



PATRON

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



“If we celebrate with such solemnity the birth of Jesus, it is to bear witness that every human being is somebody unique and unrepeatable... somebody thought of and chosen from eternity, someone called and identified by his own name. It is as it was with the first man, Adam. It is as it was with the new Adam, born of the Virgin Mary in the cave at Bethlehem: ‘You shall call his name Jesus.’”
-St. John Paul II

A perfectly timed gift

Once again, we’ve experienced first hand that God’s timing is perfect.

Recently, doctors and staff at St. Mary’s Hospital in Nebraska City donated several medical recliners after a renovation. The recliners arrived, taking up a lot of floor room at St. Francis Gift & Thrift (SFGT) here in Auburn. They were one of those donations that was awesome to receive, yet cumbersome. I promised our staff I’d find homes for the chairs.

The recliners have been a blessing! They are sturdy, extremely durable and comfortable. They recline like a bed, have a small attached tray, and roll or lock in place. We don’t offer delivery, but when a reasonable situation presents, I can usually talk my husband, teen sons, or other volunteers into it. My sons delivered a recliner (in the rain!) to a client after hernia surgery. We sold a few at the thrift store. Recently we delivered two recliners to elderly fire victims

at an apartment complex. After the fire, they were displaced to a hotel which Catholic Social Services helped pay for. The hotel rooms they had been utilizing were pre-booked for incoming outage workers. So, with short notice, they moved back to the apartment complex, rooms not yet completed. I

received a call from them realizing they had nowhere to sleep for the evening! We could not accommodate beds with such short notice, but I immediately thought of the chairs. They were delighted by the offer.

They had no way of picking them up from SFGT,

but I knew my husband would want to help. HE and I came to load up the chairs in the

evening. I had no realization of how heavy they were and was little help, I’m sure! God gave me a wonderfully strong servant-hearted husband. Watching my husband wrestle the oversized chairs into the truck and through the apartment doorways made me love him more.

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Advent/Christmas 2022

Peace is possible



A reliable vehicle makes all the difference



Offering hope in the Hastings region



Peace is possible

Katie Patrick
Executive Director

When I sat down to write this article, I had in mind to write about the Ukrainian community in Lincoln that we are working closely with, but before I did, I reread my previous articles in the fall and summer editions, and I must admit that we talk a lot about refugees.

But one only needs to scroll the news for a few minutes before seeing stories about religious persecution in Nigeria, ethnic cleansing in Ethiopia, and, of course, the war of Russian aggression in Ukraine. It's easy to be disheartened by the many conflicts that are happening around the world, isn't it? But what impacts me more is the fact that those conflicts reach us here in southern Nebraska.

In line with our mission, which is to perform the Works of Mercy in response to the call of God, we, at Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska, get the opportunity to welcome the stranger every single day.

Last week, I was visiting with a Ukrainian community member as he proudly shared with me what he and his family are doing to welcome and provide for several families who fled the war and are living here in Lincoln.

As a successful businessman, he should be proud. The Ukrainian community in Lincoln is working tirelessly to support each other by inviting new families into their homes for weeks at a time, driving them to doctor appointments and job interviews, helping them go grocery shopping and purchasing groceries for them, and much more. But one thing he said that stuck with me was that these families are hurting, spiritually. They have seen

war. They know or have seen family members killed. They have been stranded without food and shelter for days at a time.

Will you join us in prayer?

You can help us as we pray for an end to the conflict and healing for all those involved.



As Pope Francis said in a recent Sunday Angelus address, "Let us always remain close to our brothers and sisters in martyred Ukraine: close in prayer and in concrete solidarity. Peace is possible! Let us not resign ourselves to war."

CSS Vehicle Donation Program

A reliable vehicle can make all the difference

Helping our clients to get on the road to hope often includes getting them on the road, literally. Some have trouble keeping jobs because they do not have reliable transportation. Others need basic transportation to get to medical appointments or even just to get groceries. If you are thinking about upgrading to a newer vehicle and your current car is still in roadworthy condition, reliable, and safe to drive, please consider: Instead of trading it in, donate your vehicle to the CSS Vehicle Donation Program! You'll help us make a difference in the life of a family or in the life of an individual who is in need of a vehicle to be able to move around independently. Our community is in dire need of vehicles. To some, the lack of transportation has been an obstacle to sustainable employment and providing for their loved ones. All donated vehicles (drivable or non-drivable) to CSS end up helping those in need. Contact us to learn more about how your good, used vehicle can help our clients stay on the road to hope in the good life!

- Lincoln offices: Call 402.327.6222 or email mcazares@cssisus.org.
- Hastings offices: Call 888.826.9629 or email hello@cssisus.org.
- Auburn & Imperial offices: Email hello@cssisus.org.



