

Community Services Fund of Nebraska Member Agency Stories

ACLU of Nebraska

Megan, a 16 year old ACLU of Nebraska client, shares her heartbreaking story of solitary confinement:

"My cell was about the size of a queen-sized bed. There was a small bed, a desk and a chair. There was no counselor to talk to about what I was going through. I was only able to talk to my mom every few days, sometimes for only three minutes. While I was at Geneva, I was in a constant state of depression. I had anxiety attacks and when I tried to get help for them, no one cared. While I was there, at least two girls attempted suicide and many others talked about it. I can honestly say that for the first time in my life, I thought about hurting myself too. Just like at Madison, I spent a lot of my time alone, confined to my cell, desperate for anything that reminded me of my old life. At different times while I was locked up in Madison and Geneva, I was not allowed talk with my lawyers and my family. Thankfully my family fought back to get me out and to help me share my story. "

Angels Among Us

"My name is Maria. My son, Joey, was diagnosed with leukemia when he was 2 years old. I was very scared to take him to the hospital by myself, I would ask my husband, to come with me every time for the first months of treatment. Thankfully our social worker referred our family to Angels Among Us for financial help with utilities and rent. Angels Among Us helped us a lot. We did not have to worry about paying the utilities while Joey was getting the intensive part of his treatment plan in 2011. We could just focus on helping and caring for him. Joey had a secondary cancer in 2016 and a relapse of the leukemia in 2017. Angels Among Us stepped in and helped us again. It has been a long fight. Angels Among Us has been with us and has made a big difference in our journey. They have allowed us to focus on Joey and our daughter, Kate. I don't have the words to describe how much their support means to us. The staff of Angels Among Us have been very good to us. My family and I will never forget their support. Our gratitude to them is infinite." -Maria, Joe, Joey and Kate

The Arc of Nebraska

We have a member who was unable to speak until she was 20. Her time in a facility had provided a detrimental environment that left her unable to advocate for herself. She came to a chapter meeting and began to get support. Now following many trainings, care, and support she is a fearless advocate for others with disabilities. She regularly testifies, speaks at events, and organizes others to help make the world a better place for people with disabilities.

The Archway

Since prehistoric times, the path along the Platte River through Nebraska, once known as the Great Platte River Road, has been an important travel route across the continent. From the Oregon Trail era to today, the Archway's family-friendly, historical experience brings the stories of the adventurers who traveled the Great Platte River Road to life.

Imagine the daring and determination of the people who first traveled the Oregon Trail, the high-spirited adventure of racing to California during the Gold Rush of 1849, the devotion of the Mormons who moved west in search of religious freedom, the entrepreneurial spirit that led to the creation of the Pony Express, the industry that built the Transcontinental Railroad and the cooperative effort that led to the creation of "America's Main Street," the Lincoln Highway and the Interstate Highway System. All this history happened right here, on the path along the Platte River in Nebraska and you can experience it all at the Archway.

Throughout our history, people of vision and courage found ways to work together to turn their dreams into reality and to contribute to an enterprise that was much bigger than themselves, the building of America. At the Archway, we salute the pioneers of the past and inspire the pioneers of today.

Audubon Nebraska

Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center near Lincoln, through the eyes of a Fourth Grader: Thank you so much for telling us about the prairie. I can't wait to tell my family about the great time I had. I hope my parents will let us see the prairie. I'm sure that they will love to hike on all the trails, and see the pond and the cottonwood tree.

This was one of the best field trips I have ever gone on, and you made it way more fun. You are the best!

Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary, from Aurora Fowler: Rowe Sanctuary has always been a part of my life; I grew up exploring the river and listening to the cranes. This place I call home was also my classroom. Staff and volunteers opened my eyes to the world around me. Now I help other kids take time to look at the little things.

I have listened to adults talk about the threats to the cranes and the future of the river. It is very frustrating for me to realize that in the future, the cranes might not be here for everyone to see.

As I watched kids fall in love with the river this summer, they gave me hope. We are hope. All of us are hope for the future of this river.

Autism Center of Nebraska, Inc. (ACN)

One mother of an adult son with autism fell seriously ill. Her son simply stepped over her body on the kitchen floor for several days. When a neighbor inadvertently discovered the woman on the floor, emergency services were called to transport the mother to the hospital. The son accompanied her, frightened, stressed, and distressed. It soon became apparent that the gentleman had no where to go, no one to care for him. ACN was called, and immediately made arrangements for an emergency placement in an Extended Family Home. EFHs provide a stable, family-like environment with 24 hour a day supervision and supports. Today, five years later, this gentleman still resides with the same EFH provider, receiving ACN residential and vocational services. He has established a new life for himself and has been able to move past the trauma of his mother's illness and eventual death. At ACN Day Services, this gentleman is learning to create craft items for resale, to work with potential customers in The Art Garden - ACN's retail outlet, and to complete the activities of daily living. He is able to self-identify his level of stress, avoiding what had previously resulted in major property damage.

Bluestem Health

Bluestem Health had a patient that was suffering from a chronic disease and wasn't getting their medical condition under control. Both the provider and patient were frustrated with lack of compliance the patient was having with their medical issue. We had patient talk with our behavioral health consultant, met with our chronic disease nurse, and sent our Community Health Worker (who's also a Paramedic) to the home. We were able to identify many barriers to medications, food, exercise, etc. The patient just didn't have a great understanding of their illness.

With all of the resources that Bluestem Health has, we were able to help identify behavioral health & socioeconomic issues that prevented them from getting medications. Our 340B Pharmacy program was able to get them affordable medications, eventually, getting them on the Medication Assistance Program which allowed them to get free medications. We helped them get more organized in their home, worked with their behavioral health therapist, and with case management we were able to get their labs back into a "normal state" for their condition. We were also able to decrease the amount of times they went to the Emergency Room each year.

With your help, we can continue to offer a new way of treating patients and helping them overcome obstacles to getting quality health care.

Boy Scouts of America – Cornhusker Council

"I am very proud of the things that Saxon has learned in Cub Scouts! He started as a Tiger Scout in Den 1 and was one of the Founders of Pack 19 in Lincoln Nebraska.

An accident happened tonight in which Saxon kept calm and act quickly to save his 5-year-old brother from drowning.

Saxon was fishing from the dock in our back yard. Saxon had caught a large fish and so his younger brother and younger sister went down to the pond to watch. Apparently, Rowan, Saxon's 5-year-old brother, saw some moss that he wanted to touch and reached down to the water from the dock. Saxon, seeing his brother reaching down, started to say, "Rowan, you shouldn't"

And Rowan was in the water just that fast. Saxon dropped his pole and immediately laid down on his stomach, reached out grabbing Rowan's shirt and then arm and pulled him up onto the dock. Rowan was quite rattled by the whole incident. I heard him crying as they got close to the house.

Later in the evening, I asked Saxon how he knew what to do. He said, "It wasn't that big of a deal Mom, but I guess Scouts taught me some things, like laying down, reaching out, and to not become a victim yourself".

The Webelos of Pack 19 just finished their First Responder Adventure a few months ago. Words can't express how thankful I am that Saxon was quick to act and knew what to do in this emergency. I would like to thank the Cub Scouts for providing such an awesome curriculum/training and beneficial life skills to boys across America."

The Bridge Behavioral Health

In her 40 years, Kathleen has never felt so healthy. But it wasn't always that way. She started using alcohol and drugs as a teen, making her lifelong battle with asthma an even greater struggle. She frequently visited the local hospital's emergency department. Whenever Kathleen attempted to stop drinking on her own, her heart would race and she would begin to have tremors. Kathleen came to The Bridge's Voluntary Withdrawal Unit and continued with ongoing Outpatient Treatment. Thanks to medical referrals provided by The Bridge staff, Kathleen is safely managing her asthma. She says that The Bridge saved her life.

