



Hope in the Good Life NEWSLETTER

The latest uplifting updates from Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska

Called by God and **STEPPING UP TOGETHER**

Whether at the conference table or the dinner table, we often express our ideas and intentions for improvement and engagement with those around us.

For example, my husband and I are often left sitting at the table as one child runs to wash food out of their hair while the other crawls under the table to feed the dog and then there's the one sitting in timeout on the living room chair for throwing food into her sister's hair. We toss ideas back and forth for how we can create a more relaxed environment during dinner time that doesn't end in chaos. Should we eat by candlelight? Do we serve food at the table or prior to sitting down? Should we switch chairs? Should we rotate who leads prayer? *Spoiler alert: We don't have the answers so if you do, please let us know!*

At Catholic Social Services, the Leadership Team may not have food fights but we often explore ideas for how to provide more opportunities to build fellowship among the agency. Our time is filled to the brim with individual program tasks and goals, and we often unintentionally overlook the efforts of our coworkers who are equally consumed by their own programs. How do we slow down and communicate to each other how much we appreciate their efforts? At one recent meeting, as this discussion wrapped up to make way for general updates, **Poe Dee, our director of refugee and immigrant services shared some news about a former refugee family.**

Due to a series of tragic circumstances, a refugee family of eight from South Sudan needed to vacate their apartment immediately. The children were not safe and parents were split between work responsibilities and being at the hospital. In this moment of crisis, **God invited every employee at CSS to step up together and get the family to a safer location.**



Our CSS team mobilized to provide a safe place for a family in crisis

Surrounded by prayers from CSS employees unable to jump in due to distance or prior obligations—understandable in a service area of 24,000 square miles—more than a dozen of us showed up that afternoon to move furniture, install appliances, make beds, gather kitchen supplies, arrange dinner for the kids, and so much more.

At the safe location that CSS was able to provide, I watched staff mobilize and go into action. **In that moment, I was immediately struck by the ways in which God has called each of us in our talents to the Body of Christ.** A response like that could not have been possible without faith being the foundation of our work.

While we tossed ideas around earlier that day for ways to build community, God did us one better by inviting us to accompany this family in crisis to a new, safe place. So at the end of the day, maybe our dinner table doesn't need candlelight or a new seating chart. It just needs what CSS showed me that day: people willing to show up for each other, mess and all. **That's the kind of table worth gathering at.**

-Katie Patrick, CSS Executive Director

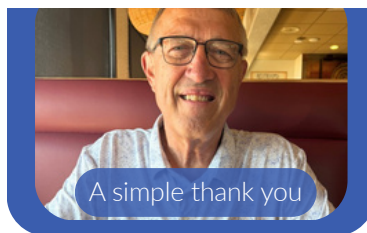
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



From the ground up



Love of Christ



A simple thank you



Hope Nurtured



Making an impact FROM THE GROUND UP



Communities, and individuals, can grow when they're built on support systems. Without them, one is more likely to be tempted to take an easier road or even give up. Like John Donne once penned, "No man is an island; entire of itself." We were made for communion: to celebrate in the joys, provide support when we're struggling, and share in all the small moments in-between.

Nolan Lemna is one individual set on building up the community around him. He has been working to bridge the gap between sustainable farmers and those facing food insecurity. After securing a \$200,000 three-year grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Nolan has been able to benefit both our CSS Food Market and the market at Community Action in Kearney.

As someone who grew up on a farm, this partnership made so much sense. I'm happy to be a part of something that honors the land and its producers, **because we are strengthening our local and state economy while nourishing our neighbors at the same time.** Some of the conservation-minded businesses we have been able to partner with are producers such as Dutch Girl Creamery, Niobrara Grain and Milling, and Common Good Farm.

Another major benefit to this particular grant is the reliability in goods received. Each week, Nolan brings a variety of items. And whether it's staples such as meat, eggs, produce, or flour, these nutritional items are always in high demand. **It has been a blessing to see first-hand the impact this is having on the people who walk through our doors.** *-Kristina Brandt, CSS Food Market Program Manager*

Nolan helps us
nourish CSS
Food Market
shoppers



CSS LINCOLN FOOD MARKET IMPACT: 9.1.25 to 7.31.26

151,876	14,880	691
LBS OF FOOD COLLECTED	BREAKFASTS & LUNCHES SERVED	FAMILIES NOURISHED

What's **HOT** at the **THRIFT SHOP: Y2K clothing & natural fibers**

There is a phenomenon where fashion trends come back in style every 20 years. This is definitely the case today with Gen Z wearing Y2K (early 2000's) styles - baggy jeans, low-rise pants and skirts, skinny glasses, matching sweat suits. All of these items were out of style 10 years ago; but now the cycle has come around again and they feel fresh and cool.

