



Hope Inside



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Best friends, backpacks, and brand-new classrooms



So much can change in five years! This August, we said farewell and congratulations to the first group of babies to attend our new Lincoln centers. They're off to do great things in kindergarten and beyond!

Thanks to your generosity, hundreds of our youngest neighbors have access to opportunities to succeed.

Back-to-school season! At Community Action Head Start, it's one of the best times of the year. Although our programs run year-round, for a few weeks each August, teachers and staff spend time on professional development and necessary group trainings. Classrooms get a refresh, and children officially transition from baby/toddler to preschool classrooms, or from preschool to kindergarten. This August, we celebrated a big milestone: The first group of babies to attend our K Street and Health 360 centers (established in fall 2016) officially aged out of our program and have since moved on to begin

kindergarten. Many are now attending local elementary schools. Although we miss seeing their smiling faces at our centers, we know you'll join us in celebrating the next step in their journeys! Around this time each year, we often hear updates from past Community Action Head Start participants like Tiara, and her daughter, Lillian. Several years ago, Tiara enrolled Lillian in Community Action Head Start because, in her words, "Lillian had a speech delay due to numerous

ear infections. When [the program] was recommended, I signed her up immediately" "Lillian entered Community Action Early Head Start at three years old, and then moved on to Head Start at age four. By the time Lillian exited Head Start, her speech delay was nearly gone," said Tiara. "During her middle and high school years, she went on to participate in theater, choir, and show choir. She even performed solos!" This May, Lillian graduated from Lincoln High School and the Career Academy in the K-12 pathway. When she returned to school this fall, it was to attend Doane University. She's pursuing a career in teaching. Thank you for your support of Community Action Head Start, and of the children and families who participate. **Your generosity creates the greatest gift of all: Opportunity.**



Lillian enrolled in Community Action Head Start to receive the support she needed to navigate a speech delay. This year, she graduated from Lincoln High School and enrolled at Doane University to pursue a degree in teaching.

Thank you for 13 years of partnership

Every day, your generosity has inspired me.

Dear Friend,

Among the most joyous aspects of my career at Community Action has been witnessing your incredible support. You know that our work here at Community Action centers on addressing the causes and conditions of poverty as they exist in our community. Your giving demonstrates your trust in our ability to see this work through—to help create a kinder, more equitable community.

As you may know, I have shared my intent to retire this year, following recruitment, selection, and support of

onboarding our new leader. My last day at Community Action will be sometime in October 2021.

I remember my first day at Community Action 13 years ago, which was right around this time of year. Our then board president, Todd Hall, walked me into the building to show me my office. I distinctly recall scanning the contents of the office – a desk, a small table, and a good number of file cabinets stocked with paper files. But more than that, I remember feeling a great deal of excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to learn more about Community Action's programming from our staff and participants.

In August 2021, Community Action's Leadership Team presented Vi with a Community Action at Work Award, in recognition of her steadfast leadership alongside five presidents of the Board of Directors (pictured).



It's been my pleasure to serve as Community Action's Chief Executive Officer since that day. **Our programs have grown so much, thanks to your tremendous support.** Together, we increased capacity to provide our existing services, and made new programs available to our community. You helped spread the word about our work, and our visibility within the community increased. I want to personally thank you for all that you've done to support this. Our board is committed to selecting a leader who will work to continue to move this positive momentum forward. And you will play a crucial role in making that happen.

As I write this note, we are one week away from making a huge step for our Head Start program: Community Action recently entered into an agreement to purchase a facility at 1843 K Street in Lincoln, which will be used to support provision of our full-day, full-year center-based Early Head Start and Head Start services. We're excited



to share updates, including our plans for the space, in the weeks and months to come.

I sincerely hope that our paths cross one day soon, whether as I wrap up my work with Community Action, or beyond, throughout the Lincoln community.

Working beside you has been one of the greatest highlights of my career. Your kindness and generosity has inspired me every day, just as I know it will inspire our agency's next leader.

