

Dear friend of Catholic Social Services,

As the joy of the Christmas season unfolds around us, I want to share with you the story of one of our clients. Kelly is homeless and often visits us at Catholic Social Services. Just recently, she came in asking for travel-sized shampoo and lotion—simple necessities that many of us take for granted. After freshening up in our restroom, she changed into clean clothes purchased with a gift card we provided her to St. Louise Gift & Thrift.

Kelly then joined her friends at one of the tables in our front lobby. Many of her friends, who also live on the streets, were gathered around sitting at tables enjoying the hot coffee and breakfast prepared by our staff and served by volunteers. Kelly is generally cheerful, gracious, and quick to smile and encourage others. She stays busy by talking with her friends and CSS staff and volunteers. Kelly waited until sack lunches were set out around 10:30, and then after she packed one into her backpack, she passed by the front desk to thank us for what we had given her that day and then headed out the door.



While we may not always know where Kelly goes after she leaves us, her presence and the interactions we shared that morning remind us of our mission. **We cannot fix her homelessness, but we can offer her dignity, companionship, and the unwavering reminder that she is a beloved child of God.**

This experience captures what we seek to accomplish here at Catholic Social Services: **not just meeting immediate needs, but fostering genuine relationships and recognizing the dignity of every human person that walks through our doors.** As we continue to shift our food distribution model from traditional handouts to client choice food markets and welcoming café-style spaces, our vision is to create an environment where individuals like Kelly can come in, share a meal, and build connections—an initiative that enhances the impact of our services and deepens our engagement with those we serve.

At the heart of our mission lies the example of St. Frances of Rome, CSS's patron saint for the year. St. Frances was known for her unwavering commitment to serving the poor, the sick, and the hungry during a plague in Italy. St. Frances desired more than anything to become a religious and dedicate her life to prayer, yet God called her to the vocation of a wife and mother, to which she ultimately embraced and dedicated her life to. In fact, St. Frances was able to respond to God's call to serve her family wherein she found friendship with her sister-in-law. Together, they used their own family's wealth and position to benefit the poor and vulnerable. **Her life was a testament to the Works of Mercy, echoing our own mission here at CSS.** St. Frances recognized that true service begins with empathy and a heartfelt response to the needs of others regardless of one's vocation. May her example inspire us all to embrace the call to serve others with compassion and companionship.



As we approach the end of the year, we are reminded of the urgent needs within our community. Hunger and homelessness do not take a holiday; they persist through the winter months. **Your prayers and financial support are crucial as we provide for the urgent and immediate needs of our clients, which are largely achieved by the dedication and commitment of our incredible staff and volunteers at CSS.**

If you are able, we encourage you to consider a donation this Christmas season. **Your generosity will help us continue our work, offering not just food and shelter, but love and community to those who often feel invisible.**

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, may we all be reminded of the call to help those in need. **Thank you for being part of our Catholic Social Services family.** Your support makes a world of difference to the lives we touch.

Wishing you a blessed and joyful Christmas season.

St. Frances of Rome, pray for us!!

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Katie Patrick
Executive Director
Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska



PS: You may send your gift to us via mail at **CSS, 2241 O St, Lincoln NE 68510**. Please fill out the information below (including any updates), detach the form and return it with your donation. You can also donate online at csshope.org/seasonofhope. May God bless you and your family for helping us bring Hope in the Good Life!

PPS: The image above is of St. Frances of Rome. The artwork beautifully depicts a young Virgin Mary appearing to St. Frances of Rome in a vision and offering her the privilege of holding the infant Jesus in her arms. **This Season of Hope, may we echo St. Frances of Rome and embrace our call to perform the Works of Mercy in response to the Call of God.**

Yes! I'll help nurture HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE!

Support enclosed: \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 other \$ _____

Please make your check payable to Catholic Social Services. Donate by credit card at csshope.org/seasonofhope. All contributions to CSS are tax deductible as allowed by law.

May we pray for you? List your intentions below and we will remember them at CSS:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please check this box if you DO NOT want a written acknowledgement for this gift (to request an end of year statement, email hello@csshope.org).

Please note: All single gifts \$250+ will prompt a written communication from CSS in order to comply with IRS tax laws.