



# CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

## Hope in the Good Life

February 2023

St. Josephine Bakhita/St. Gianna Program

### Destined for better things

Few things destroy a person’s dignity more than the feeling of being owned and abused by someone else.

Saint Josephine Bakhita was born in 1869 in southern Sudan. Kidnapped at the age of 7, she was sold many times. Beaten and abused by owner after owner, her trauma was so bad that she forgot her birthname so her captors gave her the name “Bakhita” which means “fortunate.”



When she was 13, Bakhita was sold to a Turkish official whose mistress beat her daily. Bakhita writes, “A woman skilled in this cruel art came to the general's house. Our mistress stood behind us, whip in hand. The woman had a dish of white flour, a dish of salt and a razor. When she had made her patterns; the woman took the razor and made incisions along the lines. Salt was poured into each of the wounds. My face was spared, but 6 patterns were designed on my breasts, and 60 more on my belly and

arms. I thought I would die, especially when salt was poured in the wounds ... it was by a miracle of God I didn't die. He had destined me for better things.”

In 1883, Bakhita was sold to an Italian family who treated her with kindness. They brought her back to Italy to work as a maid and caregiver to their infant. Bakhita became devoted to the child, Mimmina. When the child was old enough to attend a boarding school run by the Canossian Sisters in Venice, Bakhita accompanied her. It was there that Bakhita first heard the gospel and believed that it was God’s will that she should be freed. Slavery was illegal in Italy, so Bakhita gained her freedom and followed God’s call. She was baptized in 1890 and took the name “Josephine.” After years of discernment and prayer, Josephine joined the Canossian order, taking her final vows on December 8, 1896. For the next half century, her life was marked by simplicity, service and prayer.

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Since opening  
in 2011,  
St. Gianna  
Program  
has provided  
assistance and  
safe housing  
for  
550  
women and  
children  
fleeing domestic  
violence



#HopeintheGoodLife



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## #HopeintheGoodLife

### *Destined for better things (continued)*

“He had destined better things for me.”

For 12 years, St. Gianna Women’s Homes (SGWH) has helped victims of domestic abuse realize that God has destined better things for them. In 2011, we began with a 24-apartment complex in Lincoln staffed by the Marian Sisters, as well as a program based in Hastings called St. Gianna’s West. Our mission to help women and their children escape domestic violence has grown over the years. This includes expanding services to Auburn and Imperial and our new crisis response services in Lincoln.

To include all of the work we are doing at our four locations, our domestic violence and crisis pregnancy services will now be known as the St. Gianna Program (SGP). Please continue to pray for the protection of those SGP serves, and thank you for helping us bring them Hope in the Good Life!

 **Listen now to the sound of hope**  
 Check out our “Hope in the Good Life Podcast.”  
 Hosted by CSS Development Officer John Soukup, this podcast features stories of hope from CSS clients, volunteers, supporters and staff. Our latest podcast features Kevin Murray, the organizer behind Trumpet Fest. The podcasts are on our website at [cssshope.org/podcast](http://cssshope.org/podcast), or scan the QR code. We hope you enjoy our “Hope in the Good Life Podcast”!




**TRUMPET FEST**  
 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH  
**2:00 - 4:00 PM**  
 Saint Joseph Catholic Church  
 7900 Trendwood Dr., Lincoln, NE

A free will offering with proceeds going to Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska

In Memory of Mac McCune and Dennis Schneider

**FREE**  
 Trumpet Master Class  
 Dr. Darryl White  
 Trumpet Professor, UNL  
 1:00 - 2:00