



PATRON

Hope in the Good Life

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA

Oh St. Teresa of Calcutta, Jesus said that whatever we do to the least of our brothers and sisters, we do to Him. Please help us with your prayers so we may see the face of Jesus in our brothers and sisters, especially those who are poor and needy. May we love them not only by our prayers but with our acts of charity, Amen.

Hope during the holidays

Measuring the impact food insecurity has on the individuals and families we serve

In October, Catholic Social Services conducted a brief survey to learn more about our clients needs during the holiday season. We were curious to know what they needed most and how we could help. Would the priority be toys for their kids at Christmas? Or emergency cash assistance to help cover rent or would it be gas vouchers to visit family and friends? As the results came in, we were struck by the number of families anticipating food insecurity. When asked to name their number one need for this holiday season:



Food insecurity refers to the inability to afford enough food for an active, healthy life. Evidence points to food insecurity as a cause for diet-sensitive chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes; a lack of proper nutrition; and a gateway to poor performance in school and on the job. Just take a moment to think about your own levels of productivity when you're hungry. Like me, it probably isn't very good.

Now, let's take a closer look into why the families we serve face such high levels of food insecurity.

Have you ever heard of the Cliff Effect, also sometimes referred to as the Benefits Cliff? It refers to the sudden drop in assistance to low-income families, such as the loss of food stamps or childcare when the family's

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- 52% identified **FOOD**
- 38% identified **RENT & UTILITY ASSISTANCE**
- 6% identified **GAS VOUCHERS/BUS PASSES**
- 4% identified **TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS**

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Hope in the Good Life

Hearts like little children

Fr. Justin Fulton
Executive Director

Greetings from Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska! We hope this writing finds you and yours healthy, well, joyful, and holy as we end the year 2019!! Thank you for your prayers and support of CSS. Together you are helping bring Hope in the Good Life!!

I want to share a picture of my 4-year-old niece Cecilia feeding her 1-month-old sister Juliana. I love this picture. Cecilia is so proud to finally be a big sister. She is acting like an adult. She is showing natural care, protection, and love for her little sister. And Cecilia is doing it with confidence and without a worry in the world.



This picture is truly art to me. It is a living homily. If it is true we have to become like little children to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, this picture of these little children shows us what love, trust, receptiveness, responsibility, and joy are all about. Kids get it. This world would be better off if we put politics aside and started to truly attempt to develop the heart of a child. Jesus made it a point to teach about the Kingdom while holding children up as an example. Their innocence, trust, care, joy, and love are to be emulated by all.

In Cecilia and Juliana's "homily" they are also doing another commandment that Jesus taught us: to feed the hungry (Matthew 25:31-46). Cecilia is performing a work of mercy and she is giving Juliana joy and Cecilia receives joy doing the work as well. It is written in the human heart---when we give to and meet those who do not have the blessings we have, we are rewarded with joy. We give joy and we receive joy. And when we give He who is Joy (Jesus, "Joy to the World"), we receive He who is Joy.

We feed the homeless, hungry, and working poor at CSS. **We redistribute over 290 tons of food per year throughout the Diocese of Lincoln. And our Sandwich Programs in Hastings and Lincoln provide nearly 59,000 free lunches to the homeless and working poor**

every year. Our volunteers who help with these services give joy to others and receive joy. We are proud of them and we wish to support them and the clients they help.

Did you know it only costs \$1.50 to provide a lunch to a homeless or struggling person? If we simply gave out some pocket change every day we could feed a fellow Nebraskan who is hungry.

Please consider spreading joy by feeding the hungry through our food re-distribution and sandwich programs. If you would like to volunteer contact us. Or if you have some spare change, please consider making a donation to CSS.

May we all acquire hearts like little children. And as always let us pray for one another as together we bring Hope in the Good Life!!!

