



Hope Inside



Board of Directors

President: Captain Don Scheinost

Vice President: Jay Steinacher

Treasurer: Kal Lausterer

Secretary: Gail Steen

Members:

Kevin Baumhover

Lester Buckley

Doug Emery

Deanna Friesen

Teena Gordon

DeLynn Hay

JoAnne Kissel

Marj McKinty

Jess Parker

Ed Rastovski

Management Team

Vi See, Executive Director

*Jeri Winkelmann,
Chief Financial Officer*

*Jill Bomberger, Early Head Start
and Head Start Director*

*Steve Langdon,
Human Resources Director*

*Jill Connor, Development and
Communications Director*

*Michelle Martinez,
Family Outreach Director*

New forwarding address for The Gathering Place

Sending mail to The Gathering Place? We love to hear from you! We have discontinued postal service to The Gathering Place's physical address (1448 E Street), so please forward all Gathering Place related correspondence to the following address:

**Community Action Partnership of
Lancaster and Saunders Counties**

Attn: The Gathering Place
210 'O' Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

An Evening at The Gathering Place

A look inside the home you help to create for those who are struggling with hunger in Lincoln

It's 4:45 on a cool November evening; the autumn sun is quickly making its decline against the state capitol building. Nearly all of the trees that line E street are bare, the yellow leaves that once graced their branches painted across the ground. Winter will be here soon.

A number of people congregate on the front steps and in the foyer of the charming brick home we know as The Gathering Place. There is conversation over cups of hot coffee and tea. There is talk of the weather, how it has finally gotten cooler. And there is a warm aroma that permeates through the house. Earlier today, James Reilly channeled his culinary skills to make spaghetti and meatballs with homemade sauce. At 5:00, the meal is hot and ready to be served by volunteers from First Presbyterian Church.



Tonight, Brenda is excited about the meal (her favorite). Brenda has just celebrated her 63rd birthday, and has been coming regularly to The Gathering Place for a number of years. "I look out for the people here," she says. "I love the people who work here. Everyone is really respectful toward one another. And I also love the food. A couple weeks ago, James made chicken fried steak. It was so good!"*

The evening goes on, and guests enjoy their meals in the company of one another. As you look around the house, you are reminded of the vision of The Gathering

Place founders: to provide a place where people from all walks of life could come together, converse, and if only for an hour or two, gather together as one.

Meal service wraps up for the evening, and volunteers assist in cleaning up. The evening quiets, the skies darken, and everyone goes their separate ways. As you make your way outside, you look back at the home you were just in – its yellow windows aglow against the dark of the early evening. You smile, thankful a place like this exists in the world.

Without your support, the food, comforts, and sense of belonging this home provides to so many would not be possible. Thank you for making the vision for The Gathering Place a reality every day.

**Names of Gathering Place guests referenced have been changed.*

Your Gift to The Gathering Place through December 31st will be matched 1:1!

Thank you to all of our incredibly generous donors who have given to this exciting campaign so far! As of 12.07, we have raised \$26,970 in just over a month's time. This amount will be matched 1:1 by a generous donor, making our total raised \$53,940. Our goal is to raise \$34,000 by the end of the year in honor of 34 years of service at The Gathering Place. Over 25,000 meals were served at The Gathering Place last year, demonstrating very evident need in Lincoln. Will you help those struggling with hunger to secure hot evening meals by giving today?

Here is what your gift provides:

\$25 (with donor match) provides one night of meals

\$50 (with donor match) provides two nights of meals

\$100 (with donor match) provides four nights of meals

\$250 (with donor match) provides two weeks of evening meals

\$500 (with donor match) provides one month of evening meals

Thank you for your support!



Proud, thankful, and motivated

Thank you for making 2016 one of the best years yet

Season's Greetings – We are coming to the close of what has been a truly remarkable year here at Community Action. So many memorable things have happened – from the opening of our new Head Start centers, to our best ever Give to Lincoln Day, to the wonderful tailgate party at The Gathering Place held in honor of Michael, and more. You were part of so many of these memories, and it is with deep gratitude that I thank you for helping to make 2016 one of the best years yet.

