



# CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

## Hope in the Good Life

December 2023

The Magi/CSS Holiday Program Donors

### Honoring the King, giving joy

*“When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.”*

*-(Matthew 2:10-11)*

It’s widely believed the tradition of exchanging gifts at Christmas symbolizes the gifts given by the Three Magi to the infant Jesus after his birth. They presented the newborn King with gold, frankincense, and myrrh thus beginning the tradition of giving gifts to celebrate the birth of Christ. When we get a Christmas gift, we continue this more than 2,000-year-old tradition of celebrating the birthday of Jesus. Those who assist us through our CSS Holiday Programs ensure that many of those we serve across Southern Nebraska get to celebrate the birth of Christ by receiving gifts of clothing, toys and food.



Our regional sites in Auburn, Hastings, Imperial and Lincoln all offer various ways to assist our neighbors during the holidays. All four locations received holiday food donations to distribute, including turkeys and hams. Each site received gift cards, winter clothing, personal care items and more to give away. Hastings had the Good Toy Shoppe and was part of a coat drive. Auburn collected items for their Little Gifts of Hope program. Lincoln was a distribution site for KFOR’s Operation Santa and also offered the Adopt-A-Family program with ornaments that had gift needs printed on them and placed on Advent Trees in 6 Lincoln parishes.

So many experienced the joy of Christmas thanks to the generosity of individuals, families, parishes and groups who took part in our Holiday Programs. But just as important, our donors received a gift as well.

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**CSS IMPACT**  
July 2022 - June 2023

**\$2.23 MILLION**  
Overall cash & items assistance to help pay rent, provide money for food, electricity, water, medical bills, car repairs or other challenges

**233 TONS**  
Food distributed to nourish our neighbors across 24,000 square miles of southern Nebraska

**50,581 MEALS**  
Sack lunches and breakfast burritos provided to the homeless and working poor—no questions asked

**15,554 NIGHTS**  
Lodging & safety provided for abused women & their children through the Catholic Social Services St. Gianna Program

*Hope in the Good Life*



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## #HopeintheGoodLife

### *Honoring the King, giving joy (continued)*

A few weeks before Christmas, Blake Vajgrt, parish catechist at St. Peter's in Lincoln, delivered a load of toys and presents collected by the students in their God Teen Program. He feels that service to others "is the first and easiest way to participate in the healing ministry of Christ" and the Adopt-A-Family program would be a great opportunity for the teens to serve. A brief conversation with the mother of one of the 9th graders shed light on the impact this project had on her son. "It was eye-opening and rewarding for him." She said that so many kids that age are self-oriented, but going out and shopping for Christmas gifts for people that might not otherwise have any gifts gave her son "a glimpse of the broader needs in the community rather than their own needs."

Thank you to all who through prayers, donations and volunteering, help bring hope in the good life.

**Hope in the Good Life is the monthly newsletter of Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska. To receive our monthly publication, drop us a note in the enclosed envelope. To receive our updates electronically, visit [csshope.org/connect](http://csshope.org/connect).**

### Family Support Services-Lincoln

## Grateful for the basics

During the holiday season, when many of us focus on wish lists of "wants," it's easy to forget that some of our neighbors have a basic "need" at the top of THEIR list. Thanks to your support, we're here to help them move from winter's dark chill to the Hope in the Good Life.

Earlier this month, Family Support Services Program Coordinator Mike Fitzgerald encountered a family living in their apartment without electricity. As they had no gas furnace, they were not only in the dark but also in the cold. The reason was simple: they had an LES balance at their old apartment. Their assistance application explained why: "We just moved in and with the deposit and rent and food we didn't have any left to pay it." CSS was blessed to be able to send LES a guarantee for \$185, and the family's electricity was turned on. The next day, Mike received an email:

"Thank you God, we are so happy and grateful to have electricity and heat and lights 🙏🙏🙏 Thank you Mike. \*\*\*Peace be with you \*\*\* Best & highest Regards"

Thank you to our donors who literally helped keep the lights on for this grateful family. God bless!

