



Hope Inside

Community Action news and updates

We partner with our community in fearless pursuit of anti-poverty solutions so we all have the opportunity to live well.



One tomorrow at a time

Not long ago, Tamara wondered what her tomorrows held.

As a working parent, she balanced the demands of raising young children that included caring for her daughter's complex medical condition. Between medical appointments, work, the high cost of childcare, and everyday expenses, life was overwhelming. Then she found Community Action Head Start.

Thanks to you, the balance began to shift. With access to free quality early childhood education, for the first time, Tamara's income could stretch. You gave her breathing room. And the

chance to ask the question: For so long, I've been getting by. How can I get ahead?

The answer arrived in Community Action's Free to Save program.

Here, you gave Tamara the chance to build a financial future for her children.

"And these classes," she said, "they were able to teach me in a way that met the situation that I was in."

So, step by step, Tamara learned the fundamentals of budgeting, saving, and committing to her financial goals.

"I found someone in my community who was with me through this journey."

Along the way, Tamara experienced profound loss. After multiple surgeries and a courageous fight, her daughter passed away.

When speaking of her loss, Tamara mentioned her determination to honor her daughter.

"She fought so hard to live,"

she shared. "I had to do the same." And she did just that. Putting one foot in front of the other, leaning on her support system, Tamara continued moving forward.

"But, honestly, it's been a very hard journey," she said.

Community Action, she shared, was one of those supports on which she could rely. You built her solid ground with support and space to dream.

While her children had a safe place to learn and grow within Head Start, Tamara put her Free to Save savings match toward her post-secondary education. This spring, she graduated with her Master of Public Administration.

"You have opened up a lot of doors for me," she said.

As for Tamara's new dream? To serve her community using all she has learned.

Thank you for walking beside Tamara and believing in her future. You're turning grief into possibility, one tomorrow at a time.

Did you know?

11% of our participants use multiple Community Action services to reach their goals.



Letter from the CEO

Inspiring Strengths

Dear Friend,

Last year, our staff VOICE Committee, using input from our team, defined our guiding principles. These principles steer how we show up every day to achieve our mission. One principle is especially clear:

Making a Difference: We use our strengths to inspire change.

As seen in these pages, **you make this possible.** You build every one of these stories. You create lasting relationships at the Gathering Place.

You walk alongside your neighbors in some of their hardest moments, providing **encouragement, support, and a listening ear.**

You bring joy to young learners as they engage with new colors and cuisine.

Most importantly, **you understand our mission is more than words. It is action driven by strength.**

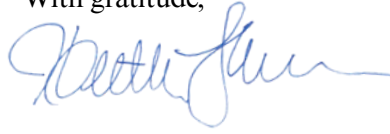
We are so thankful for how you share your strengths with us, including your strength of generosity. Your overwhelming support this Give to Lincoln Day humbles and inspires us.

Your investment and trust are what's needed most to build a better

tomorrow in which we all can thrive. **It's an honor to work beside you.**

Thank you for supporting our community and neighbors every day.

With gratitude,



Heather Loughman
Chief Executive Officer



Agency Leadership

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Doris (left) sponsors the Head Start classroom led by Jacqueline (right).

Partnerships like theirs make our work possible!



Hope within numbers

Your support in action

Thank you for showing up in a **BIG** way on Give to Lincoln Day, raising **over \$180,000** for our mission. Here are just some ways you're creating stability, meeting basic needs and going beyond.

\$10 brings books to a classroom



\$40 keeps a baby in clean diapers for a week

\$150 feeds one person for a month at the Gathering Place



\$200 keeps a family's lights on during a crisis



Making a place for Paul

Paul first visited the Gathering Place in 1999 because he was hungry. He returned because he found a place to belong. You gave that to him.

He once joked he'd record a PSA: *"You should come to the Gathering Place, all days of the week. Because it's where you meet friends you don't know, see friends you might know. You're happy when you leave."*

Paul has given back by helping with small tasks and sharing his story to inspire others. He believes in this place because he has experienced its impact firsthand.

Now, Paul is moving away from our neighborhood. We'll miss him a lot.

Before his last walk home, his parting words were simple: *"I hope the Gathering Place will always be around."*

Because of you, we know it will always be ready to welcome new friends like Paul. Thank you.



"I love what they offer. They're nice people. It's just all good."



Every meal matters

We've moved our meal prep to in-house!

Since April, within our own commercial kitchen, Chef Amanda and her small-yet-mighty kitchen team have fearlessly prepared **more than 1,200 breakfasts, lunches, and snacks each day** for our Head Start children and teachers.

They use their culinary strengths to make healthy, fresh, nutritious meals that give children the energy they need to learn and play.

Thank you for making this possible.

Potstickers, peppers, and peas, oh my! At Head Start, every day is an opportunity to try something new.



Staff Spotlight:

Carmen Hamilton
Early Head Start Lead Teacher



"I feel I was made to teach."

Carmen brings confidence to her classroom. It comes from over eleven years of experience and dedication to guiding curious toddlers.

"It's a rewarding career," she said.

Using early-learning teaching standards to develop their days of play, her class is currently exploring planes, car, and trucks.

Amidst the expected "vroom vrooms" you'll find students counting tires, naming colors, or sorting what belongs in the air or ground.

"We're down on their level. We're talking to them, we're having conversations. They're learning so much from that."

Developing connections with the parents is as important. She treasures a parent's note giving thanks for their ability to work while knowing their child is safe and cared for.

You make possible each day of learning, growth, and confidence-building. Thank you.

"It's rewarding to see the difference you make in a child's life, and with their families."



Shared commitment, shared impact

Every donor comes to this work with a story. Here is one reflection on why one of our neighbors' chooses to partner with Community Action. In the words of proud supporters Denny and Arlene Van Horn:

“We have to invest in these children upfront to ensure they are ready to go to kindergarten, reading at the third grade reading level by the time they are third graders and ready to graduate from high school. Thanks to everyone for all you do and the way you do it!”

Thank you for your passionate support. Together, we move our community forward.

Save the Date!

August 17th

Gathering Place Event!

(more info to come!)



Grandparents: Love in action



Grandma Willie has been a steady presence in her Head Start classroom since 2023.

“I like to work with the babies,” she said. And they are so lucky.

As a Community Action Foster Grandparent, Grandma Willie brings endless love, gentle care, and a reassuring presence.

“She is the one who catches and anticipates the needs of the children before they happen,” shares Jaelynn, classroom lead teacher.

Volunteering is love in action.

Know someone 55+ who would love to make a difference like Grandma Willie? Call Sam at 402-875-9320

YES, I am fearless. I want to partner in this work!

☐ Please accept my gift of \$ _____

☐ I'd like to learn more about monthly giving.

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 _____

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