As I reflect upon the past year, I am proud of the successes of our programs and thankful for your investment

in them. Your support has provided me the privilege of witnessing so many life-changing occurrences in our participants' lives...the smiles, the tears of joy, the relief that comes with knowing that your life is about to change for the better.

The successes of the past year are motivating as we move into 2017. I am reminded that – *together* – we have the ability to provide opportunities for those in our community who otherwise would not have them. For the young woman who – not even a year ago – was living on the streets while pregnant and is now in a safe, stable place to call home, has a full-time job, and is working hard every day to provide the best possible life for her children. For the refugee family who

puts away every extra penny they have to make a down payment on their first home. For the young child who gets to come each day to a safe, enriched environment to learn the skills needed to enter kindergarten successfully. I am reminded that together, we are moving people forward. We are building our communities into the best, healthiest, most prosperous places to live possible.

I hope you enjoy the success stories and updates within this letter, and that you and your family enjoy a happy and joyous holiday season.

With gratitude,



Vi See
Executive Director

Friends, food, football, and fond memories

Thank you for helping us honor the life and work of Michael Ryan

Wednesday, October 5th was an evening to remember as we joined together to remember and honor the work of former Gathering Place Administrator, Michael Ryan. The event was all about the things Michael loved and appreciated the most – his friends

and family, the work of The Gathering Place, and of course, Nebraska Football! Here are just some moments from a truly memorable evening. Thank you for making this such a memorable, special event.

UNL alumni pep band plays a variety of fight songs as guests arrive.



Justin Rousseau, Gathering Place volunteer and Bison, Inc. employee, poses for a picture on the beautiful bench generously donated by Bison, Inc. in memory of Michael.



Will Ryan unveils a clock that is now on display at The Gathering Place in honor of Michael. In the famous words of Michael himself, it reads "no seconds until 5:30." Thank you to the Ryan family for this perfect memorial gift.

Community Action Head Start centers open for learning!

A glimpse into how your investment is shaping the lives of our community's future leaders

It has been a busy couple of months at Community Action! With your support of our Soaring to Success campaign, we have opened our two new Head Start centers in Lincoln, one at Health 360 (23rd and O Streets) and one in the west wing of the Kaplan University building (18th and Capitol Parkway). Combined, the centers have enrolled 255 babies, toddlers, and preschoolers – all of whom are getting a Head Start on learning because of your generous support. Interested in touring our centers? Contact Heather at (402) 875-9339 or hloughman@communityactionatwork.org

Regular hand washing is an important part of staying healthy and avoiding sickness. And the bubbles make it fun, too! >



< Creativity at work! Preschoolers gather around a table to create their very own picture books.



Very proud of the table she set all by herself! Dramatic play such as this is an important way preschoolers learn the social-emotional skills necessary for being ready for kindergarten. >



This young one was all smiles when the camera came around! >



On her way to a brighter future

How your support gave Jennifer the opportunity to make a new start, build toward the future

At the young age of 24, Jennifer had been through more than most people experience in a lifetime. Though she was trying her best to stay ahead employed as a Certified Nursing Assistant, Jennifer struggled to make ends-meet. At her lowest point, she found herself homeless, with no other choice but to live in her car. As you might imagine, Jennifer felt hopeless. She was young...she had dreams...she knew life could be better. She knew she had to find a way to make a change, and decided that change would

begin by moving to Lincoln.

"It was the best decision I've ever made," Jennifer said, reflecting upon her move to Lincoln. "Three weeks after moving, I had two jobs, a secure roof over my head, and plans of going back to school. Moving to Lincoln provided me with the fresh start I needed."

Moving to Lincoln also allowed Jennifer to enroll in our Opportunity Passport™ program, made possible with support from the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and donors like you. The program offered Jennifer the chance to receive savings match, which she utilized toward housing, to reduce debt, and build credit. She continues to work toward achieving financial goals with support from the

program and plans to begin the LPN program at Southeast Community College. "After achieving my LPN, I would like to continue my schooling to become an RN. I would like to eventually work with children or the elderly."

