



PATRON

Winter 2024

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Every day is a blessed adventure

Divine Infant Jesus,
I know You love us
and would never
leave us and
I thank You for
Your close presence
in our lives.
Miraculous Infant,
I believe in Your
promise of peace,
blessings and
freedom from want.
I place every need
and care in Your
hands. Lord Jesus,
may I always trust in
Your generous
mercy and love.
I want to honor and
praise You now
and forever.
Amen.

One of the things I enjoy about helping out at our front desk at our Lincoln site is I never know what each day will bring. Recently, a man came in to our CSS Lincoln site asking for help as he is getting married in a few weeks and didn't have any nice clothing to wear. He shared with me how he and his fiancée had been together for 9 years and how excited he was to be taking this step in marriage. He told me how his fiancée is already set with her dress (in fact she has a few options she is deciding on!) but he still needed to get his dress shirt and slacks. I was able to give him a gift card to our St. Louise Gift & Thrift, which is located next door to our CSS Lincoln site, and sent him off to shop. After a bit, he came back and informed me that the gift card was not going to be enough to cover the items that he needed. I told him I would walk over to the store with him to see what we could figure out.

When we got there I found out that a volunteer had helped him pick out some nice clothes to wear- a dress shirt, slacks, and dress shoes. He was so excited to show me



what they had found and asked my advice on if the outfit looked nice and if he needed to polish the black shoes to make them shine even more than they already did. It was beautiful to see this encounter and the ways the volunteer helped him find just the right outfit for his special day. It gave him a sense of dignity and pride. When he went to pay he voiced his concern that the total would be more than the value of the gift card I gave him. Another client, who is experiencing homelessness, heard what was going on and offered to use his own St. Louise Gift & Thrift card to pay for the few extra dollars that would be due. I thanked him and told him we would take care of the difference, but when everything was rung up, the total was less than what was on the card! I offered my congratulations and asked him what his fiancée's name was and if I could be praying for them. He smiled from ear to ear, shared her name and when their wedding date is. Please take a moment to pray for Chris and Aimee who were married on November 5th!

-Alexis Broulliette
Outreach Coordinator, Lincoln

Inside:

Shrinking the CSS desert



It's the little things that mean so much



"I'm just blessed with everything Jesus has done for us!"



Shrinking the CSS desert

Katie Patrick
Executive Director

Do you live in the CSS desert? Sadly, it's a term I've heard recently that references places in our Diocese without the physical, or even felt, presence of Catholic Social Services. While it doesn't exude feelings of warmth or joy, and to be honest from an executive director's perspective is fairly concerning, my hope is that our continued efforts and vision for the future will cultivate a sense of belonging for all who live within the Diocese whether you are in a CSS desert or not.

In January 2023, Hope Weninger, a wife, mother and parishioner at St. Mary Catholic Church in Nebraska City, joined the CSS Auburn team as our family support services specialist. Hope assisted clients who called for help with rent, utilities and other expenses that presented a financial hardship to the family. In the months that followed, as CSS ramped up our sustainability and recycling efforts in Lincoln, Hope was quick to jump in and support our new ecommerce operations. Today, Hope, who also has an MBA, works full-time as our accounting & human resource manager.

As a pro-family, Catholic agency, we prioritize family, and are actively building internal support to take care of one another. In September, Jolene Frook joined our team. She and her family live in Geneva and are parishioners at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Jolene arrived rather timely, starting her role as organizational resilience associate, a unique position that invites her to lean into any program, at any time, in either Lincoln or Hastings. With a team of over 70 staff members, we occasionally face unexpected life events, such as surgeries or deaths in the family, as well as planned absences, like the arrival of a new baby or an extended trip home. However, since it's our responsibility to respond to

the urgent needs of the community, there are always activities and services that require our attention.

We are blessed that Jolene came to us with more than 20 years of experience in the mental health field. Her knowledge, reliability, and caring nature make her an excellent fit to respond to our staff needs and clients at a moment's notice.

