



Hope in the Good Life NEWSLETTER

The latest uplifting updates from Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska



JACOB
SEDLACEK
CSS Law Clerk

CSS Refugee Program continues to make an impact THROUGH COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In January 2025, the U.S. government terminated contracts and federal grants with resettlement agencies. Subsequently, in April 2025, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) chose not to renew its federal resettlement contract. As an affiliate of the USCCB, Catholic Social Services (CSS) received formal notification to wind down our program operations.

Despite these federal changes, CSS remains committed to our mission. Over the past five years, we have proudly welcomed and served over 900 individuals, including refugees, humanitarian parolees, and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders from around the world. While we have completed all required services under the previous federal program, **we recognize that our clients and the community still require significant support—especially as recent legislative changes have restricted SNAP eligibility for many new arrivals.**

We are pleased to announce that CSS will **not** be closing its refugee program. Thanks to the generosity of our private donors, we have established an emergency fund to assist the clients we have resettled. These funds will provide critical support, such as rental assistance and gift cards, to help families fill financial gaps as they work to build their lives in our community. **This emergency fund is vital to many families, and its direct and lasting impact is shown in this beautiful thank you note we recently received:**

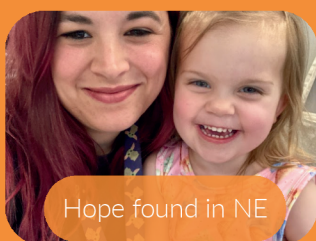
"I've been trying to find the right words, but honestly, I don't think words are enough for what I feel in my heart. Thank you so much to you and to the Catholic organization for everything you've done for me and my daughters. You came into my life during one of the hardest and darkest times I've ever lived through. I was broken, scared, and truly afraid that me and my girls would end up homeless. And then you all came like angels and changed our lives. You gave me hope when I felt hopeless, safety when I felt lost, and kindness when I needed it the most. I will never forget what you did for us for the rest of my life. No matter how much I thank you, it will always feel too little compared to what you gave me. You didn't just help us with housing — you helped save me emotionally and gave my daughters stability and peace. I also want you to know that I love you so much, Katie [Batenhorst], and I love the Catholic organization so much too. You will always have a special place in my heart because of the kindness and love you showed us when we needed it the most. May God bless you, Katie, and bless everyone in the organization. I pray that God gives you happiness, health, and makes every beautiful thing you wish for come true, because people like you are truly rare in this world. 🙏❤️"

This testimonial of thanks is from one of our refugee clients who came to Lincoln in 2023. After arriving in Lincoln, she and her husband separated due to an unhealthy relationship. The wife is staying with three children. She received a notice from her landlord requiring her to move out. She and her family lost the SNAP benefits due to an eligibility change regarding her refugee status. At the time of this change, she did not have a job. However, she is very willing to work and is actively looking for a job. When we learned of her situation, we provided assistance using emergency funding to help her secure a new apartment.

Although federal funding has ended, our commitment has not; so when members of our community have a need, we should work to meet it. Together with our donors, volunteers, and community partners, we can continue providing hope to those who need it most. **We can do so little alone, but together we can do so much more.**

-Poe Dee, Director of Refugee & Immigrant Services

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Hope found in NE



A timely reminder



Regional Roundup



Catholic Culture



From the Sisters' Desk

Reflections from our St. Gianna Program Marian Sister Advocates



Vehicle Donations: putting families on the road to **HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE**

I want to take this opportunity to give a big shout out and thank you to all our wonderful donors out there who make our work possible in the St. Gianna Program (SGP) and, more specifically, a **special thank you to those who have donated vehicles for our women and children.**

Since my arrival at St. Gianna's in August of 2025, I have seen firsthand the real difficulties, challenges, and hardships that our women and children face without a vehicle. Many of our women are not only trying to find work and raise their children single-handedly but they also need transportation to get to work, take their children to daycare/school, get groceries, clothes, resources, and healthcare. Not only that, but so often in domestic violence situations, the abuser restricts the woman's freedom by taking control over the car, the finances, and even small decisions throughout the day, so having a vehicle gives them freedom to live and do the things they need to do.