I notice lots of young people shopping for Y2K styles at St. Louise Gift & Thrift Store in Lincoln. This reflects a growing trend towards thrifting in general. A poll found that 93% of Americans bought something secondhand in 2025. Additionally, 54% of Gen Z said they buy secondhand first, before buying new. If I put a vintage Husker windbreaker out on the salesfloor, it will be gone within hours. Your uncle's old Budweiser t-shirt? Gone. Bedazzled jean jacket from 2003? Gone. The trend towards early 2000s clothing has been amplified by social media. I remember when I first saw people start wearing Y2K styles in the last 7 years, and I thought it seemed outdated. But the more I saw it (online and in-person), the more it started to seem cool, and thus my perception was subliminally altered...

Another clothing trend that is likewise being spread by social media is the **preference for natural fiber clothing.** People are looking for items that are 100% cotton, linen, wool, and silk. These and others are considered natural fibers, whereas the majority of clothing manufactured today is made out of synthetic fibers. Synthetic fibers are made from plastics, and include fabrics like polyester, nylon, acrylic, and spandex. There has been more attention recently on some negative health and environmental outcomes associated with synthetics. Meanwhile, natural fibers tend to be more durable for the long run, and even hold on to odors less than synthetics.

It'll be interesting to see when the Y2k trend tires out. It surely will eventually go out of fashion, but I also suspect that the 20-year fashion cycle has been permanently disrupted by social media going forward. You can find all sorts of people on social media who like your same niche style, so there will probably be less of a collective style in our culture as a whole. **This will be ever the more reason to come thrift at St. Louise Gift & Thrift - we have all sorts of styles from any decade - something for everyone!**



*-Caroline Nebel,
Thrift Store Manager*



Learn more about our 4 Gift & Thrift Stores at csshope.org/thriftstores

Refrigerator REFERENCE

Catholic Culture & CSS Calendar

How & why we're performing the Works of Mercy
in response to the Call of God- join us in our mission!

Our Catholic Culture: The Month of the Holy Rosary



Each October, the Catholic Church honors the Holy Rosary, especially through the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on October 7. The feast was established by Pope St. Pius V in 1571 following the Christian victory at the Battle of Lepanto. Before the battle, he called Christians throughout the West to pray the rosary for victory and later credited the triumph to that prayer. Pope Leo XIII later promoted October as a month dedicated to the rosary.

Popes and saints throughout the centuries have encouraged the faithful to pray the rosary. Padre Pio called it "the weapon against the evils of the world today," while Pope St. John Paul II described it as his favorite form of prayer. In October 2025, Pope Leo XIV likewise called Catholics to pray the rosary daily for peace.

Yet, despite its power, praying the rosary can sometimes be difficult. We become distracted or discouraged. If this sounds familiar, take comfort in knowing that even the saints struggled. St. Thérèse of Lisieux admitted in *A Story of a Soul*, "the recitation of the rosary is more difficult for me than the wearing of an instrument of penance."

Rather than giving up, Thérèse trusted in Mary. She wrote, "since she is my MOTHER, must see my good will and she is satisfied with it."

Struggling to pray the rosary is not a sign of a lack of devotion. It is an invitation to persevere and trust. The Blessed Mother sees your good intentions and is pleased. **This October, ask her help as you grow closer to Jesus through the Holy Rosary.**

A simple thank you becomes a GIFT OF HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE

Sometimes, generosity begins with a simple "thank you."

For Deacon Bill and Nancy Buchta of Grand Island, that is exactly how their relationship with Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska (CSS) began.

Several years ago, the Buchta's were helping move Nancy's parents from their home in Blue Hill, Nebraska, to an assisted-living facility in Grand Island. They had quite a few household items that were no longer needed after the move, and didn't have a way to get everything where it could do some good.

CSS stepped in.

"Catholic Social Services in Hastings came and picked up a lot of the usable things," Deacon Bill recalled. "They came and picked up beds and couches and clothes and dish towels and things that we would no longer use. I just thought we'd say thank you with a donation."

That "thank you" recently became the Buchta family's first monetary gift to CSS.

