



Hope Inside



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A life full of learning

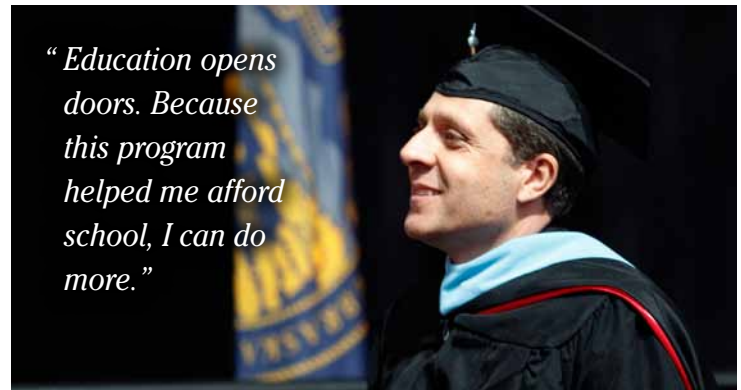
Hadi has ambition, passion, and skills. Your support gives him opportunities to use them.

Nearly ten years ago, Hadi and his family moved from Iraq to Jordan and finally, to the United States. A translator for the United States military, Hadi immigrated to Lincoln, Nebraska with his family and \$200. He also had his education, and a dream to continue pursuing it.

With a bachelor's degree in teaching English as a second language from an Iraqi university, Hadi knew his professional skills and passions, but was unsure of how to apply them in his new home. And everything about immigration came with its own learning curves.

"There were financial problems," he says. "I had a bank card, but I didn't know how to use it properly. It's difficult, when you're moving to a new country and need to learn new systems, along with other stress. I remember feeling overwhelmed, but determined."

Shortly after his move, Hadi began attending classes at Southeast Community College and then University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He earned his teaching certificate, valid in America. All the while, he worked



"Education opens doors. Because this program helped me afford school, I can do more."

Hadi used his savings match to work toward his goal of continuing education. He used some funds to earn his master's degree, and now is back working toward his PhD.

at a local nonprofit and searched for ways to finance his education. He joined AmeriCorps, and used his passion for service to support others while he worked toward his master's degree. Then, in 2015, Hadi found Community Action.

"The matched savings program was so helpful," he says. "I used funds to support my formal education, but I also loved taking the financial classes. Being new to this country, they helped me a lot. I remember being curious and asking a lot of questions."

Hadi earned his master's degree, and used part of his savings match to pay for tuition—an opportunity for which he's grateful.

"Without this program, it would have been difficult to find money just for education," he says. "I have a family. When you have little money and especially when you have young kids, there are other immediate needs that must

be met. But education opens doors. Because this program helped me afford school, I can do more."

Currently, Hadi is back at UNL. He's using the last of his savings match to pursue a PhD, which he's earning while working on campus as an educator. With a PhD, he's hoping to help others open their own doors to education.

"I know there are so many people out there like me," says Hadi. "People who have ambition and want to spend time on school, but can't. Community Action gave me tremendous opportunity. Because of this program, I have a degree I can use to improve my life and others', too. The lack of money and the financial skills were small barriers. The program eliminated them, and now my family can move forward."

Thank you for celebrating with Hadi. We're wishing him every success, and we know he'll reach them all.

Thank you for your unwavering support

Thanks to you, Community Action can continue meeting increased needs.



Dear Friend,

It likely will not surprise you to hear that in the past few months, Community Action has seen an increase in need for services unlike any before. Likely, you also know that many of those currently seeking our support are doing so for the first time in their lives. Many of your neighbors are facing true and frightening uncertainty. Your continued support of Community Action has helped ensure they have somewhere to turn. It has brought hope like you cannot imagine.

At the Gathering Place, we are serving more meals to more people than ever before—we

estimate serving double the people compared to before the pandemic. Within our Emergency Services program, phones are ringing constantly with requests from individuals and families needing assistance with rent, utility, and deposit payments. Participants in Opportunity Passport™ are using their savings match to meet immediate basic needs, like food, housing, and more. The reality is, these stories of economic uncertainty are likely to continue for some time. We must be prepared to continue meeting them. We must commit to continuing to provide not only stability,

but also opportunity.

Next month, Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties will celebrate its 55th anniversary. If this milestone means one thing to you, I hope it's this: We will continue to be here, serving our community. No matter what. *Will you continue this work with us?*

Thank you for ensuring Community Action continues to remain steadfast in our ability to not only serve and support, but empower. We are so much better when we work together.

Thank you,



Vi See

“We have to be creative, but we’re still learning. We’re growing. We’re having fun.”

This summer at Community Action Head Start, parents, teachers, and children took creativity to new levels.

Squishy or soft? Warm or cool? Wet or dry? On a cool July morning, these questions and many more lined posters along the grassy play area at our K Street Head Start Center. Beneath each sign, boxes and buckets of fun sensory materials waited. But there was a catch: Children had to try using only their feet to play and explore.

In June, our K Street Head Start Center re-opened for limited-capacity services. In re-opening, we've prioritized the safety of children, families, and staff in many ways. Center procedures were coordinated alongside local health leaders and experts. Enrollment was prioritized

based on children to be entering kindergarten in the fall, and based on families' greatest needs.

Teachers let their lesson planning creativity shine. One way of doing this was through a sensory walk! Nadya, an Early Head Start Lead Teacher at our K Street center, says working with teachers to find a way to allow children safe outdoor learning and play was one of the highlights of her summer.