Camp Confidence

"Camp Confidence brings together youth from the Omaha area... youth that would've never known each other otherwise and implants them in the beautiful, amazing and challenging wilderness experiences.

It very much impacted who I am today. I firmly believe that and tell people all the time. It's one of the best memories I have from my junior high years.

I was always a determined kid. If someone told me I couldn't do something, I was bound to prove them wrong. I was a happy girl and successful in many regards. Although I was a rock star student, involved in lots of extracurricular activities, had a solid family unit, and had lots of friends... I had insecurities. Even though I went to a great school, kids weren't always nice to me, some might say I was bullied. I kept it quiet. I didn't tell my parents. It was painful, so why would I want anyone else to know.

Going to Camp Confidence, and specifically being mentored by my camp director, was one of the best things that could've happened to me. It challenged me. It taught me to challenge myself, despite obstacles in my way. My mentor told me one day, "Do you know why I challenge you, It's because I know you can handle it." That really resonated with me. I always had been able to handle adversity and I realized that adversity didn't have to get me down. I was bigger than that. I'm proud to say he has been a friend ever since!"

Capital Humane Society

"It is a common occurrence for people to stop me when I am out in the public and tell me about the pets they have adopted from Capital Humane Society. They speak about how the pet has impacted their life. Perhaps they were depressed and the pet helped them emerge from that. How the pet helped a shy child become more engaged with others. How the pet pulled a family closer together because it became a point of focus they all cared about. Some stories are very compelling. A military veteran who was in a deep and dark place and the adopted pet gave them something else to focus on, something that they could interact with and not be judged by. The pet that gave a senior citizen living on their own a reason to get up every day. Capital Humane Society is as much a human service organization as it truly is an animal welfare organization. These stories make me proud of what my staff accomplishes and what Capital Humane Society represents. It gives me the drive to do the work I do."

-Robert A. Downey President and CEO

Center for Rural Affairs

Thirteen years ago, Maria wanted to start her own bakery. She had been working from home making cakes for friends and family, but always wanted to have her own shop.

In 2008, she started her own business, baking cakes out of her basement in Hastings. Maria and her sister delivered the cakes, and customers dropped by to pick up their order.

The cakes were custom made for weddings, Quinceaneras, birthdays, or just because. Besides doing the baking and delivery, Maria and her sister both held part-time jobs outside their home.

"I always wanted to have my own place, my own bakery. Customers asked when I was going to open my bakery," said Maria.

Our services were essential to realizing that goal. Maria qualified for two small business loans: one to purchase a van to transport the cakes and the other for remodeling a site for the new bakery.

Our Latino Business Center was able to provide technical assistance on the business plan and assist with required permits and services from the electrician, plumber, accountant, and even her attorney.

In 2015, Maria finally accomplished her dream. She opened her bakery in a storefront in Grand Island. She serves 12 items, which include Blueberry Cheesecake, Chocolate Cheesecake, Cappuccino, Carrot, and 3 Leches with Peach.

“Don’t give up on your dream. Find the resources, ask the questions, and be persistent,” she told us. We are thrilled to be a part of Maria’s success.

CenterPointe

“When I was referred to CenterPointe I was leaving the Regional Center after a 3 month stay. I had really limited resources – I found a job in food service, which only paid about \$2.00 per hour and I had to rely on tips to makes ends meet. My counseling at CenterPointe was a lifesaver. I had so much trauma in my childhood. I had to learn new coping skills. Because I didn’t have to pay for services, I could stick with it and I made real progress. I started to reach my potential.

In time, CenterPointe made a referral to Vocational Rehabilitation that changed the arc of my life. I’m the first in my family to graduate with a four-year degree. I still live with mental illness but today I’m in recovery, healthy and stable. Without CenterPointe my life would be vastly different. I’m so grateful for all I was given.”

Civic Nebraska

Civic Nebraska’s Community Learning Center at Dawes Middle School recently began an extended engineering track on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, open to all Dawes students interested in engineering. Project Lead the Way Engineering Club facilitator Amanda Woodward and Kristin Page, industrial technology instructor at Dawes, shared an update on how the initiative has taken off.

At Dawes Middle School, we’re piloting engaging new curriculum as an Engineering Club after school three days a week. The Project Lead the Way Gateway professional development has led us to consider new engagement strategies and to show engineering career paths in medical, manufacturing, and production fields. We know this exposure will lead students to make informed decisions about the classes they elect in high school, and eventually lead them to engaging career paths.

We were recently very lucky and received a 3-D printer from Lincoln Northeast High School. The printer has captivated students with the promise of 3-D printing their prototypes and successfully leads to talking about additive and subtractive manufacturing.

Students began exploring engineering design by creating a foot and ankle orthosis for a student with cerebral palsy. This gave us a unique opportunity to investigate what

different disabilities are with students in our club. Providing an open dialogue about students with disabilities allowed many students dispel myths and misconceptions they may have held.

Next, we presented the Puzzle Cube Design Challenge. This project let students explore isometric sketching by creating as many unique puzzle pieces as possible using snap cubes and sketching their creations.

Students then worked through a list of constraints to create a puzzle made of five different puzzle pieces (from the isometric sketches), totaling 27 cubes. Students challenged themselves to create peculiar and remarkable puzzle pieces that fit together without falling apart easily.

Once students had the puzzle planned, they glued $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch wooden blocks together into each of their pieces. Several days were spent creating orthographic drawings for each puzzle piece, and it was pretty incredible to hear students running around and yelling to each other how orthographic drawings are supposed to look.

One of our favorite parts of the Engineering Club has been showing students 3-D modeling software. The efficacies they learn are the same as what drafters, designers, and engineers are using at firms across the country. The kid-friendly software called TinkerCAD uses many of the same keystrokes and modeling techniques that are used in the world of engineering with programs like Autodesk Inventor and SolidWorks.

Before we started modeling, everyone used dial calipers to record the dimensions of each puzzle piece. That allowed students to make precise and accurate models of the puzzles they created.

To add a math connection, students set out to test how challenging the puzzles were. We taught students to use measures of central tendency, which helped them to ascertain the common amount of time it took for their puzzle to be solved. This allowed students to determine how challenging each puzzle was.

Each week, we dedicate one club meeting as our Design Challenge meeting. Students are using TinkerCAD and SketchUP to design C02 cars they will race.

We worked to create a stringent set of criteria and constraints that ensure the C02 cars will be safe to race as well as require thoughtful attention to detail, math, and problem solving before students 3-D print.

Thanks for the opportunity to show how inspired students are about engineering.

Clinic with a Heart

Undergoing drug and alcohol treatment, Jamie found himself estranged from his family, without a job and living in a treatment center. He was on the road to making life better but was having a hard time filling out all the forms and doing his assignments. He hadn't

had an eye exam for over 10 years. He came to Clinic with a Heart, had a free eye exam and got free glasses. He was filled with gratitude. He said "I am finally starting to have hope again."

Like almost 3000 people each year, Jamie found that you not only get help with your health concern at Clinic with a Heart, you also are loved by your neighbors.

Crane River Theater

Crane River Theater is established around the belief that lifting up the arts will only help in creating a richer and more vibrant community. The arts improve our quality of life. They remind us how to dream. They allow us to escape. They encourage us to fantasize about a world we aspire to. Our journey with Crane River Theater has witnessed this first hand on many occasions. Whether it is the child on the playground that organizes rehearsals with her friends to recreate the joy she shared at one of our Yanney Park productions, or the high school student that has long been silent finding the strength to express himself for the first time in one of our workshops, or even the elderly woman that waits for an hour following each production to offer her gratitude to each and every performer for giving her the opportunity to reflect on her own life, the power of theater is limitless. Thornton Wilder once said "the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being is through the theater." Please take a moment today to help us encourage the creativity of our youth, and remind us all why it is important to laugh, cry and reflect.

Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries

A mother of five young children, with one of the children dealing with a serious illness, commented that she loves Lincoln City Libraries, because our libraries are free and are the ONLY options that her children have for books and entertainment.

Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools

Mike loved being a dad. He and his wife Kris, have always had good jobs and done well for themselves. When little Jayden came along, they couldn't believe how much they loved being parents. The late nights and extra chores, all paled in comparison to their perfect little girl. Soon she was in grade school, and everything was going right on track, Mike thought. Until the day Jayden ended up in the hospital with an unexpected medical complication that caused numerous outstanding medical bills. They couldn't believe how expensive it was, but at least Jayden was ok. Mike and Kris set up a payment plan for their medical bills, but couldn't pay them all, along with their rent and food bills - suddenly, they were on the verge of losing their home. Thankfully, they got help.

The Foundation and LPS worked with the family to pool the back rent and pay the landlord with the help of generous Foundation donors. Now the family is back on track, and they don't have to worry about uprooting Jayden from her school and home. Most families who receive assistance, only receive it once, due to unexpected circumstances. Assisting these families helps them to maintain stability over the long term.

Grief's Journey

"We started our voyage with Grief's Journey September 2015 by attending weekly support classes and Tinsel & Tears after K lost his father and brother, unexpectedly, four days before Christmas 2014. It was and still is very emotional to know that loved ones can be gone at a blink of an eye. By attending classes, every week is a new adventure for the both of us to help cope with our feelings but most importantly, we are surrounded with positive energy from families going through the same experiences. The gatherings, conversations, comfort food as well as the activities that are shared with the children are memorable and held close to their hearts. It's just awesome to know Grief's Journey is available to help us!"

Habitat for Humanity Lincoln

Abdelkarim, Sailwa and their four sons, Mohamed, 11; Ibrahim, 9; Salih, 7; and Ahmed, 2, have been renting their three-bedroom, 1 bath home since 2010. The home has a lot of structural damage and the landlord doesn't take care of the landscaping. The family takes care of the lawn and trims low hanging branches, but during heavy winds a tree branch fell and landed on their car breaking windows.

The family of six shares one bathroom with no exhaust fan. The A/C does not work; there is one window air conditioning unit that works in a bedroom. The family sleeps together in the room when they need to cool off in summer months. The windows are hard to open to let in any fresh air and the home has a slight moldy smell.

The basement is unusable because of a hole in the wall. The family battles against insects, spiders, mice and snakes. They've tried to get rid of the problem with traps and home pest control but the problem remains. Their youngest son was potty-trained until he saw a snake in the bathroom. He is now frightened to use the bathroom, especially alone. The home was one of the worst in terms of condition that the selection committee visited.

Abdelkarim works as a taxi-driver in New York City half of the year and attends Southeast Community College in Lincoln the other half. He makes enough money in NYC that while he is back in Lincoln he can attend school full time. He is studying Business Administration with the goal to transfer his credits to Bellevue to become a CPA. Sailwa works part-time at Goodwill, manages the home, and takes care of the kids.

Abdelkarim and Sailwa applied for the Habitat Homebuyer Program so they could build a future for their children. They need a safe, decent home to raise their growing sons. They look forward to being good neighbors by taking care of each other, helping each other out, and becoming part of the family.

Hearts United for Animals

When Jim was told that Maggie, an eight-year-old Labrador, had a life-threatening growth that must be removed, it was devastating news. Jim was a single dad, raising three children by himself since the death of their mother. His income barely stretched around to monthly needs, and the money was just not there for the costly surgery Maggie needed. He could not bear to tell the children that their beloved dog might not be with them much longer. Maggie was distressed and in pain, and they all knew she was suffering.

The receptionist at the veterinary clinic advised Jim to call Hearts United for Animals and ask if there could be some assistance. He figured that was a long shot but made the call. The voice on the other end of the line was all business, but Jim knew he had reached a very sympathetic person. Arrangements were made with the veterinary clinic, and two days later Maggie had her surgery. Three happy children went with their dad to bring her home from the hospital. Maggie's bill was substantial but a small price to pay to stop the suffering of a precious dog and the people who love her.

Houses of Hope of Nebraska, Inc.

Nathan had a 14 year history of alcohol and, more recently, opiate use. His opiate use started with medications prescribed to treat pain from injuries sustained in a serious car accident.

Nathan was admitted to Houses of Hope's short-term residential treatment program to treat his misuse of alcohol and pain medications. Nathan arrived unemployed, homeless, and desperately seeking help. Due to his use, he had not been able to maintain full-time employment for several years. He had worked part-time and seasonal jobs, which aggravated the injuries from the car accident and stepped up his abuse of pain medications and other opiates. He was in poor physical health. He arrived with no car, no housing and nothing other than the few articles of clothing and some toiletries.

During this primary treatment Nathan worked with staff to address his dependence on pain medications and to help stabilize his physical health. Nathan transferred into Houses of Hope's halfway house program to continue his treatment. He was able to learn about his addiction and develop healthy ways to cope with urges and life stressors. Nathan began to utilize these skills to get back on his feet. He began to take more responsibility for his actions and decisions, and paid closer attention to his emotional and physical health. He appreciated the safe supportive environment offered in the halfway house program.

Nathan began to build a strong foundation of recovery and support and obtained a part-time job conducting phone solicitations within several weeks of admission. This job did not aggravate any of his injuries. He liked the work environment and gained a full-time position, with healthcare benefits, within 3 months. Nathan worked with his physician to manage his use of pain medications and his physical therapist to strengthen his back and increase mobility. Due to these lifestyle changes, Nathan was eventually able to

eliminate the use of prescription pain medications and manage any discomfort with over-the-counter medications. He excelled at work and was promoted to a shift supervisor. He was able to save money to help him prepare for a move back into independent living.

Nathan was very committed to living a life of recovery and sobriety. He nurtured relationships with others in recovery that he could rely on after he transitioned to independent living. After 11 months, Nathan had secured an apartment and graduated from the halfway house program and was excited about his future.

Humanities of Nebraska

Jacob learned to look at global issues from all sides before forming his own opinion as a high school student participating in **Capitol Forum on America's Future**. He now has skills to be an informed voter throughout his lifetime.

Elizabeth discovered the joy of reading and universal humanities lessons of compassion and loyalty within books. **Prime Time Family Reading Time** gave her and her family the opportunity to read together in English and Spanish.

Sharon, a U.S. military veteran, found the creative outlet she needed in **Nebraska Warrior Writers** and became a published author.

Sam and Ella turned their challenges and frustrations as Muslim immigrants into a **Speakers Bureau** presentation that promotes understanding and tolerance.

Inclusive Communities

A 7th grader at Millard Central Middle School who participates in the school's InluCity Middle Club: Handprint, is just one of many students that have been affected positively by Inclusive Communities programming.

Handprint is an afterschool diversity and inclusion education club for students. The group meets twice a month and has allowed this student and his colleagues to attend a diversity training at UNO, take a team-building high ropes course at Camp Carol Joy Holling in Ashland, NE, and participate in tough conversations about bullying, stereotypes and the current social and political climate among other activities.

This one-of-a-kind Inclusive Communities program has encouraged this student to acquire the necessary tools to combat bullying in his school. "I'm only twelve and I've experienced things that normal people at my age couldn't imagine going through," says the student, adding "through Handprint, I think we can reach out to show each other that we are not alone and that other people know and care about what we're going through."