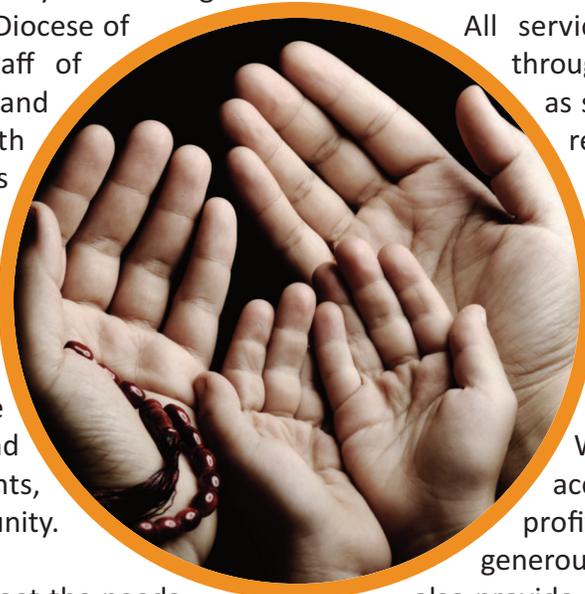
Last year, 1,150 children received toys for Christmas through our Auburn, Hastings and Lincoln locations



Performing the Spiritual Works of Mercy in response to the call of God

Dr. Courtney Miller, Director of Clinical Services

Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska (CSS) offers community based mental health services through the Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center (IHMCC). Serving the Diocese of Lincoln since 1995, our staff of Licensed Psychologists and Licensed Mental Health Practitioners feels it is imperative to develop, protect, and preserve the Catholic culture. These cultural imperatives are accomplished within a mental health context focusing on the psychological, spiritual, and physical needs of our clients, their families, and the community.



the IHMCC is also the only Catholic APA-accredited pre-doctoral internship in the nation.

All services of the IHMCC are provided through our Lincoln office location as well as several outreach sites. Through the recent addition of Telehealth capabilities, those who are located outside of our current in-person service areas can receive counseling from their home or office through a web-based HIPAA compliant system.

While most insurance plans are accepted, the IHMCC, as part of a non-profit agency, relies in part on the generous support of benefactors in order to also provide services to individuals who are not insured or underinsured. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about our services, please contact us at 402-489-1834 or visit our website at immaculateheartcounseling.org.

We at the IHMCC strive to meet the needs of our community through a wide range of counseling services for both children and adults. These services include individual, family/child, marital, group, crisis pregnancy, and post-abortion counseling. In addition,

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center assists families and individuals with:

- Boundaries
- Social Media Addiction
- Trauma
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Marital and Relationship Issues
- Perfectionism
- Parenting
- Stress Management
- Healthy Coping Skills
- Communication Skills
- Vocational Discernment

- Personal Growth
- Pornography Addiction
- Forgiveness
- ADHD
- Autism/Asperger's
- Habit Disorders
- Pediatric Concerns
- Anger
- Grief
- Sexual Addictions
- Social Skills

Other services provided by the IHMCC:

- Psychological Assessment
- Professional Consultation
- Academic Assessment
- Educational Consultant Program
- Public Speaking
- Training Workshops
- Adoption Search Program
- Project Rachel Counseling

Making a difference when Christmas shopping



Shopping for Christmas gifts can be drudgery. Fighting the crowds at the mall or the big-box stores searching for the perfect Christmas gift can drain the Christmas spirit from anyone. Shopping online can be convenient but you take the risk that the item may not be the right fit once it arrives at your door. This year, ditch the mobs, go offline and check out the great selection of unique items at one of the Catholic Social Services Gift & Thrift Stores. We operate four Gift & Thrift stores: the St. Louise Gift & Thrift Store in Lincoln, the St. Joseph Gift & Thrift Store in Hastings, the St. Francis Gift & Thrift Store in Auburn and our more recent addition to our diocesan-wide chain of stores, the St. Isidore Gift & Thrift in Imperial.

Each location offers a great selection of quality clothing, household items, furniture and more. Individuals who cannot afford items in our stores can apply to receive items for free through our emergency services programs in all four communities. All funds raised from the stores, minus minimal administrative costs, are funneled back into our programs to help serve those in need. The items sold at the stores have been donated by generous individuals across Southern Nebraska. We like to think of it as “Giving Squared”- you donate an item to our thrift stores, and we sell it and give the money to the poor. Your gift is “squared” and gives twice: to the person who needed a reduced-cost item, and to a family or individual in need of assistance. Plus, each Gift & Thrift store offers gift cards! Come find that perfect gift at one of our CSS Gift & Thrift stores this holiday season! Visit www.cssisus.org for store hours.

