



# Hope Inside



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## A taste of home

*A glimpse into how your investment provides a sense of security.*

*EHS Educator Eman shows how to prepare chard leaf for dolma.*



“Whatever we offer to these families makes them feel they’re not alone, that there’s always support and help for them to achieve their goals.”

Raga EHS Educator

Each morning at Community Action, you can hear them. Their early morning musical tones drift over the walls. Raga, Sara, and Eman, three experienced home-based Early Head Start (EHS) bi-lingual family educators, are at work, sharing stories in their native Arabic.

They are considering the needs of their multi-family caseloads. During their weekly 90-minute home-visits they may engage a new-American mother in parenting skills, reinforce a child’s ability to crawl, or teach the power of setting goals, such as learning the English alphabet or driving a car. They also remind these families that they are not alone in their new community.

**Today, they will also show up with a piece of home.** They will carry with them chard leaves freshly harvested from the Community Action Early Head Start Garden. The EHS families planted the seeds last spring. The garden planting playgroup has become a springtime

“Dolma is an array of vegetables stuffed with seasoned rice, vegetables and spices, then cooked in a tangy tomato broth. There are many versions of dolma within Iraq, and I love them all. But I’m going to share the one near and dear to my heart; my mom’s dolma.” – Sara, EHS Educator

**Here’s the general process:**

**Prepare the stuffing.** This involves finely chopping the vegetables and mixing all the ingredients together

- (short/medium grain rice, ground beef/lamb, onions, bell peppers (orange, yellow or red), and garlic... may also include a mix of spices - allspice, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, paprika and/or various herbs - finely chopped dill, parsley, cilantro.)

**Prepare the vegetables to be stuffed** by coring them/separating them

**Stuff** the chard leaves and vegetables

**Stack** them in the pot - Adjust for your pot size!

**Pour** the cooking liquid over the stuffed leaves and vegetables

- 5 cups water, 4 TB Tomato paste, ¼ cup pomegranate molasses (for that tartness that’s needed!) Salt and black pepper. (Some people love it spicy so the amount of black pepper here is up to you!) 1 teaspoon citric acid

**Cook** the dolma – for up to 2 hours!

**Enjoy!**

tradition. “They ask for okra, eggplant, tomato, peppers,” said Raga. “But every year they want Swiss chard because their favorite meal they make is dolma.”

Dolma is a traditional Middle Eastern meal of wrapped vegetables, meat and rice. Depending on the cook’s cultural background it may have different spices, different ingredients, or a different color. Yet it’s always about family and time together.

Family is an important aspect of Head Start.

“It’s our job also not to just focus on the child,” said Raga. “We have to engage and educate the family. Because if you have healthy family, you’re going to have healthy

kids.” And to do this, you must build relationships, which takes time. “If you don’t have relationships, it’s not going to work,” stated Eman.

Leaving one’s home to start a new life takes a great deal of bravery. Building a family within a new culture can test one’s courage. Making dolma, using ingredients one has planted themselves, helps.

**Your investment** in the work of Community Action allows our home-based Head Start teachers like Raga, Sara, and Eman to educate the child, as well as bring along resources and support needed for each family member to reach their goals within this new culture. **Though behind the scenes, your presence is felt.**

**Thank you.**

# Thank you for your fearless response

*Need for our services continues to grow. We couldn't meet it without you.*

Dear Friend –

As summer winds down and the leaves start to change, I find myself reflecting on all you've made possible these past several months.

Across all our programs, need has never been greater. Call numbers for Emergency Services continue to rise and at the Gathering Place, we set another record by serving 275 guests in one evening. And although more of our neighbors are finding themselves in need of support than ever before, **you continue to show up.**

These past several months, you fed more people than ever before at the Gathering

Place. You built a Home for Head Start that will support generations of young learners. You gave families shelter, stability, and the chance to save money, purchase assets, and pursue their dreams. As a friend of Community Action, every day you give your neighbors the opportunity to live well. Thank you.

As we look ahead to the fall, there's much to celebrate. For example, just last month Community Action officially paid off the bond on our 210 O Street office building! This milestone was special in many ways, one of which being its impact on programs. Owning our administrative building outright will result in thousands of dollars saved by programs every single month—dollars that can be used to address our community's growing needs.

This summer we also completed renovations at our early childhood center located on 18th & K Streets. In just a few weeks on October 2nd, we'll host a ribbon-cutting to celebrate our Home for Head Start campaign and dedicate the building the Bansal Family Home for Head Start. On October 6th, you're invited to join us for a free block party celebration complete with food, games, and a dance party! More details about both events can be found later in this newsletter.

As you continue to read this newsletter and stories of participants' success, I invite you to take a moment to



*This summer, Community Action paid off our building at 210 O Street! This will save programs thousands of dollars per month to invest in our community.*

reflect. Recognize your impact. You are fearless and **you have changed lives**—all by being a friend of Community Action.

Thank you for creating opportunity and hope for your neighbors. It's an absolute honor to work alongside you.