The newest member to join our team and help us increase visibility and strengthen the CSS desert, is Jennifer Hinze from McCook, Nebraska. She and her family are parishioners at St. Patrick Catholic Church in McCook. Jennifer joins our team to serve as the family support specialist for the western part of our Diocese, a role formerly held by Tonya Olsen and based in Imperial. With Jennifer located in McCook, CSS is eager to collaborate with the great church groups and nonprofits in the area and serve as an additional resource that meets the needs of the poor and vulnerable while living our core values of dignity, integrity, empathy, trust, and sustainability.

Ultimately, while there are areas where CSS can expand, much of what we aim to achieve depends on you. Whether you're in Red Cloud, Falls City, Holdrege, or Wahoo, we'd love to connect. If you're reading this, you're already engaged with our publications—great! If you don't already follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, please do. Visit our website to learn how you can give financially, volunteer, donate furniture and household items, and more.

If you have ideas for new ways to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable in your community, and would like to do so with CSS's support, let us know. We'd love to hear from you! And please remember, you're always welcome to tour any of our facilities. Connecting in person can be a great way to see our work firsthand and thank you for your ongoing support—whether through financial contributions or prayers. All are deeply appreciated, valued, and inspire us daily.



Hope Weninger,
Accounting/HR Manager,
Family Support
Services Specialist

"Living in Nebraska City and serving the people of the surrounding four counties helps to give CSS a more visible presence in our area. The need is here. It is important for those who are struggling to have someone to turn to to help them get through the bumps in the road."

"Service to others has been on my heart since age 9, when I learned of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize...I was moved by how one woman could meet the fundamental needs of another with gentle basic care. It has been 35 years since then, and my heart continues to be moved. It is a blessing to be part of a team committed to the compassionate care of others."

Jolene Frook,
Organizational Resilience
Specialist



Jennifer Hinze,
Family Support
Services Specialist

"I'm just in awe of the kindness and assistance the staff show towards the people facing hardships. In my new role as the family support specialist, I hope to bridge the gap between Imperial and Hastings and provide that same support for those in need. Along with other agencies in the southwest Nebraska, CSS will be a great addition."

It's the little things that mean so much

Bill Sullivan

Imperial Thrift Store Manager

With Thanksgiving on the horizon taking stock of what we are thankful for is, hopefully, one of many traditions practiced at this time.

At Imperial's St. Isidore Gift and Thrift we usually have our yearly volunteer appreciation dinner a bit later, but with events stacked up later in the year the dinner took place mid- November. Naturally we are most appreciative of our volunteers but sometimes I don't think the volunteers realize how they are an absolute must in order for us to do what we do. Most are very humble, saying, "I didn't do much." That is a point that can be debated but even if it isn't much, all the little things pile up to help folks in southwest Nebraska in a big way. So our little appreciation dinner is our way of recognizing those doing Jesus' work helping those in need.



After the dinner we had several pieces of cheesecake left over. The caterer for the event had nowhere for the cheesecake to go. I suggested a young widow in the community with several young children who can always use a little help (Mt 25:35-40). She approved, and on our way home we dropped off the cheesecake. Mom met us at the door with two of the kids alongside. I mentioned where we had come from and that we had leftover cheesecake. Those two kiddos' eyes lit up and at the same time squealed, "Cheesecake!" Mom was all smiles and thanked us for thinking of them as she closed the door. I headed back to the car with a smile on my face as well as in my heart.

It was a little thing but it gave much joy, not only in the receiving but also in the giving.- Luke (6:38).

Giving the gift of stock: A meaningful way to help us provide Hope in the Good Life

When you make a donation to Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska (CSS), you join a mission to provide Hope in the Good Life to those in need. One impactful way to contribute is through a gift of stock. This method of giving not only supports CSS's vital programs but also offers potential financial benefits for you as a donor.