Ultimately, the educational programming Inclusive Communities hosts in schools in Omaha, Council Bluffs and the Dakota regions help reduce bullying in school and allow students to become advocates for themselves and others.

"I think every school should invest in a club like Handprint and other clubs like it to make the world a better place for kids and adults alike," says concludes the 7th grader.

Junior League of Lincoln

The Junior League of Lincoln is working to support at-risk women transitioning to independence (ages 16-24). Transition-aged youth are a difficult population to reach, though this age can be a life-changing time. We know that young women who have stability in their lives are likely to have better outcomes such as better grades, high school graduation, and better pay; however, many transition-aged youth lack stability needed to succeed. These youth have faced a variety of challenges, for example, being in the foster care system since they were very young, criminal offenses, and/or mental health issues.

Further complicating the needs of transition-aged youth in Lincoln, is the long waiting list for adequate housing options, placing youth at risk of homelessness. For youth who are able to obtain housing, they do not have the financial ability to stock an empty apartment with needed goods.

For this reason, JLL established HomeStart, a "store" of household goods where young adults can shop for the basics needed to furnish their own apartment free of charge. Typical needs include shower curtains, cleaning supplies, linens, and dishware. JLL provides these items new or gently used. With basic household needs secured, transition-aged youth will be able to better establish themselves as independent adults by building resumes and/or pursuing further education. The store will remove barriers and support the stability of young women living independently.

Leadership Lincoln, Inc.

Part of our alumni engagement is an outreach program for any group or agency in the community that wants to develop a greater understanding of the issues related to poverty. Leadership Lincoln alumni volunteer to facilitate a poverty simulation to interested groups and then engage in a conversation with the participants following their experience helping them see the challenges facing those in the community experiencing poverty.

Often times the participants share, "I had no idea it was this much of a struggle" and "How do you find time for your kids?". It has been and extremely impactful exercise and one that is in high demand moving forward. Schools, churches, and businesses have reached out to schedule time for their respective staffs to experience this activity.

Lincoln Arts Council

Have you ever felt so inhibited that you were afraid to apply more than one color to a paper page? John did. He had received so much criticism in his young life that he was paralyzed. When he first arrived at the Lancaster County residential detention center, the staff thought he was mute. Terese was a perfectionist. When she was presented

with materials to sketch or paint, she had to have a straight edge to make shapes. She would become agitated if the lines and angles didn't look "just right."

Now imagine the transformation for John, who is rising to greet the resident artist, looking her in the eye and engaging in positive conversation. Visualize the freedom for Terese when she finally "let go," and just began looping large free-hand circles on her paper. "Look at me! I'm drawing!" It may be difficult to imagine a life without the simplest of art materials. Harder still to comprehend an environment devoid of positive reinforcement or the opportunity to experiment and create. Just know this – for some people, experiencing the arts genuinely changes their life. This is the work we get excited about. This is the work you support with a donation to the Lincoln Arts Council.

Lincoln Children's Museum

Lisa and her husband Eric were living the good life. "We were both working, making good money and enjoying ourselves. We didn't really save for a rainy day...but, then again, who really does? I never thought that I would someday qualify for Medicaid or stand in line at a food distribution center."

Unfortunately, Lisa hurt her back and was unable to continue working in her chosen career field. Not long after that, Eric lost his job in construction. After months of looking, he found another job, but his take-home pay dropped significantly. It was during this time that Lisa and Eric took advantage of the Have A Heart program, a subsidized annual museum pass for households meeting income qualifications.

The impact of the Have A Heart program for Lisa was significant. "When our world seemed to be falling apart, trips to the Museum with my girls became a real respite. For a few hours I could forget about our problems and take pride in the fact that I could still be a good mom, still provide good educational experiences for my kids. I want to thank all the donors who contribute to the Museum to make the Have A Heart program possible."

Lincoln Children's Zoo

Gifts to Lincoln Children's Zoo provide outstanding educational and play opportunities for children and connection with the natural world, help ensure that low-income families can visit the Zoo, and support the care and conservation of animals like the red pandas, Galapagos tortoises, snow leopards and many more. Your gift supports children, creatures and the community!

Lincoln Community Playhouse

Theatre changes lives. For the past five years, the Playhouse has been privileged to be the first replication site of The Penguin Project. This unique program pairs children with special needs with peer mentors.

It has made a positive impact on the lives of Erik Betts, 13, and Trey Anderson, 11.

Erik, who has autism, has been an artist in The Penguin Project for the past three years, playing major roles including Troy in High School Musical Jr. This is Trey's first year as a mentor. Although they go to the same school, they met and become friends through The Penguin Project.

"It's super fun," says Erik. "I've met lots of new people. They accept me for who I am." "Erik has become more confident and happy," says his mom Lisa Betts. "He's not as afraid and intimidated, and he's more comfortable around other people."

Trey says he and Erik work great as a team. One night, Erik developed a nosebleed at the end of one of his scenes on stage. As they were trying to stop the bleeding, Trey realized he had to step forward and take Erik's place on stage.

"He was more my mentor than I was his," Trey said. "We work well together so we're going to work together again this year."

Lincoln Parks Foundation

Lincoln has an impressive community wide parks and recreation system that includes 128 parks, 85 playgrounds, 133 miles of trails, 10 pools, 5 recreation centers, and 5 public golf courses. Excellent amenities like these are important for our community's strong quality of life and economic development. The Lincoln Parks Foundation works in partnership with the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department to sustain and improve our park system. We are grateful for the support of individuals, corporate donors, and other charitable foundations in this effort.

As part of our mission, we provide support for citizens, charitable groups, businesses, and neighborhood associations in making improvements to the park facilities in their neighborhood. In 2017, we supported six different community-led projects, including a free concert at Tower Square, yoga in Antelope Park, and a pollinator garden at Calvert Recreation Center. In 2018, we will work with an 8-year-old boy to add playground equipment to his neighborhood park, Bishop Heights. The work of the Foundation is magnified and amplified by the passion and care of our citizens. Each person can make a difference...we are here to help. We are grateful for your support!

Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra

Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra began working with Family Literacy (an English Language Learning program for parents and children through Lincoln Public Schools, serving the immigrant and refugee community) to provide a cultural literacy component in 2012. Participants attend Family Concerts free of charge, along with all family members living in the same household (totaling approximately 700 persons per concert). In addition, transportation is provided. Prior to the performance, LSO staff visit all twelve Family Literacy sites with translators to prepare them for the concert experience. Attendees receive information including concert etiquette, classical music history, instruments used in the concert, and a description of the story line.

Through the partnership with Family Literacy, members of the immigrant and refugee community that are otherwise unable to attend cultural performances will enjoy live symphonic music. Mexican, Russian, Sudanese, Iraqi, Vietnamese, Burmese, Kurdish families, and others, are in the program. Most are unable to attend not only because of the perceived cultural barrier, but because of the very true challenge of transportation and financial restrictions. This partnership ensures that participants experience all aspects of American culture, going beyond what is typically learned in an ELL program. This unique element, cultural literacy, is a portion of what helps Family Literacy participants more comfortable in American society.

Make-A-Wish Nebraska

Children are energized and encouraged by their wish. They can imagine, describe, plan, anticipate, and eventually rejoice in its fruition. Make-A-Wish encourages a child to envision a positive future and remain an active partner in treatment. One parent wrote these inspiring words about her daughter's wish:

“As a mom of a Wish Kid, I cannot tell you how much Make-A-Wish means to families. My daughter was diagnosed with cancer when she was 2 ½. After 10 months of surgeries, radiation, and chemo, she was able to go on her Make-A-Wish trip to Disney World. For that week, she was a happy, carefree 3-year-old. No doctors, no needles, no “ouchies”. Just a “normal” child. It brought tears to my eyes to watch her have the time of her life. She had private meetings with the Princesses as well as private time with Barney, who hugged her non-stop. Make-A-Wish made sure that she was treated as a true princess. At the time, we had no way of knowing that she would be soon having an emergency surgery that would remove 18 inches of her intestine. During her recovery, we often talked about her wish. She would say, “Tell me the story again of when the princesses all hugged me.” It is only with your help that Make-A-Wish can grant these types of life-changing moments for children.”