Fearlessly,

Heather Loughman



*Head Start Renovations are complete!*

## Learning in our new HOME!

Thanks to you, we are at HOME to learn! After a busy couple of years - renovations at the **Bansal Family Home for Head Start are complete!**

**What joyful new learning opportunities are before us:**

- We have bigger, brighter classrooms
- Our classrooms now have the necessary bathrooms attached

- We have two indoor play areas for large motor skill development
- We have two outdoor play areas to enjoy beautiful weather
- And we have improved training spaces for our staff to ensure every day is well pulled together

**From Lincoln's littlest learners – THANK YOU!!**

Join Community Action at the **BANSAL FAMILY HOME FOR HEAD START**

**ROCK BLOCK PARTY**

Sunday 1821 K ST.  
**OCTOBER 6 | 1:00-4:00 PM**

Family fun event! Free food\*, photo booth, games, dance party, and face paint!

\*while supplies last

PRESENTED BY **First Plymouth**

# Record meals served

*The Gathering Place serves up a record number of meals. You make this possible.*

A wave hit the Gathering Place on Wednesday, August 21st, 2024.

**Thanks to your passion for others,** it did not overwhelm us.

The meal was a beef sausage, veggie and rice dish with salad and oranges. Volunteers from Raymond Community Church were there and ready to serve. On an average August 2024 evening, 171 meals would be served, which is approximately 25 percent more than served one year ago. **On this Wednesday evening, they served 275 meals.**

**In our 45-year history, 275 meals served is a Gathering Place record. Less than a week later 205 meals were served.**

A long-time guest noted the change, There's been a lot more people lately, it's been packed. The end of the month can be a tough time to make ends meet. This is especially true if one is living on a limited, fixed income. Yet a meal isn't the only reason our neighbors show up.

As another guest chimed in, **"It's a safe place for an hour.** I can come cool off. And that's important for somebody like me."

The Gathering Place has rallied to stay accessible to people and meet our neighbor's needs. **Thank you for making this possible.**

*Gathering Place staff teamed up with volunteers from Raymond Community Church to serve a record-breaking 275 people on August 21st. You made this possible.*



# Walking beside our youth

*How your support is helping Georgia build a positive path forward*

By 21, Georgia had a lifetime of trauma wrapped within herself. After aging out of the foster-care system she soon found herself deeply immersed in a sea of barriers, including homelessness. She was also five months pregnant. She began searching for a new path forward.

**Georgia found a bit of you** when she found Community Action's Youth Homeless Demonstration

Program (YHDP). The program is built to provide coaching and life navigation support to youth 18 - 24 years old who are experiencing homelessness. Each participant is asked what they need and what are their goals. **By supporting Community Action, you walk beside your neighbors to support and connect them to beneficial referrals. You help them know they are not alone.**

"A lot of what we do is simple education," said YHDP Coach Emily Hanson. "There's a lot of people in

the world who haven't had the opportunity to learn to do things like fill out applications or who don't have that support, so that's where we're so beneficial."

It's working on the now for a stronger later.

Georgia's stories flowed to her YHDP Coach, revealing a tangled web of needs. And Georgia was committed to change. So she and her YDHP coach got busy. Within 48 hours, Georgia had enrolled in the WIC program, obtained a mental health therapist, and applied for ADC. Soon after, she found a home built to help young women like herself to heal.



**Your support of Community Action is an integral piece** in helping Georgia re-write her story. She is on her desired path forward where she will learn to build a safe, stable, and healthy environment for her and her child. **Georgia will learn how to thrive.**  
**Thank you.**

# We need you to sponsor a Community Action Head Start classroom!

*One gift can provide classroom supplies for an entire year of learning and fun!*

You can give opportunity and inspire hope. As a Community Action Head Start classroom sponsor, you'll make so much possible. Classroom sponsors provide the supplies and resources teachers need to stock their classrooms with essentials like diapers, wipes, and formula, as well as the fun stuff, like books, CDs, toys, and art supplies.

**With a gift of just \$1,500 you can sponsor a Head Start preschool or infant/toddler classroom for the 2024-2025 school year.** Gifts can be made in multiple installments!

As a classroom sponsor, you'll receive exclusive communications, volunteer/engagement opportunities, and more. A plaque will also be placed outside your classroom



recognizing your support!

Make a difference today and help create the quality learning environment your youngest neighbors need to succeed. We can't do this without you!

**If you're interested in classroom sponsorship or want to learn more, contact Jessie Hedrick at [jhedrick@communityactionatwork.org](mailto:jhedrick@communityactionatwork.org) or (402) 875-9338!**

## This year, your gift to Community Action's Gathering Place will double

*Mark your calendars! From October 14 – December 31, all gifts to Community Action's Gathering Place will be matched, \$1 for \$1.*

This match is made possible thanks to the generous support of Lead Sponsor Acklie Charitable Foundation as well as other generous sponsors. Keep an eye out for more information about this opportunity to double your impact. **We can't do this without you.** Thank you.

*Mona is a regular guest at the Gathering Place. "I'm kind of like the eyes here. I've sat in the same spot right here. And, people make me happy here."*

*Your support of the Gathering Place makes this possible. And what would Mona say to that? "I would say thank you very much."*



**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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