The Buchta's worked with the Catholic Foundation of Southern Nebraska to donate appreciated stock. Deacon Buchta transferred shares from three stocks that had performed well to the Foundation, which sold the shares and helped the Buchta family direct the proceeds to charities they selected, including CSS. "It allowed us to make charitable donations without paying taxes," he said.

The Buchta's were especially drawn to CSS's work of meeting people's basic needs, like providing clothing, furniture and food

to people who are struggling.

"I like that they come in to meet the needs of the community," Deacon Buchta said. "The CSS mission of doing Works of Mercy in response to the call of God, really resonates with us. Just picking up and helping out people with the basics of life, be it a bed or clothes or whatever the case may be. And I really like that they feed the hungry."

For the Buchta's, giving is ultimately an expression of faith and gratitude.

"The Lord wants the first fruits of your labor. He doesn't want your leftovers," he said. "When we were first married, it was kind of our leftovers. We see now how He [God] has blessed our life abundantly. He's saying, 'Give me your best.'"

Bill is already looking ahead to future opportunities to give, including using his required minimum IRA distribution for non-taxable charitable gifts when he reaches the eligible age of 70 and a half.

CSS is grateful that Deacon Bill and Nancy Buchta have joined the CSS family - **and that their simple "thank you" has become a gift of Hope in the Good Life for others.**

-John Soukup, CSS Development Officer



Save these upcoming
CSS
EVENT DATES

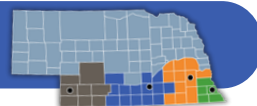
- * **FRI 10/2** MONTHLY CSS HOLY HOUR
FOR CLIENT INTENTIONS
CSS LINCOLN OFFICE CHAPEL
- SUN 10/4** BOUNTIFUL HARVEST GALA
& SILENT AUCTION
HASTINGS CITY AUDITORIUM
- SAT 10/17** COATS FOR KIDS: SPONSORED
BY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
ST. PATRICK CHURCH LINCOLN
- THUR 11/5** SOUTHWEST NEBRASKA BIG GIVE
SUPPORTING CSS SOUTHWEST
ONLINE GIVING EVENT
- SUN 2/21** TRUMPET FEST SUPPORTING
CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
ST. JOSEPH CHURCH LINCOLN
- SAT 3/20** CELEBRATION OF HOPE 2027
GALA & SILENT AUCTION
EMBASSY SUITES LINCOLN

* Monthly event- visit our website for full list of dates

See more info & register online:
csshope.org/calendar



CSS Regional Roundup: *Serving 24,000 square miles of southern Nebraska*



CSS HASTINGS: Celebrating a BOUNTIFUL HARVEST & the LOVE OF CHRIST

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Gal 6:9)

As we transition into the autumn season (and hopefully some cooler weather!), we are reminded of the blessing of a generous harvest. Here at Catholic Social Services in Hastings, we see a different kind of harvest every day—one of hope, love, and encounter with Jesus really present everyday in those with need. **I wanted to personally take this moment to invite you to join us for our upcoming Bountiful Harvest celebration.**

Bountiful Harvest is more than just an event; it is a vital moment for us to gather as a community and reflect on the extraordinary work God is doing through our staff, volunteers, and generous donors. Over this first year of my time in Hastings, I have seen remarkable growth in our ability to serve our neighbors. From our new office building and enriched Open Table diner, to the ongoing construction of our new warehouse and thrift store, God has enabled us to better meet the needs of families across South Central Nebraska. None of this would be possible without our huge support community being present and stepping up to serve others.

This year, we have the profound privilege of honoring two individuals who perfectly served this community for a lifetime. On October 4th, we will gather to present the "Love of Christ" award to Tom & Tammie Schik (pictured on the right).

This award is given to those who live out the Gospel message through extraordinary charity, humility, and dedication to their neighbors. As so many of you know personally, Tom and Tammie have been absolute pillars of faith and generosity in the Hastings area. Their tireless commitment to uplifting those around them, supporting our mission, and leading by example has left an indelible mark on our community. They do not seek the spotlight, but their quiet, steadfast love for others constantly inspires hope and love in those they encounter. I could not think of a more deserving couple to recognize this year, and we are thrilled to celebrate their influence.



Please join us in honoring Tom and Tammie and supporting the continued mission of CSS. You will find an RSVP form and a QR code located on the back panel of this newsletter. Scan the code to register online or fill out and return the form to reserve your seat.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. We look forward to celebrating this Bountiful Harvest with you!

