



Friendship Home

2023 Annual Report

Empowering freedom from domestic violence



“I first came to Friendship Home without any hope, lost and confused about how to rebuild my life. They helped me find safe shelter, medical help, and counseling. They even helped me find a job and assistance with childcare. Friendship Home saved me.”

Former Friendship Home Resident

Dear Friends,

At Friendship Home, we understand the profound significance of each survivor's story. We recognize that the narratives of their experiences are sacred and deeply personal. As advocates, we embrace the idea that individuals have the right to determine what parts of their journey they wish to share. Our role is to create a space where survivors feel empowered to speak their truth, knowing someone will meet them with respect, compassion, and unwavering support.

When survivors walk through our doors, they often carry the weight of their experiences with them. For many, speaking with one of our advocates marks the first time they have shared the intimate details of their journey with another person. It is a responsibility we don't take lightly. We understand the trust that survivors place in us, and we are committed to honoring their courage by providing a safe and non-judgmental environment where they freely express themselves.

Listening to the stories of those we serve is just one part of our work. We recognize that survivors are the experts in their own lives — they know what they need to heal and rebuild. Our role is to listen attentively, without assumptions or preconceptions, and respond to their unique needs and aspirations. We believe in walking alongside survivors as they navigate their path to healing, offering guidance, support, and resources along the way.

As we continue our work at Friendship Home, we remain steadfast in our commitment to honoring the survivors' journeys with empathy, compassion, and respect. Our work would not be possible without those who support and believe in our mission. Together, we will continue to listen, learn, and advocate for a future where all individuals can live free from the fear of violence.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark purple ink that reads "Leah". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leah Droge, Executive Director

Empowering Freedom from Domestic Violence

Friendship Home's vision is that someday, the need for our services will cease to exist, that no one in the community will tolerate domestic violence, and that all homes will be places of love, support and safety.

For over 45 years, Friendship Home has provided support, shelter, and advocacy for survivors and their children who have experienced domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking. Our staff respects that each survivor knows their situation best and that they have the right to decide what happens next in their journey.

Emergency Shelter

Friendship Home is the only emergency domestic violence shelter in Lincoln and Lancaster County, focused on providing safe, secure, and confidential shelter options for survivors and their children when their risk of violence is at its greatest. Trauma-informed shelter options include communal shelter and single-family apartments. During a shelter stay, advocates and case managers work alongside survivors to support and empower them to reach their goals.



Our Services



Crisis Services

Friendship Home's crisis services offer caring protection from domestic violence - safety planning, case management, advocacy, crisis counseling, access to medical and behavioral health services, financial aid, transportation, short-term mental health services, and support groups.

24-HOUR SHELTER CRISIS LINE: 402-437-9302



Transitional Housing

Survivors focus on financial literacy, learning to track expenses, budget, and build credit. Our transitional shelter program offers direct case management along with assistance navigating community resources. Survivors have the support they need to find a job or obtain job training, locate childcare, and secure permanent housing.



Rapid Rehousing

Short-term rental assistance and supportive services are provided to households experiencing homelessness due to domestic violence. The resources and services provided are tailored to the unique needs of each household. Rapid Rehousing is an intervention designed to help survivors quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Intensive case management services are offered to address barriers to housing stability.



“ Friendship Home extends beyond being just an emergency shelter; it’s a place where advocates are constantly confronted with the heartbreaking aftermath of domestic violence, evident in the pain carried by the youngest survivors. Ensuring the strength of the parent-child bond is crucial for fostering resilience and minimizing harm in children, mitigating the impact of domestic violence.

Children’s Advocates (CA’s) work extensively with parents in shelter, providing advocacy and support that helps them strengthen bonds with their children. CA’s provide education on the impact of domestic violence on their children’s development, assess their children’s physical and psychological needs, and offer information on community resources that may be helpful to their family. Through skillfully prepared activities, they begin to share their stories, their fears, and their hopes. Safety planning is discussed in practical, age-appropriate ways, reducing their sense of powerlessness.

I am proud to be a part of an organization that prioritizes providing a safe space and opportunity for healing through strength-based advocacy focused on helping children’s long-term health and wellbeing.”