One of our residents had been walking three hours with her children to daycare and to work. She did not have enough money to pay for an Uber and riding the bus was difficult for her with her three little children, so when she received a good, reliable van from a generous donor, it was life-changing for her and her children! She was so grateful for this gift. **We do what we can to help support the women and children with bus passes and rides when we are able to, but it is not possible to keep up with the high demand, so when someone donates a vehicle, it is such a blessing that changes lives.**

A resident told one of the Sisters after she received a vehicle from a generous donor, "I am so thankful for everything Catholic Social Services and St. Gianna's have done for me. You guys have truly changed my life for the better, and I couldn't be more grateful for everything!" I have seen many times over how this big act of generosity of a vehicle has empowered the women here at St. Gianna's to have a better quality of life for themselves and their children. It has allowed them to accomplish their goals and the dreams they have for themselves and their families.

-Sr. Melissa Moxley, SGP Advocate



If you're upgrading to a newer vehicle & your current car is still in roadworthy condition, reliable, and safe to drive, **please consider donating it to the CSS Vehicle Donation Program!** Start your donation journey at csshope.org/vehicledonation



Why consider a **Planned Gift?**

- **Provide for your loved ones first** while also supporting the causes you cherish
- **Create a lasting legacy** that reflects your faith and values
- **Support the Works of Mercy** for generations to come
- **A planned gift costs nothing today** & may be changed if your circumstances change
- **Every gift matters.** Your legacy, regardless of size, can have a lasting impact
- **Join the Legacy of H.O.P.E. Society** and become part of a community committed to *Helping Others Plan for Eternity*

Planning today. **Providing Hope in the Good Life tomorrow.**

August is National Make-A-Will Month, a timely reminder that creating a will is one of the greatest gifts you can give your loved ones. A thoughtfully prepared estate plan provides peace of mind, reduces uncertainty during difficult times, and ensures that your wishes are honored.

A will is also an opportunity to reflect on the blessings God has entrusted to us and how those blessings can continue serving others long after we're gone. While our first responsibility is always to care for our families, many faithful Catholics also choose to remember the ministries that have shaped their lives and strengthened their communities.

At CSS, we witness the impact of generosity every day. Because of compassionate supporters, families receive nutritious food, mothers and children find safe shelter, immigrants receive trusted legal assistance, and individuals facing hardship discover renewed hope. These Works of Mercy continue because people like you choose to make a lasting difference.

One of the simplest ways to continue that mission is by including CSS in your estate plans. Planned gifts can be made through:

- A gift in your will or living trust
- A beneficiary designation on a retirement account or life insurance policy
- Charitable trusts or other planned giving arrangements
- Gifts of appreciated assets or other estate planning tools

No matter the size of the gift, your generosity helps ensure that future generations will continue to experience **Hope in the Good Life** through the work of CSS.

Those who notify us that they have included CSS in their estate plans are welcomed into the **Legacy of H.O.P.E. Society (Helping Others Plan for Eternity)**. While many members prefer to remain anonymous, all are united by a desire to leave a legacy rooted in faith, compassion, and hope.

If you have already included CSS in your estate plans, **thank you.** We would be honored to recognize your commitment by welcoming you into the Legacy of H.O.P.E. Society. If you have not yet created a will, perhaps this August is the perfect time to begin. Your family will benefit from the peace of mind that comes with good planning, and your legacy can continue bringing Christ's love to those who need it most.

For more information, please contact CSS Development Officer John Soukup: jsoukup@csshope.org or 402.327.6235

Refrigerator REFERENCE

Catholic Culture & CSS Calendar

How & why we're performing the Works of Mercy in response to the Call of God- join us in our mission!

Our Catholic Culture: A month of many memorials

August is one of the more notable months on the Church's liturgical calendar. As summer begins to wind down, the Church offers an extraordinary opportunity to deepen our faith through the lives of the many significant saints and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the traditional devotion for the month.

No other month features a longer consecutive stretch of memorials and feast days. For 13 straight days, the Church celebrates at least one saint or holy observance, making August a month filled with daily reminders of faithful men and women who followed Christ with courage, humility, and love. Here are a few of the many saints honored in August:



- **August 1 - St. Alphonsus Liguori:** Founder of the Redemptorists, priest, Doctor of the Church and great moral theologian.
- **August 4 - St. John Vianney:** Patron saint of parish priests, remembered for his holiness, humility, and tireless dedication to hearing confessions.
- **August 8 - St. Dominic:** Founder of the Dominican Order who helped spread devotion to the Rosary.
- **August 10 - St. Lawrence:** A deacon of the early Church who devoted his life to serving the poor and gave his life for his faith.
- **August 11 - St. Clare of Assisi:** Founder of the Poor Clares, close friend of St. Francis.
- **August 14 - St. Maximilian Kolbe:** A modern-day martyr who willingly gave his life in Auschwitz to save another prisoner.
- **August 21 - St. Pius X:** Lowered the age of receiving First Holy Communion to children, strongly encouraged the faithful to receive Communion more frequently.
- **August 23 - St. Rose of Lima:** First canonized saint from the Americas, known for providing shelter and medical care to the poor.
- **August 25 - St. Louis:** King of France, known for his acts of charity including washing the feet of the poor.
- **August 27 - St. Monica:** Mother of St. Augustine, known for her unwavering prayers that led to his conversion, and that of her husband and mother-in-law.
- **August 28 - St. Augustine:** One of the Church's greatest theologians and writers. His powerful conversion story continues to inspire Christians around the world.

The month also includes several beautiful Marian celebrations, highlighted by the **Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** on August 15, reminding us of Mary's unique role in God's plan of salvation. **Communion of Saints, pray for us!**

Sign up now to support our 30th Annual CSS Memorial Golf Classic & Cookout

Registration is now open for our 30th Annual Memorial Golf Classic & Cookout! This year's event will be held in memory of Tom and Margaret Tracy and takes place Monday, September 14th at Hillcrest Country Club in Lincoln.

Not a golfer? Not a problem as there are a number of ways you can support CSS through our Memorial Golf Classic & Cookout. Hole sponsorships and priest sponsorships are available, or you can make a memorial gift in honor of the Tracys or your loved one. If you'd like to golf, you can choose the morning flight which begins at 7:00 AM, or the afternoon flight which is at 1:00 PM. Team fees include carts, lunch, and a cookout for golfers/and a guest at 6:00 PM. To register or for more info, scan [this QR code](#) or call (402) 430-5626. **Space is limited so register today!**

-John McDermott, VP of Marketing & Development



**Save these upcoming
CSS
EVENT DATES**

*** FRI 8/7** MONTHLY CSS HOLY HOUR FOR CLIENT INTENTIONS
CSS LINCOLN OFFICE CHAPEL

SAT 8/8 WALK TO END HUNGER FOR CSS FOOD MARKET
PIUS X HS LINCOLN

MON 9/14 CSS MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC & COOKOUT
HILLCREST COUNTRY CLUB

SUN 10/4 BOUNTIFUL HARVEST GALA & SILENT AUCTION
HASTINGS CITY AUDITORIUM

THUR 11/5 SOUTHWEST NEBRASKA BIG GIVE FOR CSS SOUTHWEST
ONLINE GIVING EVENT

SAT 3/20 CELEBRATION OF HOPE 2027 GALA & SILENT AUCTION
EMBASSY SUITES LINCOLN

* Monthly event- visit our website for full list of dates

See more info & register online:
csshope.org/calendar

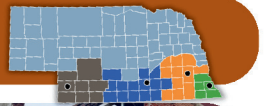


**CATHOLIC
SOCIAL SERVICES
OF SOUTHERN NEBRASKA**



**30th Annual
Memorial
Golf Classic & Cookout**

CSS Regional Roundup: *Serving 24,000 square miles of southern Nebraska*



CSS AUBURN: Community Resilience

In Auburn, our work continues to be defined by moments of profound connection and resilience. **We are humbled by the opportunity to walk alongside our neighbors, whether they are visiting us for the first time or facing unexpected challenges.**

Auburn has faced significant challenges recently since two tornadoes caused widespread damage and power outages throughout the city and surrounding communities. No one was left untouched by the devastation. **Moments after the storms passed, residents immediately banded together to check on one another, clear roads of heavy debris, and assist with yard work.**

The City of Auburn issued a disaster declaration. Witnessing the immediate response was truly inspiring. A massive effort by local residents, alongside coordinated help from nearby counties, regional relief organizations, and specialized volunteer groups sprang to action without hesitation. Auburn was flooded with help and good hearts that showed up with chainsaws, trucks and trailers, manpower and love, and the words "How can I help?"

We were honored to be part of that relief effort. From providing essential supplies (water to workers!) to helping families secure



May 2026 storm damage in Auburn

emergency resources (gift cards and financial assistance), we saw firsthand the power of neighbors caring for neighbors.