CSS donor and volunteer, John White agrees: "I was fortunate to work for a large corporation during my career and accumulated shares over the years," said White. "The cost basis of those shares is very low, so if I sold them there would be capital gains to pay. But since I donated them to CSS, I can use their full market values as a charitable deduction and CSS gets the full value. It's a win-win!"

Why Consider a Gift of Stock?

A gift of stock can be a tax-savvy way to make a difference. White added that supporting non-profit organizations like CSS that make the community a better

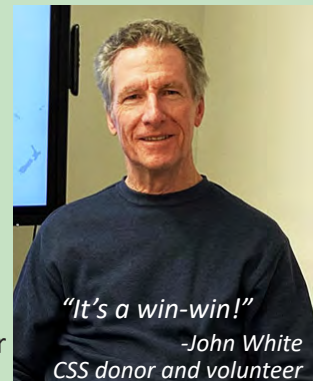
place is important. "Using appreciated stock or donating directly from an IRA can have significant tax advantages depending on your financial situation and age."

How Does It Work?

Contact CSS: Reach out to CSS to obtain our brokerage account information and ensure the transfer process is seamless.

Instruct Your Broker: Notify your financial advisor or broker of your intent to donate stock, providing them with CSS's account details.

Confirm the Gift: Once the transfer is complete, CSS will acknowledge your gift and provide the necessary documentation for your tax records.



"It's a win-win!"
-John White
CSS donor and volunteer

The Impact of Your Gift

Your generosity helps CSS carry out its mission to serve

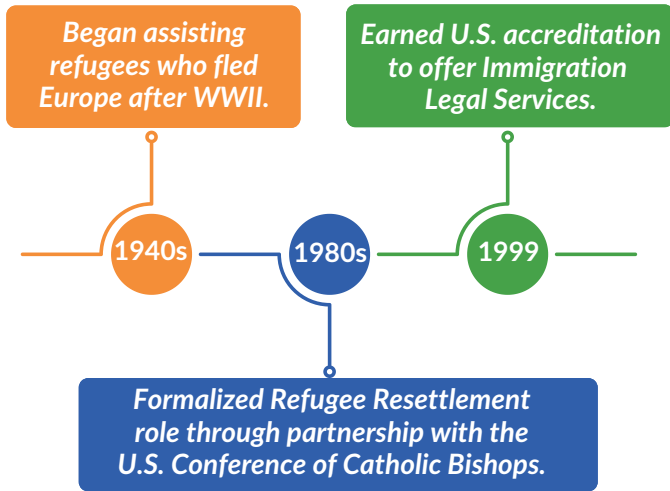
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Our Mission is to perform the **Works of Mercy** in response to the call of God.

“Pray for us as we serve the needs of immigrants who remind us that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph [fled to] Egypt, escaping violence in their home country.” - Brad Brestel, Attorney, Immigration Legal Services

Catholic Social Services has a strong tradition of living the Works of Mercy by **Welcoming the Stranger** through **Refugee Resettlement & Immigration Legal Services**.



This quarter, our ILS team, based in Lincoln, traveled to McCook to encounter the immigrant community across all reaches of Southern Nebraska.



Immigration Legal Service Clients



Total Refugee Arrivals



Job Applications Submitted for Refugee Clients



Ukrainian Refugee Arrivals



Clients Attended Cultural Orientation or Employment Readiness Courses

OUR WORK NOURISHING HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE



2,401

Total Lbs. Fresh Produce Donated to Lincoln



254.35

Total Lbs. Food Grown in Lincoln Garden

CSS's commitment to providing healthy meals begins with the generous donations of fresh ingredients.



