

St. Gianna Women's Homes
Catholic Social Services
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Spring 2020

No Greater Love

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

TRUE ROLE MODELS

Oh, Winter! You are lovely but I am so ready for spring training and baseball already!!!

Don't you just love this picture? This is a picture of my niece Juliana on the right and her friend Vaida on the left. Their moms both grew up as friends and they will now grow up as friends.....hopefully, not enemies as evidenced by the picture!! My sister and Juliana are bigtime Kansas City Royals fans, as am I. Vaida and her mom Jill are big time New York Yankees fans.....I'm guessing the Yankees will have a better record than the Royals will this year. But we still have celebrated a World Series Championship in the recent past and the Yanks have not!!!



I love spring training (Pitchers and Catchers report to it in mid-February) because it gives baseball aficionados a little something to look forward to in the doldrums of winter. As the boys of summer head to Florida and Arizona to hone their skills, the baseball world looks to the upcoming warmer days and we all look forward to seeing what our teams can do this year.

I am happy Jill and my sister are passing down their love of baseball with their daughters. And I am proud of these young women as role models for their daughters---not in baseball---but in work, faith, femininity and life.

The women we care for at St. Gianna Women's Homes are role models for their children too. The women there have acted boldly to escape domestic violence situations and some have even survived human trafficking. They enter St. Gianna's scared, anxious, timid, and wounded---and our Marian Sisters, staff, and volunteers give them a 'hand-up' to get them back on their feet again. With time and God's grace they build confidence and gather the necessary skills and courage to live greatly. They work so hard to come out of the darkness in which they have been living. They become living stories of survival and hope for others. They are role models. And they pass along their love and their courage to their children. They make us proud!

Jesus is the reason for our existence at St. Gianna Women's Homes. He protects, heals, nurtures, and sustains these women through our works. We cannot exist without Him. We cannot exist without you and your support. It costs \$15,700 per mother per year to house and protect these precious lives. If we did not have your prayers and financial backing, these women and children could very well still be in danger. Thank you for helping them back on their feet and thank you for helping them continue to be role models for their children.

May God bless us all!

Cheers,

Father Justin Fulton
Executive Director, Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska

Here is your copy of *No Greater Love*



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND POVERTY GO HAND IN HAND (CONTINUED)

law defining and criminalizing trafficking persons into the country.

- 2006** -- Nebraska passes its first state law defining and criminalizing human trafficking.
- 2011** -- Shared Hope gives Nebraska a Grade F for legal framework addressing sex trafficking of children.
- 2012** -- The Governor's Task Force convenes for the first time. Nebraska brings its first trafficking prosecution to state court in State v. Mangiameli, which leads to a conviction and sentence of 30-50 years for sex trafficking a boy under 15 years of age.
- 2015** -- The Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF) is created to coordinate the state's response to human trafficking involving law enforcement, prosecutors, service providers, and advocates
- 2016** -- The NHTTF conducts a series of human trafficking training sessions for law enforcement and service providers.
- 2017** -- State Legislature passes LB298, which improves the language of the criminal law and increases penalties for human trafficking. On February 23rd, advocates from the anti-trafficking movement testify at the committee hearing. It passes without any opposing vote.
- 2019** -- At the end of 2019, there were 22 proactive operations, 135 human trafficking investigations, 64

arrests, and 33 prosecutions statewide of which, 13 were human trafficking. Shared Hope gives Nebraska a Grade A.

- 2020** -- Governor Pete Ricketts proclaims January, Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

At St. Gianna's Home for Women, we have the privilege of caring for survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Our ministry, like many others in our community, is reliant upon strong, local laws and policies that not only investigate and prosecute the perpetrators but that also engage service providers and advocates who care for survivors.

It isn't easy, caring for victims, for survivors of human trafficking. Those who have fled their captor, arrive to us broken, and oftentimes battling substance abuse, anxiety, depression, night terrors, and much more. We live in a broken world, but so long as we have and give hope to those in need, we are living the Gospel. To learn more about how you can help CSS and become a mentor for survivors as they seek strength and dignity, without fear for the future, contact me at kpatrick@cssisus.org.

Katie Patrick
Regional Director of Social Services

PAY BACK

Several days ago I called a former resident asking if she would be willing to do a short testimonial for a video Catholic Social Services was preparing for the Celebration of Caring Banquet. Her response was immediate, “Sure, I would do anything for St. Gianna”. Her response was heartwarming but also in keeping with the wish of so many of our ladies to “pay back”. They are so grateful for the gift they have been given during their stay at St. Gianna. As I was musing over some of the pay backs we have received, I thought of one that



happened just recently. One of our residents was a manicurist before she came to St. Gianna. She had all her equipment with her: salts, creams, and even the wax and wax warmer. She wanted so badly to give us sisters a manicure, but since manicures are not a high priority on a nun’s list, it didn’t happen until she gave it to us as a Christmas present!! I must admit it felt great to be a little pampered and we had a very good conversation during those ninety minutes. As I was leaving I expressed my thanks but she said, “Oh thank you for letting me do it,” and gave me a big hug.

One of our former residents, who became a friend to a present resident, now helps with taking her children to school because she doesn’t have a car. Several residents help as volunteers at Catholic Social Services as their way of saying “thank you.” We can see that being a volunteer has added a new dimension to their lives. We can’t count the times a knock on our convent door brought with it warm chocolate chip cookies right out of the oven, soft gooey brownies, or a whole meal—often a delicious ethnic meal.