We wish to extend our thanks to Auburn's Backpack Program, which generously donated extra food for us to distribute throughout the summer. Taking care of one another is what small towns do best!

As we continue our work, we carry these stories of grace and perseverance with us. **Please keep the Auburn community in your prayers as we continue to repair our beautiful town, and may we all continue to find ways to be a blessing to one another.**

-April Boellstorff, Auburn Regional Director

CSS HASTINGS: Save the date and join us 10/4 at BOUNTIFUL HARVEST 2026!



Please mark your calendars for Sunday, October 4, 2026, as we gather at the Hastings City Auditorium for our largest and most important fundraiser of the year: the annual Bountiful Harvest Gala & Silent Auction! **This event is a beautiful opportunity for our community to come together, celebrate the bridges of love and compassion we are building, and ensure that our vital ministries can continue serving those who need it most.** One hundred percent of the proceeds from Bountiful Harvest support the daily work of Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska. When you attend, you directly fund our Family Support Services, keep our Open Table sack lunch program running, and stock the shelves of our personal care and cleaning pantry for vulnerable families. You also champion our ongoing sustainability efforts, allowing us to recycle goods and keep countless usable items out of the local landfill.

Continued on back page

CSS SOUTHWEST: Meeting Challenges

We just finished the **Chase County Challenge**, our biggest fundraiser of the year, sponsored by the Imperial Community Foundation. The Foundation invites any Chase County 501(c)3 to receive a dollar-for-dollar match from the Foundation, up to \$10,000. This event coincides with a concert and the Smokin' on Broadway barbecue contest. This year, the event was trimmed down as conflicting events and other logistics canceled the barbecue contest portion. However, this did not deter our donors as we met our goal and then some. **We're grateful for every dollar donated and will keep those who have donated in our prayers of thanksgiving. Their generosity will go a long way in helping families in need.**

We received a compliment from a mother with her two sons visiting from out of town. She asked about our rosaries at the counter, cueing us to ask if she happened to be Catholic. Indeed, she was, and her two sons are making their First Communion this fall. We asked if they'd seen our chapel and invited them to do so if they hadn't. **They visited and were so thankful and joyful to have had the opportunity to take it in.** It actually stirred up a Catechism lesson with the boys asking lots of questions. The mother continued to voice her appreciation for the chapel and mentioned how much she loved the layout of the store.



With another out-of-town experience, we assisted an elderly couple, helping their adult son with health problems, get started furnishing his new apartment. He'd found an employer willing to work around his health problems in a town an hour and a half away. As his parents told us, **"He's sitting on the floor with his dog in his new apartment"**. We helped with a reduced price on a loveseat and a small end table. We stuffed the loveseat into their small SUV with plans for the couple to be back to get the end table, possibly collecting a few more furnishings as they have room to haul.

-Bill Sullivan, Imperial Thrift Store Manager

How may we *pray for you at CSS?*

Share your prayer intentions with us, and we'll offer them during our **Rosary** in the CSS Lincoln Chapel. You may also submit requests anonymously online at csshope.org/pray

HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE NEWSLETTER | JULY/AUG 2026

I'll support *Hope in the Good Life!*

You may also use this form to correct any mailing info found on the front panel or to provide your email address (see below)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Providing your email allows us to communicate with you digitally, saving us valuable resources (including postage) for CSS programs/services & supports SUSTAINABILITY, a CSS Core Value.

Support enclosed: \$ _____

☐ Check to receive an annual statement ONLY (individual thank you letters for each gift will NOT be sent to you)

Donate online!
csshope.org/donate



Thank you!



We had that tornado come through in Auburn and CSS helped us to be able to meet our deductible on our insurance by providing food that we would have otherwise have had to spend our money on. I just can't say enough - just so grateful for it."

-Pat, a CSS Auburn Food Market client

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Hope found in Nebraska

"Why would you move to Nebraska?" That's always the first question I get when people learn that I'm originally from Lake Charles, Louisiana. What they don't know is that while my Cajun roots are strong, I moved 23 times growing up, and Nebraska just happened to be the last stop along the way. It was here that I became an adult, married my high school sweetheart, and brought seven beautiful children into the world.

