



# PATRON

Summer 2021

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

“Let us remember that love lives through sacrifice and is nourished by giving. Without sacrifice, there is no love.”

-St. Maximilian Kolbe



## Providing a pathway to success CSS, CareerLadder Program work together to help immigrants continue their career in their new home

Meet Monica. I've been working with her through the Pathways Case Management program of the New Americans Task Force (NATF) CareerLadder Program of which CSS is a participating agency. Monica comes from Venezuela where she went through a law degree program, specialized in customs and has over 20 years of experience practicing law. Through Pathways Case Management, she is beginning in the Law Pathway which will assist her journey in entering a law career here in the United States.

Monica has been granted asylee status with the new status protections for Venezuelans that were granted through the Biden administration that came out in March. Asylum status as well as Temporary Protected Status (TPS) were among the new status protections provided to

Venezuelans this year. These changes and updates have allowed individuals like Monica and her family to legally live and work in the United States while fleeing political, environmental, and humanitarian crises.



CSS' Kersha Kahrs, left, with Monica

Monica has big dreams to re-enter the law world where she can be free to represent women and children and advocate for those who are disadvantaged. Monica will also enter the Connector's Program through CareerLadder where she will be introduced to a local law

professional who will provide mentorship, share job readiness guidance and assist in expanding her professional network.

New Americans Task Force is a network of public and private organizations and community members that help refugees and immigrants who relocate to Lincoln.

*(continued on back page)*

### Inside:

Summer 2021

Where we've been and where we can go



Making a lasting impact



25 years of Chippin' for Charity



Hope in the Good Life

# Where we've been and where we can go

**Katie Patrick**  
Interim Executive Director

It has been twelve years since Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska moved into its current offices at 2241 O Street in Lincoln. The location of its social services and administrative offices, as well as the St. Louise Gift and Thrift Store, are easily accessible by our many clients and customers who come daily for diapers, food, immigration services, and much more.

With the expansion of our services, the development of the downtown and Telegraph areas, and ultimately to uphold the dignity of those we serve, the time has come for restoration and renovation. We are currently in phase one of this plan, which includes mechanical updates as well as exterior and interior updates to the thrift store, creating a more customer-centered check-out and improved lighting for shoppers. The former Via

Van Bloom Tour & Travel building on the west side of the thrift store has been demolished. The open space created will hopefully lead to a community garden next year. Phase two will focus on renovating the social services and administrative offices. We will be creating a more warm and welcoming space for our breakfast and lunch time patrons, program-specific coworking spaces, classrooms for our English, U.S. Citizenship, and Cultural Orientation classes, and much more!

One of the unique features of this project is the preservation of the black and white brick façade. Buildings, just like people, hold within them the trials and joys of the past, and they tell us stories of where we have been and the possibilities of where we can go. For instance, see the photo below of the St. Louise Gift and Thrift Store building back in 1933 when it was a local grocery store during the Great Depression. No doubt Works of Mercy were performed by the staff and passersby of the day helping those in need. We at CSS are grateful for the opportunity not only to transform our workspace in response to our growing work in the community but we are thankful to be part of the history of the city we call home.

We sincerely thank all of you who have contributed to our renovation efforts and we look forward to welcoming you to our renovated offices and thrift store soon.



*The Lincoln Market at 2201 O Street, Lincoln in 1933. This is currently our St. Louise Gift & Thrift site. The two crosses on each side of the "Lincoln Market" sign are still on building today. (Photo courtesy of History Nebraska)*

# Halting stressful uncertainties

**Mike Fitzgerald, Emergency Services and Employment Specialist**

Every day, donations given to CSS are used in many ways to carry out Works of Mercy. In addition to helping individuals and families with food, clothing, furniture and shelter – including those escaping domestic violence—there is a steady stream of people struggling to make ends meet who come to the CSS office and ask for help paying their rent, utilities, medical or car repair bills. Others call seeking assistance with these items and some are referred here by other agencies.

People age 18 to 87, including many single mothers, with barely enough income to pay their bills each month are pushed into swirling stressful uncertainty by one unfortunate event such as reduced hours at their job or a car that stops running, or an illness. Often, they are burdened by multiple adversities simultaneously and ask for help to escape the cycle of juggling bills screaming the loudest -- rent, electric, car repair or medical bill.

