



Hope Inside



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"I want to be independent enough to give back"

Thank you for believing in Erich, who's working hard to create opportunity for others.

We last interviewed Erich in late 2019. He was a participant in our Opportunity Passport™ matched savings program, and a few months before that, he'd used his savings match to purchase a reliable vehicle. He drove to and from work in that new-to-him car, and supported himself with the money he earned. When we last spoke, Erich shared that one day, he wanted "to be independent enough to give back."

He worked while earning his college degree and graduated in 2020. Passionate about cars, he dedicated many long hours to learning the ins and outs

of caring for his own vehicle, purchased from Baxter Toyota Lincoln.

Erich is kind, hard-working, and curious, and recently, we had the chance to catch up with him. Of the past year and a half, he said, "When I graduated, I knew I wanted to keep working with cars, and I knew I wanted to be a part of something bigger than myself."

Over the past eighteen months, Erich's interest in cars has only grown. When Erich used Opportunity Passport™ savings match to purchase his vehicle in 2019, he worked with Ryan (pictured left) at Baxter Toyota Lincoln. For several years, Ryan has been a volunteer with Opportunity Passport™, sharing with

participants his knowledge and support relating to the car buying process.

When Erich graduated college, he applied for a job at Baxter. Now, he works with Ryan! Together, they volunteer with our Opportunity Passport™ program and guide participants through the process of purchasing a reliable vehicle.

Erich said, "It feels amazing. I know exactly what people are going through in Opportunity Passport™, and now being able to use my skills and experience to give back, when the program helped me so much—I feel really lucky. Not many people get to come full circle like this."

Thank you for believing in Erich throughout his journey with Opportunity Passport™ and beyond. Your support of Community Action programs makes success like his possible.

"I feel really lucky. Not many people get to come full circle like this."



In 2019, Erich visited Baxter Auto to purchase a reliable vehicle with his Opportunity Passport™ savings match. Now, he works at Baxter and frequently volunteers to support current participants of our programs!

A season of hope and opportunity, thanks to you



As we begin rebuilding, those served by Community Action still need your support.

Dear Friend,

What a spring it's been. As community cases of COVID-19 continue to lower and vaccination rates rise, our community is beginning to re-open. We're seeing

friends and family again. At Community Action, we've been able to spend more time with our participants, in-person. For many, after a year of immense uncertainty, there is hope. *And for our neighbors served by Community Action, a great deal of that hope is made possible by you.*

Over the past year and a half, many of our neighbors have faced the unimaginable. As the pandemic forced many businesses to close, many who were previously making ends-meet lost their jobs. For the first time in their lives, many families found themselves having to make impossible decisions—such as, with limited funds, whether to pay rent or a medical bill. Parents searched for support to find the affordable, quality early childhood education

they needed in order to return to work. When they needed support, they turned to Community Action. They turned to you.

Many of those who shared their stories in this newsletter sought support from Community Action due to circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The words “thank you” seem too small to cover all that you've done for your neighbors. In a time of crisis, you were a safe haven. The true reach of your impact cannot be measured.

And yet: We know that last year, your support of Community Action allowed us to increase our rent, utility, and deposit payments to 30% more homes than in 2019. You helped us serve 5,277 more hot, nutritious meals at the Gathering Place. You supported delivery of

food, diapers, and supply items to 479 babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their family members. And so much more.

Moving forward, we'll need to continue working together. Your tremendous support during this year's Give to Lincoln Day is just one example of how much we can accomplish when we work together. Thanks to your generosity, we raised a preliminary total of **\$101,989** before match to support Community Action.

The road to economic recovery remains long, especially for those we serve. But with you by our side, we'll make it there stronger than ever.

Thank you,

Vi See
Executive Director

Community Action Head Start is growing

We're opening a new full-day, full-year early childhood center in Lincoln!

On April 21, Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird and Community Action announced that Community Action received a \$1.6 million annual grant from the Office of Head Start to expand our Early Head Start programming in Lincoln. Funding will allow us to add 72 additional full-day, full-year center-based enrollment slots for infants and toddlers.

Your support makes possible our work to provide children and families with opportunities for success in school and beyond.

Funding from this grant will also allow Community Action to open a new early childhood education center at 2615 O Street.

The new center will house nine classrooms, with services provided at no cost to families. Thanks to partnership with Speedway Properties, the building will be renovated specifically to support young learners. We anticipate the new center will open in October. We'll keep you updated!



Interested in sponsoring a Community Action Head Start infant/toddler classroom for the 2021-2022 program year?

Contact Heather at (402) 875-9339 or hloughman@communityactionatwork.org!