Thank you for all that you do—for our neighbors, for our agency, and for our community.

Thank you,

Vi See
Chief Executive Officer

This fall, your gift to Community Action's Gathering Place will double.

Mark your calendars!

From October 11 - December 31, all gifts to Community Action's Gathering Place will be matched, \$1 for \$1. This match is made possible thanks to the generous support of lead sponsor Acklie Charitable Foundation, as well as additional sponsors Miriam Moeller

Charitable Trust, Union Bank and Trust, Bukaty Companies, Horizon Bank, and Sue Quambusch, in memory of Len Sloup. Keep an eye out for more information about this opportunity to double your impact. Our goal this year is to raise \$200,000.

We can't do this without you.
Thank you.



Last year, your support helped us serve over 34,900 meals to those experiencing hunger in Lincoln.

Remembering Len Sloup and Steve Alexander

Two Head Start classroom sponsors we lost this year.

Every now and then, you meet people who make you want to be better – not because they counsel or coach you to, but because there's something about their core being that just inspires you. Those were our friends, Len and Steve, who we lost this summer.

Not only proud supporters of Community Action and its programs, Len and Steve were true leaders within the Lincoln community. Their contributions to Lincoln and the state of Nebraska impacted many.

Community Action's heartfelt condolences are with Len and Steve's families and all who loved them. We continue to celebrate lives to be admired.



Len Sloup

Photo courtesy of Aging Partners/
Living Well magazine



Stephen "Steve" Alexander

Building a community of support

Through programs like Community Response, families receive the resources and opportunities to achieve success.

In November of last year, Samantha's family dynamic changed nearly overnight when she welcomed her sibling's high school-aged children into her home, becoming their temporary guardian.

"There was a lot going on at once," she shared, "and everyone needed a lot of support—including my own child, and

myself, and my husband." When she began looking for local resources that could help her navigate her family's needs, she found Community Action and the Lancaster County Community Response program.

"I'm so grateful that there's a support system like this," said Samantha. "For the six months I participated in the program, I had access to so many resources that helped us care for three additional family members. Everything helped—physical resources from the Community Action Store, and emotional resources, too. Staff were so caring. I've been out of the program for a little while now, but I just

feel so much better and more prepared."

Recently, Samantha's nieces and nephew reunited with their parent. Samantha shared that thanks to support from Community Action, she now has the resources she needs to navigate her situation to the best of her ability. "I'm better able to care for my family now," she shared. "I feel more prepared and set up for success, if I found myself in this situation again. I'm so grateful, and my family benefitted so much."

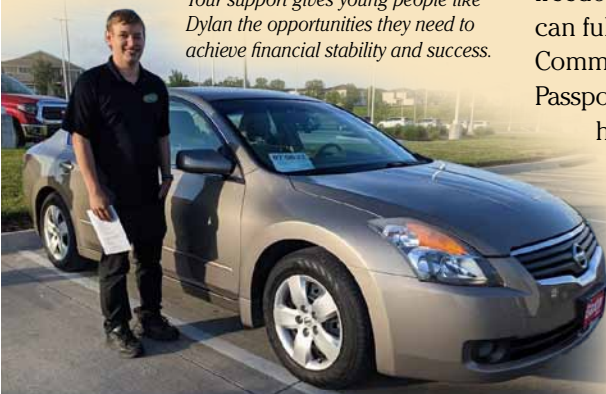
When you support Community Action, you support kind, hard-working people like Samantha and their families.

You create opportunities for success.

"This program gives me confidence every day."

Dylan joined our Opportunity Passport™ program with a clear goal: save enough money to purchase a vehicle. To Dylan, owning his own

Your support gives young people like Dylan the opportunities they need to achieve financial stability and success.



car meant so much more than being able to drive to work, school, and other obligations.

