



THE JOURNEY

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Empowering freedom from domestic violence

Community Support at the Holidays

It's finally here, the holidays. Maybe you have been anxiously awaiting its return since closing the final box on the decorations last year, or perhaps you've been dreading it. The holiday season can bring many gifts in the form of love, harmony, and friendship, but it can also bring unwelcomed guests — such as stress. For survivors of abuse, the holidays bring the stress of weighing the balance of staying in a dangerous situation or fleeing and disrupting family traditions. This is a life-changing decision, yet each year our confidential safe shelters are full during the holiday season.

Friendship Home receives an immense amount of support from the community throughout the year and the holidays are no exception. Our clients can take control of how they want to spend the holidays. From making a family meal to writing a letter to Santa, or wrapping presents gifted by donors, you ensure families are strengthened and supported as they forge new beginnings and new memories.

At Friendship Home, we don't want the holidays to be something our client's dread. Instead, we want the holiday spirit to fill their lives and help create a magical experience in an otherwise challenging time. We thank you for helping survivors of domestic violence find safety and peace this holiday season through your generous support. Thank you for being hope they can feel.

Holidays Bring Hope

With financial strain, increased time at home, and a wealth of added stress, the holidays are not always full of joy for those experiencing domestic violence. For Elaine and her children, the holiday season had become a marathon of threats and violence.

Elaine, along with her seven children fled her abusive husband, and entered emergency services with Friendship Home. For nearly two decades, Elaine was physically and emotionally abused by her husband. Her focus, however, was always on keeping her children as safe and as happy as possible. Elaine's instinct was to put her own needs last.

Each holiday season, Friendship Home — with tremendous help from the generosity of community donors — provides gifts to all survivors and their children currently in shelter. Last Christmas, when Elaine's case manager brought gifts to her door, she was beside herself. While delighted to know her children were going to have the holiday they deserved, what overwhelmed Elaine the most were the packages that had her name on them.

"She said she had never received a gift in her life," Elaine's case manager recalls. "She asked me to watch her open her gifts and take pictures. She had a beautiful smile, full of joy."

The simple act of receiving a gift allowed Elaine to realize, perhaps for the first time, that she deserved to feel safe, cherished, and loved.

Thanks to you, families like Elaine's experience hope for a new future, during the holidays and throughout the year.

From the Executive Director

Today, I am reflecting on the relationships that have made it possible for us to serve survivors, and it is with a heavy heart, I am reminded that in October we lost a truly authentic relationship builder, Kay Mathews. Kay was fiercely committed to Friendship Home's mission, and she had a unique and eloquent way of communicating the need for shelter and services to our donors and funders. Her belief in our ability to do right by the women and children we serve was unwavering and her vision for the future was forever expanding. And she most genuinely cared about you.

Relationships are the cornerstone to how we support survivors and their children looking to find a path to a life free from violence. Recently a young artist, whose mother we served in shelter, graced us with three pieces of her work showing two hands intertwined. She gave them to her mother's case manager in appreciation for her help and told her that the hands were hers and her mother's. The comforting, behind-the-scenes support case managers and advocates provide helps build relationships of trust, a foundation to help survivors begin to rebuild their lives.




Rest assured, our relationships will continue to grow in Kay's spirit, and it is with heartfelt gratitude that we continue to provide peace and comfort during this holiday season. **Thank you and Happy Holidays!**



Leah Droge
Executive Director



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Transitional Housing

It was the mid-1980s when the abuse became too much for Amara, prompting her to take her six children and flee from their remote, rural Nebraska home and their abuser. She entered emergency shelter and began the steps of healing and planning for the future. She had made progress, but when it came time to leave shelter, she didn't have anywhere to go, despite the progress she had made as a survivor. With no other options, she had to return home, back to her abuser. A time later, Amara placed a call to Friendship Home. Her abuser could be heard in the background of the call over Amara's screams of fear.

Amara's situation, like entirely too many others, left an emotional impact on Friendship Home. Her situation sparked the idea for transitional shelter. In 1992, Lincoln Housing Authority made transitional housing available for survivors of domestic violence at Friendship Home. The first duplex was and remains foundational to the aspirations of hundreds of survivors who have had access to safe and decent housing for the past 30 years. This opportunity allowed survivors not just time to recover and begin the tasks of rebuilding their lives, but safety and security of not having to return to an abusive and violent partner. Lincoln Housing Authority has supported Friendship Home's expansion of transitional housing. Its marvelous staff who initiated this project have worked hand in hand with Friendship Home to ensure its continuation.

