**Making a Difference for Our Neighbors Across the Metro**

When individuals have what they need to thrive, it impacts our entire community. Here are some examples of who your donations are helping…

* **Maurice** came to **Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership (ENCAP)** seeking assistance with his past due rent. He was employed full time at the time of intake, but had missed hours at work due to a COVID diagnosis, needing to address his children’s mental health issues and an upcoming surgery that would put him out of work for many more weeks. Through UWM’s City of Omaha ARPA funding, ENCAP was able to provide direct rental assistance. ENCAP’s Support Services Specialist also helped the family create a plan to obtain new employment, prioritize household expenses and access resources including mental health counseling, affordable medication options, food, clothing, financial assistance and job placement assistance.

***Pop-out statistic****:* A family of four living just above the current federal poverty line of $30,000 can hardly be considered financially secure. Based on the cost of living in the metro, it’s estimated that **1 in 3 families** in our community **struggle to make ends meet**. *(American Community Survey 2021)*

* The **Hassan family** first requested food assistance when the father’s hours became inconsistent and completely dependent upon the weather. With mounting bills and nowhere else to turn, they went to **Heartland Hope Mission**. The family was approved for crisis assistance including a week supply of groceries, clothing, hygiene items and diapers. When the family learned they could receive weekly pantries, the mother became teary eyed and said, “Thank you so much. You have no idea how much this will help my family.” They’ve also received utility and other supports to get back on their feet. This quick intervention and support kept the family from experiencing homelessness. They are now working toward self-sufficiency and the father has accepted a full-time position as a driver for Heartland Heart Mission.

***Pop-out statistic:***The 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment indicates **19.7% of metro area residents often worry about running out of food**. This is up from 11.3% in 2018. Similarly, calls to the 211 Helpline for food and meal supports have continued to grow annually since 2020.

*\*The clients’ names and images have been changed to protect their privacy.*

**Changing Lives Through Community Partnerships**

* **David**, a **Completely KIDS** student at Field Club Elementary, was referred for an inpatient stay at Immanuel after expressing suicidal ideation. He struggled with depression, lack of hygiene, low motivation, poor attendance at school and no real friends. For the past year, David has participated in individual therapy with a counselor at Completely KIDS – focusing on his depressive symptoms and a safety plan for when suicidal ideation occurs. During the spring of 2022, David had suicidal ideation and almost attempted suicide. But he stopped himself and remembered the safety plan he’d worked on with his therapist. With medication, family engagement, increased therapy and coping skills, his symptoms have improved significantly. David was discharged from therapy and people see a remarkable difference in his well-being.

***Pop-out statistic:*** **1 in 3 people** in the metro have experienced symptoms of chronic depression, and Nebraska ranks 33rd and Iowa 18th in terms of access to mental health care. *(Community Health Needs Assessment)*

* **Jazmine** had been homeless on and off for five years due to her struggle with mental health issues. She had moved into an apartment, but was soon evicted for falling behind on rent. After going to a local shelter, she was referred to **Together** for the Horizons Program. Jazmine received intensive case management, referrals to mental and behavioral health, transportation to and from appointments, section 8 housing, SNAP and food from the Together pantry. Through this circle of support, she was able to move into and sustain an apartment.

***Pop-out statistics****:* On any given night, approximately **1,400 people** are homeless in the metro area – 30% are chronically homeless and 43% suffer from mental illness. (*Point-in-Time Study by Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless*)

The Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area is **80,000 units short** of our affordable housing needs.

*(Housing Affordability in the Omaha and Council Bluffs Area: An Assessment of Housing Affordability, Needs, & Priorities, April 2021)*

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**Removing Barriers & Strengthening the Systems People Rely On**

* **Marisol** was continually detached from school due to physical and mental health issues. She failed multiple classes and was referred to juvenile probation due to truancy issues. In the fall of 2019, she earned one credit, then the pandemic hit and 2020-21 was essentially a lost school year due to her depression and anxiety. But Marisol’s youth attendance navigator at the **D2 Center** didn’t give up. As she approached age 21 without a diploma – her navigator created a plan toward graduation with programs that offer alternative ways to earn course credit and help to navigate the system. Marisol gained confidence, got a part-time job, finished all her credits and even spoke at graduation. While in summer school in July 2022, she participated in an internship through OPS for future teachers and worked as a para. She is now employed as a full-time para through OPS and plans to attend Metropolitan Community College and begin working on a degree.

The number of disconnected youth in the metro has **increased from 8,900 to approximately** **12,000**.

Across the state of Nebraska, nearly **1 in 5 students** missed at least 10% of school days during the 2022 school year – making these students vulnerable to falling behind academically and socially.

*(American Community Survey 2021)*

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