Chawisa Misheck and his family of 10 received a van generously donated recently by Ameritas



Lincoln Emergency Services staff Mike Fitzgerald and Marilu Cazares

Emergency Services-Lincoln

On the frontline providing relief and hope

Mike Fitzgerald

Emergency and Employment Specialist

Men and women, individuals and families, call or come to CSS offices across southern Nebraska everyday seeking help with expenses which are overwhelming them and pushing them toward becoming homeless. Getting by on a tight budget is their norm but then an injury, illness or death, or extra burden such as an unexpected car repair happens - - pushing them into a corner, adding more stress to their challenging routine. The generosity of donors allows CSS to help lighten the load our brothers and sisters carry.

Here are just four examples from among the situations we helped within a week recently.

- Providing and caring for your children is especially challenging when you are a single parent who must also shoulder Covid and other illnesses. “Marie” is a single mother with three sons 16, 10 and 7. She had Covid during January to March, and suffered intestinal inflammation from June to August. Also, she has a torn disk in her spine and will undergo back surgery next month. She has also endured fibromyalgia for more than 15 years. Despite all this, she is planning to return to her job as soon as possible. CSS helped her with her LES bill and rent.
- Anne is also a single mother and has three children ages 11 to 14. Her fiancé, who was the income provider for Anne and her children, recently passed away unexpectedly. Because they were not yet married, Anne and the children do not receive any of his social security benefits. She quickly found a good job at a dentist clinic, but then became ill with Covid. She is working again but has struggled with the family’s bills that accumulated during this challenging period. CSS helped with their rent, and Anne is seeking additional part-time employment she can do from home.
- Gina is 48 and her husband Rick, 52, are married with two sons 11 and 8. The family has struggled making ends meet because Rick had hip replacement surgery and was out of work for four months. They asked CSS for half of one month’s rent. CSS was able to provide a full month of rent, which also helped them to catch up on other bills. Rick returned to work this week and they expect to pay their bills again going forward.
- Ashley is 24 and her husband Josh is 37. He works for a food processing company. They have been struggling to pay all their bills because their unborn child died and they are paying the hospital bill because they did not have maternity insurance. CSS has assisted the young couple by paying their LES bill and their rent.

These and other clients come to us overwhelmed by bills because of misfortune that has left them unable to pay for basic needs. Listening with a caring ear and providing financial assistance prevents further hardship and allows them to focus again on being a reliable and productive employee and caring for family members. The assistance provided by donations large and small are transformed into smiles and tears of relief and hope.

“She gave everything she had left”

John Soukup Development Officer

As 2022 comes to an end, Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska (CSS) thanks you for all your prayers and support. Over the past year, we have served over 30,000 people across 24,000 square miles of southern Nebraska, with not only food, funds, and services they urgently needed, but also happiness and hope.

Among those you helped was Emily and her daughter Jesse, who were suffering through a domestic violence situation involving Emily’s husband. To escape the danger she and her daughter faced, they moved into St. Gianna Women’s Homes, a 24-apartment unit in Lincoln for victims of domestic violence.

Each family is provided a safe and secure environment at St. Gianna’s to deal with the trauma caused by the abuse, become self-sufficient and learn to develop healthy relationships in the future. After a year of living there, Emily and Jesse had emotionally healed and were strong enough to go out on their own. Emily found a home to rent and started a full-time job with an insurance company. Jesse found happiness in a new school and is thriving. They found hope and healing thanks to your support.

Then there’s Ameer Damanhoury, a new donor this year who didn’t know much about CSS when we first met in our business networking group. The more I shared with him about the services we provide, the more compelled he felt to give back thanks to a childhood memory he had of his mother.

“We could barely afford the groceries we had just bought, when my mom saw a homeless man sitting outside the grocery store. She immediately reached into her purse and gave the man everything she had left in her wallet.” Ameer said that’s where he learned the im-

portance of charitable giving, even when it hurts a little bit. He has found happiness in the hope his dollars can provide.

As we approach the joyous celebration of Christmas and the New Year, if you haven’t already, we urge you to come forward and support more people in need. There’s so many ways you can help:

- Cash or checks are always graciously appreciated.
- To become a monthly or quarterly giver, you can sign up to have funds automatically withdrawn from your checking or savings account. Just go to www.csshope.org/ach.
- For donors who actively engage in farming, significant tax savings can be found through donating grain directly to CSS. Donors get tax deductions at a better rate than just cash donations, while CSS benefits from the selling of the grain.
- Does your employer have a matching gift program? If so, consider making a donation to CSS and your employer will donate an additional amount, often equal or greater than your donation.
- By transferring your stock to CSS, you can enjoy the benefits of tax savings on this year’s tax return. In addition to your charitable deduction, you will avoid paying capital gains tax that would otherwise be due on the sale of your appreciated investment.

