



Hope Inside



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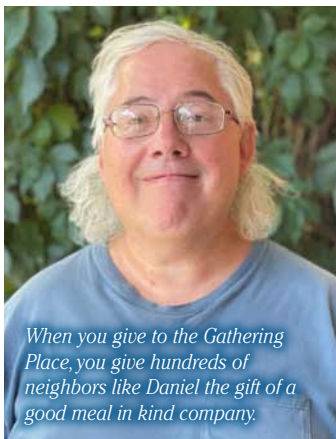
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You're bringing love, joy, and peace this holiday season



When you give to the Gathering Place, you give hundreds of neighbors like Daniel the gift of a good meal in kind company.

By giving to the Gathering Place before December 31st, you are doubling your impact.

“Love. Joy. Peace.”

These are the three words Daniel, pictured above, used to describe Community Action’s Gathering Place.

“**Love:** I love coming here, and the love is given back,” he said. “**Joy:** I enjoy the meal and the time being here, and **Peace:** when I leave, I feel peace knowing that I had a good meal.”

Daniel is just one of the many guests who has found comfort at the Gathering Place over the years. He began visiting us regularly after he unexpectedly lost his job and experienced homelessness.

You know the importance of the Gathering Place’s work to provide free, hot, nutritious meals to any neighbor in need. In the past year, need for this service has skyrocketed. For each of the past six months, we’ve set new records for the number of meals served at the Gathering Place. Need for our services is growing, and **we could not keep up without you.**

This October, you helped serve over 5,000 meals to our neighbors experiencing hunger in Lincoln – a Gathering Place record.

And all throughout this fall and winter, you’re ensuring that every one of our neighbors has somewhere to enjoy *warm, home-cooked holiday meals* in good company. Because you know, like our guests, that the Gathering Place is so much more than somewhere to eat a meal.

Recently, Daniel shared with us that he has moved into a stable housing situation and found consistent work. He still occasionally visits the Gathering Place, sharing,

“This is a place where I belong.” Many of our guests feel the same way.

As you know, the Gathering Place relies primarily on community contributions to operate. We could not do this work without you. You know the importance of accessing healthy food on the journey to economic stability. Thanks to the generous support of this year’s lead sponsor, Acklie Charitable Foundation, as well as additional sponsors, **gifts to the Gathering Place will be matched \$1 for \$1 through December 31st.** When you give to the Gathering Place this year, **your impact will double.**

Our goal for this year’s campaign is to raise \$200,000 to support the Gathering Place. Currently, you have helped us raise over \$70,000 toward that goal.

Thank you for your compassion toward your neighbors. For your commitment to ensuring that everyone in our community has the resources they need not just to make ends meet, but to thrive. **Thank you for bringing love, joy, and peace this holiday season.**

Thank you to this year’s Gathering Place Match Campaign sponsors!

Lead Sponsor:
Acklie Charitable Foundation

NPF
 Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation
Miriam Moeller Charitable Trust

UBT
 Union Bank & Trust
BUKATY COMPANIES

MarshMcLennan Agency
INSPRO
Sue Quambusch

Need is greater than ever, and so is your response



Thank you for continuing to ask, “How can I help?” and always stepping up for those we serve.

Dear Friend,

I am always heartened when kind people like you ask me questions like “*What are the greatest needs you’re seeing in the community right now?*” and, shortly thereafter, “*How can I help?*” The resulting discussion always leads to some kind of action on your part – whether an agreement to do a supply drive, a gift of volunteer service, a donation to one of our campaigns, or another

meaningful contribution.

You are more than someone who cares – you’re a true partner in our mission.

If you were to ask me about the most prevalent needs we’re seeing right now, two essentials immediately come to mind: food and housing.

At the Gathering Place, we’ve not even reached the end of 2023 and **have already served a record number of meals for a single year.** In October alone, that number was over 5,000, 60% more than the same month the prior year. While we might be tempted to believe this increase is the result of word getting out about our great food (our “Taco Tuesday” is becoming a bit legendary in the neighborhood), we know that’s not the case. It’s because **our neighbors’ resources aren’t stretching as far as they used to.** It’s because they’re **hungry and need options.**

More folks than ever are reaching out for rent and utility assistance, too. On average, **the number of requests we’ve received this year has increased by nearly 50%** compared to the prior year. Many are doing *all they can* to keep pace with the cost of living right now, and they often do. But none of us are immune from life’s curveballs – whether an unexpected medical or car repair bill, job loss, or sudden familial change. And we all need someone to lean on during these times.

So that brings us to a response to the second question, the one I know you’re asking as the season of giving approaches: **“How can I help?”** While there are always many ways to give, there are two that would help us to keep pace with community needs as they exist right now.

The first is to **make a financial contribution**

to the Gathering Place to support our provision of meals not just this holiday season, but throughout the whole year. And thanks to Acklie Charitable Foundation and our additional generous match sponsors, your contribution before the end of the year will be matched \$1 for \$1! The second is to **give to our rent and utility assistance fund,** which would provide a bit of additional support to a neighbor who is going through a difficult time. Need for this support will be especially great as we enter the chilly winter months.

Thank you for being a friend to so many in your community through your unwavering support of our work. Wishing you the same joy this holiday season as you bring to us all throughout the year.

With gratitude,

Heather

Home for the holidays

Julie hoped to find a new home for her young son by Christmas. You made that possible.