-Jonathan Kiehl, Hastings Regional Director



SOUTHWEST NEBRASKA

Big Give

CSS SOUTHWEST: Support SW Works of Mercy on 11/5

From helping a homeless individual living in his vehicle secure a place to call home, to assisting a family displaced from their home after a devastating rainstorm, CSS Southwest (serving Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Hays, Hitchcock, Lincoln, Perkins, and Red Willow counties) is there when people need help the most. Since opening our presence in McCook, we've seen firsthand the growing needs of individuals and families in our communities. CSS provides financial assistance for a variety of urgent needs, including rent and housing expenses, utility bills, vehicle repairs, and more. Every request is considered based on the individual or family's circumstances and needs.

We're excited to share that on 11/5, we'll be participating for the first time in **Southwest Nebraska Big Give**—24 hours of giving that invites supporters to give back to their favorite local charities, learn more about the non-profits in our communities, and amplify their generosity with "power hour" matching funds. Your "Big Give" gift—no matter the size!—will make a meaningful difference for someone facing a crisis. When you give to CSS, you are helping put the Works of Mercy into action. **Your generosity provides hope, dignity, and a helping hand to our neighbors when they need it most.** To learn more and support CSS on 11/5 through Southwest Nebraska Big Give, visit csshope.org/BigGive. Save the date to make a difference in Southwest Nebraska!

-Jennifer Hinze, FSS Specialist McCook

CSS AUBURN: Blessed Beginnings

Life often unfolds in ways we cannot anticipate, reminding us that we are all part of a larger, supportive community. For one new mother, her little one decided to make an early appearance right around the Independence Day holiday. When nursing difficulties arose and she found herself unable to reach WIC for immediate assistance, she reached out to us. **Since we had walked alongside this family before, we were ready to step in and support them.**

When Grandma visited our office to pick up a can of formula, it was our pleasure to also provide a "Blessed Beginnings Box"—a gift from our community designed to act as a baby shower in a box. It was filled with diapers, newborn essentials, clothing, and a lovingly handmade quilt. We also included a donated Walmart gift card, hoping to ease any immediate stresses during those first few days at home.

The family returned the following week for food pantry staples and personal care items, giving us the opportunity to meet the newest member of their family. **It remains our sincere honor to share forward all that donors have provided as we wrap this growing family in love and support as they navigate their new chapter.**

*-April Boellstorff,
Auburn Regional Director*



REMINDER! NEW STORE HOURS: 10a-2p | WED THUR SAT
St. Francis Gift & Thrift Store | 1014 Central Ave, Auburn NE

How may we *pray for you at CSS?*

Share your prayer intentions with us, and we'll offer them during our **Rosary** in the CSS Lincoln Chapel. You may also submit requests anonymously online at csshope.org/pray

HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE NEWSLETTER | SEPT/OCT 2026

I'll support *Hope in the Good Life!*

You may also use this form to correct any mailing info found on the front panel or to provide your email address (see below)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Providing your email allows us to communicate with you digitally, saving us valuable resources (including postage) for CSS programs/services & supports SUSTAINABILITY, a CSS Core Value.

Support enclosed: \$ _____

☐ Check to receive an annual statement ONLY (individual thank you letters for each gift will NOT be sent to you)

Donate online!
csshope.org/donate



Thank you!



"It is wonderful to meet the other women here at St. Gianna's. It provides powerful support among women who have gone through similar things. It's interesting when a new woman moves in, sometimes I can see in them where I was at in the beginning of my journey. **I am able to see how far I've come and encourage them and share with them what has helped me.**"

- A St. Gianna Program client, grateful for your support of her journey to **HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE**

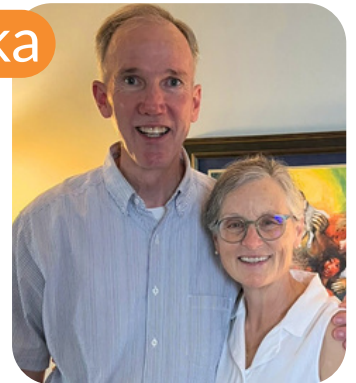
STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Hope nurtured in Nebraska

I am very blessed to be from a large family and being raised on a livestock and crops farm located 10 miles east of Des Moines. We cared for many things - fruit trees, grains and a range of two and four legged critters. It worked in no small measure because there were 12 of us, I have six sisters and three brothers, nurtured by two loving parents from the Greatest Generation who worked to impart their values that included generosity, resilience, duty and sacrifice, and hospitality. Elizabeth, my wife of 44 years, likes to mention to people that my father and mother's names are Joseph and Mary.