Taking “stock” in your year-end charitable giving

If you are like most individuals, the value of your stock and other investments has grown over the years. Perhaps you are entering your retirement years and wondering how you can turn your highly appreciated asset into extra income. If you identify with any of these situations, a variety of charitable plans can help you achieve your goals for tax savings and even provide income.

Current Stock Gift - By transferring your stock to Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska, you can enjoy the benefits of tax savings on this year’s tax return. In addition to your charitable deduction, you will avoid paying capital gains tax that would otherwise be due on the sale of your appreciated investment.

Stock Bequest - If you are still enjoying the benefits of holding your appreciated stock but looking for a way to avoid estate tax in the future, a stock bequest is a good choice. In your will or trust you may wish to include instructions for transferring your appreciated stock to Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska. Your estate will benefit from a charitable deduction that will lessen the impact of taxes on your estate and your heirs.

Please contact Michelle Birkel, CSS Advancement Director, at 402-327-6235 or email mbirkel@cssisus.org for additional information.

Getting back more than what you give

Many folks who come to Catholic Social Services to volunteer do so to give of their time and talents. What they soon discover is the gift they receive from volunteering is often far more than what they gave. At all of our CSS locations, there are opportunities for volunteers to share their gifts with those in need. Our volunteers are vital to us in performing our mission across the 24,000 square miles of southern Nebraska that we serve. Last year, 590 volunteers from all walks of life including parishes, schools, workplaces, retirement facilities and more provided 26,000 volunteer hours statewide which translates to \$280,000 in service to Catholic Social Services.

There are many ways to encounter Christ through those in need who come to our locations in Auburn, Hastings, Imperial and Lincoln. Areas for volunteer opportunities include:

- Food pantry
 - Sack Lunch Program
 - Childcare for Citizenship classes
 - English Language and Citizenship Classes
 - Childcare at St. Gianna Women's Homes
 - Gift & Thrift store opportunities
 - Administrative assistance
 - Financial Literacy Mentor
 - Warehouse help (Grounds/Truck Driver/Maintenance/Baling)
- ...and much more!

"I find that in helping people I receive far more than I feel I give to them."

-Volunteer with the St. Teresa of Calcutta Sandwich Program

If you would like to share your time and talents with others, visit our website at www.cssisus.org. Click on the "What You Can Do" section, the "Volunteer" for more information on how you can help us bring Hope in the Good Life to those we serve across southern Nebraska.





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#HopeintheGoodLife



(S.A.G.)

Catholic Social Services

*Hope during the holidays
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income increases. Here's a sample breakdown for a family of three in Nebraska (2010).

- \$5.11/hr. - Lose Access to Adult Medicaid
- \$11.44/hr. - Lose Access to SNAP (Food Stamps)
- \$16.29/hr. - Lose Childcare Subsidies
- \$17.82/hr. - Children Would Lose Kids Connection (health insurance)
- \$20.62/hr. - Self-sufficiency wage for family

Most of the families we serve at Catholic Social Services are low-income in the sense that they work full-time but do not earn enough to cover their expenses. For example, if Dad works full-time and earns \$11.44/hr. that's roughly \$1,500 per month after taxes. Rent for a family of three can be anywhere from \$525 to \$750 per month plus utilities. Add to that a modest cell phone bill, car payment, and auto insurance. If they can secure income-based childcare, maybe Mom works, too. With

the income that remains, it must be spent on everyday needs and of course saved for emergencies, including medical bills and car repairs. And we must not forget the food because remember, Dad earns \$11.44/hr., thus making the family ineligible for SNAP. The Benefit's Cliff is harsh and we as Catholics are called to do our part.

At Catholic Social Services, we serve an average of 160 individuals per week through the St. Francis Food Pantry but this holiday season we are doing something a little extra. We are providing Holiday Food Baskets to families in need and we are actively seeking financial donations for our Emergency Services Program so that we can increase our weekly budget to assist families with emergency cash assistance such as rent and utilities. Every donation counts and no donation is too small. As Mother Teresa said, If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.

*-Katie Patrick
Regional Director of Social Services*

**Donate now at www.cssisus.org to help bring
Hope in the Good Life to those we serve!**