



Hope Inside



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“You saved me.”

Because of your support, Melinda lives in a safe home that makes her proud.

When Melinda moved from Texas to Nebraska, she left behind her career and her ranch house to be closer to her family. She purchased a small property in need of great repair, and planned to flip the home with her son's help. But after a terrible, unexpected fall on some ice, Melinda found herself with limited mobility and in constant pain. For many long winter months, she was living in a 450 square-foot house with a \$390 utility bill.



After her fall, Melinda was left without income, in a drafty home with holes in the walls that she was no longer able to fix. “The house was just pouring out energy,” she said. “I put my savings into this place. There was nothing I could do.”

Heat rose to the uninsulated loft and stayed there. At times, Melinda barely kept warm,



You gave Melinda a home she not only lives in, but loves.

and placed four space heaters throughout the house. And because of space constraints, two rested under the sink—a terrifying safety hazard.

Melinda's nearby family was busy. Her son worked two jobs and her daughter-in-law went to school, and they had three young children to look after. “It just wasn't reasonable for me to ask them for help,” she said. “It wasn't responsible either. That's when my daughter-in-law found Community Action.”

Your support of Community Action allowed us to provide Melinda with much needed weatherization services. We sent a team to her home for over a week, performing over a dozen repairs from the loft to the basement. Today, Melinda's

house is transformed: *It's become a home.*

“It was the biggest relief of stress in my entire life... I thought we were going to have to sell. I was so depressed, after the fall, at the loss of my independence. You saved me.”

Now, because of you, Melinda's family can visit her in a home she's proud of.

“When my son, daughter-in-law, and grandkids come to visit, I don't have to worry about if things are safe for them. Now I'm just figuring out what my life looks like from here.”

None of this work would be possible without your generosity. Because of you, Melinda has a home in which to build her future.

“When my son, daughter-in-law, and grandkids come to visit, I don't have to worry about if things are safe for them.”

When you feel good about yourself – when you’re confident – anything is possible.

Your support inspires this confidence in so many...and it has a bigger impact than you could ever know.

Dear Friend –

After a long, cold winter, it seems that sunshine and spring may finally be here. I find the first days of spring to be some of the best of the year because they contain so much potential. And it always reminds me of what we do together here at Community Action: empower others to reach their full potential... to be confident and ready to achieve success.

As an incredible friend of Community Action, you understand that reaching one’s potential is tied to reaching economic stability. When hard-working people are given the opportunities and resources to thrive, they do, because they have had potential all along. It’s thanks to you that Community Action is able to provide our program participants with the opportunities and resources they need to reach that potential.

There are, as always, many projects in progress here at Community Action. I’m thrilled to be able to update you on a few of them through this newsletter.

Our Healthy Food Access Kitchen, made possible through a legacy grant from Community Health Endowment of Lincoln, is nearly complete. In a little over a month, we will begin utilizing the space to prepare wholesome meals with fresh ingredients for some of our community’s most vulnerable children.

The Weatherization expansion I shared with you last newsletter is underway. We’re so grateful to be able to expand work to improve low-to moderate-income housing stock in our community. We have lots of homes to improve, so if you or someone you know is a contractor, we’d love to work with you!



As we take the turning of a new year as an opportunity to look forward –to dream bigger and set new goals – I’d like to take a moment to thank you for your continued belief in what we can do. Together, our potential to end poverty is limitless.

Gratefully,

Vi See
Executive Director



“You helped me learn that it’s okay to ask for help...”

You helped Torri find the guidance she needed to achieve her dreams

Torri moved to Lincoln as a college freshman, recently aged out of the foster care system. She began attending our Opportunity Passport™ classes as a way to learn how to better manage her finances while she supported herself and worked her way through school.

“Those classes were amazing,” she said. “The support at Community Action is different from anywhere else. You helped me become proactive with my finances. Because of Opportunity Passport™, I had the tools to graduate college debt-free.”

Because of your support, hardworking

young people like Torri are able to better manage their finances as they work toward economic stability. They’re also able to follow their dreams: Torri credits her time as a Community Action program participant with helping her make the decision to change majors from civil engineering to finance.

As for Torri’s plans after she graduates? They’re big!

“I’m going to use my degree to help people,” she said. “I have a job as a financial advisor lined up in August—being part of Community Action helped me realize the importance of giving back to your community. I place a lot of value on that.”

Thank you for believing in Torri, so she can move forward to help others believe in themselves.



“The support at Community Action is different from anywhere else.”

Kiddos participated in some arts and crafts between all the food, learning, and fun!



