



CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

Hope in the Good Life

April 2023

St. John Vianney/Hastings Food Recovery Program

Our inspiration to serve

Much has been written about the life of St. John Marie Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests- and namesake of our Catholic Social Services (CSS) Hastings regional site. Many know that as a priest in a small village in France, Fr. Vianney's gift as a confessor would draw thousands to his church, some waiting in line for two or three days. He also had a strong devotion to the poor, instilled in him as a child. His parents would often assist those in need and his grandparents hosted Benedict Joseph Labre (who later became a patron saint of the homeless) as he passed through the area on his pilgrimage to Rome.



St. John Vianney also had a deep devotion to St. Francis of Assisi which led him to become a Third Order Franciscan because of his love for the poor. His dedication to serve the poor and hungry is one reason our CSS Hastings regional site is named after him.

CSS has had a permanent site in Hastings since 1991. Our services have grown over the years and include a food pantry and emergency services (direct cash assistance for rent, utilities, and more). We are proud to collaborate with Open Table and other local organizations for our Sack Lunch program.

One of our programs that has seen recent growth is our Food Recovery Program. It began in 2005 with us receiving surplus bakery items from Russ's Market in Hastings. Shortly thereafter we added more bakery items and produce from the Kearney Food Bank, gathered from the local Walmart and Sam's Club as part of the Feeding America Program. In 2010, the Kearney Food Bank's food recovery program was acquired by Food Bank of the Heartland. In October 2017, Food Bank of the Heartland invited us to partner with them in picking up recovery food from the Walmarts and Sam's Club in Grand

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CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

HASTINGS

Calendar Year 2022 Impact

FOOD DISTRIBUTION



350,000
Pounds
of Surplus Food

237
Food Boxes

181
Holiday Boxes

34,000
Sack Lunches

HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE!

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#HopeintheGoodLife

Our inspiration to serve (continued)

Island and Hastings. We offered to do a trial run picking up food just from Hastings Walmart to see if this was feasible for us.

We discovered that with lots of volunteer manpower and the added resources of our 24 foot box truck, along with a 400 sq. ft. walk-in freezer and a 200 sq. ft. walk-in refrigerator, the volume of food was manageable. We then contacted 10 small food pantries in southwest Nebraska to see if they were interested in receiving food recovery items. The response was overwhelmingly positive. With a rural food distribution system set up, we felt confident we could handle the volume coming to us, agreed to the partnership proposed by the Food Bank of the Heartland, and became their distributor across southwestern Nebraska. We now distribute food to 14 different pantries across southern Nebraska as well as a weekly distribution of food to the Crossroads Mission in Hastings. Three distribution routes were established, with a food drop every month. Currently our outreach stretches from Aurora on the eastern edge to as far west as Benkleman.

Inspired by St. John Vianney, we're feeding the poor and hungry and bringing *Hope in the Good Life* to many of our southern Nebraska neighbors.



Mark your calendar- the 10th annual Give Hastings Day takes place on Thursday, May 4th. Your gift to CSS on Give Hastings Day will help us serve our neighbors in need through our Hastings regional site.

Though Give Hastings Day is May 4th, there's no need to wait to make your gift. **Early giving begins April 19th!** You can donate at givehastings.org/catholicsocialservices.

If online giving doesn't fit your style, please mail or drop off your gift (made payable to Hastings Community Foundation and write "Catholic Social Services" in the memo field) to: Hastings Community Foundation 800 W. 3rd Street, Suite 232 Hastings, NE 68901 (second floor of the Heritage Bank building) or Give Hastings Day headquarters at "The Lark" 809 W. 2nd Street. Thank you for helping us bring Hope in the Good Life to those we serve in the Hastings community. God bless!