CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

SEASON OF HOPE
Christmas 2026

As the Executive Director, I have the privilege of writing this letter to you each year. In past letters, I express our gratitude for all that you have given and the sacrifices you made throughout the year to impact those we serve. **I share with you our efforts and, of course, ask for your continued assistance in meeting the urgent needs of those we serve.**

Oftentimes, I am inspired to share the story of a client who came to us in a moment of need, trusting that we would provide them material support but was overwhelmed by the love and care that accompanied it. I'm incredibly proud of the team we have at CSS and am consistently inspired by their generous hearts. **But this year, instead of sharing a story, I want to encourage your personal prayer life.**

At a recent Catholic Charities gathering, Bishop James Ruggieri of Portland, Maine, said to us, "Prayer returns you to the Father's love and renews the charity within you."

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Refreshing, isn't it? God invites us into deeper communion with Him, so that first and foremost, we can be filled with His love, followed by the graces required for unconditional love and service to the poor and vulnerable. It isn't up to you, or me, or any one specific person to meet the needs of our neighbors—**it's God who meets their needs through us.** A radical notion for a post-modern society that tirelessly seeks justice for the poor apart from God the Father.

When you allow God to work through you, powerful encounters can happen and lives can change.



A resident came to us looking for a safe place to rebuild her life after escaping abuse and to continue her journey in sobriety. A year and a half later, she ended her program with great confidence in herself, a strong and supportive community, and a renewed faith in the Lord.

–Veronica Pino
Director of the St. Gianna Program



Every week, we have Bible Study with men at the prison, where one gentleman has been struggling because he feels like his son is going to end up in a situation like his. However, he has been encouraged by the fact that his son answers when he calls every morning to make sure he is ready for school.

–Will Stokebrand
Coordinator for the Prison & Reentry Apostolate



Theo, a retired veteran, started volunteering at our thrift store through a workforce development program in 2025. He began with basic tasks like stacking plastic grocery bags, but progressed into more complex tasks like pricing picture frames and stocking shoes. For Theo his daily volunteer job is more than work - it is community. Through CSS he has coworkers and friends who will share a laugh with him during the work day, and who will also support him through hard times outside of work.

–Caroline Nebel, Thrift Store Manager



Aisha came to CSS "broken, scared, and truly afraid that [she] and [her] girl would end up homeless." One month later, the family was moving into a new residence, and the client was filled with hope again for their future: "[CSS] didn't just help us with housing [they] helped save me emotionally and gave my daughters stability and peace."

–Katie Batenhorst, Assistant Director of Refugee & Immigrant Services

(over)

Whether you are an employee, volunteer, or donor—you have the knowledge and profound responsibility that together we are doing God's work. For it is only by His love for us, and our love for the Father, that we are equipped to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and bury the dead in a way that is totally life-giving.

As we conclude 2026, I encourage you to grow in your prayer life. Invite God to work through you. If time or distractions are a barrier, turn to St. Teresa of Avila or St. Ignatius of Loyola, well-known for bringing others into greater intimacy with the Lord, and asking them to pray for you. **"Prayer returns you to the Father's love and renews the charity within you."**



Wishing you a blessed and joyful Christmas season.

St. Teresa of Avila or St. Ignatius of Loyola, pray for us!!

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Katie Patrick

Katie Patrick
Executive Director
Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska

PS: **Please send us your prayer intentions.** Those received through Friday, January 8th will be remembered at a special CSS staff Mass during January. **To support us financially, send your gift in the enclosed envelope.** Please fill out the information below (including any updates), detach the form and return it with your donation. You may also donate online at **csshope.org/seasonofhope** or scan the QR code at the right. May God bless you and your family for helping us embrace Hope in the Good Life!

PPS: The enclosed holy card is our Season of Hope gift to you. The prayer is attributed to St. Teresa of Avila. This Season of Hope, may this prayer remind us that **we all are the hands and feet of Christ** 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: ☐$25 ☐$50 ☐$75 ☐$100 ☐$250 ☐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.*

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.

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

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