

HomeTalk

Spring 2021



NEBRASKA
CHILDREN'S
HOME SOCIETY

children first.

A safe and loving family for every child.

Upcoming Giving Days

April
19-24
Share Omaha Do Good Week
Wednesday, May 5, 2021
shareomaha.org

MAY
25
Norfolk Area Big Give
Tuesday, May 25, 2021
norfolkareabiggive.org

MAY
04
Wyobraska Gives
Tuesday, May 4, 2021
wyobraskagives.org

MAY
25
Give to Lincoln Day
Tuesday, May 25, 2021
givetolincoln.com

MAY
05
North Platte Giving Day
Wednesday, May 5, 2021
northplattegivingday.org

Nov.
30
Giving Tuesday
Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021
givingtuesday.org

MAY
06
Go Big Give
(Hall, Howard, & Merrick Counties)
Thursday, May 6, 2021
gobiggive.org

Dec.
02
Kearney Give Where You Live
Thursday, Dec. 2, 2021
givewhereyoulive.net



A Letter from Lana

Dear Friends,

Spring is here!

A time for renewal and new beginnings. After a long winter, and an even longer 2020, it's energizing to see the grass turning green and the sun shining bright. With containment of the virus seemingly in sight, we look forward to reconnecting with one another in person and strengthening our partnerships with the community to put children first.

Although our teams have had to adapt to the changing needs of the community, we remain on the front lines of social services to children and families throughout the state. Likewise, you are there with us because of your financial support and advocacy for our vision of **"a safe and loving home for every child."**

In this edition of HomeTalk you'll read about real families overcoming real challenges and learn how our dedicated team of professionals build life-changing connections for the children we serve.

Be sure to save the date for events and giving days throughout Nebraska. Each one presents an opportunity to help families in need of your support.

Truly,

Lana Temple-Plotz



Ways to Give



Cash gifts



Bequests or Estate Gifts



Gifts of Stock



Employer Matching Gifts



Gifts of Grain



Partners: AmazonSmile, Thrivent Financial, TAGG App, Baker's Community Rewards, Ebay for Charity and Paypal Giving Fund





Sophia & Gabrielle's Forever Family

The day finally came when a life-altering call was made reporting concerns in Sophia and Gabrielle's* home. This day forever changed the outcome of the lives of two extraordinary girls.

After experiencing sexual abuse, drug exposure and severe neglect, Sophia and Gabrielle desperately needed a safe place to call home. A place that would help them heal from past hurts and give them hope for their future. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services entrusted Nebraska Children's Home Society to help the children through its Foster Care and Pathways to Permanency programs.

NCHS found a perfect match, a family that would welcome the girls, meet them where they were at, and provide them with all necessary services to help the girls thrive. Together, NCHS specialists worked with the foster family to help the girls form healthy attachments while maintaining connections with their parents.

Because of their parents' ongoing battle with addiction, homelessness and mental health, professionals realized that reunification was likely not possible. The NCHS team and amazing foster parents were committed to helping the girls maintain lifelong connections with their parents while concurrently working towards permanency through adoption.

Their parents decided it was in the girls' best interests to make an adoption plan with the foster parents, whom they felt would provide the girls with an abundance of love and remain dedicated to their well-being. "With the dedication of amazing foster parents and a wonderful NCHS team, the girls thrived throughout the process, creating a smooth transition and positive experience for all," says Mindy Parker, NCHS Foster Care Supervisor. Two and a half years later, the girls were able to celebrate joining their forever family through adoption just in time for the holidays. Sophia and Gabrielle were able to celebrate with all parents present, joining together to embark on this new adoption journey.

*The names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of those we serve.

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Turning Hardships Into Happy Endings

After experiencing several years of infertility, Brad and Jamie came to Nebraska Children's Home Society looking to adopt. They heard about the agency through Brad's parents, James and Lisa, who had adopted his three younger sisters through the agency when Brad was just seven.

Brad and Jamie were very involved in educating themselves about adoption and how it's practiced today. They attended PREPARE* meetings which provided them with guidance and support and they've even led a group discussion. After applying and being accepted for a home study and what seemed like a long wait, NCHS notified Brad and Jamie that an expectant mother wanted them to adopt her newborn. The baby went home with Brad and Jamie before relinquishments were signed, and the baby stayed with them for about a week. The birth mother's family became aware of the situation, disapproved of the adoption plan and the mother decided to parent her child. Brad and Jamie tearfully brought the baby back to the Lincoln office and went back home, alone.

They took several months to re-group, and during that time, they became close friends with the mother and even cared for the baby on occasion. They stayed in contact with the agency and their specialist, who continued to advise them during their time on hold. The couple updated their home study and came back to the program hoping to

become parents. They continued to be involved in PREPARE and continued to share their knowledge with other couples.

A year later, Brad and Jamie once again were selected by an expectant mom and gladly met with her, knowing like last time, there's no placement guarantee.