10,783

Sack Lunches Distributed in Lincoln & Hastings



1,670

Hot Breakfasts Served in Lincoln



18,646

Total Lbs. Food Donated from Lincoln Walk to End Hunger



24,753

Total Lbs. Food Donated in Auburn, Hastings, Imperial, Lincoln



Our fresh produce sharing basket at CSS Auburn



100

Food Boxes Provided in Hastings



1,747

Individuals Received Food from Lincoln & Auburn Food Markets

OTHER IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS THIS QUARTER:

4,674

Safe Nights Provided at St. Gianna Program

\$59,456.97

Total Monetary Assistance Provided Through Family Support Services

14,771

Personal Encounters at our Thrift Stores

137,248

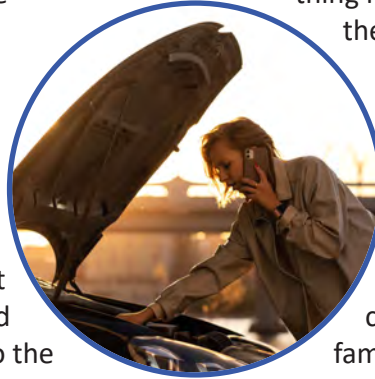
Total Pounds Recycled



Finding hope during a tough time

Each week, our Family Support Services receives an endless stream of phone calls from individuals facing overwhelming challenges. On the other end of the line are people like “Laura,” their voices carrying desperate pleas for help. Our dedicated team listens with compassion and responds with empathy, offering both hope and support in a time of crisis.

For the past five weeks, Laura has been running herself ragged caring for her 14-year-old daughter, who was hospitalized in Lincoln. The demands of being by her daughter’s side meant she had to miss work, and she soon lost her job. Recently, her daughter was transferred to Children’s Hospital in Omaha. On the way to the hospital, Laura’s car broke down. With no other options, she called the police, who towed her car to the hospital parking lot.



Laura’s family was already in a dangerous financial position, living paycheck to paycheck. Their rent is \$735/month with a housing voucher, but her husband’s income can only stretch so far. It covers food and part of the bills, but with everything needed to support Laura, her husband, and their three teenage children, it comes up short.

Laura knew she couldn’t navigate these difficult times alone. She turned to CSS for help with car repairs, rent, and utility bills to keep her family afloat. Thanks in large part to our donors, our Family Support Services staff could step in and cover the utility bills in full contributing \$740 toward their rent, helping the family manage their \$1,740 car repair bill.

Laura’s family can now focus on what matters most—caring for their daughter and looking ahead with renewed hope for the future.

2024 Thanksgiving FOOD BASKETS

This Holiday season, we're especially grateful for our donors and volunteers who helped distribute Thanksgiving Food Baskets in Auburn, Hastings, and Lincoln. Their time, effort, and kindness brought HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE to so many families!

"I can't think of anything that I'm not thankful for. I am extremely thankful for this organization that helps provide food for people in need, and so it's a blessing for us. I'm very grateful to you guys, I really am. It's really very helpful, and I'm so blessed with my family, and I'm just blessed with absolutely everything that Jesus has done for us."

—Donna, Auburn Thanksgiving Basket Recipient



**CATHOLIC
SOCIAL SERVICES**
OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

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#HopeintheGoodLife

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(S.A.G.)

The Patron

Winter 2024

Giving the gift of stock: a meaningful way to help us provide Hope in the Good Life

(continued from page 5)

the vulnerable across Southern Nebraska. From food pantries and family support services, to women escaping domestic violence and refugee resettlement, your support strengthens CSS's ability to transform lives with compassion and care.

By choosing to give the gift of stock, you create a lasting legacy of hope for individuals and families in need, while maximizing the value of your donation. "I volunteer at CSS, and my wife just started as a volunteer," added White. "We see the lives that are touched by the love that people here demonstrate. Helping, in many cases, takes money for clothing, food, shelter or whatever. We want to help enable the good work that CSS does so well."

For more information about donating stock to CSS, please contact CSS Development Officer John Soukup, or visit csshope.org. Together, we can build stronger communities rooted in faith, service, and love, and bring more Hope in the Good Life.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!

*Celebration
of
HOPE
Gala & Silent Auction*

**Saturday, March 15th, 2025
Embassy Suites | Lincoln, NE**

**SUPPORTING CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF
SOUTHERN NEBRASKA & *Hope in the Good Life***

More soon at csshope.org