



PATRON

Lent/Easter 2021

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.
-Pope Francis



With your help, we could help

It is truly good that Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska exists, especially for helping mothers struggling to care for their children. One snowy morning in January, I received a phone call from a young mother seeking warm shelter for her and her two young children, ages 1 and half and 2 months. She called from her car where she and her two children had spent the night because electricity –the only heat source in their home- had been shut off the previous day because the bill had not been paid.

On behalf of the young mother and CSS, I contacted Lincoln Electrical System to confirm the situation and to discuss options for getting the heat source restored. LES staff was helpful and appreciated CSS bringing the situation to their attention. With a verbal commitment that CSS would pay the young family's electrical bill, LES dispatched its workers to turn the electricity back on to the home. The electric bill had not been paid because the young mother had been laid off from her job; COVID had reduced business for

her employer. The mother chose to use the little money she had to pay for food rather than the electricity bill. CSS was able to get electricity for the young family restored by paying the bill with money given by donors specifically for people and families

negatively impacted by the pandemic. For about \$375, CSS and its donors were able to help this young mother and her children move from sleeping in their car in January to sleeping in warm beds.

This is the story from just one of the calls for help CSS receives every week. In addition to seeking help with utility bills, people call asking for

help with rent, medical bills and car repairs. They are barely making ends meet and it only takes one more unexpected expense or health issue for their budget to fail.

Thank you. Because of your help, we could help.

*-Mike Fitzgerald,
Lincoln Emergency Services and
Employment Specialist*



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Dreaming of the day

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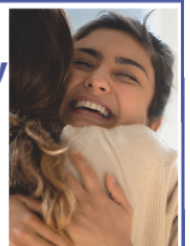
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Dreaming of the day

Fr. Justin Fulton
Vicar General, Diocese of Lincoln
Administrative Oversight, CSS

Here is a picture of my niece Cecilia strumming her new guitar on Christmas morning. Note her little sister Juli-ana in the background. See how Juli-ana is enamored by her big sister Cecilia? I love this picture. It shows a big sister so proud and a little sister looking up to her. You can almost see Juli-ana dreaming of the day she can learn to play the guitar as well. In a few years Cecilia can help Juli-ana along the way and be a role model for her to learn how to play that guitar as well.



In a way we see the same *“dreaming of the day we can do it on our own”* at Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska daily. Our clients come to us for help as they can’t provide for themselves or their families alone. They look to us for support, help, and love. We give it to them in the form of food, rent and utilities assistance, car repair funds, counseling, clothing, furniture and household goods, employment services, housing, and many other forms of help. So many of our clients do not believe they can do it on their own. We give them a “hand-up” and we give them support so they can believe in themselves. We give them hope and they begin to realize they can indeed supply for themselves with just a little bit of help.

We do not do this important work alone. We do this with you. We do this with Jesus Christ Himself. It is the most important work He gave ALL of us.....to love one another as He has loved us.

It costs us \$15,500 per day in services and salary for Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska to provide Hope in the Good Life. THANK YOU FOR HELPING US SAVE LIVES!! THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST!!

Please help us continue to provide food for the hungry, a tank of gas for someone who needs it, rent and utilities payments for someone who has lost a job, safety from a domestic abuser, and help for someone who needs a hand-up---not just a handout.

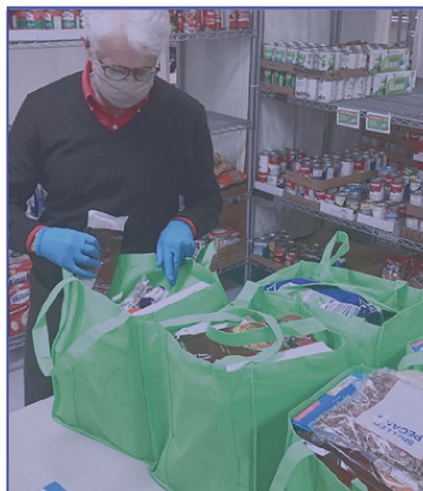
You can donate at www.csshope.org. Consider making a recurring gift to ensure our neighbors in Southern Nebraska are provided hope throughout the year. Or if you would like information on how to make a planned gift and help for many generations give our Direc-

tor of Advancement Michelle Birkel a call at 402-327-6235 or email at mbirkel@cssisus.org.

The demand is great but Christ’s love is Infinitely greater. Thank you for sharing His love and your care with our neighbors here in southern Nebraska.

God bless and keep you all safe, joyful, and holy.

