

St. Gianna Women's Homes
Catholic Social Services
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No Greater Love

The Quarterly Newsletter of St. Gianna Women's Homes of Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska

OUR MOST IMPORTANT WORK

Jealousy/ownership. Drug abuse. Abrupt Mood Changes. History of Abuse in the Family. Alcohol Abuse. Stalking Behavior. Depression. Homicide Threat. Increased Severity/Frequency of Abuse. Lack of Employment. Suicide Threat. Use of Weapons. Pushed/Shoved/Grabbed. Slapped/Punched. Choked. Bitten/Scratched. Lost Consciousness. Kicked. Spit Upon. Emotional Abuse. Physically Restrained. Objects Thrown. Sexual Abuse. Abusive to Pets. Threatened to Take Children. Intimidation. Financial Abuse. Isolation. Abused/Hurt Children. Verbal Abuse.

These are all of the entries on the "Lethality Assessment" of our intake form for women who come to us at St. Gianna Women's Homes. To think that any woman or child could suffer these forms of abuses is sickening. Unfortunately, the reality is the women and children we provide shelter for experience most if not all of these abuses prior to coming to us.

The way these women and children are treated prior to coming to St. Gianna's is reprehensible. It is appalling. It is disgusting. It is real.

Our sisters, staff, and volunteers do the work of Jesus Christ everyday with these women and children. They provide shelter, companionship, mentorship, education, safety, and love. It is a joy to witness their work.

Will you consider partnering with the Marian Sisters and staff at St. Gianna's and helping out with prayers and a monetary donation?

This is the most important work the Church does.....Reaching out and helping the poor and the vulnerable. It is Pro-Life work. It brings hope and love to those who lack hope and love.

When we die and meet Jesus I'm guessing He will have a special place in His Sacred Heart for people who pray for and donate to women and children escaping from abuse, domestic violence, and murder.

Please consider partnering with us to continue to bring hope and security for the women and children of St. Gianna's. Together, we will be saving lives and building up women and children who need help.

Thank you for your support of St. Gianna Women's Homes. And thank you for your faith in Jesus Christ! May God bless and keep all of us.

Cheers,
Fr. Justin Fulton
Executive Director, Catholic Social Services



Here is your copy of *No Greater Love*



EXTENDING A LEGACY OF FAMILY AND LOVE (CONTINUED)

"Carol's greatest legacy is her family," Joe shares. "And, now, I would like to extend this legacy to Catholic Social Services." Carol passed away almost one year ago but she is still finding people who need her. Carol's spirit lives on through this generous donation and she will continue to help St. Gianna's be a safe home for women and their children and allow them time to rebuild their life, become autonomous and build trust with others.

Your donation of stock and other investments is a wonderful way to impact those we serve. If you are like Carol's husband, Joe McNeil, the value of your stock and other investments has grown over the years.

Current Stock Gift. By transferring your stock to Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska, you can enjoy the benefits of tax savings on this year's return. In addition to your charitable deduction, you will avoid paying capital gains tax that would otherwise be due on the sale of your appreciated investment.

Please contact the CSS Advancement Office at (402) 327-6235 or email mbirkel@csssus.org for more information.

CAROLE FESTO

A BENEFIT FOR
ST. GIANNA WOMEN'S HOMES

Save the Date:
Sunday, Dec. 13th

More details
coming soon!



“I’M PINOCCHIO”

I don’t think I am exaggerating when I say that everyone has had enough of COVID-19. It has become very wearisome to get those masks on and keep them on, and wash those hands umpteen times a day. It doesn’t look as though it will stop any time soon so we just make the most of it. We make it a part of our lives and can even offer it as penance. What a wonderful form of sacrifice not to complain about it all. The Lord has everything under control so let go.

How are the children handling this? They are doing better than most I would say. This morning two masked children passed my office on their way to school. They kept a safe distance and told me they were on their way to school and told me “good bye.” It was just another day. One of our four year olds was on his way out the door with mom in the lead. Sister told him, “Good bye Gabe.” He came back with “I’m not Gabe I am Pinocchio.” Sister returned with, “You aren’t Pinocchio, you’re Gabe.” “No I’m not, I’m Pinocchio.” So Sister said, “Well then, good-bye Pinocchio.” To which he said, “Good-bye.”



Several days ago, Sister met two children in the hall and asked them what they needed. They said they needed a ladder. Since neither one was big enough to carry a ladder she knew their mother had not asked them to get one. Sister asked them what they wanted it for. The girl piped up, “Well, we got locked out of our apartment and we thought we could use a ladder to get into our apartment through a window.” Sister was so glad she asked as their apartment happens to be on second floor!!