Friendship Home currently offers 15 transitional housing units plus two which are operated as "housing first" with the survivor as the tenant and Friendship Home providing rental assistance, Case Management, and Advocacy for a total of 17 units.

Are you an Online Donor?

If yes, we encourage you to use Friendship Home's secure website, www.friendshiphome.org. Donations come directly to Friendship Home and we all benefit from lower processing fees. **Thank You!**

Safe Quarters Thank you!

On October 9th, we held our annual Safe Quarters event LIVE and in person for the first time in three years. This year was a great milestone for us, as it was the 20th anniversary of the event! We'd like to extend a huge thank you to our volunteers and sponsors for their hard work and dedication.

Throughout the day on October 9th, volunteers walked Lincoln communities to spread awareness and collect donations. Through sponsorships, virtual fundraising, and donations, we were able to raise \$93,365!

Safe Quarters truly is a community-wide effort, and the results show how generous our community is in helping to empower freedom from domestic violence.

A special thank you to our 2022 Safe Quarters Sponsors!



20 Years of Safe Quarters: Where it all Began

Twenty years ago, Cynthia Fitchett, Marcia Roth, and Kathleen Allan met for coffee. The three friends had been volunteering for Friendship Home and were enthralled by the work Friendship Home was doing in the community. They wanted to take their volunteering a step further – to help Friendship Home grow



within the community. Kathleen had an idea to raise awareness and funds by canvassing neighborhoods in the Lincoln community. That night, Cynthia dreamt of the event and the impact it would have for years to come. “We need to call it Safe Quarters,” she shared the next morning. “Safe Quarters Save Lives!” An event was born.

This year marked the 20th anniversary of Safe Quarters. Our event was held on Sunday, October 9th, and we had over 500 volunteers in attendance, including our very own Marcia Roth and Cynthia Fitchett, pictured above. We are honored to have such great friends of Friendship Home that support us and continue to share their time with us as the years go on. Thank you to Cynthia Fitchett, Marcia Roth, and Kathleen Allan for their hard work and dedication to create this event.

Partner Spotlight: Nebraska Orthopaedic

Since 2006, the Orthopaedic Open, hosted by Nebraska Orthopaedic Center, has supported Friendship Home’s mission to empower freedom from Domestic Violence.

This year was the 15th Annual NOC Ortho Open, which took place at Woodland Hills Golf Course. The annual golf tournament raised \$27,000 this year through sponsors, a silent auction, and free-will donations. The funds raised will provide safe emergency shelter and crisis services to survivors at Friendship Home. We are grateful to partner with Nebraska Orthopaedic Center, and for all they do for the community.

We are truly grateful for the generous support from individuals, families, and local organizations we receive every day. Thank you to all our friends!



Lives You Have Touched

January 1, 2022 - September 30, 2022



1,247

Survivors received shelter and/or crisis services



667

Survivors and their children requested safe shelter



581

Survivors of domestic violence were sheltered
(**208** adults & **373** children)



32,817

Bed nights



38,325

Meals were provided

A sincere thank you to our recent contributors for your generosity. To maintain a level of commitment to being cost-effective, the donor lists are now published online at www.friendshiphome.org.

The Gift of Sustainability

This holiday season, end-of year donations are especially important as we strive to meet the increased needs of domestic violence survivors and manage upcoming federal funding cuts. These gifts create a substantial impact and help provide life-changing support all year long.

You can help ensure that survivors and children in our community will continue to have safe shelter, crisis services, and the hope of freedom from domestic violence. Donors can help secure our future by:

- ✓ Joining our Partners in Friendship Giving Society by making a multiple year pledge gift to provide sustaining funding through the gap and beyond.
- ✓ Name Friendship Home as a beneficiary or partial beneficiary of your IRA, life insurance policy, or other financial account.
- ✓ Remember Friendship Home in your will or estate plan.

For more information on planned giving or to make a pledge, please contact Angie Hilsabeck, Donor Relations, at **402-436-2156** or AngieH@friendshiphome.org.



Friendship Home

Our Mission

Friendship Home exists to support, shelter, and advocate for survivors of domestic violence and their children.

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Monthly Giving

Our monthly giving program, "True Friends," helps Friendship Home build a consistent base of monthly revenue. This gives us the stability to be able to offer each survivor services that are unique to their circumstance and plan for the future. For more information and to enroll, please go to www.friendshiphome.org and click on How You Can Help!

This newsletter is published three times annually by

Friendship Home

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24-Hour Crisis Line: **402.437.9302** • In-Kind Donation Line: **402.437.9301**