The Mediation Center

One of The Mediation Center's newest programs is Victim/Youth Conferencing in the Lincoln Public Schools' Middle and High Schools. This program brings youth who have committed an offense during school and their 'victim' together in a face-to-face meeting to learn from each other's perspective and find a way to solve the conflict and provide restitution. By participating in this, the youth stays out of the judicial system for an offence that might typically land them in front of a judge and, hopefully, learns a little bit about peaceful conflict resolution.

Point in fact: A student felt attacked by another student, certain that it was racially motivated, and responded physically. He was referred to a Victim/Youth Conference, led by The Mediation Center. During this conference he came to realize that his aggressive response not only negatively affected him but also negatively affected his family. This was a big "aha" moment for him. He worked with our facilitator and the other student to make it right while also working with our mediator on how to respond

differently in the future. This type of positive outcome from a negative experience is precisely what the Victim/Youth Conference program works to achieve.

Mental Health Association of Nebraska

Sadarah stayed at Keya House in 2009 and again in 2011. She was struggling with mental health and substance use issues. In 2014 she and her family were struggling and she found herself being dishonest at her job. She got honest and quit her job. She wanted to stop the cycle and do something different with her life. She reached out to Keya House again and found the resources to move forward. She started volunteering, learning to provide peer support to others that were trying to get to a better place in life. Eventually she was hired by MHA. She worked part-time at first and then full-time at Honu Home with individuals transitioning out of corrections. This then led to a position as an employment specialist helping people obtain and maintain meaningful employment. Before Keya House she had been in and out of hospitals and treatment centers since the age of 19. Since the Keya House she has stayed out of the higher levels of care. Her family of 4 has grown to 6 and they have a place to call home. She has gone back to school and she is able to care for her kids. The Keya House taught her how to take control of her own life and learn new recovery skills that enable her to live a meaningful productive life.

Merryman Performing Arts Center

The MPAC is the area's major presenter of regionally and national known professional artists and touring companies. Our goal is to become "an engine of creativity" for area youth and a place of enjoyment and "affirmation" for the community. The MPAC achieves these goals with selected programming and continual outreach to area underserved audiences. The educational programs serve all area school children at no cost to the students. Area schools provide transportation to and from the Merryman Performing Arts Center, as the MPAC seeks funding for programming costs for the student matinee performances.

These diverse performances not only introduce and engage young students in the arts, but they also lay the foundation to develop a lifelong appreciation of the performing arts. Nearly 4,000 students attend student matinees at the Merryman throughout the school year. Recently, nearly 700 elementary students had the opportunity to learn about modern dance. Erik Kaiel, a choreographer who is based in the Netherlands, performed an original piece based on the Windmills he saw as he drove across Nebraska. After the performance the elementary students were able to ask Mr. Kaiel questions. This opportunity helped to expand an understanding of this art form. Students were asked to write a response following the performance. One fifth grade student responded, 'I've always wanted to be a dancer, but my Mom can't afford it, so this encouraged me to dance in my house and yard more.' These same students also have the opportunity throughout their school career to perform on this professional-quality stage for elementary vocal concerts, middle school musicals, and high school band and orchestra concerts.

Midlands Mentoring Partnership

For more than seven years, MMP has collected mentoring data across the community. Based on the information gathered, it was determined at-risk audiences, including juvenile justice and foster care youth, were not being reached in high enough numbers with formal mentoring services. It was also clear from the data that more could be done to serve youth living in some of the higher poverty areas of our community. In partnership with member programs, MMP launched Youth Initiated Mentoring to reach at risk youth. The program helps youth identify a positive adult in their network to become their formal mentor.

Linda Rozo was asked by a youth she coached in basketball to be a mentor. "Mentoring has shown me the beauty of being someone else's cheerleader. I used to be so consumed with my personal, emotional, spiritual growth that I didn't pour into others around me. I guarded my time, energy, and resources for fear of depleting myself. And while I believe self-care and personal growth is incredibly important, I strongly believe that thinking outside of yourself is just as important. So, I went from being my own cheerleader in life, to finding great joy and significance in being hers." - Linda Rozo, Youth Initiated Mentor.

MilkWorks

"Can't think of a better cause. What a wonderful organization. It's SO important to breastfeed your baby! My experience there was amazing, like everyone else and they helped me over obstacles that I didn't know possible when trying to nurse my baby. I was able to continue nursing for a year." -Brittney

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Nebraska

When Jenna entered a room, it lit up, not only from her smile and personality, but from her willingness to help and inspire others. She was loved by her parents, family, teammates, friends, coaches, and really anyone she came into contact with. Jenna had a passion for sports ever since her mother could remember. Jenna's connection to sports allowed her to travel and compete against teams across the country. Her parents found joy in watching their daughter play sports, and spent many hours traveling and cheering her on.

On December 31, 2015, Jenna went to a New Year's Eve party with a group of friends. There was underage drinking at the party and even though people knew the driver had been drinking, they didn't stop him from driving. At just 16 years old, Jenna was killed after being ejected from a vehicle driven by a driver with a BAC of .208, more than twice the legal limit. The driver survived the crash. He pled guilty to criminally negligent homicide, and was sentenced to 5 years of probation. Jenna's parents were devastated by the courts decision. They believe that probation shouldn't be an option when someone kills someone else in a drunk driving crash. They continue to remain positive in honor of Jenna but would also like to see laws change to reflect the seriousness of the crime.

Jenna's mother, wishes she would have spoken to her daughter more about underage drinking, and encourages all parents to talk to their adolescents about the possible consequences. She believes drunk driving is a selfish act that is completely preventable. She hopes that Jenna's story will prevent others from making the same mistakes and save lives. MADD's Power of Youth works on creating intentional, ongoing, and potentially lifesaving conversations between parents and kids about alcohol. Join us to learn valuable strategies for how to talk with your child or teen about not drinking and not riding with a drinking driver.

Museum of Nebraska Art

A third grade boy from a central Nebraska school toured the Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA) with his class in 2014. Afterward, MONA received an e-mail from his father, "He came home so excited about his trip to MONA that he insisted we take him and his younger brother to the Museum over the weekend. He proudly took us around the exhibits, sharing his favorite pieces and works he thought important for us to see . . ."

MONA so captured the boy's imagination that he saved his pennies to contribute to the Museum in 2014 and again in 2015. As a donor, he was included on the Museum's mailing list and received an invitation to MONA's biennial benefit event in 2016. His mother contacted MONA to see if her son could participate in some way because he really wanted to help. The Museum's Collection Coordinator was pleased for him to assist with packing and labeling of the artworks sold at the event's auction.

The now seventh grader again assisted at the Museum's 2018 biennial benefit event and continues to save his pennies to contribute to MONA through the Kearney Area Give Where You Live campaign each fall.

MONA is especially proud to have the dedicated support of this special young person!

NALHD – Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors

When we think of "health," a visit to the doctor comes to mind. But factors outside clinics or hospitals—in our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities—play bigger roles in our health. Many health problems can be avoided with cost-effective prevention programs. As the locally governed Chief Health Strategists in districts that cover from 1 to 11 counties, Nebraska's local public health departments (LHDs) develop programs and policies that promote safety, health, and wellness across entire communities. They work to keep their whole communities healthy and well by preventing diseases and by addressing public health emergencies. Resources to support LHDs are unpredictable and scarce. On average only 35% (and as little as 4%) of LHD revenues come from reliable state and local tax dollars.

