



Hope Inside



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IN THIS ISSUE

- 1} Building a Home for Head Start
- 2} Letter from the CEO
- 2} Fun in the fall
- 3} Holiday toy drive
- 3} Big news at the Gathering Place
- 4} Dreams come true
- 4} Double your impact

It's official: We're building a Home for Head Start

Your support will build the future of early childhood education in Lincoln.

Last month, Community Action announced the public phase of our capital campaign to raise \$4.5 million to complete renovations at our K Street early childhood center.

More than \$2.25 million has already been raised. Funding will transform the space located at the intersection of K Street and Antelope Valley Parkway from one used for adult education into one designed for young children and their families.

Currently, 197 children participate in Head Start programming at this center.

Although Community Action has been providing Head Start services in Lincoln since the 1960s, we've never had a permanent Home for Head Start. Renovations will include **building new classrooms** with easily accessible restrooms and handwashing sinks, **indoor and outdoor**

play areas, and spaces for support services offered to participants and neighbors. Former City Council Member Carl Eskridge is chairing the volunteer fundraising effort.

"Access to quality early childhood education for all is a Lincoln priority," said Eskridge. "And this project is about just that: ensuring children with the greatest barriers to success get everything they need to be ready for kindergarten and reach their fullest potential."

Our K Street center is located at the intersection of three neighborhoods with some of the highest poverty

rates in Lincoln—one as high as 58%.

The first of two renovation phases were completed in early April of this year. Phase II improvements will begin in early 2023.

"The most important investment we can make is in our children. Every child deserves access to the supports they need to succeed," said Eskridge.

We need your support to build our Home for Head Start. Gifts to support this campaign may be pledged over multiple years, and there are many recognition opportunities available! **To learn more, visit our website or contact Jessie at jhedrick@communityactionnetwork.org or (402) 875-9338.**



Thank you to our Home for Head Start campaign committee!

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
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We are better when we work together



Thank you for being part of the Community Action team. We couldn't do this without you.

Dear Friend,

A couple of months ago, we celebrated the Gathering Place's 40th anniversary. You may have joined us for that milestone occasion. On that warm late summer evening, the streets surrounding the two-story brick home were filled with people – guests, neighbors, donors, volunteers,

staff, passersby. Live music played jovially as those people chatted, enjoyed a lovingly-prepared meal, jotted down memories of their favorite moments at the Gathering Place, and played games – “ladder ball” and bean bag toss. Children and adults alike lined up eagerly to get their faces painted or to receive a balloon animal. There was a sort of magic in the air.

When the event was fully underway, I looked upon the crowd of people as I stood on the Gathering Place's front porch preparing to deliver remarks. I stalled slightly to soak in the view: the laughter shared by friends and strangers who visited over plates of food, autumn's first yellow leaves floating in the warm breeze, couples dancing in the street to the beat of a familiar tune, neighbors nearby coming

out of their homes to join in the celebration. In that very moment, I was reminded of the beauty of humanity; *the power we hold not alone, but as a collective.*

As a supporter of our work, **you are a part of this collective**; part of a community that values and believes in the potential and inherent goodness of the people around you. **One of our guiding principles at Community Action is “we are better when we work together.”** While we adopted this years before the pandemic, it's certainly taken on new meaning in those more recent. You continue to show up for your neighbors in remarkable ways, whether through a financial contribution, a volunteer effort, or lending of an encouraging word. For that, I want to thank you. The need

for your support in these ways has truly never been greater.

My favorite moments over the past year have been spent in community with people like you – whether dreaming and planning over coffee, or sharing about new enhancements for our poverty-fighting programs... or even dancing in the street. As we move into another year, the thing I am looking forward to the most is keeping these connections going strong. There's no limit to what we can do together, and the fight to end poverty depends on that very thing.

Wishing you and yours a joyous holiday season.

With Gratitude,

Heather Loughman
Chief Executive Officer

Thank you for celebrating the fall season with Community Action

Whether you stopped by one of our trunk or treat stations, spotted us at a career fair, or spread the word about our programs and services—thank you for making us a part of your community!