The follow-up question is usually something like, "Why stay in Nebraska?" or "Why not follow your family?" My answer is simple: **God has blessed me abundantly in Nebraska.**

My home life was very unstable growing up. At 17 years old, I ran away from home and spent time on the very same streets of Lincoln as some of the clients I greet with a smile in the lobby here at CSS every day.

God blessed me with a best friend who became my husband of 12 years. God blessed me with my children. God blessed me with dear friends who have become my chosen family, surrounding me with love and helping instill in me a deep love for my Catholic faith. God blessed me with the opportunity to be part of this outstanding organization.

My heart overflows with gratitude for the joy I have already experienced during my time at CSS. **I am truly blessed to help ensure the safety and well-being of each and every "Little Blessing" entrusted to our care at Little Blessings Child Care of Catholic Social Services.**

I want to share with everyone around me the many blessings I have received here in Nebraska—the beauty of the Catholic faith, the gift of family, stability, education, love, and hope in the good life.

I want every child in our care to experience these blessings, not only after reaching adulthood, but from the very beginning of their lives. It is my mission to ensure that every child feels loved, valued, and secure from the moment they walk through our doors.

This is one of the reasons I have embraced my role at CSS with such enthusiasm. **It is also why we will be raising our child care age limit to five years old.** It is important to me that the toddlers in our care have the opportunity to continue their Catholic education with us. It is equally important that if there is a child who needs us and we have the ability to care for them, we do so.

According to the Baltimore Catechism, "Hope is the virtue by which we firmly trust that God... will, in His mercy, give us eternal happiness and the means to obtain it." What does hope in the good life mean to me? It means that here in Nebraska, 1,000 miles from where I was born, I can say with complete certainty that God is moving. He is working. He is calling us. He is pouring out His blessings, bringing people from every background and every hardship toward eternal happiness and giving them the means to obtain it.

That is the hope I have found in Nebraska. It is the hope I pray every child and every family who walks through our doors will come to know as well.

-Mattie Quick, Child Care Manager

Learn more about Little Blessings Child Care and our current child care openings: csshope.org/littleblessings





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Hope in the Good Life Newsletter

JULY | AUGUST 2026

We're gearing up for the 2026 WALK TO END HUNGER



The countdown is officially on! There is a buzz of excitement in the air as we put the finishing touches on this year's Walk to End Hunger. **Whether you've been attending for years or this will be your very first time, we are thrilled to welcome you to a morning dedicated to helping relieve food insecurity.**

This year we are shaking things up with a few exciting changes. The walk will now be on **Saturday, August 8th, from 10 am to 12 pm.** It will still be located at the Pius X School track, so I suggest wearing comfortable shoes for the walk. Another logistical note to keep in mind is where to park. *Since Pius X School is currently working on some construction, we ask that attendees park either in the few spots closest to the track, in the East school parking lot, or across the street (including the church parking lot).*

Some of the fun will include raffles, a clown with balloons, and a firetruck. You can expect to enjoy vendors such as Valentino's, Chick-fil-A, kolaches from a local bakery, and beverages to cool down as you walk. **Keep watching csshope.org for more info, including an upcoming podcast highlighting the event. Hope to see you on 8/8!**

-Kristina Brandl, Lincoln Food Market Program Manager

Regional Roundup: CSS Hastings (continued)

As we prepare for this incredible evening on 10/4, we're actively looking for community partners to help us lay the groundwork for our biggest night of the year:

- **Sponsorships:** We invite local businesses and individuals to partner with us as table sponsors. If you or your business would like to support our mission through a corporate sponsorship, please contact us.
- **Silent Auction Donations:** Help us raise crucial funds by donating to our silent auction! We are seeking unique items, professional services, or timeshare opportunities to make this year's collection truly special.

To learn more about partnerships, reach out at csshope.org/contact

Bountiful Harvest Gala Details:

When: Sunday, October 4, 2026

Where: Hastings City Auditorium

Individual Tickets: \$75.00

Whether you can sponsor a table, donate an auction item, or simply plan on attending, your presence matters. **Please put October 4th on your calendar today.** We cannot do this work without your ongoing generosity, and I am so excited to celebrate with all of you there!

-Jonathan Kiehl, Hastings Regional Director



COMING IN HGL EXTRA AUGUST EDITION **digital only:**

We have MUCH more to share with you (too much to fit in a single newsletter!) including more stories and reflections on our encounters with neighbors across southern Nebraska. Join our digital communication list: csshope.org/connect