Briefly, here are just three examples. “Patty” is a

single mother age 43 and disabled with several health conditions, one requiring surgery soon. In March, she and her daughter moved to a different apartment because the new owner of their previous apartment would not rent to tenants with housing subsidies. She was behind paying rent and utilities at the new address because she purchased a vehicle to replace their pickup that was stolen. CSS used donations to help her catch up on her rent and the electricity bill – providing a fresh start. A second example involved “Ruth”, a single mother age 26 with a 6-year-old



daughter. She recently completed a drug addiction rehabilitation program, got a job and was soon promoted from team leader to assistant manager.

Establishing stable housing would help her achieve another goal -- being reunited with her son who had been placed with her sister. CSS partnered with St. Vincent de Paul Society to pay the deposit and first month’s rent for Ruth – helping with a fresh start and progress on her goals for her family. A third, “Ann” is a single mother with four children. She moved to Lincoln from another state to escape domestic violence. However, the father contacted the oldest daughter when he was released from prison and said he would come to Lincoln. CSS paid for the mother and four children to stay in a hotel for two weeks. During this time, she contacted St. Gianna Women’s Homes and was admitted – CSS donors having provided refuge and a home base with support for a new start.



## CSS Imperial Outreach Office

From Grant and Benkelman to Elwood and Arapahoe, our Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska Outreach Office in Imperial helps bring Hope in the Good Life to southwest Nebraska. Imperial Regional Manager Bill Sullivan and Emergency Services Coordinator Tonya Olsen service 10 counties and 16 area parishes. Programs include food pantry, emergency services including rent and utility assistance, and the St. Isidore Gift & Thrift. If you’d like to volunteer or would like more information about our Imperial Outreach office, visit our website at [csshope.org](http://csshope.org).



Volunteer Program

## Making a lasting impact

Jeremy Sousek, Volunteer Coordinator

Serving as the Lincoln Volunteer Coordinator has been a great experience over the past two years. From all of my experiences there are many lessons that can be learned. Here are just a few that I would like to share:

**Volunteers make a difference-** Countless times I have seen the Holy Spirit work through volunteers to make an impact in the lives of those they are serving. And the impact is the same for the volunteer. One of the joys of having volunteers encounter and serve clients is to witness the sharing of gifts and experiences for the benefit of others.

**Volunteers uphold the mission of CSS-** To perform the Works of Mercy in response to the call of God is a vocation for everyone, but it is especially our mission here at CSS. Donations of food, clothing, and money go a long way in supporting this mission, but ultimately upholding the mission comes down to the staff and volunteers who are encountering those in need. It is our responsibility to treat that human being with dignity, be generous with what we have been given, and share the love of God.

**Volunteers bring new life-** Volunteers come from all walks of life: retired, stay-at-home mothers, working individuals, students, and people serving diversion hours. This diversity allows for multiple viewpoints and more importantly empathy with clients. The variety of people serving in any given program always ensures that we are adapting and changing to better serve people.

Right now, we need more volunteers to staff programs as we transition back to in-person services. Whether you have a free hour every week or a time once a month we would love to have you come serve and encounter those in need here at Catholic Social Services. To volunteer at any of our four regional sites, visit our website at [csshope.org](http://csshope.org) and click on the "Volunteer" button. Thank you!

CSS Vehicle Donation Program

## On the road to Hope

Helping our clients to get on the road to hope often includes getting them on the road, literally. Some have trouble keeping jobs because they do not have reliable transportation. Others need basic transportation to get to medical appointments or even just to get groceries. We try to alleviate their stress by helping with car repairs. We have a fund for these expenses, but the amount is getting low. We also have the St. Christopher Car Program where we take donated vehicles and give them to people who do not have any transportation. Some donated cars which may not be safe to drive are sold to get funds to help the poor as well. All donated vehicles (drivable or non-drivable) to CSS end up helping those in need. If you have a car that you are getting rid of or do not need, contact Marilu at 402-327-6222. If you'd like to donate to our car repair fund, send your check in the enclosed envelope and write "Car Repair Fund" in the memo field or, make a donation online at [www.csshope.org](http://www.csshope.org) and choose *Vehicle Repair Fund*. Thank you!