Cheers,
Fr. Fulton



Thank You to our volunteers who helped us bring Hope in the Good Life last year



469
VOLUNTEERS



20,290
HOURS



\$280,800
VALUE

A full circle story

Tyson Foods, CSS partner to assist immigrants, refugees with services

Building stronger, healthier communities is a commitment both Tyson Foods and Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska share and we are proud to announce a \$25,000 grant received from Tyson to support our Employer Outreach Partnership program. This program supports our long-term goal of providing comprehensive immigration services to the refugee and immigrant communities of southern Nebraska.

“We are proud of our diverse team at Tyson, which comprises many immigrants who are undertaking the complicated process of obtaining U.S. citizenship,” said Trish Reimers, HR Director of the Waverly-Tecumseh plant. “We are proud to support CSS’s program to offer support and ease the burden of achieving U.S. citizenship.”

In Waverly-Tecumseh, Tyson team members will have access to the following services:

- 4-6 full days of onsite immigration consultations for Waverly and Tecumseh employees;
- Assistance in completing immigration forms such as applications for work authorization (I-765), U.S. Citizenship (N-400), Permanent Residence (I-485) and additional forms.

CSS began resettling refugees to the community after World War II. Today, we continue to serve families from Vietnam, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Afghanistan, Iraq, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan. Additionally, CSS has been certified by the

Department of Justice to practice immigration law since 1999.

The value of these services is illustrated with an example of CSS helping a Karen refugee. With only her eyes exposed, CSS’s DOJ accredited representative, Drew Miller, was at first unable to recognize the face of the Tyson Foods’ team member as she walked in for her socially-distant immigration consultation at the plant. With the wearing of PPE and masks, the ability to immediately recognize faces during the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging. However, after seeing her nametag taped across the front of her protective safety helmet, he immediately remembered her. This

team member and her mother arrived in the United States as refugees in May 2016 after spending years in a refugee camp in Thailand.

The Karen people, a minority from Burma, have been the victims of an ongoing civil war for over half a century. When this mother and daughter first got off of the plane at the Lincoln Municipal Airport, Drew Miller, a refugee resettlement case manager at the time, was there to welcome them. Over the next three months, CSS helped them both enroll in English classes, adjust to life in the United States, and even secure a full-time job at Tyson Foods.



Drew Miller, CSS Immigration Specialist, consults with Tyson Foods team members

After consulting with Drew in October 2020, she realized that she was eligible to apply early for U.S. citizenship in February 2021, and retained CSS for free legal services through their grant with Tyson. With a powerful command of the English language and an impeccable record in the United States, this individual is more than prepared to naturalize and become a United States citizen through the partnership between Tyson and CSS.

Since the grant began in 2020, CSS has provided 39 in-person consultations and is currently representing two

(Continued on back page)

Our basic need to stay connected

Dr. Courtney K. Miller, Director, Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center

In his Jan. 1, 2021 World Day of Peace message titled “A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace” Pope Francis writes “These and other events that marked humanity's path this past year have taught us how important it is care for one another and creation in efforts to build a more fraternal society ... a culture of care as a way to combat the culture of indifference, waste and confrontation so prevalent in our time.”

What exactly does this mean and how does this apply to us in our day to day lives?

The pandemic has highlighted the need for a culture of care. We have needed to depend on others now more than previously, recognizing we cannot do this alone. By increasing involvement and engagement with others, we share the burden. We find we are not alone in our struggles, our fears. We find strength in relationships with others and the courage to continue to persevere and to hold fast to our faith.

It is about balance in our lives. We as human beings are made for connection and for care of one another. Connection and care do not have to be big gestures, but are often best communicated through small acts of kindness. It is about being attuned to the needs of others, whether it is someone close to us or someone we do not know very well or even at all. A smile and helping hand are a universal language. It is about offering a gift of yourself to another, without any expectation of anything in return.



When we are able to get outside of ourselves, we regain control. We shift our focus from a passive state to an active, doing state. We know physiologically that any form of physical activity boosts the brain's dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels, reducing anxiety, depression, and negative mood and improving self-esteem and cognitive function. Involvement in new activities can also alleviate symptoms such as low self-esteem and social withdrawal.

Again, we all desire human connection. We are made for love and for care of one another. Having another person take a caring interest in our lives allows us to feel valued, appreciated, loved. It reminds us that we are special and beautiful, as each of us is made in the likeness and image of God. We have a purpose. All of us benefit from having another person take a caring interest in us. Often when we can come back to the basics, we find we have all we need.

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Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska offers community based mental health services through the Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center (IHMCC). Our staff of Licensed Psychologists and Licensed Mental Health Practitioners strives to meet the needs of



Immaculate Heart of Mary
Counseling Center

group, crisis pregnancy, and post-abortion counseling. IHMCC is also the only Catholic APA-accredited pre-doctoral internship in the nation. All services are made available through our Lincoln office location as well as several outreach sites and Telehealth services. Most insurance plans accepted. For more information, visit www.csshope.org/IHMMC.

