



Hope Inside



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Building a world of possibility



Your support of Community Action has helped people like Jessica make their dreams reality.

For Jessica and her family, your generosity has built "a pillar of support."

Jessica is an entrepreneur, a licensed nurse preparing to begin graduate school, and a mother of four. Calling her "busy" just might be the understatement of the century. We've been fortunate enough to know Jessica and her family for nearly four years now, as they've participated in Community Action programs like Head Start, Free to Save, and more.

"In 2018, my kids and I moved to Lincoln without an external support system," she shared. "It was really difficult and scary. When I learned about Head Start and was able to enroll—that's really where I started to build that network."

Access to free, high-quality childcare every weekday made it possible for Jessica to go to work, to attend financial

education classes through Free to Save, and eventually, to apply for, enroll in, and study at school to earn her nursing degree. She graduated with honors in December 2020, and due to the pandemic, finally had the chance to participate in a ceremony in April.

It was an accomplishment with great personal significance. Jessica was the first in her immediate family to graduate, and her decision to pursue a career in the medical field meant honoring her extended family's history in dismantling medical racism; several of her relatives were among the first Black medical practitioners in the Midwest. Jessica herself spent much of the past year and a half working with COVID-19 patients. One day soon, Jessica plans to earn her master's degree and become a midwife.

"Participating in Community Action programs offered support, but it's also been an investment," Jessica shared.

"With Free to Save, I was able to literally invest in myself. First in my education, and then in my business."

But in the meantime she's focusing on growing her small business, which provides hair products designed specifically for women with 4C hair. Her products have sold around the world, and are currently listed on Amazon with many positive reviews.

"It's all just been incredible," said Jessica. "The business started with a mixing bowl in my kitchen. And if I hadn't had access to resources like Free to Save and Head Start, the rest wouldn't have been possible. So, I just want people to know that. **This support is life-changing.** You created an opportunity for me to create something of my own—to build so much more for myself and my family."

Thank you for supporting Community Action and your neighbors like Jessica.

Jessica used her Free to Save savings match to invest in herself: First by paying for school, and then to launch her own small business.



An introduction from Community Action's new CEO



Dear Friend,

It is with tremendous gratitude and honor that I write you this note, my first to you as CEO of Community Action. If you don't already know my name, I want you to know that in my 10 years of working at this agency, I have gotten to know yours. Receiving generous gifts from compassionate, community-

minded people like you has been the best part of my job. Your giving is a powerful demonstration that you believe in Community Action's ability to make the community we know and love a better place for everyone to live. And it means that **you believe in your ability to impact positive change.** When those two beliefs work together in harmony, there is no limit to what we can achieve... and that includes eliminating poverty – no small task, but one that we are ultimately here to do.

I came to Community Action fresh out of college after moving from a small town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (*side note: if I were talking to you in-person, I would absolutely create a Michigan map with my hands and show you where I'm from!*). At that point, I truly didn't know what I wanted to do for the rest

of my life, but was aware of where I might add value in the world based on my skills. So I found myself in a role writing grant proposals here at the agency. I had never done it before, but when my efforts were eventually successful, I got this feeling I had never felt before. Something I did made a difference. *Something I did impacted change.* From then on, I knew: I had found my place.

Community Action is an organization very important to me. It's where I've had tremendous opportunity to learn and grow both as a professional and as a person. It's where I've been able to recognize my privilege, and define for myself what I am going to do with it. And it's where I've gotten to know caring and compassionate people like you – and like our staff, volunteers, and participants – who make me

a better person, community member, and leader. Who inspire me each day.

Community Action is well positioned for continued growth and success. That is because of the dedication and support of people like you, and because of the tremendous leadership by our Board of Directors, Head Start Policy Council, and my predecessor, Vi See.

I invite you to support our continued growth not only through giving, but through sharing ideas relating to how best to fight poverty in our service area. I can be reached at (402) 875-9319 or hloughman@communityactionatwork.org. I look forward to our partnership.

With gratitude,

Heather Loughman
Chief Executive Officer

There's still time to double your impact with a gift to Community Action's Gathering Place.

Gifts to Community Action's Gathering Place continue to be matched \$1 for \$1 through December 31st! Our goal this year is to raise \$200,000 to support provision of hot, nutritious meals to all who may need them. **Will you be the one to help us reach our goal?**

This match is made possible thanks to the generous support of lead sponsor Acklie Charitable Foundation, as well as additional sponsors

Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation; Miriam Moeller Charitable Trust; Union Bank & Trust; Lincoln Rotary #14 Foundation; Bukaty Companies; Horizon Bank; DuTeau Chevrolet-Subaru; and Sue Quambush, in memory of Len Sloup.