Sara Druke, Community Action's Opportunity Passport™ Program Specialist, has watched as Jennifer has flourished in the program.

"Jennifer embodies the heart of what Opportunity Passport™ is all about," Sara said. "It has been a joy to

get to know her and see her persevere. Jennifer came into this program with a strong determination to create positive changes. Now that she has found housing

stability, developed a financial plan, and enrolled in college, there is no stopping her!"

Your investment in the work of Community Action gives people like Jennifer

the opportunity to move forward...to work toward a brighter future...and perhaps most importantly, restores in them a sense of hope. Thank you.



Jennifer and Opportunity Passport™ Program Specialist, Sara Druke.

First National Bank, Mutual of Omaha, and First State Bank Nebraska provide **financial support** of IDA

Community Action's IDA (Individual Development Accounts) program provides low- to moderate-income individuals the opportunity to receive 4:1 savings match for the purchase of a first-time home, small business start-up/expansion, or post-secondary education. The life-changing services provided through the program are made possible by federal grant funding and support from the local community.

We would like to thank our Corporate Builders, First National Bank, Mutual of Omaha, and First State Bank Nebraska, for their recent financial support of the program. These funds combined with grant funds from Woods Charitable Fund, Cooper Foundation, Lincoln Community Foundation, and other generous organizations and individuals will leverage federal funding to support individuals in building assets and stronger financial futures.



First National Bank presents award for \$5,000. Pictured from left: Heather Loughman (Community Action); Rich Herink (First National Bank); Vi See (Community Action); Jennifer Lamprecht (First National Bank); and Michelle St. Clair (First National Bank)



Mutual of Omaha presents award for \$2,500. Pictured from left: Jeri Winkelmann (Community Action); Andrew Ritta (Community Action); and Dawn Green (Mutual of Omaha)



First State Bank Nebraska presents award for \$2,500. Pictured from left are Debbie Mumm (First State Bank Nebraska) and Vi See (Community Action)



Meet Lisa, the newest member of our team!

Community Action has hired Lisa Janssen as Gathering Place Administrator. In addition to overseeing operations at The Gathering Place, Lisa will help to create a new Community Response program being launched in partnership with United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County. Community Response is a preventative program aimed at supporting and linking families to resources needed to prevent entry into the child welfare system.

"Lisa brings a unique mix of administrative and direct service experience that will be a great addition to The Gathering Place and Lincoln's near south neighborhood," said Dean Settle, a long-time Gathering Place volunteer who once worked with Lisa. "Her passion combined with work experience make her the ideal candidate for this position."

Lisa will begin work on December 12th and will office at The Gathering Place. She is looking forward to connecting with you soon!

Soaring to Success



Campaign Update

As of 11.29.16, we have reached 92% of our Soaring to Success campaign goal of \$750,000! Funds generated from the Soaring to Success Campaign have helped to equip our centers with everything children need to learn, and are supporting efforts to further expand the programs – both in terms of programming and number of children served. We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations that have committed financial support of \$1,000 or more:

Community Health
Endowment of Lincoln
Imperial Foundation
Assurity

Nelnet
Bryan Health
Anabeth H. Cox
Duncan Aviation
Pinnacle Bank – Lincoln
Ameritas Charitable Foundation
Lincoln Pediatric Dentistry
Tracy's Collision Centers
Union Bank & Trust
Abel Foundation
Anonymous
Bill and Heather Loughman
Les and Nancy Buckley
Vi See
Steve Langdon
Carl and Janet Eskridge
Drs. Darek and Karla Lester
Jill Connor and
Chad McVicker

Lincoln Pediatric Group
Rogers Foundation
Runza National
Barb Cruz
Jeri Winkelmann
J. Todd and Kimberle Hall

There is still time to give to this campaign, which is helping to shape the minds and lives of some of Lincoln's most vulnerable children. Classroom sponsorship opportunities (beginning at \$10,000) are still available. For more information, contact Heather Loughman at (402) 875-9339 or hloughman@communityactionatwork.org.