“I loved seeing their smiling faces,” she says. “And that day we did a sensory adventure, every one of them lit up. So I'm glad we took time and effort to make a safe place where everyone could just relax, learn, explore, and be kids.”

Creating this space—creating any Head Start space, whether in-person or virtual—is only possible because of you. Thank you for ensuring the children served by Community Action Head Start will always have the opportunity to explore.



Plans for Community Action Head Start this fall

Implementing measures guided by our local health experts and Office of Head Start, Community Action Head Start began its 2020-21 program year on August 17th by opening 16 of 24 classrooms. Families not receiving center-based services will continue receiving virtual services. You can always find the most up-to-date information on our website: www.communityactionatwork.org.

A Q&A with **Halley Kruse**, Vice President of **Acklie Charitable Foundation**

For two years in a row, Acklie Charitable Foundation has generously served as lead sponsor of the Gathering Place match campaign. We recently had the opportunity to chat with Halley and learn more about this fantastic organization.

Q) Can you share a bit about yourself and the Acklie Charitable Foundation?

A) Both of my grandparents were the children of Nebraska farmers, and for them, continuing education wasn't a foregone conclusion. Thanks to some luck and various circumstances—and a lot of support from others—my grandfather was able to attend college. Eventually, he was also able to attend law school and purchase a business. He always saw these opportunities as ways to give back to the community where he grew up, and that helped him achieve his dreams. In a lot of ways, the Foundation is his legacy. I feel lucky to get to work with my family every day toward the goal of making the world a better place, especially in our community here in Lincoln, and all of Nebraska.

Q) What are the Foundation's main goals?

A) Acklie Charitable Foundation's two main goals are to support education, and to promote health and human services. We realize that without access to basic supports like nutritious meals, safe housing, and healthcare, people can't put forth the work needed to achieve stability, let alone their education or dreams.

Q) How did you first hear about Community Action's Gathering Place?

A) Oh, this is tough! I feel like I've always known about the Gathering Place. I remember serving a meal there once with my youth group, growing up. In my mind, Community Action has always been a staple of Lincoln.

Q) What do you find most rewarding about supporting Community Action's Gathering Place as lead sponsor of the annual campaign?

A) I think it's most rewarding to just be

able to give that meal to someone. It's so simple, but so essential. Right now, it can be so difficult to make long-term plans. We all have to do our best to just get through each day, and the Gathering Place is a huge part of helping people do that. They've risen to the occasion since March, and people know the Gathering Place will be there for them every day. It's a great reminder that one day at a time, we'll get through this.

Year-end Donations to the Gathering Place to be matched \$1 for \$1.

From October 14 – December 31, all donations to Community Action's Gathering Place will be matched, \$1 for \$1. Mark your calendars! Thank you our lead sponsor, Acklie Charitable Foundation, as well as sponsors Miriam Moeller Charitable Trust, Union Bank and Trust, Horizon Bank, and Bukaty Companies.

Since March, **the Gathering Place** has served over **19,100 meals** to those experiencing hunger in Lincoln.

That's over 3,440 more meals than the same time last year. Thank you for helping to meet such incredible need.



For Sheldon, meals at the Gathering Place are a reminder of home. "I love that I can come here, and it's like my mom is cooking for me again," he says.



Volunteers like Jodi make meal service possible. She says, "When I think of the Gathering Place, the word 'family' comes to mind." Thank you for being part of the Gathering Place family.



Paul has been a guest of the Gathering Place for many years! His favorite meal is meatloaf, "or whatever James is making." We hear you, Paul!





“It levels the playing field.”

Kloreace and her husband were able to purchase a house thanks to Opportunity Passport™. Thank you for supporting them in reaching this incredible milestone!

Purchasing a home can be difficult and stressful under the best of circumstances. But imagine doing so during a

pandemic. Still, Kloreace did, and with the same steadfast work ethic she uses in every area of her life.

Kloreace was 25 years old when she enrolled in Community Action’s Opportunity Passport™ program. About six months later—June, 2020—she bought a house, where she now lives with her husband.

“It was just an incredible opportunity,” she says. “I’ve developed a financial backing I

wouldn’t otherwise have. It’s an incredible program for anyone in the foster care system.”

Kloreace works as a school psychologist. She’s kind, dedicated, and smart. And she’s passionate about the benefits of participating in a program like Opportunity Passport™.

“It really levels the playing field,” she says. “And if someone who qualified asked me whether they should join, all I would say is, ‘What do you have to lose?’”

Thank you for supporting Kloreace so she can continue supporting others.

Looking for a very 2020 way to volunteer?

We’ve got an opportunity for you!

The past year has changed the way we do many things, and volunteering is certainly among them.

If you’re looking for a new way to volunteer, Community Action is looking for a few kind people to help out

within our Foster Grandparent Program. These kind people, who are referring to as “Grand Friends” will assist the program in the following ways:

- Deliver supplies between Foster Grandparents’ homes and our Head Start centers/administrative office;
- Check in with Foster

Grandparents periodically to assess needs/chat;

- Provide support to Foster Grandparents, as needed, relating to use of technology.

Foster Grandparents are seniors over the age of 55 who will soon begin volunteering remotely within our Head Start centers. As a Grand Friend, you will ensure

our Foster Grandparents have all that they need to stay engaged in Community Action Head Start. And we’re pretty sure you’ll make a friend for life, too!

If you’re interested in learning more about this opportunity, contact Georgann at (402) 875-9320 or groth@communityactionatwork.org.

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