Brad and Jamie now have a daughter in their caring and loving home, and she soon will be adopted as a permanent member of their family. They continue to have a close relationship with the young mother who chose to raise her daughter, and they occasionally have her daughter visit their home. They share letters and pictures with their daughter's birth mother, hoping to have a close relationship with her someday if she becomes ready. They have shared their experience of loss with other prospective adoptive parents and have grown in their understanding of adoption and openness in adoption.

Brad and Jamie are a proud second-generation NCHS forever family.

*Available across Nebraska, PREPARE meetings are designed for couples that are approved or are in the process of being approved for an adoption. PREPARE meetings provide participants with adoption education and the opportunity to establish a support network with other families waiting for adoption.



Jill's Journey Raising Her Grandchildren

For seasoned veterans of the NCHS Raising Your Grandchildren and Ambassadors programs, grandparents transitioning group meetings to a virtual platform was initially met with some trepidation. Some grandparents were hesitant to use the technology or worried the group would be less engaging without the in-person element. For Jill, a grandmother raising two young grandchildren, the “how” of the service was not nearly as important as the support she has found through those faces on her computer screen.

Jill arrived in the program after being referred through a local school. She had raised her six-year-old granddaughter for roughly three years and had recently taken on caring for a second infant granddaughter due to her own daughter's mental and physical health struggles. As many grandparents acting as full-time caretakers for young children would say, raising grandchildren can be a uniquely isolating experience when so many of their generational peers are empty nesters or pondering retirement. This lifestyle, coupled with a global pandemic, was a recipe for a new level of loneliness.

For Jill, finding the Raising Your Grandchildren program was akin to finding a much-needed refuge. When she started with the six-week series in the summer of 2020, eventually continuing to the ongoing Ambassadors support group, Jill says she “found the camaraderie and information very useful, and the laughter was very helpful since we had a lot in common.”

Though she understood how to take care of her granddaughters physically, Jill did not have all the answers when it came to the aspects of modern childrearing. Within the group, Jill found a wealth

of knowledge and an endless supply of resources. For every challenge she encountered, someone else had walked that path and was eager to show her the road map.



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A central component of the Raising Your Grandchildren program is talking about the “blessings” and “losses” that come with the rapid and often jarring shift in the life trajectory. For Jill, many of the losses surround her challenging relationship with her own child. She understands that these years of her life would look a lot different without two small children accompanying her on this journey but shared with the group that the things she has gained outweigh anything she has sacrificed.

To Jill, seeing all the firsts of childhood for the second time has been even sweeter. When she raised her own children, Jill felt she missed some of those experiences when racing to every responsibility. As a grandparent parenting

again, Jill knows to slow down and appreciate each of those fleeting moments. Her life is not without struggle, but, thanks to the Raising Your Grandchildren group, Jill has a place and a time she describes as “just for me.” It is within this space, this couple of hours alone at her dining room table, that Jill can share tears or swap humorous anecdotes or talk through a challenge. The program looks different today than it did a year ago when an often-boisterous group of grandmothers gathered in a cramped dining room in North Omaha. Recruits and long-time attendees were chatting over coffee like the oldest friends. In its altered state, the particular sense of relief and peace that stems from being in the presence of people who know and share your struggles is still there for Jill each week with the simple click of a Zoom link.

Raising Your Grandchildren is designed for grandparents and other kinship caregivers with a focus on providing support, resources and parenting strategies.



APRIL
National Child Abuse Prevention Month
**Thriving Children & Families:
Prevention With A Purpose**

National Child Abuse Prevention Month highlights the importance of communities working together to help families flourish and prevent child maltreatment. Throughout April and the year, communities are encouraged to increase awareness about child and family well-being to implement effective strategies supporting families and preventing child abuse and neglect.

MAY
National Foster Care Month
**Foster Care as a Support to Families,
Not a Substitute for Parents**

With more than 423,000 children nationally in foster care and 6,000 children in Nebraska’s foster care system, National Foster Care Month celebrates those who make a meaningful difference in these children’s lives.

SEPTEMBER
National Kinship Care Month
**Celebrating Families When Children
Live with Kin**

In Nebraska, 28,316 children are cared for by a relative, and approximately 85% of those caregivers are grandparents. National Kinship Care Month recognizes the importance of grandparents and relatives caring for children, while their parents work towards stability.

NOVEMBER
National Adoption Month
Engage Youth: Listen & Learn

National Adoption Month celebrates and educates communities through programs, events and activities that aim to raise awareness about the thousands of children and youth currently in foster care who are waiting for their own permanent, loving families.



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4939 South 118th Street
Omaha, NE 68137



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Upcoming Events



BACKPACK DRIVE

July 2021
Omaha, Nebraska



HUSKER HOMETOWN TAILGATE

September 18, 2021
Norfolk, Nebraska



NEIGHBORHOOD CELEBRATION

August 13, 2021
Omaha, Nebraska



HOMEGROWN

October 8, 2021
Omaha, Nebraska



A NIGHT AT THE BALLPARK

August 5, 2021
Lincoln, Nebraska



PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST

February 2022
Omaha, Nebraska