Joel Bacon, Friendship Home Board President

2023 Accomplishments

- In 2023, Friendship Home actively participated in a community safety needs assessment with other community agencies, focused on learning from survivors through their experiences with local agencies.
- Friendship Home worked on organizational strategic planning efforts to establish an enhanced and inclusive work culture, create sustainable funding for expanding services, and continue improving community knowledge of services.
- Friendship Home performed an agency-wide database migration to Vela, which has had a significant impact on reporting, client documentation, and staff training. Vela is a unique data collection and reporting site used to meet the needs of Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs.



“It takes courage to leave an abusive relationship; to create a life free from violence is not an easy decision to make. Friendship Home strives to create an environment where all survivors can grow and heal. We take a unique approach by providing Strengths-Centered Advocacy, offering survivors the opportunity to discover and apply their strengths to assist in recovering from the traumatic effects of domestic violence.

Strengths-Centered Advocacy has flourished at Friendship Home over the last twenty years. Using strengths allows advocates to deepen their understanding of each survivor and more meaningfully individualize support and services.

Upon discovering their strengths, many survivors shared that their abusers had attempted to make them feel their strengths were weaknesses. One survivor said...

“For so many years, he tried to take everything from me. But seeing my strengths, I realize it was one thing he couldn’t take away. They were always within me, and still are.”

Since implementing strengths-centered advocacy, we have seen a significant change in survivors and their children. Strengths-centered advocacy provides a path to help strengthen the relationship and connection between survivors and their children and deepen their understanding of each other. It is one of the many ways we strive to create a healing, welcoming, and empowering environment for all.

Julie Havener, Wellbeing Manager



Lives You Have Touched



1,664 Survivors received shelter and/or crisis services

922 Requests for safe shelter were compassionately addressed

529 Survivors of domestic violence were sheltered; 302 were children

49,539 Meals were served

46,269 Bed nights were provided

The amount of time each survivor is staying in Friendship Home's emergency shelter has increased from 5.87 weeks on average to 6.2 weeks.

Numbers represent services provided January through December 2023.



“A strong community-coordinated response is the essential core of quality service for those experiencing domestic violence.

The Lincoln Police Department (LPD) and Victim Assistance value our close relationship with Friendship Home because, together, our coordinated response team is able to help survivors assess risk, seek safety, and support them through the trauma and violence they are facing.

As an organization, we rely on Friendship Home’s staff and the services they provide to individuals. The services and support Friendship Home provides to individuals facing violence foster the strength to be empowered to seek freedom from abuse and make choices for their own lives. Most importantly, they offer the space and guidance to redefine themselves as survivors.”

Elizabeth McQueen, LPD Victim Assistance Manager

Money Matters

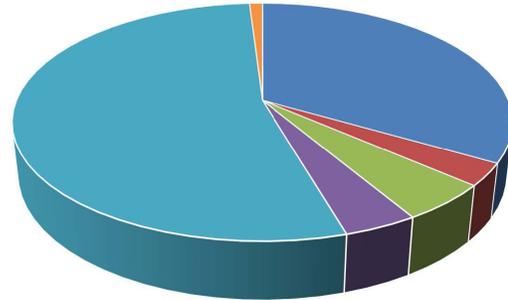
In 2023, 56% of our income came from Grants and Government support, 31% from Donations and Special Events and 13% from United Way, the City of Lincoln, and the State of Nebraska.

Friendship Home is one of only seven Human Service charities of similar size in Lincoln to receive Charity Navigators' highest rating of four stars - for eight consecutive years! Charity Navigator is the nation's most trusted evaluator of nonprofit efficacy. This means that Friendship Home is an excellent steward of financial support, and has sustained and delivered high quality programs and services for many years. We are committed to good governance and transparency – and trusted to have impactful outcomes on those we serve.



Friendship Home 2023 Income Sources

Total Budget = \$3,808,321



- 56% Grants & Government Support
- 31% Donations & Special Events
- 5% City of Lincoln
- 4% State of Nebraska
- 3% United Way
- 1% Other Income

Board of Directors

Joel Bacon

Miranda Soulliere

Tera Beermann

Beth Lau

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Brady Bauer

Pat Bennett

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Brad Ewerth

Matt Ferris

Peggy Friesen

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Jill Miller

Mary Nelson

Cecilia “Sissy” Ruley



Friendship
Home

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402.434.6353

402.437.9302 **CRISIS LINE**

FriendshipHome.org