



PATRON

Lent/Easter 2022

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

“Mother of God and our Mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the Church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine. Accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that war may end and peace spread throughout the world,”
-Pope Francis



God’s timing is perfect, as always

Back in September, I received an email from our refugee department notifying me that we were having two large families arriving in Lincoln in the next few weeks. One was a family of 10 and the other a family of 7. In the email, the staff member asked if we could hold two vans for these families. While I was reading it, all I could think was “Hold TWO vans? We don’t even have ONE!” These poor families were probably going to be waiting for a long time because we didn’t have ANY vans available.

Soon I was reminded, all in God’s time, not ours.

A few days later, we received an email from Ameritas offering to donate not one, but two vans! They had heard about our new families arriving and wanted to help. I just couldn't believe it! I was in shock and had to laugh about it. I am so grateful to God, and so grateful

to Ameritas for thinking of us.

Later that week, we met with the Ameritas representative, completed the paperwork and received the two vans.



Ameritas representatives present CSS’ Marilu Cazares (center) with two vans

Shortly after receiving the vans, the father of the family of 10 received his Nebraska driver’s license. He and his family are so grateful to have transportation to get to work, medical appointments, do grocery shopping and so much more.

Thank you, Ameritas, for your very generous (and timely!) donation. Your gift will help two families

acclimate to their new home. We are always in need of good, reliable transportation for those we serve. If you would like to donate your vehicles to one of our locations, visit our website at csshope.org or drop a note in the enclosed envelope. Thank you!

-Marilu Cazares
Emergency Services Coordinator, Lincoln

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Securing a place to call home

Katie Patrick
Executive Director

Sometimes it's hard for me to pause throughout my day and spend time reading anything other than grant proposals and reports, emails, and local nonprofit newsletters. But recently what came across my desk were two bills being presented in the current legislative session: LB1201 and LB968.

Both bills are vying for state dollars associated with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), where more than \$4 billion worth of requests have been made to the Appropriations Committee of the Nebraska Legislature and only \$1 billion is available to be awarded. Talk about some intense competition!

LB1201 would appropriate \$40 million in federal funds to the Department of Health and Human Services for grants to nonprofit organizations providing food assistance. Half of the funding will go to the two Nebraska Food Banks, and the remaining half will be distributed using a competitive grant process to qualifying organizations with innovative food supply chain proposals.

LB 968 would appropriate \$10 million of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for two purposes. The first appropriation of \$8 million would be used to provide grants to nonprofit organizations to develop affordable housing including housing for vulnerable populations like refugees and immigrants. LB 968 also includes \$2 million in ARPA funds for job training and employability programming for refugees.

Here is one very practical scenario of our services across southern Nebraska and how increased state funding through LB968 would both help our clients and further our mission: Imagine submitting a rental application in a new country where you do not speak the local language, where you have no credit history, and where you have yet to secure employment. Not so easy, right?

Refugees come with next to nothing and face a long road of rebuilding when they arrive in Lincoln. While our refugee resettlement team is trained to help them enroll their children in school, schedule doctor appointments, take them to the grocery store, and apply for jobs, securing safe and affordable housing is extremely challenging for our staff. Ideal housing is often found near bus stops and within walking distance to laundromats, ethnic grocery stores, and elementary schools that have English Language

Learner programs, and hopefully, if we are lucky, close to other members of their ethnic community. As you can imagine, most of the housing that meets this criteria is often found in unsafe neighborhoods and in buildings that often fail to maintain safety and sanitary standards. For example, we recently welcomed two families from Syria, who just weeks after



arriving in Lincoln experienced a nearby domestic disturbance and shooting. This is not the type of living situation that we want to provide to families who fled violence. As a city and a community, we can and should do better.

One of my long-term goals is for CSS to purchase, own, and operate a six to ten-plex apartment building where we can provide temporary housing to refugee families. With a six-month lease we can give these families the chance to build credit, secure employment, and familiarize themselves with the Lincoln community so that they can choose the neighborhood or area of town they want to live in. With the recent arrival of nearly 130 Afghan parolees and immigrants, we spent nearly \$60,000 on short-term stay hotels due to the lack of affordable housing in Lincoln. And

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You can now listen to the sound of hope

We are excited to announce the launch of our "Hope in the Good Life Podcast." Hosted by CSS Development Officer John Soukup, this monthly podcast features stories of hope from CSS clients, volunteers, supporters and staff. These podcasts are now available now on our website at csshope.org/podcast, or scan the QR code at the right to listen at anytime. We hope you enjoy our "Hope in the Good Life Podcast"!



