

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.

Journey to home

You support building bridges, strengthening dreams

Couch surfing and moving from one friend's home to another had become Chandra's key to survival. She dreamed of giving her sons a home. She wondered, *What do people do to get their houses?* She knew she needed education and support.

Then Chandra shared her dream with us. She confided in Katie, her Family Advocate within Community Action's Supportive Housing program, her dream to buy a house. With her goal set, things began to click.

You built the bridges Chandra needed to cross to reach her goal. Our Supportive Housing program facilitated a path to rent an apartment and establish credit; gas vouchers to extend a budget; and someone to encourage her when days got hard. Within our Free to Save program Chandra learned about credit, budgeting, mortgages, and more.

Completing Free to Save, Chandra received \$8,000 for her down payment. She added to this a grant from the Ponca Tribe, support from NeighborWorks Lincoln, and a committed realtor. As one community bridge led to another, **you were part of a village sustaining a dream.**



Chandra's front porch gathering of dream builders, from left, realtor Michelle, Chandra's sons Cyrus and Moses, Chandra, and Community Action's Katie and Cheryl

“She's a leader in the community.”

-Cheryl Martin, Financial Coach

In February, Chandra signed the papers. In March, she moved in. In April, you ensured Community Action could once again be at Chandra's side — this time, our Weatherization program strengthened the life of her new 100-year-old house.

“It was a hectic day, moving everything in here. **But after it was all done, it was peaceful. This is our home,**” said Chandra.

Thank you.



We did it...again!

Community Action has been named one of Lincoln's Best Places to Work for the eighth year!

Our incredible staff is the heart of all we do. Thank you for your support!



A core concept of Community Action is success is dependent upon the collective efforts of the entire community and its institutions. We work better together. For 60 years. Thank you for standing with us.



Letter from the CEO

Challenges to opportunity

It's no secret that the moment of today does, indeed, present challenges. As an organization, we face uncertainty perhaps like never before in our history.

There is fear in uncertainty.

You continue to remind us of what it means to be fearless. To look for opportunity and hope.

Over the past several months, you've shown up for us like never before. You've acted upon our requests for advocacy by sharing our social media posts, calling or writing your representatives, and even literally standing on the steps of our State Capitol with legislators and members of the Head Start community to say "Head Start is important to Nebraska!"

You've fought hard, and we're already seeing victories as a result.

You've conducted supply drives – donating thousands of diapers, wipes, hygiene products, and other basic care items that your neighbors depend upon.

To us and those we serve, you've been the sun rising on a dark horizon.

Your giving has reached new heights. Wow, what a Give to Lincoln Day! Over \$9.5 million raised for Lincoln nonprofits, over \$115,000 of which will directly support and lift up our mission. We're truly grateful for your support—not only for our work, but also for the missions of our partner organizations as we come together to serve our community. It's a team effort in every way.

As a respected member of our team, you're meeting this moment with courage, compassion, and a deep sense of responsibility. Thank you for standing strong beside us.

The stories presented in this newsletter remind us of our why. We celebrate those who are the heart of our mission – our neighbors who, with your partnership, are building bright futures.

The challenges before us are real and growing, and meeting them will require continued commitment—from us and from generous supporters like you.

As you read, remember: This is what's possible when fearless people like you choose to invest in others.

And we will celebrate our 60 years of community impact with a September 21 gathering full of food, fun, and the String Beans, Lincoln own children's band! Please pencil it in - more details will arrive soon!

With you in our community, I remain hopeful. Thank you.

Heather Loughman
CEO



Agency Leadership

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Michelle Libal

David Lux

Kelley Porter

Thuy Ngoc Ho



Leadership Team

Pam Benner

Jill Bomberger

Deanna Briley

Jessie Hedrick

Heather Loughman

Michelle Martinez

Hope within numbers

This Give to Lincoln Day
you contributed
over \$115,860.00
to Community Action.

What does that mean?