Through NALHD, member LHDs secure additional resources and amplify their effectiveness. Since 2012, NALHD members have secured over \$2.5million in federal and private grants that are benefiting the 77 counties they serve. Through NALHD, members are providing military cultural competence training to over 500 rural providers,

supporting veteran family-centered programs in rural communities, and helping LHD staff and partners hone their health communication skills with all community members, regardless of their English literacy.

An investment in public health system infrastructure, through NALHD, helps to prevent illness, reduce health care costs, and improve the quality of life for all Nebraskans.

The Nature Conservancy

Your donations help to support one of the most biologically diverse and beautiful places in Nebraska – the Niobrara Valley Preserve (NVP).

Over thirty years ago, The Nature Conservancy made a huge strategic investment in the conservation of the Niobrara River and its iconic valley. With the purchase of two ranches from willing sellers, the Conservancy created what is still the largest nongovernmental wildlife area in the state: the Niobrara Valley Preserve. This is particularly significant in Nebraska, which has the lowest percentage of conservation land of any state except Iowa. The investment was strategic, too, because it helped secure permanent protection for 26 miles of the Niobrara River.

The Preserve is a keystone of a 30-mile segment of the Niobrara River that biologists call the biological crossroads of the Great Plains. Six ecosystems converge there. More than 600 plant species and 85 butterfly species have been documented on the NVP. 268 species of birds have been reported, making it one of Nebraska's most bird-rich regions. This land, with its unique stands of aspen and birch, is known for its prairie grasses and species adapted to those grasses.

Visitors to the Preserve enjoy two nature trails. Two bison herds help manage acres of prairie that stretch as far as the eye can see. While the Preserve is operated as a working ranch, donations help the Conservancy host groups of students and researchers and meet our management goals so that this special place reflects Nebraska's natural heritage – forever.

Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers

Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers works with each of the seven Child Advocacy Centers across Nebraska who coordinate 111 multidisciplinary teams representing all 93 counties in Nebraska! Multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) consist of professionals from child protective services, law enforcement, prosecution, mental health, medical, advocacy and child advocacy centers. MDTs collaborate the investigation of child abuse and neglect and coordinate the intervention of services to reduce trauma to victims of child abuse. MDTs directly affect the reduction of trauma to child abuse victims, the criminal justice outcome, and improve the timeliness and access to appropriate support and services.

One way the Nebraska Alliance promotes system improvements for victims of child abuse and neglect is through protocol review. Each multidisciplinary team has a

protocol that outlines their investigative response, inter-agency communication, and provision of support and services to families.

In 2017, the Nebraska Alliance worked collectively with a team of professionals to review each of the protocols for the 111 multidisciplinary teams across Nebraska. The review impacted team functioning and assessed for compliance with state statutes and national accreditation standards. The review offered Nebraska Alliance the opportunity to create consistent protocol language across the state.

Nebraska Appleseed

For years, Caroline fought a chronic illness and fought to stay employed, taking on multiple jobs to help pay for her medical bills. But her disease often kept her from being able to work. Unexpected medical emergencies and expensive medications threatened her life and made it impossible to make ends meet. Like nearly 100,000 Nebraskans without health insurance, she was faced with impossible choices, every day.

When Nebraska Appleseed began efforts to expand Medicaid began in 2013, Caroline was one of the first to join the Medicaid expansion fight. She quickly became a driving force alongside Appleseed, taking on a leadership role as she worked to find a solution to the problem that she and so many others faced.

Early on, Caroline spoke with a woman who, like herself, couldn't get affordable health insurance. The woman's expression changed from one of frustration to amazement as Caroline explained how nearly one-hundred thousand Nebraskans were hurting, sick, and unable to get the care they so desperately needed. She helped the woman realize, for the first time, that she was not alone.

Nebraska Appleseed is proud to fight alongside advocates like Caroline every day, who want to make their voices heard and impact their communities for change. Whether that means taking Caroline's fight to the courthouse, advocating for change with her lawmakers, or building community support, Nebraska Appleseed exists so that when Nebraskans like Caroline fight for justice, they're never fighting alone.

Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

Christina graduated at the end of the Winter 2018 term with her Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Metropolitan Community College in Omaha. She was first awarded a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship in the Fall 2015 term. She completed 102 credits on the quarter system at Metropolitan Community College and graduated while working full time as a teacher in a child care program in Elkhorn.

Christina says, "The first time I heard of the T.E.A.C.H. program was two and a half years ago. At first it sounded a little too good to me true to have assistance with school as long as I can continue working at the same center. I decided to apply for it anyways and go for it. The T.E.A.C.H. program has meant so much to me and my family. Without it I would not have been able to complete all of my classes within this last two and a half

years. I would be taking one class at a time, hoping to be able to pay for the tuition and books. Because my job sponsored me, I felt that I had a much better support system this time attending college. While this journey has not been easy, I have learned so much, and I am glad I found out about this opportunity."

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

Barb, a single mom, was being evicted and felt incredibly overwhelmed. She was connected to Community Response (a program supported by Nebraska Children) by a community member.

After conversations with a CR Navigator, Barb was willing to learn new skills and tools for lasting changes. Due to her anxiety, she was connected to counseling. Knowing that she would soon be able to talk to a counselor made her more receptive to addressing other immediate needs.

The CR Navigator worked with her on a budget and forming a sustainability plan. She was encouraged to contact her landlord and communicate her plan to avoid eviction. She was uncomfortable making this call, and as a result, a navigator sat with her while she called her landlord. She asked for some time to work on a plan to get caught up on rent. Her landlord agreed. She was surprised that her landlord was willing to work with her. It illustrated to her that she was a good tenant that he would prefer not to lose, and the importance of open and honest communication.

The CR team then helped to submit a flex-fund request for her past due rent. It was approved and she presented to her landlord the payment and plan to cover the remaining balance. The landlord accepted the proposal. Barb felt so empowered by this outcome. She not only learned how to make a budget, but she also learned she had the ability to advocate for herself.

At the conclusion of her time with CR, she not only accomplished the goals she identified, but also identified personal strengths and learned new skills. She was a totally different woman than when she first entered CR. Working with her CR Navigator, she created a budget that had a positive cash flow at the end of each month; a new job; bankruptcy paperwork completed with affordable payments; her wages no longer being garnished; and an approved hardship waiver against owed taxes, rent, and other bills all while building on her savings plan. She is also working on a nutrition goal and has learned to budget her food costs and meal planning to help stretch her budget. She praised the entire CR team for assisting her with accomplishing her goals.

Nebraska Children's Home Society

Angie is a woman in her 20's who learned of NCHS through the internet and contacted the office in her area. When she called, she shared that she had been parenting her child for 5 weeks and wanted to talk with someone about adoption. Angie shared with her caseworker that she has battled addiction for over 10 years and had been sober for 90 days at the time she contacted NCHS. She shared with her NCHS caseworker that

she was not sure she was done using and that her daughter deserved a family with two parents who could provide her with stability. She made the decision to utilize newborn care for her daughter as she went through the process of making a decision.

Angie ultimately made the decision to move forward with adoption. She was drawn to the pictures of the family she selected, most specifically the ones where they were interacting with children. This family would faithfully drive an hour and a half one way to attend NCHS training and events. They wanted to be available to a child who may need them.

Angie went ahead with her adoption plan and signed relinquishments. The family fell in love with their daughter. Angie and the family have stayed in contact and are in the process of developing a wonderful relationship.

Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence

The Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence envisions a world where domestic violence and sexual assault are a distant memory and healthy relationships prosper. To this end, we are committed to social change work through innovative thinking. Our Catalyzing Change project has allowed us to work collaboratively with our member programs and allies to develop a shared vision of the world we are trying to create, and foster a sense of inter-connectedness. This focus has permitted us to provide the opportunity for advocates to embrace and learn about a larger movement, giving a purpose and meaning to work that may otherwise feel isolated. Advocates have been supported in building leadership skills, developing the future leaders for our state and ensuring growth of individuals as well as our social change momentum. Through this project we have centered the importance of self-care, to prevent loss of those who we have trained as leaders in our movement. We have also strengthened the ability of advocates to provide services and safety for survivors in Nebraska, while also addressing the root causes of violence in our communities.

Nebraska Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association

A CASA volunteer had been assigned to 2 siblings who were both under the age of 5. The children had been removed from their home due to neglect. Their mom was an addict and not caring for her children. The neglect was so bad their safety was in danger. After months of the children residing in foster care and mom seeming to comply with court orders, the children were returned home. Their mom had been in counseling and her drug tests were consistently negative. The case was going to be closed soon. But the CASA volunteer still had concerns. She dropped by the home to do a surprise visit. What she found broke her heart. The children were unfed, unsupervised and miserable. Their mom had been defying her drug tests by huffing inhalant drugs. She was still using and had left her children uncared for because she was so high she could barely move. No one knew how long these small children had been left to care for themselves. The CASA volunteer's discovery led to the case not only being kept open, but the children were placed into safety.

Nebraska Sports Council

"I got my start in the Cornhusker State Games when I was 8 years old and that was my first introduction into competitive athletics and I've loved it ever since all the way up to the Olympics. I would encourage everyone to get involved whether you're an Athlete...young or old...recreational or competitive or a Volunteer or a Sponsor and support the Nebraska Sports Council" ~Olympic Gold Medalist, Curtis Tomasevicz

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

Wanda's tree-planting story began 20 years ago as she saw the need to replenish the aging community forest and enhance the stewardship of local green spaces in Pender. With the arboretum's assistance, Wanda started her first tree-planting project. Enthusiasm and community support grew, resulting in many greening projects across town.. Pender is now doing a 10 year tree-planting initiative.

Nebraska Trails Foundation

A young engineer, looking to move away from the big cities on the east coast, began a journey across the United States with his bicycle and a resume. After visiting many communities between New England and Nebraska, this promising young man decided to stop in Lincoln. He visited the State Capitol and received a free map of the multi-use trails in Lancaster County and greater Nebraska. He was impressed with the network and connectivity of the trails across the state. At a job interview, the interviewer looked at his resume and seeing his previous address in New England asked, "What made you decide to move to Nebraska?" His answer was that one of the key factors was the trail network. He described how he decided this would be a perfect place to raise a family. He said the network of trails would provide a safe place to exercise, bike to work, ride and walk safely with children.

The Nebraska Trails Foundation (NTF) is an important partner in the acquisition, development, and promotion of multi-use recreational trails across Nebraska. NTF participates in the purchase and acquisition of abandoned railway lines to be used for multi-use trails. The trails are used by the public for transportation, recreation, and promotion of healthy lifestyles, all while preserving the environment.

NET Foundation for Radio

Dr. Robin Huebner of Stanton describes living on a farm as a dream come true. Originally from the East Coast, she was born in Boston, grew up in Indiana and went to school at University of Delaware. She moved to Nebraska 33 years ago and practiced clinical psychology in Norfolk before moving to a farm where she boarded her horse. Now retired, she enjoys her rural life immensely.

Huebner enjoys NET and decided it was the right thing to do to name Nebraska's public media network a beneficiary in her will.

“This is a form of paying back and paying forward. I’ve enjoyed NET many hours every week and have just loved it and appreciated it so much that I wanted to provide the same opportunity for those that come after me,” she explained.

She said her radio is permanently set to NET, she enjoys classical music and the NPR interview program Fresh Air.

Like so many NET fans, Huebner is a lifelong learner. She listens to NET radio programs such as Wait Wait... Don’t Tell Me! and enjoys cooking, gardening and travel shows on NET television’s Create channel, as well as NET’s original productions including Nebraska Stories. “There is a foundation of truth and balance that I value in NET and I want to help make this available to everyone in Nebraska,” she added.

NET Foundation for Television

“I grew up in a family that encouraged me to give back – both as a volunteer and financial supporter – so I became interested in NET at a young age,” Ann explained. “NET was bigger than anything I had been involved in and I decided right then to provide funds to NET from a life insurance policy. I know that this planned gift will help sustain NET for future generations.” Ann said she got started in 1978 as NET’s auction co-chair for Cuming County and would travel down to help with the auction every year. One thing led to another and she soon began serving on NET’s Foundation board, including a term as president. Her husband, George, later served on the NET Foundation board, too – NET had become a family affair.

“Both of our boys grew up on NET. We had high expectations for them and wouldn’t let them watch much television. However, we liked Sesame Street and NET’s other educational programs,” Ann said. The boys, now grown, have interesting careers. Elliott is a neuroscientist researching brain functions in London and Andrew is an aerospace engineer in Los Angeles.

“George and I have stayed connected to NET. We like the news, travel shows as well as Antiques Roadshow, NOVA, Great Performances and Masterpiece. We’re fans of both NET radio and television and love it,” she added. - Ann Beckenauer, West Point, NE

Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM)

We help nonprofits help their communities. There are thousands of nonprofits in our area – each trying to make a difference on their own. We bring them together so that each member can benefit from our collective strength.

Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM) is the only membership organization in the state dedicated exclusively to working with nonprofits in the Midlands. By connecting organizations with information, education, advocacy and collaboration, we help members focus their energy on the people and communities they serve.

Omaha Zoo Foundation

Conservation of the world's most precious species and habitats is at the core of the mission of Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium. From rescuing elephants from drought-stricken Swaziland to creating protocol for increasing the population of Amur Tigers, Omaha's Zoo strives to inspire learners of all ages.

Building first class exhibits to bring visitors closer to the animals in the Zoo's care, is one of the first steps in mission fulfillment and something that was at the forefront of rescuing the elephants. Preparing for their arrival included supporters of every kind. From every single donor who helped build the largest indoor herd room in North America, to the vet team who cared for them during transport, the multiplying effect of Omaha Zoo fans safely delivered them to their new home where they are thriving. Additionally, the genetic diversity offered by these elephants allows breeding efforts that will help sustain this species for generations to come.

Open Door Mission

Donna realized her addictions to alcohol and painkillers were becoming life-threatening dangers to her children and herself. At the recommendation of a few friends, she came to Open Door Mission for help. Marti, one of the Mission's case managers, recognized that Donna was tired of the instability that marked her life. Marti encouraged Donna to try an addiction recovery program at the Mission.

"Open Door Mission opened my eyes to a lot of things I wasn't dealing with in the right way," Donna said. "Just like everyone else, I needed some structure in my life. Getting real about that helped me feel better about my future in just a few weeks. "I was afraid I was somehow out of God's reach, but that wasn't true at all. Getting my life together and establishing this relationship with God and are the best gifts I could have."

Today, Donna is well on her way to completing her GED and furthering her education. "My children and I can look to the future with confidence now," she says. "I know that I count now. I have people at Open Door Mission and my church who remind me that I count every day."

Thank you for your part in helping Donna and dozens like her achieve sobriety and job readiness through Open Door Mission each year.

Outlinc, Inc.

When Lincoln's LGBTQ community needs to be heard in government and with community leaders, Outlinc has provided a voice. From fighting so no one is fired because of who they are or who they love to working to give government employees fair and equitable benefits, Outlinc has brought the stories of LGBTQ to these and many more important conversations. Through our work, some of Lincoln's most influential elected officials, faith leaders and business leaders have stood by the LGBTQ community. One of the individuals who shared their story with Outlinc said "I moved

from Lincoln and never thought I could consider moving back. Thanks to you, I might be able to call Lincoln home again one day."

Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln

Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln is dedicated to improving health, wellness, and fitness in Lincoln and Lancaster County. We collaborate with over 75 local organizations and clinics on projects increasing the impact of our joint efforts - helping our community live longer, healthier lives.

Our WeCook interactive cooking, nutrition and fitness program starts with children and reaches beyond the school setting to impact the health of whole families. See what's cookin' at <https://bit.ly/2HrxL7K>.

Our Streets Alive Community Development Project helps fund a living and learning center that will serve as an outdoor classroom for pre-school and school aged kids and provide additional space for senior and neighborhood organization programs. Find out more at <http://www.healthylincoln.org/initiatives/streetsalive/community-project.html>.

Our Community Breastfeeding Educator program provides education for culturally diverse moms, including moms new to America, in nine different languages, improving both maternal and infant health. Meet Lincoln's educators at <https://bit.ly/2wosKKY>.

Our cancer screening program saves lives through the detection of colon, breast and cervical cancers in their earlier, more treatable stages. Our vaccination program prevents several cancers by increasing HPV vaccination rates. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2FUWEsC>.

Planned Parenthood of the Heartland

One young woman came to our Lincoln South health center looking for help accessing birth control. Although she had a prescription for oral contraceptives, she struggled to find reliable transportation to pick them up. This inconsistent use made them much, much less effective. She also didn't feel comfortable discussing her concerns with her parents. PPHeartland discussed all her contraceptive options, including continuing on the pill, injections, or long-acting reversible options such as an implant or intrauterine device (IUD). The patient chose an IUD that would provide many years of consistent contraception without the challenge of remembering to take a pill daily and pick up a prescription on a regular basis. In addition, PPHeartland was able to help offset the cost of the appointment, reducing that barrier as well.

Rabble Mill

Years ago, we were referred to a young woman who had been raped by a relative and gave birth to a child that has cerebral palsy and autism. When our outreach staff met with her in a group home, the woman was in a very unstable situation. Nikki assessed her needs and opportunities, helped her manage her finances through Community

Action Financial Counseling, secure a car through a local car dealer's charitable program, and access resources necessary to adequately care for her son. Gaining control of her budget allowed this woman to pursue higher education. In 2017, she earned her college degree, and gained a job at LPS. With this woman now in a very stable situation, our outreach staff has begun working to help her brothers.

Ronald McDonald House Charities in Omaha

Juan is a seven-year-old boy from Texas whose family has been to our House several times over the past few years, often for months at a time. Juan was born with intestinal problems, and eventually received a transplant in June 2016. While Juan was cared for in the hospital, his mom, Sabrina, dad, Francisco, and little brother, Cameron stayed in our House, where they felt the support of our staff, volunteers, and the other families. They were able to solely focus on Juan's progress, rather than worrying about making dinner after a long day in a hospital room, or the financial burden of paying for a hotel room each night. Once Juan was discharged, he played with Cameron in the toy room, and interacted with other children going through similar experiences. Sabrina is forever grateful to have a home away from home when Juan has a check-up in Omaha. "What the House provides is not only the volunteers and the employees, it's the other families too. You can really understand where they're coming from and they understand where you're coming from. It's so nice, and it's really heartfelt. You need that kind of support. You don't feel like you're coming back alone and in a bubble, starting the next day over with the same thing. Being here changes everything."

Seniors Foundation

As a result of recent fundraising efforts, the Seniors Foundation was able to donate proceeds to Aging Partners to install a new wheel-chair ramp at Aging Partners' new Seniors activity center/exercise facility. This facility provides numerous seniors in our community a place to stay physically active every day!

ServeNebraska

A two-year-old autistic child enters the ACT clinic and is assessed for verbal and behavior milestones by an AmeriCorps member; the child scores a 19. After working with the child for 6 months the assessment was given to the child again, this time the child scored a 76 on the same assessment. The Child made such huge gains in his verbal and behavioral activity the child's mother became even more engaged and wanted to learn what she could do at home to increase the verbal and behavior milestones. Early intervention with Autistic Children makes huge differences in their adult lives, AmeriCorps makes a difference in lives and impacts communities.

Sunrise Communications – KZUM

KZUM makes supporting our local arts scene a priority. Through events coverage, live performances and programming designed to highlight visual arts and local music, we

promote more local arts than any other station in the area. As of March 2018, KZUM has created paid performance opportunities for 40 different local music acts. Sixteen of these opportunities offered promotion on an international stage through the SXSW Music Festival in Austin, Texas, and the Folk Alliance International Conference in Kansas City. In addition to music, KZUM provides promotion for Lincoln's visual arts scene. Our organization creates a monthly arts map that highlights special events showing at galleries around town and our program schedule has three shows that feature visual and performing arts. Promoting our local arts scene is promoting the vitality and heart of our community.

Tabitha

Given economic uncertainties, Tabitha continues to experience high demand for Meals on Wheels with a 62 percent increase in the number of meals served during the past 10 years. Last year it served 174,817 meals. Your support for Meals on Wheels is crucial as Tabitha does not put anyone on a waiting list and does not deny anyone a meal because of an inability to pay. With your generous assistance, Tabitha will continue to provide hot, nutritious meals to needy Lincoln residents seven days a week and 365 days a year.

Tabitha Meals on Wheels not only brings those we serve a meal, but also provides a much-needed safety check. This was certainly the case for Patricia, an elderly woman at risk for falls. This past year a Tabitha Meals on Wheels volunteer attempted to deliver a meal to Patricia. When she did not answer the door, the volunteer knew something was wrong. The volunteer alerted the Meals on Wheels Coordinator who was able to reach Patricia's daughter. When she went to check on her mother, she discovered that Patricia had fallen and was laying on the floor unable to get up. The quick actions of Tabitha's volunteer averted a situation that could have turned deadly.

University of Nebraska Foundation

Alyssia Casillas was a 14-year-old with intelligence and drive. She had good people in her life, like her mom – a single mother who worked hard to raise her three kids. But Alyssia's lack of confidence had led her to make bad choices. Friends were getting pregnant. She was hanging with a rough crowd. So when a big, handsome envelope with her name on it arrived at her Grand Island home, she was surprised. She was even more surprised when her mom read the letter inside and screamed.

"You got it! You got it!"

"I'm either in trouble or I did something really good," Alyssia thought at the time. That was a decade ago. The letter inside announced that Alyssia had been selected for the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy, a program through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that nurtures and mentors promising first-generation, low-income students like Alyssia through high school and college.

Alyssia graduated from UNL last year. She now is studying dental hygiene at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

“For me, the NCPA was huge,” she says. “It made that college experience that might have been extremely scary and hard so much more exciting and comfortable and enjoyable for me. “It helped me defy the odds.”

Volunteers of America Western Nebraska

Volunteers of America Western Nebraska recently worked with a single father, who had been experiencing domestic violence within his home. Our connection to him came through our home visitation program, focused on engaging parents as the first and most important teachers in their children’s lives. After experiencing a crisis situation, the father found himself in an unstable living environment with his 8-month-old child. Our agency was able to help coordinate services to help him move forward. Volunteers of America Western Nebraska was able to provide case management, navigate resources for legal representation, as well as make the initial payments to secure housing for two months so that he could build a better path, for himself and his child. The client recently reached out to our office with a message stating the following: "It's all seeming to come together but the help we got from Volunteers of America Western Nebraska is what made it all possible."

The Volunteers of America story is long and rich. And widely unknown. But we are not chasing fame or glory. Our lives are meant for service. We help because we are impassioned. We are honored.