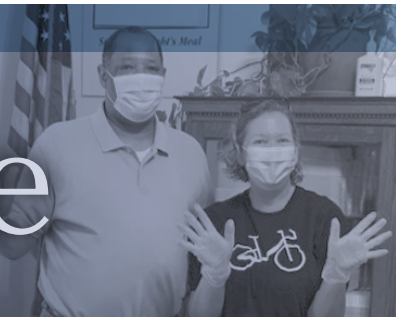




Hope Inside



Board of Directors

- President: Gail Steen
- Vice President: Lisa Hale
- Treasurer: Lorene Bartos
- Secretary: Amy Jensen
- Members:
- Jim Baumann
- Les Buckley
- Scott Larson
- Michelle Libal
- David Lux
- Christine Marvin
- Roy Rivera
- Marla R. Styles
- Ashley Ulmer
- Jaylen Vella
- Brodey Weber

Management Team

- Vi See, Executive Director
- Jeri Winkelmann, Chief Financial Officer
- Jill Bomberger, Early Head Start and Head Start Director
- Michelle Martinez, Community Services Director
- Heather Loughman, Communications and Development Director
- Pam Benner, Human Resources Director

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 } Thank you for supporting the Gathering Place
- 2 } Letter from the Executive Director
- 2 } A healthier home
- 3 } Q&A with Scott Larson, board member
- 3 } A decade-long dream
- 4 } Spread cheer this holiday season

Serving up meals and stability.

This year, we've needed you more than ever. And you've shown up like never before. Thank you.

On a cold fall evening in Lincoln, warm light shines from the windows of the old brick house on the corner of E and Goodhue. The smell of homemade macaroni and cheese drifts out the door and down past the porch, where people await a hot evening meal from the Gathering Place.

"You know, I eat maybe one meal a day, and it's here at the Gathering Place," a guest named Dennis recently shared with us. "I like to come here because I know I'll eat something good. It tastes good, it's nutritious—which I need—and the people are nice."

Every night, hundreds of your neighbors like Dennis visit the Gathering Place for a home-cooked meal and some friendly conversation.

"Everyone is always smiling," Dennis says of the atmosphere. "Even if you can't see faces [due to masks], you can hear it in their voices. I appreciate that."

Making the Gathering Place a warm, comfortable, welcoming environment nine

months into a pandemic is only possible because of you and your unwavering support. You have provided meals to more people than we've ever seen before, some of whom have visited us for the first time in their lives.

This year has proven more than ever that anyone at any time could find themselves experiencing a crisis situation. **In the months to come, the Gathering**

Place will be needed more than ever. And that means the Gathering Place needs you more than ever.

As you likely know, we are just over a month into our Gathering Place match campaign. In that time, you've contributed over \$101,000 in support of the Gathering Place's work to fight hunger in Lincoln. That's over 83% of our total campaign goal raised in just one month. Thank you.

Your generosity has been nothing short of astounding. This campaign continues through the end of the year. There's still plenty of time to support the Gathering Place!

For those we serve, the Gathering Place is so much more than somewhere to eat a meal. A guest told us recently, "When I'm happy, I want to celebrate here. When I'm sad, this is where I go to seek comfort. And without fail, whenever I need it the most, you always seem to be serving my favorite meal—spaghetti."

There will be colder and darker months ahead. Thank you for ensuring the Gathering Place stays warm and bright for anyone who needs it this year.

P.S. Gifts to the Gathering Place continue to be matched \$1 for \$1, thanks to our generous sponsors! If you'd like to give, visit www.communityactionatwork.org or mail your contribution to Community Action.



Thank you to our friends at Atwood, Holsten, Brown, Deaver, & Spier Law Firm who surprised us with a donation drive for the Gathering Place!

2020: A year of challenge, change, and community.



Thank you for embodying Community Action's mission through it all.

Dear Friend,

What a year this has been. First, and most importantly, thank you for spending it supporting Community Action. As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected those we serve. It will continue to do so.

Many times this year, I've been reminded of *the importance of community*. The importance of you, and your willingness to learn with us as we adapt to our "now normal." This past year has invited us to make many quick changes to the ways we work. In doing so, we found there might be better ways to serve our community—such as by offering virtual financial coaching classes, serving grab-and-go meals at the Gathering Place, and finding new opportunities for Foster Grandparents to serve virtually within our Head Start classrooms. We've worked to address other community needs, as well, relating to food, transportation, and the cost of studying and working at home. This year, thanks to funds received through the CARES Act, we have provided 437 individuals with food vouchers,

and 185 individuals with gas vouchers. We've assisted 11 students and 50 individuals with creating home work spaces and technology to support remote learning and working.

In the past year, we also established an employee-led Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. Since May, this committee has led nine virtual staff discussion and development opportunities, with plans for more to come. The committee's work will continue in collaboration with agency leadership and governance as we establish measurable agency-wide goals. I look forward to updating you on this work as it continues.

As we draw nearer to 2021, I want to reiterate how great an impact your support has had on those we serve. Since March, you've provided

countless basic needs supplies like diapers, formula, and educational materials to families with young children. You've helped individuals and families avoid homelessness, and in the last month alone supported 434 families requesting emergency rent and utility assistance. You've served thousands of meals to neighbors who might otherwise go without. **And in a time of great uncertainty, you've provided not only hope, but opportunity.**

Thank you for your unwavering support. It's an honor to work with you toward a better future and a world without the devastating conditions of poverty. We could not achieve one without you.