To highlight a few examples, during one year:

- **103 guests** can receive a nightly meal every day at the Gathering Place.
- **23 Head Start classrooms** are prepared with diapers, wipes, and supplies.
- **1,158 emergency rent/utility payments** can be made.

And countless other life changing moments.

Thank you.



Walking TALLER

Your investment in Community Action strengthens our whole community, including the early childhood workforce.



You know that stronger teachers build stronger communities.

Walking a little taller among the Community Action Head Start Zebras, Polar Bears, and Eagles classrooms are Danielle, Justine, and Alex. They're newly certified CDA (Child Development Associate) teachers.

As a friend of Community Action, you value the importance of early childhood education, and the educators who make it possible. That's the magic of our On-the-Job Training program.

"The more I know, the better I can do," said Justine. Yet as a working mom of three, finding time to learn seemed impossible—until On-the-Job Training removed that barrier and others.

A program made possible by a Workforce Development Grant from the City of Lincoln, scholars can study while working at Community Action Head Start. They are also offered financial support to help with living expenses, and receive a laptop to learn when and where they need. They also have a coach on hand to support their success.

Over 83 Head Start teachers have participated in the program so far. They've earned degrees, certifications, and credentials. These advance their careers, lead to higher pay, stronger teaching, and greater stability—for the teachers personally, and for our entire community.

Thank you for investing in the educators who shape our children's futures.

"It's not simply to teach – it's asking how can we help you learn better." - Alex



"Now I want to go for my early childhood associate degree. I'm in it now. I don't want to stop!"
- Danielle



"I learned to see the classroom as their community." - Justine



Staff Spotlight:

Jenise Kouma

Emergency Services Advocate
Saunders County



"Out here, we have to rely on knowing the lay of the land and working together."

Between Saunders County's 15 communities within 748 square miles, Jenise is a connector. She knows when the Food Bank is in town, where there is a housing opening, and the first names of her partners within the county.

One example of her work: There was a young couple living in their car. They called a lot. Jenise put to work her list of emergency food, housing and job resources, relying on her community trust.

Stable housing led to stable work and ultimately reunification with their child. The more secure these folks became, the less Jenise heard from them.

"And that's the goal," Jenise says. "Independence, moving forward. They did well."

Thank you for providing this touchstone of support for our neighbors in Saunders County.



Hope on the move!

New space, same promise

This fall you will find all 30 Community Action Head Start classrooms under the roofs of our Bansal Family Home for Head Start and 26th Street Center. We will also be opening two new classrooms!

This move brings efficiencies while maintaining our commitment to effectively serving children and families.

Our Health 360 campus served us

beautifully and we are deeply grateful for our nine years there.

A new place to gather

As our number of guests grows at the Gathering Place, our need for more space and a larger kitchen are evident. We searched and found 919 S. 12th Street - just a few blocks away!

Approval to move forward came with this sentiment from City



Councilman James Michael Bowers, "Community Action's Gathering Place is a vital example of meeting the needs of our residents and providing essential support and resources."

Details on how you can support this exciting opportunity coming soon!

Fuel fearless action. Every month.

Become a monthly donor. Join the **Action Crew**.

Your monthly gift:

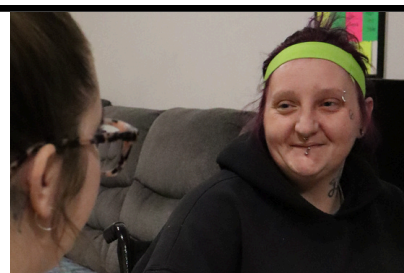
- Supports immediate action.
- Sparks long-term solutions.
- Ensures families have what they need to build better lives.

Poverty doesn't take a break. Neither should our response. Become a monthly donor today.



Every little program, every little part of Community Action changes peoples lives in huge ways. Like the store. One month I couldn't figure out how to get toothpaste and I went in there and got toothbrushes and toothpaste."

-Community Action participant



YES, I want to help empower people living in poverty to reach economic stability.

☐ 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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