# CSS Memorial Golf Classic & Auction marks 25<sup>th</sup> year of chippin' for charity

On Friday, August 6th, Hillcrest Country Club in Lincoln will host the 25th annual Catholic Social Services Memorial Golf Classic & Auction. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and golfers over the years, this event has become one of the area's largest charity golf tournaments.

The day after the first tournament was held in 1996, Fran Walsh, a CSS staff member- and sister of then Executive Director Fr. Joseph Walsh- was involved in a car accident that took her life. The next year the tournament was held in honor of Fran and each year since, has been held in memory of individuals who have had an impact on CSS and our community. This year's event will be held in memory of Jack Hoenig and Marilyn Clyne Hoenig. Together, Jack and Marilyn volunteered for many organizations including the Catholic Social Services Lincoln Food Pantry, where they prepared sacks of food for clients for many years.

Last year, 36 teams played in the morning flight and 36 teams played in the afternoon flight for a total of 288 golfers participating. The silent auction portion of the event takes place online which allows folks from anywhere to bid on items. Through the generosity of golfers, bidders, and sponsors, last year's event raised a net amount of over \$111,000 for the programs and services of CSS. With 2020 being the year that it was, we were unable to hold the cookout at the end of the day. The good news is "Burgers, 'Brats & Biddin'" is back for this year! As part of playing in the tourney, all

golfers and a guest are invited to the cookout that wraps-up the day.

There are a number of ways to participate in this important fundraising event- even if you aren't a golfer:



**Golfers.** The cost for each individual to play is \$150.00 and includes cart, lunch and invitation to the cookout. The cost for a foursome is \$600.00, or \$450.00 if there is a priest on the team. Team space is limited.

**Hole sponsor.** This \$200.00 donation allows your name, company name or parish organization to appear at a tee-box during the tournament.

**Priest Sponsor.** The \$75 donation underwrites the cost for a priest to play in the tournament.

**Memorial Gift.** A memorial gift may be made to Catholic Social Services in honor of a loved one.

**Auction Gift.** You may donate an item or service to be offered on the silent or live auction. A day at your cabin, antiques or cash are just some ways that you can donate.

**Not a golfer? You can still participate in the silent auction!** Again this year, all bidding will take place via your smart phone! Visit [csshope.org](http://csshope.org) to see how you can participate in the fun and bidding!

To register for the tourney, visit [csshope.org/golf2021](http://csshope.org/golf2021) or call 402-430-5626 for more information.



Do you have an antique or collectible item that is collecting dust? Maybe a nice vehicle you no longer need? If you or your business have an item or service for the silent auction, drop us a note in the enclosed envelope, call (402) 430-5626, or e-mail the information to [hello@cssisus.org](mailto:hello@cssisus.org).





PO Box 30425  
Lincoln NE 68503-0425

NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
LINCOLN, NE  
PERMIT No 976

*#HopeintheGoodLife*



(S.A.G.)

**Hope in the Good Life** **Summer 2021**

**Providing a pathway to success**  
*(Continued from page 1)*

They developed CareerLadder to connect skilled immigrants and refugees to career pathways, digital resources, and a professional network while fostering economic opportunity and restoring dignity through work.

Impact Challenge grant and the \$125,000 People's Choice bonus (thanks to MANY of you who voted for them!). CSS provides crucial mentorship through the Connectors Program, which connects clients with a reliable professional mentor within their industry with whom they will meet at least three times during the three-month mentorship period.

In 2020, the program won both a \$175,000 Google.org

*Kersha Kahrs*  
*Senior Case Manager*

**PROVIDING SUPPORT IN PURSUIT OF THE DREAM**

Beginning in May, I also began volunteering as a mentor at a local non-profit organization, The Refinery. The Refinery was started by founder Kelly Ross and exists to assist refugee and immigrant women in Lincoln to increase their family income and create a supportive social network through business education classes and professional mentorships.

The Refinery's second cohort began in May and will continue through August where the group of women entrepreneurs will learn from local business experts to inform and inspire along the journey to launching their businesses. There will be a graduation ceremony in August to celebrate work the women have done and to showcase their businesses.

*- Kersha Kahrs*