Thank you for helping us bring Hope last year

At Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska, we want to share our story of what we do across the 24,000 square miles of the Diocese. These are true yearly statistics that show how God works through CSS to bring hope to people daily from Venango to Verdon, Palisade to Plattsmouth, Wauneta to Wahoo and all points in between: here is what God does through the work of CSS.

• **\$1.8 million dollars** in overall cash and in-kind assistance yearly. This can go from help in paying rent, providing shelter, providing money for food, electricity, water, a bus ticket, car repairs, medical bills, and anything else that life throws one's way.

• **327 tons of food** given to the hurting and hungry of southern Nebraska.

• **51,397 sack lunches provided** to the hungry and homeless of the Hastings (42,814) and Lincoln (8,583) areas. 4280 breakfasts given to the hungry and homeless of Lincoln during the pandemic.

• **981 meals** for school families for weekend sustenance through our Food Market Program.

• **31 automobiles given** statewide to people with no form of transportation at a value of \$64,627.

• **\$32,411 in counseling service charity grants** given by our Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center.

• **17,280 nights of lodging** and safety provided for abused women & their children through St. Gianna's Women's Homes. 59 families were served through this program.

• **7 babies were born** into St. Gianna Women's Homes and provided shelter and protection for the mother and baby from an abusive relationship.

• **62 refugees** fleeing from war-torn parts of the world resettled and given a new start on life through our refugee placement services-- 1 of only 3 agencies in the state of Nebraska doing this work.

• **5,268 sessions and 501 unique individuals** served through the Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center.

• **112,878 diapers collected** for approximately 7000 babies throughout southern Nebraska.

• **441,000 pounds of recycled clothing** at a value of \$57,988 that goes to help the poor.

• **\$5.1 Million operating budget per year**---\$15,500/day in services and salary to provide our outreach to southern Nebraska.

Thank you to our volunteers and benefactors for partnering with us in bringing Hope in the Good Life, especially during a very challenging year. God bless!



CSS- Hastings

Offering a hand up during a tough time

A young couple with three children reached out to our Hastings office last summer for help. The family lives in rural Adams County and had been struggling financially since the onset of the pandemic. The mother, "Angela", first contacted us in May merely asking for help with necessities such as food, gas and toiletries. As the weeks went by after our initial meeting, the financial pressures began to build. Neither of the parents qualified for unemployment- the father farms and the mother's job at a school ended early due to COVID-19.

Our caseworker spoke with the mother over the phone, discussed their monthly budget, and told her that CSS could assist them with their utility bill. The mother began sobbing, knowing they no longer needed to worry about having their service disconnected. The family was beyond grateful for the assistance we were able to provide. We were beyond grateful to help.

Angela and her family are like so many of our neighbors who came to us last year- folks who never thought they would ever need a hand up, but due to the pandemic and by no fault of their own, they needed help. Last year our Hastings office gave away \$47,765 for COVID-19 relief. This amount was over and above our normal emergency services budget. Thank you for your continued prayers and support for those we serve across southern Nebraska.



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#HopeintheGoodLife

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(S.A.G.)

Hope in the Good Life

Lent/Easter 2021

A full circle story (Continued from page 3)

Tyson team members for their citizenship applications, two team members for their green card applications, one team member petitioning for his wife in Myanmar, and two work permit renewals. All legal representation was made possible due to Tyson's ability to allow employees to consult with Drew Miller during their shift, rather than requiring team members to take time outside of work to contact CSS. Many more individuals will become eligible for immigration benefits, namely citizenship and green cards in the coming months.

Our basic need to stay connected (Continued from page 4)

In counseling, we often speak about self-care as well. It is important that we examine our own care, particularly during this stressful, uncertain time, in order to best care for others. We need to attend to our needs across these areas of well-being: physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, relationship, and workplace care. Often our own self-care involves reaching out to others for support, being humble enough to ask for help when needed, which in turns gives the gift of God's grace to the helping individual.



MEMORIAL
GOLF CLASSIC & AUCTION
FRIDAY, AUGUST 6TH, 2021
HILLCREST C.C. LINCOLN, NE

Items needed for 25th Memorial Golf Classic & Auction

Save the date now- the 25th annual CSS Memorial Golf Classic & Auction will take place on Friday, August 6th at Hillcrest Country Club in Lincoln. We're starting to collect items for the silent auction. If you or your business have an item, service or idea for silent auction item, drop us a note in the enclosed envelope or contact John McDermott at (402) 430-5626, or e-mail the information to hello@csssus.org. Keep watching csshope.org for details on this year's tourney!