Thank you for bringing hope to our neighbors

At Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska, we've spent the past couple of years bringing Hope in the Good Life to those hardest hit by COVID. This included single parents who struggled to pay rent because their work temporarily shut down or went out of business. We helped families who never dreamed they would need our services pay their utility bills. We transitioned our emergency services program to phone interviews only, which actually allowed us to reach more families. Thanks to our staff, volunteers and supporters, here is what God did through the work of CSS last year:

• **\$1.94 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.

• **574,086 pounds of food** given to the hurting and hungry of southern Nebraska. This equates to approximately **1 ton of food given away each day we are open.**

• **45,009 sack lunches** provided to the hungry and homeless in Hastings and Lincoln, and 4,333 breakfasts given to the hungry and homeless of Lincoln.

• **29 automobiles** given statewide to people with no form of transportation, allowing them to get their children to school, attend medical appointments and secure employment.

• **\$45,923 in counseling service charity grants** given by our Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center.

• **18,566 nights of lodging** and safety provided for abused women and their

children through St. Gianna's Women's Homes.

• **\$21,683 in furniture** given by our Lincoln and Hastings regional offices.

• **410,073 pounds of food** distributed by our Hastings Food Recovery Program, at a value of \$697,039.

• **4,064 in-person sessions and 2,163 Telehealth sessions**

served through the Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center.

• **16,860 in volunteer hours** served at our sites in Auburn, Hastings, Imperial and Lincoln.

• **130 Afghan refugees** resettled since September 2021.

• **\$386,000 pounds** of recycled clothing items at our Hastings and Lincoln sites that generated approximately \$60,000 to assist our neighbors in need.

• **\$5.4 Million operating budget per year**---\$15,000/day in services and salary to provide our outreach to southern Nebraska.

Thank you for joining us in bringing Hope in the Good Life. God bless and keep you always.



CSS- Hastings

When one door closes...

John McDonald
Hastings Regional Director

With an end of many pandemic-related government food assistance programs, Catholic Social Services in Hastings has seen a sudden increase in requests for food. Thankfully, the Lord has provided food through multiple unique avenues.

The first source was a woman who dropped off bags full of baked goods and breakfast sandwiches from a local coffee shop. This unexpected act of generosity was compounded by the identity of the donor—a former St. Gianna's West client. This mother of eight used her newly acquired job to give back to CSS to the delight of myself and my staff. She now returns on a regular basis with up to 60 pounds of food!

Another blessing has been the hundreds of dozens of eggs we received over the past month. Protein, such as eggs and meat, is the most difficult food to acquire due to its perishability while also being the most desired food. This donation has been especially timely since we recently lost one of our sources for eggs. We are blessed with so many eggs that we are able to send them on our Food Recovery routes and include them with our Open Table sandwiches!

God is not only providing food for those in Hastings, but also across the region we serve. Catholic Social Services in Hastings just added a food pantry in Benkelman to our Food

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#HopeintheGoodLife



(S.A.G.)

Hope in the Good Life **Lent/Easter 2022**

Securing a place to call home

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as you can imagine when we finally did secure housing, our families were faced with less than ideal neighborhoods and units.

LB968 would give CSS the chance to request one-time funding from the government to purchase and or build this apartment complex. As always, if you have any questions or would like to learn more about how this particular bill could positively impact our refugee community please contact me at kpatrik@cssisus.org or by phone (402) 327-6223. Thank you for bringing Hope in the Good Life and God Bless!

One door closes...

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Recovery Program. This program is a partnership with the Food Bank for the Heartland through which CSS picks up unsold food from local grocery stores and distributes to rural food pantries. This food pantry in Benkelman is the 15th stop on our truck's food routes!

God is not only providing for the needs of our clients, but also our staff. Having gone without regular Mass in our chapel for months, we now have Mass two weeks out of the month. There is nothing more unitive and restoring than receiving our Eucharistic Lord. We hope to establish a weekly mass. God will provide!



**CATHOLIC
SOCIAL SERVICES**
26TH ANNUAL MEMORIAL
GOLF CLASSIC & AUCTION
HILLCREST C.C. AUGUST 5, 2022

Items needed for 26th Memorial Golf Classic & Auction

Save the date now - the 26th annual CSS Memorial Golf Classic & Auction will take place on Friday, August 5th 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 our silent auction, drop us a note in the enclosed envelope or call (402) 430-5626, or e-mail the information to hello@cssisus.org. Keep watching csshope.org for details on this year's tourney!