At this time we have a house full of little children and babies. We love it. Never a dull moment! A few days ago a friend of St. Gianna’s sent us baby and toddler clothes. We were so happy to receive them. Another brought lovely colored plastic dinnerware for children. After giving those gifts we were asked, “What else could you use”? Since this question comes up quite often, we will share a list of items we are most in need of at this time.: **Dish drainers (for drying dishes), Pots and pans, Knives (kitchen), Cutting boards, Strainers, Brooms, Mops, Bath towels, Shower curtain liners, 13 gallon kitchen trash cans, Serving spoons, Can openers, Cake pans, Body wash, Shampoo and Conditioner, Toothpaste, and Toothbrushes for children and adults.** If you are interested in donating any item large or small, you could take them to Catholic Social Services and identify them as for St. Gianna. You can be sure that any item will be most appreciated.

No matter how surreal things may seem at times, the children can still be children at St. Gianna and that is wonderful. Gabe, you can be Pinocchio whenever you want to be. Blessings to all of you. We thank you for all your prayers and support. You are in our prayers.

-Sr. Bernadette Radek, M.S.



RUNBORN, an ambitious 10 day, 520-mile trek across Nebraska this past June by Steve Sousek, raised over \$20,000 for St. Gianna Women's Homes. We're grateful for the generosity of many donors and supporters as well as Steve's athletic and spiritual dedication to our mission. Thank you!

BUILDING BRIDGES OF SUPPORT DURING A DIFFICULT TIME

One of the most difficult topics for almost anyone to discuss is money.

At St. Gianna’s we have been blessed with an opportunity to address this challenging topic in a way that not only educates, but that also builds community. The first three sessions of Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin’-By World have exceeded our expectations. The ladies are creating a space where they are able to share and grow together, learning from each other just as much as from the class itself. Over the past year, we have been working to strengthen the community at St. Gianna’s. COVID-19 made that incredibly difficult, putting a halt to most of the activities. After such a prolonged period of isolation, this class offers a space in which the women can connect again, sharing in their common experiences and forming friendships. Having a community of support is important for all of us, especially if we are trying to make changes - which is the focus of this class. Together, we are diving into the circumstances we have encountered and the choices we have made that brought us where we are now, and what we can do to make the changes that we desire.



It has also provided an amazing opportunity to involve mentors from the Lincoln community and to create strong, positive relationships that can support the women both in and out of the sessions. We are so thankful for each of the amazing ladies who have stepped into that role of mentorship. Having the mentors present to offer guidance and to share their various experiences is an invaluable asset to this new program, and it creates bonds that we hope will outlast each woman’s stay at St. Gianna’s. The mentors are creating bridges that will assist the women not only in building up their knowledge in the financial realm during this class, but will also serve as a support that is greatly needed any time we try to make lasting changes in our lives.

-Veronica Hotovy, Marilu Cazares

EXTENDING A LEGACY OF FAMILY AND LOVE

A generous stock donation honors the memory of a woman who loved St. Gianna Women’s Homes and will continue to support women and their families fleeing domestic violence. Carol J. McNeil of Lincoln, passed away October 15, 2019. Carol was born on February 3, 1947, in Lincoln to Garret and Mary (Shoemaker) Oosting. She married Joseph McNeil on June 22, 1968, and they welcomed two children into the world- Joe, Jr., and Michael.

was done in a friendly, loving way. She had a great sense of humor and was always joking with friends. “One day while preparing lunch for the day care kids she fixed tuna casserole. A couple of the kids saw her opening the tuna can. They thought it looked like the can they use every day to feed their cats with. So Carol told them she was fixing ‘Cat Food Casserole’ for their lunch. The next day one of the mothers asked Carol, ‘What are you feeding my kids?’ From then on Cat Food Casserole was a lunch favorite!”



Carol McNeil

In his virtual address to the May, 2020 UNL graduating class, NU volleyball coach John Cook said there are three questions he asks himself every day. The first question is “Who needs me today? I need to figure out who that person is and take care of them. It could be a family member or teammate. Then I need to find them and help them.”

Reflecting on Coach Cook’s speech Joe McNeil states, “I’m sure my wife Carol never consciously woke up asking herself who needs me? She had a God-given talent for accomplishing it without making it part of a ‘To Do List.’ Managing an in-home day care for over 20 years, raising two boys, having an active parish life and being supportive and comforting for her husband she saw plenty of people who needed her. She recognized their needs without being asked.”

“Even before we were married Carol said she would like to have a dozen kids. I never was sure when she was joking”, Joe recalls. “She wasn’t joking. After a couple of years of trying we learned we were not going to have children the ‘old fashion’ way. After ten years of marriage we received a phone call telling us to pick up our baby boy. We had lived in Kansas for most of our working lives and worked with Catholic Charities of Northwest Kansas. Because so many couples wanted to adopt they had a policy limiting adoptions to a maximum of two per family. Almost three years later we were blessed with another son.”

Sometimes it was just a hug, visiting a neighbor or a phone call to someone hundreds of miles away. It almost always

(continued on back page)