Our new Community Action Head Start center, located at 2615 O Street, will welcome nine new infant/toddler classrooms in October.



Building connection, moving forward

The following was written and submitted by a Community Action participant.

I had always seen Community Action here in Lincoln for as long as I have lived here. In fact, I was once working with a group of folks that did a donation drive for Community Action. It was some eight years later that I needed help but did not know where to turn.

I was not homeless, destitute, or near homeless. I was just in a situation that was entirely too unhealthy to continue living and raising my child in. I needed something to change, but did not know where to turn. For a long time, I resigned to the idea that I was just stuck where I was. That I should just keep focusing on getting my child through high school and into college, so they could at least move out and move on.

But yet, I still knew if I was not setting a healthy example, my child had a high probability of following suit.

I began emailing different service providers but was turned down almost everywhere I turned... Finally, one agency did refer me to Community Action's Community Response program, and to Sam.

Sam was the first person to tell me that she would meet with

me. Not only would she meet with me, but she would do so under whatever conditions I was most comfortable. I remember her even telling me that she would sit with me on my front porch, if need be.

Sam renewed the strength I knew that existed in me. This program allowed her to help me. I was able to move out of the situation with my child and into our own apartment. We have our first therapist appointment this month to begin our own healing process. **I am again empowered to be myself.** Without this program, I would still be stuck where I was.

I wholly and truly am grateful for this agency and the help they have given me and my child. I truly hope that this program continues and that the next 'me' is able to find their Sam and move to the next great step in their life.

Thank you for supporting Community Action, and every day making healing and recovery possible for so many.

"I wholly and truly am grateful for this agency and the help they have given me and my son." – Community Action participant



A soft bed and a happy home

Your support connects families to the resources they need to build safe, healthy homes.

For several years, Tiffany has been highly involved in Community Action Head Start. She's a mom of two young daughters who have both attended our early childhood centers. Outside of being a parent, Tiffany also serves on the Head Start Policy Council, where she works with other parents and staff to constantly improve our program.

Recently, one Community Action Head Start staff member shared, "Tiffany does everything and anything for her daughters' education, and she shares resources with others in the program whenever she can find them."

Tiffany's two daughters are growing. They needed new beds to comfortably sleep on—beds of their own. Thanks to a partnership between Community Action and Slumberland Furniture, Tiffany found new beds for her children, age seven and four.

"They were so excited to pick out new



Thank you for looking after families like Tiffany's. Your support gives parents the resources they need to build safe, stable homes for their families to thrive.

bedding," Tiffany shared. Their family worked to make name plates to decorate the girls' room.

The next morning, Tiffany texted her Family Engagement Specialist at Community Action. "They slept like angels," she said.

Thank you for supporting families like Tiffany's. Your generosity gives your neighbors opportunities to build safe, stable homes in which they can thrive.

Thank you for your tremendous support during this year's **give** To Lincoln Day!

This Give to Lincoln Day, the event's 10th anniversary, we set a goal to raise \$100,000 to support the children and families served by Community Action. Achieving the goal would have been a record for our agency by far.

And thanks to you, we made it! You helped us raise a preliminary total of **\$101,989** before match.

Thank you for helping to ensure that your neighbors will have the chance to rebuild, To create something better. Together. Thank you.



“It feels so good to be independent.”

Chloe first learned about Opportunity Passport™ as she was preparing to age out of the foster care system.

“Opportunity Passport™ has done so much more than teach me financial skills,” she says. **“It’s connected me to a network of support I wouldn’t have otherwise had.”**

Chloe has used her Opportunity Passport™ savings match in a variety of ways, each time creating her own opportunities to achieve long-term stability. In 2019, she utilized savings match to secure safe, stable housing and move into her own apartment. She’s lived there for the past two years, supporting herself by working hard.

In 2020, Chloe unexpectedly lost her job due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the job loss, her financial situation drastically changed. Where she’d previously been able to work toward achieving her goals, she found herself

looking for support to meet her basic needs.

Chloe says, “Opportunity Passport™ helped me so much this past year. The program helped me cover some essential bills so I could stay housed when I couldn’t find work. And the financial education classes have continued to be useful. They’ve helped me create goals I can work toward and achieve.”

After a period of extreme financial stress, Chloe has a new job and is back to taking steps to achieve long-term stability, thanks to the support provided by Opportunity Passport™ when she needed it most.

“It feels so good to be independent,” she says. **“And I really want to stress that the position I’m in is because of Opportunity Passport™. It’s because of the skills I learned, the support I received, and the people who make this program possible.”**

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 Vi See at (402) 875-9319 or vsee@communityactionatwork.org, or Heather Loughman at (402) 875-9339!

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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