When women first come to us they are so turned in on themselves and their physical, psychological and emotional trauma that they tend to isolate themselves. When they are finally able to realize their dignity as a woman and a precious child of God, they start reaching out to others. When we see this we are so grateful to God for the gift these women become. We love and thank God for each and every one of them. May God Bless each of you.

Sr. Bernadette Radek, M.S.

Capitol City Ford & Mustang Club event raised funds for St. Gianna’s

This past September, the Capitol City Ford & Mustang Club (CCFMC) held its 38th Annual All Makes Auto & Truck Show at Havelock. For the 2019 show, the club chose St. Gianna Women’s Homes as the charity for the event. The St. Peter’s Knights of Columbus cooked and served lunch and the St. Peter’s Boy Scouts distributed bottles of water for free will donations. The CCFMC, along with the Knights, the Boy Scouts and many generous sponsors, raised \$7,225.00 for St. Gianna’s. Members of CCFMC, St. Peter’s Knights and Boy Scouts recently presented a check to Fr. Fulton, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services of Souther Nebraska.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND POVERTY GO HAND IN HAND

Fleeing domestic violence is hardly ever an easy decision. Leaving a man who once loved you but started to abuse you doesn’t necessarily mean you never loved him. But his struggles can no longer be solved, excused, or endured, by you and most importantly by your children. The abuse became too much to bear and whether it was physical, verbal, emotional, or psychological; you had had enough. As the news breaks to family and friends, one might ask: *well why didn’t you just leave sooner.* Let me tell you why.

Poverty, and the prospect of poverty, reduces options. Separating oneself from an abuser can be expensive. It usually requires finding a new living arrangement, paying for moving expenses, and then all the details of changing your address and updating any and all emergency contact information – time consuming tasks that can easily cut into your work schedule, and your paycheck. If you have children, you might need to transfer them to a new school district and inform the school office of the situation. Children living in homes with conflict often struggle academically, and sometimes socially, so any supplemental learning and behavioral support they were receiving might need to be paused, or worse, stopped.

You break it to family and friends that he won’t be coming with you to birthdays, work events, and family gatherings anymore. Many people will be shocked at his absence but probably just because you hid the abuse so well. Time goes by and the curiosity and concern dissipate. You and your children settle into apartment living, but one thing remains and follows you everywhere – financial insecurity.

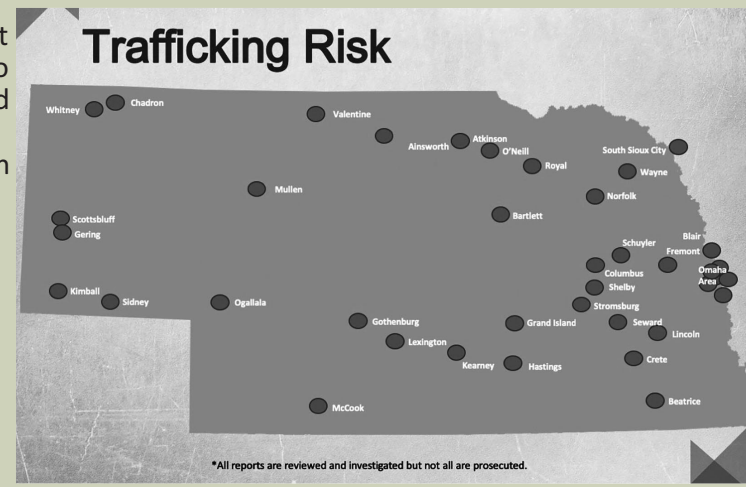
In June, with great interest by our residents, we hosted a guest speaker from a local bank and credit union. She presented to the women about how to achieve financial stability. She opened the conversation by asking our current residents: *What do you want for your future? What are your goals? Where do you want to be five years from now?*

The women quickly responded with answers and comments such as: *I want to buy a home. I want to improve my credit score. How do I budget my monthly*

expenses so that I can save? What community resources are available to low-income families wanting to buy a home? What do I do for retirement?

To lay the foundation for these women and motivate them to pursue the answers, our speaker moved onto discussing **SMART** goals. Encouraging the women to be **specific** with their goals. Identifying ways to **measure** progress toward achieving their goals. Reflecting with the women as to whether their goals are **attainable** and **realistic** and most importantly, setting a **timetable** for which to achieve their goals.

Conversations such as the one we shared that evening are just the beginning. Many of the women we serve at St. Gianna’s are coming from severe situations of financial insecurity. Transitioning from a mentality of survival to one of sustainability takes a lot of hard work. At Catholic Social Services, we remain



continuously grateful to our generous donors and prayerful supporters who help make our work possible. With your continued support, we will be able to serve and hopefully guide women not only in ways of spiritual and physical wellbeing, but also of economic stability and prosperity so that they too can be powerful witnesses of strength, resilience, and hope.

A survivor of human trafficking is rarely freed of his or her captor. While the physical chains of captivity have been broken, he or she continues to suffer from the experience of having been treated as a commodity rather than a human being. As they leave behind an underworld of abuse and neglect, they reenter the world distrusting many of those they meet along the way, and often never stop looking over their shoulder fearing that their captor will find them.

Did you know that human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal industries in our world today, and that it’s happening here in our state? Take a look at the timeline provided by the Attorney General’s Office, **Task Force Review 2019: Combatting Human Trafficking in Nebraska** to learn more:

- 2000 -- The United States Congress passes the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the first criminal

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