Sincerely,

Vi See
Executive Director

"You gave me a way to lift myself out."

Jack can breathe safely in his home because of you.

All his life, Jack has lived and worked in Nebraska. When a lung condition meant he qualified for and began receiving disability benefits, Jack began to do some research.

"Where I was living wasn't helping my situation," Jack says of his mobile home. "There were a lot of problems with it, and it really was unsafe for me to breathe the air inside my own home. I knew I needed to do something for my health."

In 2018, he began researching his options, knowing that moving from the home he owned wasn't one.

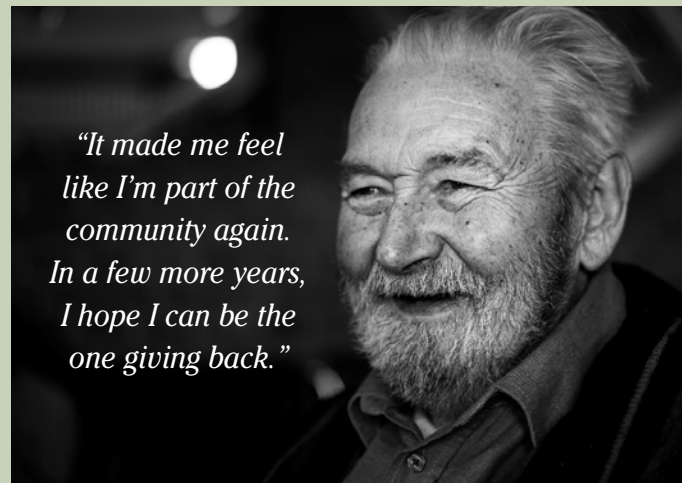
That's when he found Community Action's Weatherization program.

When homes are weatherized, they become cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. This can lower utility bills and create safer, more comfortable homes. For Jack, added safety was the biggest benefit.

"I just want to say, it's been wonderful," Jack said of working with us over past few years. "I have a new central air unit, which is great, but really, I can breathe again. This program gave me a way to lift myself out of my situation. It made me feel like I'm part of the community again. In a few

more years, I hope I can be the one giving back."

Thank you for supporting Community Action, and helping to give Jack a safe place to call home.



"It made me feel like I'm part of the community again. In a few more years, I hope I can be the one giving back."



A Q&A with **Scott Larson**, Community Action board member

Scott has served on Community Action's Board of Directors for two years. When not volunteering, he serves as the Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Ceresco as well as Director of Development for the Eastmont Foundation.

Q) What made you want to serve on Community Action's board?

A) I knew about Community Action's programs through my professional work, and I've always wanted to find more ways to support others. Board service fits my skills and my passion. Being involved with Community Action engages me with my community.

Q) What makes Community Action unique?

A) These programs are about meeting

people where they are and offering a hand up. I think about the saying, "A rising tide raises all ships," and I think that embodies Community Action well. The programs address whole issues through work with individuals. It's exciting to be a part of.

Q) Why do you give to Community Action, and what do you most want other donors to know?

A) I give because I want to address issues of poverty in my community. I serve on the board for the same reason. It makes a difference. And I'd want others to know that when they give, they're making a difference in the lives of other people. People's lives are made better because of your gift. And when individual people can do better, our whole community can do better.

"I've found mentors here."

Anah's journey with Community Action began in 2009. Thank you for supporting her as she works to achieve her dreams.

In 2009, Anah moved to Lincoln with plenty of life experience, but felt some uncertainty about what her next steps would be. When she learned about a mentorship program being offered through Community Action, she registered almost immediately.

"They helped me find work and connected me to GED classes. Alfred was my mentor at Community Action. Later, when I was accepted to college, he was the first person I wanted to tell. I am successful because of my own hard work, and because of the support I received from Community Action."

Next spring, Anah will graduate with her associate's degree. It's an

accomplishment she's worked hard for over the past decade. She's taken GED classes, computer courses, and found many other opportunities to enhance her academic and professional skills. Now that she's no longer a Community Action program participant, she interns with Community Action Early Head Start.

"I love Community Action," she says. "It's always been in my nature to help others, and Community Action did so much for me. Interning here means a lot because I get to give back."

We're so grateful to have been able to witness Anah's journey, and we can't wait to celebrate her graduation in just a few months. Thank you for giving her opportunities to realize her dreams.

Anah says, "I am successful because of my own hard work, and because of the support I received from Community Action."



Bring cheer this holiday season by donating a toy or gift to Community Action!

The holidays are a joyous time, but they can also be difficult for those struggling to make ends-meet. This year, families are facing more struggles than ever in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. You can bring cheer to families in your community by purchasing and donating a toy/gift for a child who might otherwise go without!

Holiday toys/gifts are distributed to families participating in Community Action's programs. To make donating easier this year, Community Action has created a wish list, available at www.communityactionatwork.org.

Those interested in donating can purchase an item from the list and ship directly to Community Action.

Toys/gifts donated will be distributed to participants in the month of December leading up to the holiday season.

Those wishing to donate another way may contact Heather Loughman at (402) 875-9339 or Jessie Hedrick at (402) 875-9338.

Thank you for your support!

Last year, our friends from the Tint Shop donated dozens of items to the children served by our programs. Thank you, Tint Shop!



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:

Heather Loughman, *Communications and Development Director*
 (402) 875-9339 | hloughman@communityactionatwork.org



210 O Street
 Lincoln, NE 68508
www.communityactionatwork.org