Around the world on a Wednesday

Early Head Start children and families shared an international exchange

In February, we invited families in our Early Head Start Home-based Program to our annual Multicultural Fair! Your generosity allowed us to provide families with a rich experience focused on celebrating all kinds of world cultures.

Families shared food from South America, Asia, and other countries, all right here in the American Midwest! Did you know there are at least three different kinds of empanadas, all from different parts of the world? Before dinner time,

neither did we!

We also set up learning booths, crafts like henna art and aluminum foil painting, and—the best part—we all shared. We learned so much from each other!

Thank you for helping us create one-of-a-kind cultural learning experiences for our kiddos and their families.

Over \$148,000 raised for The Gathering Place during our year-end campaign



The Food Bank and Ivanna Cone volunteered at The Gathering Place in February, and together served a sweet treat to our guests!

Your generosity will provide thousands of meals to those who need them this year!

If you've been with us for the past several years, you know about our annual year-end campaign to raise funds for The Gathering Place. Funds contributed by friends like you provide the critical support needed to prepare and serve thousands of hot, nutritious evening meals to those who need them throughout the

year. And demand continues to be significant. Since October of 2018, we have averaged serving 2,377 meals per month. We would not be able to keep pace with this need without you!

This campaign grows every year because of your loyal support. We were thankful this past year to have many foundations, businesses, and individuals step up as our match sponsors. Their generous financial commitments totaling \$60,775 were leveraged by \$87,940.91 from donors like you. That means – altogether – we raised \$148,715.91 for The Gathering Place! We cannot begin to describe how much this means to us as we work to provide wholesome and nutritious meals to those in our community who need them the most.

More than a place to get a meal, The Gathering Place provides comfort, community, and hope to its guests. It provides a safe space – a home – for people of all walks of life to share their challenges and triumphs. The true impact The Gathering Place has on Lincoln – and your support of it – is immeasurable.

Thank you to our 2018 Gathering Place Campaign match sponsors!

- Hugo & Thelma Aspegren Charitable Trust
- Rogers Foundation
- INSPRO Insurance
- Lincoln Rotary Club #14 Foundation
- Bukaty Companies
- Union Bank & Trust
- Walmart
- Rotarian Friends of The Gathering Place
- First State Bank Nebraska
- TEK Services

Interested in becoming a 2019 campaign match sponsor? Call Heather at (402) 875-9339!

There's nothing better than a home-cooked meal

In just a few weeks, construction on our kitchen will be complete!

Both you and the Community Health Endowment have believed in us throughout this process. We're so excited to get cooking, and make you proud.

When construction ends on April 1, our Healthy Food Access Kitchen will be fully operational. We'll then be able to provide Lincoln's most vulnerable children with fresh, healthy foods they may not otherwise be able to access.

The benefits of this kitchen will extend beyond Lincoln's

children. We'll share our space with Lone Tree Foods, so they can process locally grown produce for area markets. We believe healthy food should be accessible to all!

Thank you for pushing us to achieve great things in providing Hunger Relief and Healthy Food Access!





A worthy investment

You've graciously given your hard-earned money to help us teach others how to save theirs.

Thanks to your wise investment, Alfred, our Financial Well-Being Specialist, has been spending his Tuesday nights teaching financial education classes. These classes cover just about everything from how a penny saved equals a penny earned, to how to earn and maintain good credit. Participants learn the tools they need to continue on a path to economic stability.

"Because of the presentations and the group discussion, I have received new information and ideas I didn't even know about before."

- A Community Action Financial Well-Being participant

You gave warmth x 1,000 this winter

Over 4,000 community members contributed to fund warming kits for those in need

For a while there, it seemed like winter would never end. When your community members needed you, you stepped up to provide. You raised over \$7,700 to give hats, socks, and gloves to those who needed them most. Whether you donated handmade items or funds for purchases through QP Ace Hardware, we have one thing to say: THANK YOU!

If you were inspired by Give Warmth x 1,000, you may want to consider contributing to our store, which provides our program participants with a place to obtain basic needs items at no cost to them. Some of the store's year-round needs include:

A \$10.00 donation to the Community Action Store can provide **9 shampoo/conditioners or 24 bars of bath soap.**

A \$20.00 donation to the Community Action Store can provide **48 rolls of toilet paper or 14 deodorants.**

A \$50.00 donation to the Community Action Store can provide **420 Size 3 diapers or 19 (50 oz.) laundry detergents.**

Remember to Give to Community Action on

give To Lincoln Day

May 30, 2019. More details coming soon!

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)

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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