



Hope Inside



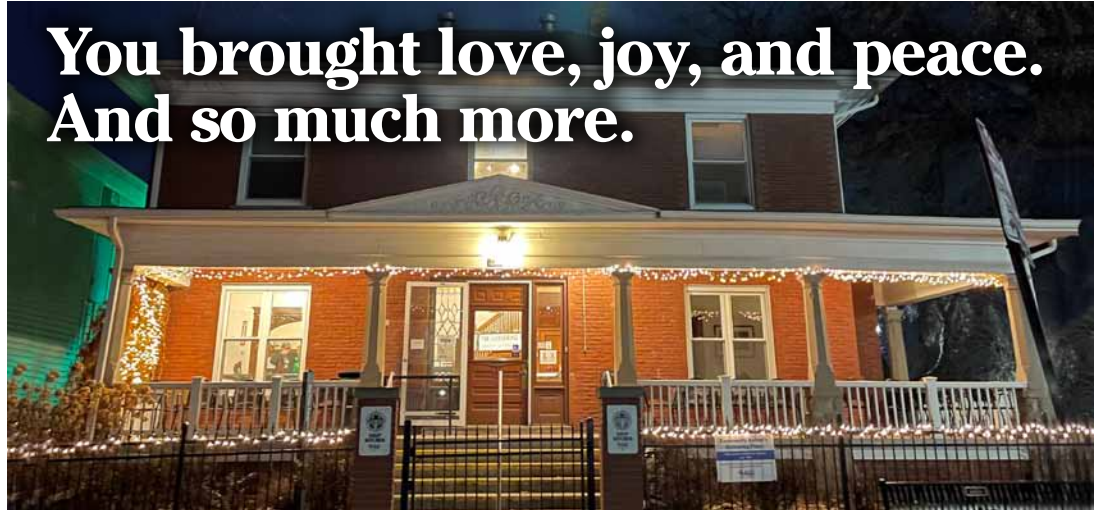
Board of Directors

President: Lisa Hale
 Vice President: Brodey Weber
 Treasurer: Grant Buckley
 Secretary: Lorene Bartos
 Members:
 Tiffany Back
 Janet Chung
 Carl Eskridge
 Ana Jelavic
 Amy Jensen
 Michelle Libal
 David Lux
 Christine Marvin
 Keeli Rabago
 Michelle Suarez
 Jaylen Vella

Management Team

Pam Benner,
 Human Resources Director
 Jill Bomberger, Early Head Start
 and Head Start Director
 Deanna Briley,
 Chief Financial Officer
 Jessie Hedrick,
 Communications and
 Development Director
 Heather Loughman,
 Chief Executive Officer
 Michelle Martinez,
 Director of Program Impact

You brought love, joy, and peace. And so much more.



Thank you for showing up for your neighbors who each night rely on the Gathering Place for warm dinner in a safe, welcoming space.

Over the past year, need has grown astronomically for free nightly meal service at our soup kitchen, the Gathering Place. We knew if we were going to keep up throughout 2024, we needed help from our entire community. We needed **you**.

In mid-October, we asked for your help to raise \$200,000 for our soup kitchen. Thanks to the generosity of lead sponsor Acklie Charitable Foundation and others, donations were matched \$1 for \$1 from mid-October through the end of 2023.

You showed up for the Gathering Place and our guests. **Your generosity was astounding.** In fact, it was record-breaking. **You helped raise over \$275,000 for Community Action's Gathering Place! Thank you.**

By giving to our 2023 Gathering Place Match Campaign, you helped ensure that we're able to step up and continue feeding our community. **And you helped ensure the Gathering Place will remain so much more than a soup kitchen.** For our guests, the Gathering Place is also a place to spend time in community with friends, somewhere warm to visit when the nights are cold, and

ultimately, *a place of hope.*
Last month, we served over 4,000 meals in just 29 days. This was a record for February, and we anticipate the need will continue to grow throughout the year. **Without your support during the 2023 winter holiday season, we would not be able to keep up today.**

"They let me in with open arms every time. I appreciate all that you have done for me."

One of our guests recently shared of their experience at the Gathering Place, *"They let me in with open arms every time. I appreciate all that you have done for me."* Gathering Place meals are served every night of the week from our brick home on the corner of E & Goodhue Streets in Lincoln. All are welcome—because of you.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1} You gave love, joy, and peace
- 2} Letter from the CEO
- 2} Stability in partnership
- 3} Building a home of support
- 3} It takes a village
- 4} Warm hands, warm hearts

Thank you to our 2023 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

Charging forward, fearlessly.

Thank you for propelling our mission forward.

Dear Friend –

Spring has always been my favorite season. For as long as I can remember, the sight of a lone dandelion or sound of a robin singing on a sunny morning have always filled me with joy. It is this time of year in which the energy and promise of new life abounds, and **thanks to the seeds you've sewn through your many contributions**, you can feel this energy at Community Action, too! There are so many updates to share since my last message.

One of the most exciting is that **the renovation of our K Street Head Start Center is nearly complete!** In December we completed Phase II of the project and 82 children moved into their new classrooms, which are big, brimming with natural light, and designed in a way

that meets their developmental needs. Our dedicated team members also now have the space they need to train, work toward advanced credentials, and simply take a minute or two away from the classroom to regroup in their new break and wellness rooms. Phase III of renovation (the final stage!) is underway right now and we anticipate completion by late summer. This project could not have happened without the support of friends like you, and we cannot wait to celebrate with you when it's finished!