Donations of diapers and other essentials make all the difference to those we serve.



Head Start classrooms sampled delicious apples and participated in a “Crunch Off!”



We had lots of fun representing Community Action at several trunk or treat events this October!

Thank you to the volunteers who stopped by our K Street center to help us keep things looking warm and welcoming!



Want to spread some holiday cheer?

Now through December 22nd, you can donate a new, unwrapped toy to Community Action and brighten someone's holiday.

Community Action's Holiday Toy Drive allows our participants from across almost all of our programs to "shop" for gifts for their families at no cost. Donations from the community make this possible every year. Want to be a part of this merry project? You've got a couple

different options:

- Order from our Amazon wish list, available on our website. Gifts will be shipped directly to Community Action.
- Deliver store-bought gifts to our office at 210 O St, Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Have questions about participating in this year's toy drive? Contact Sam Bates at sbates@communityactionnetwork.org or 402-875-9320.

Thank you for supporting Community Action and making the winter holiday season that much brighter for those we serve!

Gathering for the holidays

We are so thrilled to be celebrating the winter holiday season indoors with guests and volunteers!

This is big news: For the first winter holiday season since 2019, **Community Action's Gathering Place is open for indoor meal service!**

After two and a half years of serving solely in to-go boxes, we returned to in-person dining this November – just in time for the harsh drop in temperatures. Guests have welcomed this dining option back, especially the hot coffee!

Thanksgiving dinner was served indoors for the first time since 2019, which was exciting for both guests and volunteers. Christmas Eve dinner will be served indoors or to-go for anyone who arrives the evening of Dec. 24, no questions asked.

"At the Gathering Place, we're seeing a greater need for fresh, nutritious food

than ever before," said Gathering Place Administrator Lisa Janssen. "We're so glad to welcome our guests back inside for a warm place to eat and engage in conversation with neighbors and friends."

This transition wouldn't have been possible without the support of people like you. Whether you volunteer at the Gathering Place, give to support financially, or both — **thank you.**

Thank you to the volunteers who helped serve Thanksgiving dinner at the Gathering Place! Indoor meal service is back, and we couldn't be happier.



Your support helps create partnerships like this one, which gave Eliseo (pictured here with Paige, Community Action staff) a warm and safe new place to sleep.

A new place to dream

Your support gives families a safe place to land every night.

Paulina is a mom to three children under age five and a parent in our Head Start program. She works hard every day to provide her children with the support they need to succeed.

Paulina's children are growing quickly, as little ones do. Just a few months ago, Paulina shared with Community Action Head Start staff that her two oldest children had outgrown their beds. She needed to find new ones for them but wasn't sure where to go or

how to find something safe and affordable.

Thanks to a partnership between Community Action and Slumberland Furniture, Paulina found new beds for her son and daughter.

Paige (pictured), the Community Action Family Educator who delivered the beds, shared, "Everyone was so happy. The kiddos started cheering when we carried the beds in. They both said they were so excited to have new beds to sleep in."

Your support of Community Action makes partnerships like this possible. Your generosity gives support to families like Paulina's when they need it most.



At the Gathering Place, our match pool grew!

Through December 31st, gifts to Community Action's Gathering Place are being matched \$1 for \$1. Thanks to your generosity, we are over halfway to our \$200,000 goal! **Thank you to all who have given to the Gathering Place.** Your support will help to ensure we continue serving free hot, nutritious meals every night of the week to any and all who need them.

The extra exciting news? Thanks to

an additional contribution from our generous sponsors, **our match pool grew.** This means there is now even greater opportunity to double your impact through a gift to the Gathering Place. Will you join us and give today?

This year's match campaign honors the 40th anniversary of the Gathering Place. It's made possible thanks to generous support from legacy sponsor Acklie Charitable Foundation, as well



as sponsors Union Bank and Trust, Bukaty Companies, INSPRO, Connie Maguire, Rohn and Beth Loyd, and James Stuart III Family Foundation.

We can't do this without you. Thank you.

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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