Last year, your support helped us serve over 34,900 meals to our neighbors in Lincoln who were experiencing hunger. **We can't do this without you. Thank you.**

Thank you to those who have already given in support of this campaign! Your generosity is ensuring the Gathering Place's work can continue.

Now serving: Friendship, hope, and opportunity

Your support of Community Action's Gathering Place ensures that every one of your neighbors can enjoy a hot meal with good company every night of the week.

Every night, dozens of your neighbors visit the old brick house on the corner of E and Goodhue. Every one of them is met with a smile, a friendly greeting, and the comfort of a delicious evening meal.

Lonnie, a regular guest of the Gathering Place, recently shared, "People are kind and friendly, and the food is good... I'm so glad to have somewhere like this."

You know that the road to recovery from this pandemic has been long and winding—and we've not yet reached the finish line. For those we serve, the pandemic's economic effects will linger. But thanks to the Gathering Place—**thanks to you**—our community members will always have somewhere to turn for a good meal and so much more.

Thank you for supporting Community Action's Gathering Place this season.



Every day, your neighbors like Lonnie rely on the Gathering Place for access to hot, nutritious meals and so much more. Your support makes this service possible.

Thank you for spreading so much joy!

Your generosity this holiday season is bringing happiness and hope to so many.

From dollars to diapers, to toys, to books, to games, and so much more: You've embodied the spirit of giving this winter holiday season!

Thank you for choosing to support Community Action and those we serve with your friend, family, and workplace donation drives.

Your kindness goes further than you could ever know!



(Above) The Doane University Master of Arts in Counseling program collected over 200 pairs of socks and underwear for participants in our Supportive Housing Program!



(Above) Thank you to Custom Blinds & Design! They donate one diaper for every blind sold, and selected us as a recent donation recipient!



(Left and right) Our friends at Molex and the University of Nebraska Federal Credit Union, as well as others, collected hundreds of toys for the children and families we serve.



A family of compassion, care, and support

Below is an excerpt from a letter written by a parent of Community Action Head Start, and recently shared with our staff:

To say simply amazing is an understatement. "Family" is more fitting for the way we feel about the care, compassion, and dedication we have received since attending Community Action's Head Start program. My family and I had to relocate from 27 hours away. The change has been a journey.

[On my first day visiting the center] there was the most soft and welcoming smile. From the day she greeted and left me with that feeling is the same way she greets me every single morning and every afternoon pick up. That feeling of "Hey, I see you," and "Yes, you matter," means a lot.

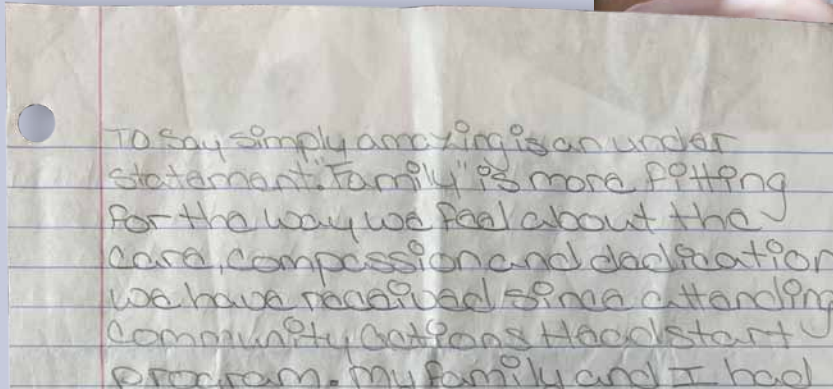
After the third week I started noticing many improvements with my child. I thought the transition was going to be devastating and to my delight it was exactly the opposite. **The care and**

compassion that staff provide gives my child the confidence she needs.

She has friends again she can play with, and be free to imagine, learn, and grow. To know that she feels welcomed, she feels like she is a part of something again, but most of all, she feels safe. She walks in, head held high, smiling from ear to ear.

Whatever kind of day we are having, [the staff here] really make us feel like we are important and cared for, but most of all like family. Thank you.

Your support of Community Action Head Start creates safe, welcoming spaces for children and their families to learn and grow. Thank you. Without you, this work would not be possible.



Every day, your support of Community Action Head Start gives children and families the tools they need to achieve success in school, and in life.

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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