



CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

Hope in the Good Life

September 2021

St. Fiacre/Brian Cecava

Cultivating compassion



Born in Ireland in the 7th century, St. Fiacre was raised in a monastery. As a young monk, St. Fiacre became a skillful gardener. Word began to spread across Ireland about the high quality vegetables and the healing abilities of the herbs the young monk grew.

St. Fiacre sought more solitude and moved to France, where he established a hermitage in a wooded area near the Marne River. St. Fiacre approached the Bishop requesting land to build a monastery. The Bishop promised him a piece of land if Fiacre could surround the property with a large ditch- that would have to be built in one day. Undeterred, Fiacre dug the ditch with his staff, as trees and rock miraculously moved out of the way to make room for the monastery. After the monastery

was built, St. Fiacre planted a vegetable garden that built a reputation for high-quality produce and healing herbs.

Through his love of gardening, St. Fiacre used this God-given gift to serve others. Much like Brian Cecava.

When the opportunity presented itself to attend World Youth Day in Brazil in 2013, the youth and chaperones at St. John the Apostle parish in Lincoln began looking for ways to raise funds to go on the pilgrimage. That's when Brian Cecava, an avid gardener, came up with the idea of holding a farmer's market. Extra produce from his garden and others, as well as donated baked goods, were made available after

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In the
first six months
of this year,
2,019
households
received diapers
from our
Lincoln
Emergency
Services program

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Cultivating compassion (continued)

masses for free will donations. Along with other fundraisers, the farmers market helped make it possible for Brian, his children, and others to attend World Youth Day in 2013 (Brazil) and 2016 (Poland). The success of the farmers market continues to this day for future pilgrims.

Moving to an acreage has allowed Brian to expand the size of his garden and his charity. He now provides produce weekly to Catholic Social Services, the Pius X High School Farm-to-School program, the Marian Sisters and the Carmelite Sisters. Produce has also been shared with family and friends. It has truly become a family affair with Brian's children and siblings assisting with labor and transporting produce. Brian has also enlisted friends, who have also assisted in donating needed supplies as well as sharing valuable gardening knowledge.

Brian remembers that the theme of World Youth Day 2016 was the beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy" (Mt 5:7). Brian hopes that with the help of family and friends, his God-given gift of gardening will allow us to follow Christ's example of compassionate service and show mercy to others as it has been shown to us. Thank you, Brian and those who support your efforts, for growing Hope in the Good Life!

Volunteer Opportunities

You can help us bring Hope

In an address to volunteers during the Year of Mercy, Pope Frances told those gathered, "Your presence is the hand of Christ held out to all, and reaching all." At CSS, volunteers

are needed to be the hand of Christ to those we serve. Last year, 469 volunteers from all walks of life provided 20,290 volunteer hours across southern



Nebraska. Opportunities exist in our Auburn, Hastings, Imperial and Lincoln locations to help us Bring Hope in the Good Life. For more information, visit our website at csshope.org/volunteer.

SAVE THE DATE!

OUR HASTINGS BOUNTIFUL HARVEST EVENT

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH

Watch csshope.org for details



Volunteer, donate or connect with us! Visit www.csshope.org