In another reflection of gratitude: **you helped us raise more than ever** during our holiday campaign for the Gathering Place: **over \$275,000** including the match committed by our sponsors! You stepped up like never before, and we couldn't be more thankful. As I shared in my December message, need for evening meals has reached historic levels over the past year, and simply put:

we'd not be able to keep pace without you. Your contributions to our Warm Hands, Warm Hearts campaign also provided hundreds of socks, gloves, and hats to Gathering Place guests during the very cold winter days we experienced. **Your care brings such comfort to your neighbors.**

Last, but certainly not least, we have a refreshed mission statement! This new statement – ***We partner with our community in fearless pursuit of anti-poverty solutions so we all have the opportunity to live well*** – was formed in partnership with our staff, board, and participants. Living well means something different to everyone, but to us, at minimum, this means:

- Having **ample resources** to provide for ourselves and those for whom we care
- **Safety** in being who we are
- Ability to access **opportunities** to achieve **greater well-being**

As a dedicated supporter of our work, you are a critical driver of this mission. And together, there's no limit to what we can do. Thank you for all the ways you continue to show up for us, and for your neighbors, day after day and year after year.

Fearlessly,



Heather Loughman



Making a home of warmth and possibility

Thank you for supporting Community Action and programs like Weatherization, which helps neighbors facing the burden of unnecessarily high utility bills.

Thank you for believing that every one of your neighbors deserves a safe, stable, affordable place to call home. Your support of Community Action makes programs like Weatherization possible.

Our Weatherization program can lower participants' utility bills while creating a safer and more comfortable home in which to live. When a home is more energy efficient, the money saved on bills can help an individual or family become more financially stable.

Recently, a participant of our Weatherization program wrote the following note to our team:

"I would like to thank the Community Action Weatherization Program for the work they did on my home.

Last year at this time my gas bill was \$399. I just received my

current bill and it is only \$150 in spite of all the days below freezing temps.

Everyone I dealt with in the program was so friendly and professional. They kept me informed about everything. If I had any questions, I would always give a call and could count on their help. All the contractors who worked on my home were the best. They knew what they were doing and got the job done.

Thank you again to everyone."

By giving to Community Action, you make successes like this possible. Thank you.

Finding stability through community

You make possible the partnerships needed for neighbors like Greg to find safety and stability.

Greg is a kind, compassionate, and dedicated son. When his mother grew ill last year, he sacrificed a great deal to care for her. As his mother's primary caretaker, Greg was unable to maintain employment. Keeping her safe and comfortable was his primary focus.

When Greg's mother passed earlier this year, he lost everything.

Grieving the loss of his mother and unable to find other employment, Greg was eventually unable to maintain his family home. He became unhoused and began living outdoors. Knowing he needed extra support to get back on his feet, Greg reached out to Community Action.

You believe in your neighbors like Greg. You believe in compassion, hope, and opportunity.

And you believe in ensuring that every one of your neighbors can access the opportunities needed to live well. Because of this belief and your support of Community Action, when Greg came to us for support, we were able to assist.

Thanks to a long-standing partnership with a local property owner who understands the needs and barriers of those we serve, our Emergency Services staff were able to find safe, stable housing for Greg. Greg met with the property owner and signed his lease to move in immediately.

He's now settling into his new home. There, he'll be able to grieve and move forward in safety, stability, and peace.

This outcome for Greg wouldn't be possible without the partnership and community you make possible. Thank you.



You partner with your community, including property owners, neighbors like Greg, our agency team, and more, to create anti-poverty solutions.

It takes a village

You create opportunities for children like Riley and their families.

With Riley's complex medical history and diagnosed developmental delays, their parent, Avery, knew Riley needed exceptional care and support as they prepared for kindergarten. That's when Riley enrolled in Community Action Head Start. When Riley began the program, they were both nonverbal and non-mobile.

From the moment Riley was enrolled, our Head Start team worked to connect both Riley and Avery to important resources. Staff such as our Health coordinator, Education and Disabilities Coordinator, and Riley's teachers partnered with Avery to identify and enroll in services that would support Riley's developmental delay.

A dedicated parent, Avery has always been wholly invested in their child's



success. By partnering with Head Start staff and using the additional services to which their family was referred, Avery was able to support Riley as they worked on skills such as walking and communicating.

Now, several years later, Riley can walk with an assisted device. They say "Hi!" and "Bye!" often, especially in the hallways at our Head Start center!

Riley is also continuing to progress developmentally, socially, and medically, thanks to their hard work and the support of their parent, our Head Start team, and you, who make our early childhood education programming possible. **Thank you.**



Save the Date for

give
To Lincoln Day

Thursday,
May 30, 2024



Thank you to our countless friends like the Alpha Alpha Zeta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau nursing sorority for collecting warm clothing items for our Gathering Place guests!

Warm Hands, Warm Hearts: Made possible by you

Thank you for thinking of our Gathering Place guests during the long, cold winter nights.

This winter was difficult. With deep snow, high winds, and bitter cold—sometimes all in the same day—many of our neighbors were exposed to dangerous outdoor conditions for days at a time. Many of our guests at the Gathering Place walk to nightly meal service, and

some spend their nights outdoors.

Knowing this, we asked for your help to provide warm clothing items to our guests. **You responded immediately.**

Throughout January and February, **you donated hundreds of new warm socks, hats, gloves, scarves, and more for our guests.** We distributed these items at nightly meal service to guests of all ages.

The overwhelming response? **Your neighbors said, “Thank you!”**

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:

Jessie Hedrick, *Communications and Development Director*
 (402) 875-9338 | jhedrick@communityactionatwork.org



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