We raised our five children in Lincoln, moving here from Kansas, 15 years after we met at Benedictine College in Atchison, Elizabeth's home town. Her resume includes Mom, Grandmother, Labor and Delivery nurse, adjunct professor, and St. Teresa parish supporter. My earliest memory of Nebraska is of traipsing around the Omaha Stockyards with my father during his trips there to purchase feeder cattle from the Sandhills.

Prior to serving at CSS, I managed communications for the Nebraska Cattlemen's Association. I enjoyed those years, but have been especially blessed by the opportunity to be a member of the CSS team in Lincoln since 2020. My duties here primarily consist of serving clients through three outreach programs: financial assistance via the Family Support Services program, coordinating donations of furniture - both from donors and to individuals and families in need. Third, facilitating donations of vehicles to CSS and giving roadworthy ones to people in need, primarily residents of St. Gianna's Women Home and refugees settled by CSS.

There are many things to like as a member of the team. One is the opportunity to work alongside staff and volunteers, young adults to seniors alike. My faith is nurtured every day from seeing them in action - hearts and hands of Jesus embracing people where they are and offering resources wrapped in compassion and encouragement.



Here, "Hope in the Good Life" is a living reality rooted in dignity, community, and Christ-like love. It is a safety net where families find housing, the hungry receive food, immigrants find welcome, and single mothers find safe harbor and guidance.

CSS turns abstract hope into concrete action. Every grocery box and utility payment declares that every individual matters. Witnessing God's grace move through human hands turns despair into a future filled with promise.

My time at CSS has shown me that the "Good Life" is found in restoration rather than material wealth. True hope is sparked when we recognize a person's inherent, God-given value, providing the confidence that tomorrow can be better because a community shares the burden.

I am grateful for Katie Patrick and Dan Krick articulating a sentiment many of us share: "culture eats strategy for breakfast." A great plan fails without shared habits and values, but CSS thrives because it has both a strong culture and clear strategy.

-Mike Fitzgerald, FSS Program Coordinator



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#HopeintheGoodLife

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(S.A.G.)

Hope in the Good Life Newsletter

SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER 2026

Bountiful HARVEST

A New Harvest and Bountiful Future
SUNDAY 10.4.26

An evening of fellowship celebrating the work of Catholic Social Services Hastings and supporting HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE

Hastings City Auditorium - 400 N. Hastings Ave.
Social Time at 5 PM | Dinner at 6 PM | Program at 7 PM
Silent Auction throughout the evening

You're warmly invited to attend **BOUNTIFUL HARVEST 2026!** Our event & auction will raise much-needed funds for the neighbors helped through our CSS Hastings region's programs & services. Please join us as we:

- **ENJOY** a delicious meal and social time/fellowship together.
- **SHARE** how Divine Providence guided each step of our recent CSS Hastings campus expansion.
- **HIGHLIGHT** inspirational stories of impact thanks to incredible community support.
- **PRESENT** the 2026 Love of Christ Award to **Tom & Tammie Schik**.

Register & pay online with a credit card:

csshope.org/bh2026



Bountiful Harvest Registration Form

___ Yes, I/We will attend Bountiful Harvest on 10/4/26 in Hastings.
Enclosed is \$_____ for _____ tickets. (Tickets are \$75 per person)

___ No, I/We cannot attend, but enclosed is my gift of \$_____ to support the important work of Catholic Social Services Hastings.

Note: There is no charge for priests or religious to attend but a RESERVATION FORM IS REQUIRED for planning purposes.

Attendee Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

NOTE: EMAIL IS REQUIRED FOR TAX RECEIPT

Include any dietary restrictions and all attendee names for name tags (include note if needed). **Our banquet tables seat eight guests.**

Please note: this year's gala is open seating (doors open at 5:00 p.m.)

Please make checks payable to CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES.

Please mail this form back with your payment no later than 9/25/26

Use the envelope provided or mail to:

Catholic Social Services | 124 S Colorado Ave | Hastings NE 68901



COMING IN HGL EXTRA OCTOBER EDITION **digital only:**

We have MUCH more to share with you (too much to fit in a single newsletter!) including more stories and reflections on our encounters with neighbors across southern Nebraska. Join our digital communication list: csshope.org/connect