Those are just a few of the ways you can make a difference in the lives of thousands of people and families. Have a blessed holiday season and thank you for helping to provide hope in the good life.



Listen to our Hope in the Good Life Podcasts, including our latest podcast featuring Ameer Damanhoury at csshope.org/podcast or just scan the QR code at the right!



Offering hope in the Hastings region

John McDonald
Hastings Regional Director

Fall marks the turning of the season. This past fall marked my one year anniversary as Regional Director of Catholic Social Services in Hastings. This has been a rollercoaster of a year, but it's been a year filled with hope. Here are a couple stories of hope.

We recently had a mother of four, a full-time college student, walk into our office. She wanted toys for her kids for Christmas. "I have one year left and I am broke!" she stated. The expression of hope on her face as her eyes lit up after we told her we could provide toys made an impression on me. Not only could we provide toys, but we could also give her a food box and a turkey. A hopeless mother came to us and left with hope.

Our caseworker Anne and I received a client referral from a local priest. This woman was in dire need. She was pregnant, unmarried, only nineteen years old and was struggling with cystic fibrosis. Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disease that affects the lungs and makes pregnancy a serious, even deadly, challenge. Her immediate family lived across the country and they were not happy with her pregnancy.



This expectant mother was determined to keep her baby, so it was a matter of convincing her grandma with whom she lived. As Anne and I sat with her and her grandma, the mother stayed resolute and determined. The grandma's anger and confusion turned to tears and relief as we explained our St. Gianna's Program. We would be able to connect them with community resources, provide them with diapers, clothes, and food and financial support if needed. All these tangible goods are wonderful, but the most important thing we provided them was hope.

This year has been filled with hope for us in our Hastings office too! Since last fall we have hired a new bilingual case worker, a new food operations coordinator, and two new part-time warehouse staff. In addition, we have acquired a new delivery truck, a new forklift, and a new minivan. Our new staff members and our new equipment are already making a positive impact on our ability to serve our clients. It's fair to say that we have hope that we will be able to bring hope to those in need for years to come!

CSS Imperial Outreach

Assisting our neighbors in Southwest Nebraska

Impact in our local communities:

Wauneta	\$285.01
Arapahoe	\$247.28
Bartley	\$428.44
Champion	\$200.00
Curtis	\$550.00
Imperial	\$1,449.78
Indianola	\$200.00
Lamar	\$275.00
McCook	\$1,451.49
N. Platte	\$863.05
Stratton	\$230.00
Wallace	\$650.00

\$6830

in assistance given

Hope in the Good Life

In 2008, CSS was welcomed to Imperial, and just three years later the St. Isidore Gift & Thrift store opened downtown. Thanks to our shoppers, hundreds of people of all faiths and backgrounds in need of financial and emergency services have been helped. CSS Imperial Outreach covers a 10-county region, helping people who may be at the lowest point in their lives. Our Imperial staff of St. Isidore Gift & Thrift Manager Bill Sullivan and Emergency Services Coordinator Tonya Olsen have helped people pay their rent and utilities, daily living needs such as clothing and household items, and food assistance for the hungry. **The graphic at the left is a fiscal 2022 snapshot of their work.**

Ways we helped

- SHELTER**
 Rent & Mortgage Assistance
- UTILITIES**
 Gas & Electric Assistance
- HEALTH CARE**
 Medical Care Assistance
- CHILD CARE**
 Infant-Toddler Basic Needs Assistance
- DAILY LIVING**
 • Clothing
 • Household Items
 • Transportation-related
- FOOD**
 • Pantry
 • Bread
 • Frozen Meat



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#HopeintheGoodLife



(S.A.G.)

The Patron

Advent/Christmas 2022

A perfectly timed gift (continued from page 1)

With the help of our donors, we gave those men a place to sleep that evening. We brought them food boxes and toiletries. They were overjoyed and thankful. In fact, they sent me this email:

Thank you for the update April I greatly appreciate the blessing you and all thoughts at St Francis (Gift & Thrift) and Saint Joseph church have bestowed upon me, I was more than happy to bring the food donated to those of us here at Westbury Heights, it is the least we could do, thank you.

Know I can only hope and pray that not only myself but all of those displaced by this fire, will have a home to return to soon enough for this holiday season, Thank you again . 🙏🙏🙏🙏❤️

I will stay in contact with them as they fully move back in and help them acquire beds. For now, they have something - somewhere to lay their heads thanks to thoughtful donors and strong volunteers.

-April Boellstroff
Auburn Regional Director

Introducing the CSS SWAG SHOP!

Now you can buy CSS SWAG (what a GREAT Christmas present idea!) to help us spread the word & support HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE. All monies raised through our swag shop will support our programs across 24,000 square miles of Southern Nebraska.



Use discount code
SWAGLAUNCH20

to save 20% at checkout!

csshope.org/swag