"It's confidence," he shared. "It's freedom. It's the knowledge that I can fully support myself. And without Community Action and Opportunity Passport™, I'm not sure how I would have gotten there."

Dylan joined Opportunity Passport™ with the goal of building his financial security. After a few years of hard work, he was able to utilize his savings match to purchase a

reliable vehicle of his own.

"Every staff person I worked with [at Community Action] genuinely cared about me, and they helped me achieve my goals even beyond vehicle ownership," said Dylan. "Now, I have my own vehicle and I have savings. I can focus on improving other areas of my life. I don't know how else to say it: This program helps. It gives me confidence every day, and I don't know where I would be without it."

Thank you for your continued support of Community Action, and of young people like Dylan.

“You have led my family to a new path.”

You’ve given connection and opportunity to Muyassar and her family.

Last fall, the COVID-19 pandemic isolated many in our community. As families stayed home more often, many found themselves cut off from their support systems, and in many cases, access to new opportunities. One person who found herself in such a situation was Muyassar, a mother of three children and recent participant of Community Action’s Financial Coaching program.

Muyassar said, “I found Community Action before the pandemic started, because a friend recommended the Financial Coaching program to me. I was excited to begin classes in April 2020.

Then, many things shut down at once and my life changed quickly. I had to pause my participation, but promised myself I would find Community Action again.”

Several months passed, and Muyassar’s interest in joining a Financial Coaching cohort only grew stronger. “I wanted to learn,” she said.

Last fall, Muyassar joined our virtual Financial Coaching cohort. She attended every class from home, and invited her son to join her. Together, she said, they learned valuable skills such as how to create an effective budget and how to set and work toward achievable financial goals.

Muyassar shared, **“This program helped me in all aspects of my life.** I liked the classroom learning and the individual coaching. Everyone was helpful, cooperative, supportive, and patient, and made me feel comfortable asking any question related to the program. **Because of this program, I feel more confident in my ability to learn new skills,** and more prepared to achieve my goals beyond the pandemic.”

“I would like to thank the people who make this program possible,” she added. **“You have led my family to a new path of happiness and stability.”**

On behalf of Muyassar and all those we serve, thank you.



Thank you for supporting Muyassar and her family on their journey toward stability. In her words, “You have led my family to a new path of happiness and stability.”

Thank you to our 2020-2021 Community Action Head Start classroom sponsors

- Alexander Wealth Management/UBS
- Bob and Lisa Rauner
- Christine Marvin
- David and Lynn Lux
- DeLynn and Esther Hay
- First Plymouth Congregational Church
- Grant and Kelsey Buckley
- Lincoln Sunrise Kiwanis
- Mick, Lisa, Jordan, Katie, and Elizabeth Hale
- Pinnacle Bank – Lincoln
- Office Interiors and Design
- Rhonda Seacrest
- Sue Quambusch, in memory of Len Sloup, and John and Nancy Wiederspan
- Tom and Candy Henning
- Vi See
- Yvonne Norton Leung

17 Community Action Head Start classrooms still need incredible sponsors like you! Our program is growing, which means your continued support is needed more than ever. If you’d like additional information regarding classroom sponsorship, please contact Heather Loughman at hloughman@communityactionnetwork.org or (402) 875-9339. Thank you!

YES, I want to help empower people living in poverty to reach economic stability.

Please accept my gift of \$ _____

Your donation will go toward supporting:

- Feeding those who are hungry at the Gathering Place
- Preparing children for success in school
- Preventing and eliminating homelessness
- Helping families learn financial skills/save for major asset purchases

I would like to designate my gift to the following program (e.g. The Gathering Place, Head Start, Basic needs supplies for families)

I have included (or intend to include) Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties in my will or estate.

My name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

May we publish your name? Yes No

If so, how would you like your name(s) to appear?

Payment Options:

- Check payable to *Community Action*
- Credit Card: Visa MasterCard Discover

Account # _____

Exp. Date (mo/yr) _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____ Date _____

For more information contact:

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