



CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

Hope in the Good Life

March 2025



Aggie Gesch with a truckload of donated food from the 2022 Walk to End Hunger

St. Julian and St. Basilissa | Mike & Aggie Gesch

Marriage as a Mission of Service

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.” Matthew 7:24-25

Building a strong foundation is the most important step for everything, but especially for relationships. The strongest marriages are based not only on love for each other but also on a mutual love of God. The story of 4th-century St. Julian and St. Basilissa illustrates this beautifully. Through their union, they dedicated their lives to God and spent their time together in service to the poor and sick. Upon marriage, they distributed their property among the poor. They converted their house into

a kind of hospital, in which they housed anyone in need. St. Julian primarily cared for the men, and St. Basilissa for the women. To all, they were seen as models of charity, detachment from worldly goods, and joy.

Under the Roman emperor Diocletian, they underwent great persecution, but they never let it sway their faithfulness. Basilissa passed away peacefully, while Julian faced martyrdom for refusing to renounce his faith.

Their example reminds us that marriage is a mission, one rooted in love, sacrifice, and faith. Here in our communities, we are blessed with many faithful couples who also live out this mission.

(Continued on back page)

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Marriage as a Mission of Service (cont.)

One of those couples is Mike and Aggie Gesch. The Gesches have been volunteering at CSS for years. Mike is an active member of the St. John's Knights of Columbus, and he has been making sandwiches every week for our walk-in clients for almost 10 years. Aggie joined him in volunteering a few years ago with the Walk to End Hunger.

Aggie is known around CSS Lincoln as our “full-time volunteer,” as she spends every Monday helping in the food market and every Wednesday here with Mike and the “sandwich guys.” Aggie helps sort the food donations and encourages healthy meal options. She brings in home-baked goodies and puts together simple recipe cards and meal kits for our clients.

The Gesches are always finding new ways to help out around CSS and lend a hand in any way they can, including being community advocates in their parish of St. John's. This April, Mike and Aggie will celebrate their 49th wedding anniversary. For nearly five decades, this couple has lived out their marriage by serving others and sharing their love and hope with those around them.

As we continue bringing *Hope in the Good Life*, let's remember that hope grows strongest when we walk alongside one another—whether with a spouse, a family member, or a friend. It's not built in isolation but on a foundation of faith, love, and community. **St. Julian and St. Basilissa pray for us!**

The Walk to End Hunger that brought Aggie into CSS volunteering was spearheaded by Mike Hosek. Let's all come together for our **2025 Celebration of Hope Gala on March 15th** where we will honor Mike Hosek for his wonderful leadership and service that has inspired so much good—including Aggie's journey with CSS!

Reserve your seats online now at csshope.org.

The banner features the CSS logo at the top left, followed by the text "CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA" and "Hope in the Good Life" in green. Below this is an orange bar with the word "PODCAST" in white. A photo of a smiling couple, Bill and Stacie Hooks, is shown in the center. To the right of the photo, text reads: "Our latest podcast features **Bill & Stacie Hooks**, owners of Slim Chickens (our 2025 Celebration of Hope Silent Auction Sponsor!)". At the bottom left, it says "Listen to the full podcast episode here!" with an arrow pointing to a QR code on the right. The bottom of the banner contains the URL csshope.org/podcast.