



## Fact Sheet

### **WHAT IS LSA FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE?**

The Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service (LSA) has offered community-based health and social services to East Harlem families since 1958. We seek to help families build on their existing strengths in the belief that strong, healthy families are the cornerstones of a vital community. We provide services to families in their own homes and at our center.

### **WHAT DOES LSA FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE DO?**

Over the years, we have developed a range of services in five basic program areas. Currently we serve approximately 3,000 people—many of them in multiple programs. Our programs work closely together, with referrals between programs made as they are needed.

Our **Certified Home Health Agency** is our original core program which serves up to 100 patients at time. Its nurses provide direct care at home to patients of all ages from newborns to the elderly, and coordinates other services such as physical therapy. The Home Health Agency has developed specialties in prenatal child health, asthma and diabetes. We care for people on the basis of their needs, not their ability to pay. Many of those who receive nursing care are referred from other LSA programs; for instance, pregnant women who visit the Food Pantry are deemed to be particularly vulnerable and are referred to our Maternity Outreach program. Our community-based Family Asthma Program works to improve outcomes for children with asthma through nursing management and reduction of environmental triggers in the home. The Family Asthma Program includes a special activities group for children with asthma.

Our **Early Childhood Program** for families with children from birth to age three has three components: **Home-Based Child Development**, the **Toddler Nursery** and **Early Intervention**. In the Home-Based Child Development Program, an early childhood specialist visits families in their homes to assess each child's development, and works with parents to formulate a service plan tailored to each child's needs. Parents receive counseling to help them understand their role in the development of their children. If children demonstrate developmental delays or other problems, referrals to the appropriate services are made. The Early Intervention Program provides services such as speech, physical and occupational therapies for children who have diagnosed developmental delays. The Toddler Nursery provides a warm and stimulating group environment for children to develop socialization skills. Over 200 children and their parents are served each year through this program.

Our **Family Support Program** (Preventive Services) works with 45 families at a time, with approximately 70 families in the course of a year, to prevent children from being placed in foster care. The staff provides counseling, makes referrals, teaches parenting skills and acts as advocates for services, education and entitlements.

Our **Food Pantry/Advocacy Program**: The emergency food pantry provides non-perishable food for families and the elderly. The Advocacy Office provides counseling and referrals in the areas of welfare, food stamps, medical care, housing, health insurance, Social Security, education, employment, immigration, etc. It is often the families' entry point to our other services. The Food Pantry/Advocacy Program serves more than 400 clients every month. A new advocacy effort—the **Education Advocacy Program**— helps parents navigate the complexities of admissions, enrollment and conflict resolution in public and private schools. Education Advocacy also provides Afterschool Tutoring, a Summer Reading Academy and a Girls' Mentoring program that are helping East Harlem's children improve their academic performance.

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Our **Community Life Program** enrolls nearly 500 participants a year in classes and group activities aimed at socialization, education, recreation and employment. In addition to tutoring and formal classes in English as a Second Language, there are parent education groups in English and Spanish, a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren and a gardening group. A **Summer Trips** program provides one-day vacations for more than 1,400 people—2/3rds of them children. And our **Basic Education in Spanish** program provides primary school level education to adults who may not have had any prior schooling.

**The Sharing Place.** In addition to our five basic programs, our thrift shop, *The Sharing Place*, is much more than a place to shop for low-cost, high quality items. The Sharing Place functions like a program by providing a welcoming place for neighbors to greet each other, and opportunities for volunteers to develop work skills.

### **WHO DOES LSA FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE SERVE?**

We serve families who live in East Harlem. With the highest percentage of young people in Manhattan, East Harlem is a vibrant community. We see families here that have impressive strengths. They are hard-working, courageous in the face of adversity and eager for their children to succeed. Many residents are newcomers to the U.S., close-knit families who left their homelands with sadness but with hope, convinced that this was the only way to provide a brighter future for their children.

### **WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF EAST HARLEM?**

The **East Harlem Community** suffers a disproportionate share of the social and health problems that affect families in New York City. In fact, East Harlem is marked by a number of unfortunate “lows” and “highs.” For example:

- The **lowest median household income** in Manhattan (**\$20,000**)
- The **highest percentage of families in Manhattan with incomes under \$15,000** per year (**30.4%**)
- In East Harlem, the percent of residents living below the poverty level is nearly twice as high as New York City overall
- The **highest rate of childhood asthma** in the U.S.
- Children in East Harlem, ages 0-4, are **more than 4 times as likely to be hospitalized for asthma** than children living in more affluent areas
- An **official unemployment rate of 16.7%**
- 21% of adults over 25 have **less than a ninth grade education**
- The **highest percentage of births to teenage mothers** in Manhattan (**17.6%**)
- **Infant mortality rate of 10.0/1,000 versus 5.4/1,000 for the rest of Manhattan**
- **Epidemic rates of obesity and diabetes**
- In the 2004 avoidable hospitalization rate, East Harlem **ranked last-- 42<sup>nd</sup> among 42 NYC neighborhoods.**