



Spout

News from Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

Autumn 2009

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Your bequest is a wise and valued investment in Nebraska's future



Re-Writing Their Stories

Together we're opening new chapters in the lives of children and families at risk

The stories of far too many children in Nebraska include chapters about abuse and neglect, unstable homes, unsafe communities, and failure in school. These end in a child's inability to grow into a happy, productive and successful adult. The cost of this failure to the community is staggering. But the cost to a young life is beyond calculation. We simply cannot afford to have our children become a story about the loss of human potential.

As a supporter of Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, thank you for helping to re-write the stories of children and families at risk. With your support we've brought public and private partners together, and granted over \$8.5 million to local communities to combat the urgent problems of child abuse, neglect, and failure in school. Together, we've leveraged funds, promoted best approaches for preventing problems before they start and advocated for policy change to benefit children and families throughout the state.

The following pages give just a glimpse of our ongoing work. With your help, we're doing more than influencing individual lives. We're working together to improve our statewide community.

That's a story you can be proud to be a part of.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Jo".

Mary Jo Pankoke, President



Introducing the Rainmakers

Meet the people who make extraordinary contributions to our mission

Various threads of Native American tradition recognize certain rituals and individuals as having the power to invite rain when a drought-stricken community is in great need.

Now more than ever, individuals across Nebraska and beyond are being called to contribute their talents and resources to the needs the neighborhoods, towns, cities and state in which we live. These individuals are commonly known as philanthropists.

At Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, we call them Rainmakers. Becoming a Rainmaker means taking one's place in a dedicated group of citizens mutually committed to the idea that Nebraska ought to be a place where children and families can thrive. Rainmakers open doors of opportunity, build networks of support and provide critical financial resources to efforts that help ensure children at risk can grow up safe, healthy and valued in their communities.

For Nebraska Children and Families Foundation Board Member Eric Buchanan, becoming a Rainmaker was first and foremost a way of acknowledging his own good fortune in life by providing opportunities for others in need. It's also a way of continuing a long-standing tradition of service within his own family and passing that practice to his sons, pictured with him at right.

"I want to set an example so my kids know that service to the community is important. My father actively supported the Special Olympics, and that commitment made a strong impression on me when I was young. I'd like my kids to feel that way about my own contributions someday."



Eric, who also serves as Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations for the University of Nebraska Foundation, finds a great deal of personal satisfaction in the simple act of giving time and support to a worthwhile cause. But he also believes that being a Rainmaker for Nebraska Children and Families Foundation does something more; it's a way of giving wisely, too.

"Supporting an organization with the reach of Nebraska Children and Families Foundation means my contributions are multiplied many times over; so my gift of time or money will reach more people and do more good."

Learn more about how you can become a Rainmaker by contacting Meg Johnson at mjohnson@nebraskachildren.org.



Finding Their Way

What's being done to improve foster youth's opportunities for success

Lack of stability in the lives of many foster youth can take a heavy toll. Research shows that within four years of leaving the system, former foster youth are far more likely than their peers to have left school before graduation, been homeless, or become parents themselves. The vast majority – over 80 percent – are unable to support themselves.

The reasons for youth being placed in foster care are as varied and unique as the youth themselves. And while reunifying families is always the goal, it doesn't always work out that way.

Like for Cindy.

Cindy remembers growing up in an environment where her home and social situation changed so often she couldn't find firm ground to stand on. "By the time I was 16 years old," she recalls, "my mother had gone through seven marriages or so. I'd been in dozens of schools and lived in as many houses. My mother was eventually arrested for neglect and my siblings and I were left to grow up in the foster care system."

In cases like Cindy's, youth will spend the rest of their childhood or adolescent years with foster families. But when these youth reach age 19, they find themselves suddenly cut adrift from the financial and legal support of the state. The experience can be traumatic and disorienting, especially for a young person who lacks practical living skills, resources and the support of a stable family that many of us take for granted.



But thanks to the support of the Sherwood Foundation, the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and donors like you, we are changing the lives of foster youth in communities across the state.

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation is a leader in providing broader opportunities for youth facing challenges like Cindy. Through the Foster Youth Initiative, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation addresses the needs of foster youth on the community level. We work with partners throughout the state to connect current and former foster youth to practical information and resources for housing, employment, education, health care and more.

Just as importantly, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation provides a venue for youth to make their voices heard through local Foster Youth Councils. Their participation in the policy discussions that directly affect them ensures that the foster care system will continue to evolve as a safe, equitable and supportive resource.

It's not hard to find solid evidence of progress. In Omaha, the local foster youth council was the prime mover in developing the Omaha Independent Living Plan, an innovative blueprint for shaping public policy and coordinating existing resources to help foster youth grow into self-sufficiency. The Plan promises to become a model for similar programs in communities throughout Nebraska.

For Cindy, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation was an essential part in her journey towards independence. She found sources of support, developed practical skills and grew in self-confidence so she could move forward with her life. Best of all, she's professionally involved in shaping the foster care system so more youth in care will have better opportunities for success.

"As soon as I heard about the Nebraska Foster Youth Council, I knew it was for me. I have been on the council for five years; every second of it has been valuable. In that time, I've met with important change makers and made my voice heard at all levels of the social service system."



Cultivating Opportunities

Your help makes the Good Life possible for Nebraska's children and families

Every day, our friends and benefactors make a tremendous impact on Nebraska's most vulnerable citizens – at-risk children and families. Becoming a member of a Nebraska Children and Families Foundation Giving Society gives more children the opportunity to grow up safe, healthy and valued in our communities.

Friend

Lifetime giving of \$5,000 or more, a pledge that brings lifetime giving to \$5,000, or a deferred gift of \$10,000 or more.

Friend with Distinction

Lifetime giving of \$10,000 or more, a pledge that brings lifetime giving to \$10,000, or a deferred gift of \$25,000 or more.

Benefactor

Lifetime giving of \$25,000 or more, a pledge that brings lifetime giving to \$25,000, or a deferred gift of \$50,000 or more.

Benefactor with Distinction

Lifetime giving of \$50,000 or more, a pledge that brings lifetime giving to \$50,000, or a deferred gift of \$100,000 or more.

Legacy for Children Society

Membership in the Legacy for Children Society is reserved for those individuals who have named Nebraska Children and Families Foundation as a beneficiary of their estate or have made a deferred gift. These gifts include charitable remainder trusts, charitable gift annuities, charitable lead trusts, life insurance and bequests. There is no minimum gift amount and details of your donation are kept confidential.



Leaving a Legacy

Your gift is a wise investment in the future of our children

A gift through your will or trust is one of the simplest ways to leave a legacy to the children and families of Nebraska. And leaving certain assets can provide tax advantages as well.

There are many ways you can include us in your will. One way is to say:

"I, [name], of [city, state, ZIP], give, devise and bequeath to Nebraska Children and Families Foundation [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property] for its unrestricted use and purpose."

We hope you'll tell us when you've named Nebraska Children and Families Foundation in your estate plans. We would like the opportunity to thank you in person. If you wish to remain anonymous, your gift will remain confidential.

Thank you for considering your legacy to Nebraska's children.*

If you would like to know more about leaving a bequest to Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, are interested in increasing your support to the level of a Giving Society, or believe that your gifts may already qualify you for membership in one, please contact:

Meg Johnson
Associate Vice President of Development
402.817.2002
mjohnson@nebraskachildren.org

On behalf of Nebraska's children and families, thank you.

We are grateful for your support.

*We recommend that you consult your tax advisors when considering charitable gifts through your estate



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