A few months ago, life threw a curveball at Julie. Through no fault of her own, she found herself experiencing homelessness with her young son. In need of support, Julie came to Community Action.

She found support in our Emergency Services program. During her first meeting with her Family Advocate, Julie shared her big goal.

“I just want to us to have our own home by Christmas,” she said.

With several months of hard work and support from Community Action’s Emergency Services team — and ultimately, *support from you* — Julie recently received some wonderful news. She will be exiting our program into stable housing this month, December. With her move-in date scheduled for early in the month, Julie will meet her goal. **Julie and her son will be home for Christmas.**

You make joyful stories like Julie’s possible. Thank you.

You gave Julie and her young son a chance to start over this holiday season. Thank you.



Thank you for an amazing season of support

We love when we get the chance to say “Thank you!” in person for all that you do!

From basic care items to toys and gifts to fresh, locally grown food, and so much more — we’ve asked for your support and you’ve shown up.

Thank you for volunteering, for giving, for spreading the word about what we do and what your neighbors need. Every day that you show up for our mission

and those we serve, you help to build a community where every single one of us has the chance to thrive.

We can’t do this without you. Thank you for caring for your community and those we serve. Truly — **you make our work possible.**

Thank you to Picnic Hill Orchard for donating 500 apples to be enjoyed by our Head Start kiddos during this year’s Crunch Off celebration!



Your volunteerism makes nightly meal service possible at the Gathering Place!



Your donations of food and basic care supplies to our Little Free Pantry are so appreciated by your neighbors!



Thank you to Lincoln Sunrise Kiwanis for sponsoring a Head Start classroom and stopping by to read!



Driving toward a bright and hopeful future

You make Community Action a place where hard-working neighbors like Evan can turn for support as they work to get ahead.

Evan works full-time. He’s, for the most part, always had enough money to pay rent, buy groceries, and fill his car with gas to drive to and from work. Money has been tight, but he’s gotten by.

And as the years have passed, Evan’s once safe and reliable vehicle has slowly grown older and more worn down. He knew he needed to find a replacement, but it was difficult to save enough to make such a large purchase. *That’s when Evan found Community Action.*

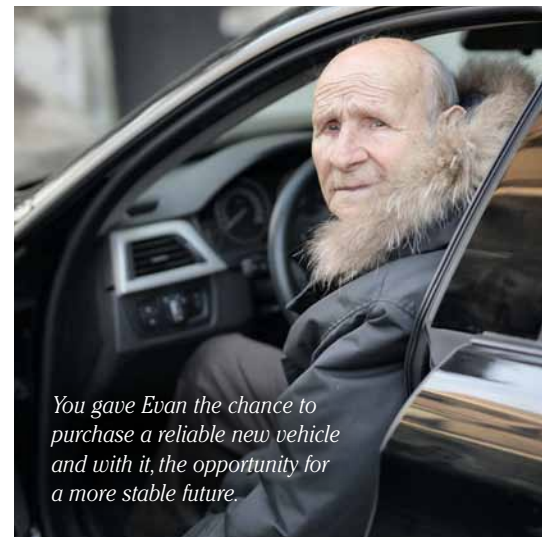
Last year, Evan enrolled in our Free to Save Matched Savings program. He completed the required Financial Coaching classes and met with our team members to discuss his goals and develop a savings plan.

With six months of hard work and careful planning, Evan saved \$1,000 to go toward this new purchase. This was matched with \$4,000 in program funds, and Evan began the search for his new vehicle.

A few months ago, Evan found the perfect car.

“Thank you,” he said. “Now that I can drive safely to and from work, everything is so much easier and less stressful. There’s a big weight that’s been lifted from me.”

Because you give to Community Action, **you create opportunities for your neighbors like Evan to build better, brighter futures.** Thank you.



You gave Evan the chance to purchase a reliable new vehicle and with it, the opportunity for a more stable future.

There's still time to join our holiday toy drive

You can give families a brighter holiday season with a donation to our annual Holiday Toy Drive!

It's definitely the most wonderful time of the year when the Community Action Holiday Toy Drive kicks off! We are accepting **new, unwrapped toy donations now through December 22 for ages 0-18. Toys can be dropped off at 210 O St., Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

If you prefer to shop from the comfort of your home, **visit our website to see our full wish list and learn how to ship gifts directly to Community Action!**

Last year, you helped us collect over 1,000 toys and games to give to the children and families we serve. Do you think we can top that this year?

Every donation to our holiday toy drive will help to brighten a child's winter holiday season. Thank you for considering spreading some extra love, warmth, and joy this holiday season!



Thank you to those who have already donated toys for this year's drive! Your gifts will brighten so many neighbors' holidays this year.

How do you want to be remembered?



Leave your legacy through a planned gift to Community Action.

Have you asked yourself this question? What legacy will you leave? Certainly, you've spent some time over the past year considering your passions – the causes closest to your heart. And you've taken time to consider what the world will look like for future generations. How you might make it better, brighter, and kinder.

Making a planned gift to support the work of Community Action is a powerful way to impact generations to come. By committing to a planned gift today, you will become a member of our Legacy Circle, a special group of donors who will play a significant role in advancing the work of Community Action well into the future. It's the perfect way to make a big impact for tomorrow without affecting your financial situation today.

Want to learn more or get started? Contact Heather Loughman at (402) 875-9319 or hloughman@communityactionatwork.org, or Jessie Hedrick at (402) 875-9338!

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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