

Spout

Drops of Change for Children

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation | Summer 2014

Project Everlast launches in Lincoln

Local and statewide donors wrap services
around kids aging out of foster care.



nebraskachildren
AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION

Save the Date
for UpPour

October 23

New Donor
Profile

Neveen Hegab of Lincoln

Collective Impact 101

Training for Nebraska's
change-makers

Project Everlast
youth say thanks
to their heroes

1 in 4 kids who age out of foster care will be **homeless.**

To us, that is
UNACCEPTABLE.

The road out of foster care doesn't always lead to a successful adulthood. More often than not, it leads to jail, early pregnancy or a life on the streets. For youth aging out of care:



24% will experience homelessness



Only **6%** will attain 2- or 4-year degrees



Only **48%** will be steadily employed by age 26
(compared to 72% of their peers)



Only **58%** will graduate high school



71% of young women will be pregnant once by age 21.

62% will be pregnant twice.



60% of young men will be convicted of crimes
(compared to 10% of their peers)

Project Everlast exists to change those outcomes. Already a success for youth in Omaha, Project Everlast is expanding to more communities to create a network of services and caring adults young people can go to as they transition from foster care to adulthood. That's what every teenager needs (and deserves) to be successful.

Support Project Everlast. Donate at NebraskaChildren.org.

| Letter from the President |



Mary Jo Pankoke

Dear Friends,

It's been a busy few months here at Nebraska Children. While we always have a lot happening, what I'm most excited about is the expansion of Project Everlast.

Started in 2010 as the Omaha Independent Living Plan, Project Everlast has become a multi-agency lesson in successful collective impact. The Omaha initiative now serves more than 700 young people. And while we know that the exact model in Omaha would be impossible to replicate elsewhere, the lessons of collaboration we've learned are already informing efforts as Project Everlast expands to other cities in Nebraska.

This summer, after 18 months of planning with youth, nonprofit organizations, service providers, government entities, funders and faith communities, Project Everlast has launched in Lincoln. Lincoln's Project Everlast youth council has been around for several years, and provided input at every step of the process.

After watching things come together, it occurs to me that the idea of Collective Impact is really starting to take hold in Nebraska. And that means amazing things for the future of our children. It means:

A focus on a shared agenda and cooperating to create real change for children.

Pooling our resources instead of competing, so that more children are being served.

Bringing the children and families served into the process, so we can truly understand what they need.

Life-changing improvements for Nebraska's children.

A more stable, prosperous state for all as our youngest citizens become successful adults.

We all have a long way to go before a Collective Impact approach becomes common practice. At Nebraska Children, we'll continue doing business this way because we know it works. Over the last 16 years, I've seen that this level of collaboration is the only way to make permanent change for children.

Thanks for all you do in supporting this important, complicated, life-changing work. The results aren't immediate. But they're undeniably powerful.

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

Mary Jo Pankoke
President and CEO



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| News to Know |

Upcoming Events



UpPour | October 23

Our annual celebration of Nebraska's children's champions is coming up. This year, we're headed west to the Panhandle to honor Senator John Harms and the Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services. Get your tickets at NebraskaChildren.org/uppour.



Recharge for Resilience

Home Visitors Conference | October 30

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services is partnering with Nebraska Children to host the first-ever Home Visitor Conference at the Younes Center in Kearney. Find out more at NebraskaChildren.org/recharge.



Prevention Summit 2014: Promoting Healthy Relationships | November 14

DHHS and Nebraska Children are bringing together statewide child welfare professionals for a day of education and inspiration. Register now at <http://bit.ly/PreventionSummit>.

Cradle to Career

York kicks off new child well-being work

Nebraska Children community outreach specialists met with stakeholders in York in July to begin planning the community's Child Well-Being initiative. Nebraska Children is working with several Child Well-Being communities across the state to create community-wide systems that support positive outcomes for children.

Early Childhood

Saline County completes Rooted in Relationships work plan

After months of effective and collaborative planning, Saline County is ready to move forward with a plan to foster healthy social and emotional development in children, from birth to age 8. One aspect of the plan includes providing training and ongoing support to caregivers on strategies to promote social emotional well-being.

Sixpence sites approved for continued funding

The Sixpence Board of Trustees recently approved continued funding for all 25 Sixpence early childhood education sites for 2014-2015. The Sixpence program provides high-quality early learning experiences for children at risk across Nebraska, either via regular home visits, or through center-based care. The 25 sites are producing remarkable outcomes, ensuring young children get the best start in life.

Middle Childhood

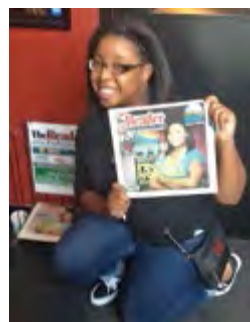
NET airs "Future of Education" edition of *State of Education* series

Nebraska Children's partnership with NET has yielded many great installments of *The State of Education in Nebraska* series. This summer, NET aired a discussion about Nebraska's educational future, featuring Dr. Paul Reville of Harvard, State Senator Kate Sullivan, Nebraska Education Committee Chair Matt Blomstedt and Nebraska Commissioner of Education Rachel Wise. View the program at <http://bit.ly/FutureEdNET>.

Teen/young adulthood

Project Everlast's Schalisha Walker featured on the cover of *The Reader*

Omaha Youth Advisor Schalisha Walker shares her story and her passion for helping youth in *The Reader's* cover story this summer. Read the full story here <http://bit.ly/Schalisha>.



Ronda Newman joins Project Everlast

As the new Associate Vice President of Project Everlast Omaha, Ronda Newman brings a wealth of human



services and child welfare experience to Nebraska Children. We're excited to have her on our team. Read more about Ronda at <http://bit.ly/RondaNewman>.

Meet Neveen



Neveen Hegab is an award-winning advertising pro who has worked on national campaigns for big league clients.

She's the mother of 2 young children—Alexander (4) and Olivia (18 months) and wife to Chris, a nanotechnology scientist.

Neveen has recently struck out on her own as a freelance consultant, and is able to spend more time with her own children.



Here's what Neveen told us about why she supports Nebraska Children (specifically, Project Everlast):

Why did you choose Project Everlast to make your donation to this year?

I feel that it's such a great and necessary program that helps young adults transition into a world that is incredibly unfamiliar, incredibly jarring and incredibly murky. We try to do as much as we can for young children within the system, providing shelter, nourishment, education and everything else they need to grow and thrive, which, of course, is our responsibility as a community. But once they age out of the system, it is still our duty to help them navigate the unknown and set them up for success. This is what this program does and why it's important.

Why do you think it's so important to support foster youth as they're transitioning to adulthood?

The transition into adulthood is hard enough when you're a youth, whether you're in the system or not. Add having been in the system to that, and the pressure is really on. By supporting foster youth on their journey to adulthood, we can give them hope for their future, the confidence needed to explore their potential and the ability to live a productive life—a life they can be proud of.

You have children of your own. What's the one thing beyond food, shelter and clothing that you think makes children thrive?

This one is hard because I think it's more than one thing. I think children need love, stability and confidence. They need a sense of security and hope. But if you twist my arm and make me choose just one, then I'd have to say confidence. If they think they can, then they will.

If you could change one thing for the children of Nebraska, what would it be?

I would want to see more support—both financial and structural—for all of the agencies that help our children. It's those agencies and the wonderful people who work there, that play the most important part in the children's lives. When they receive what they need to work properly, without being stretched thin, then the children receive what they need to really thrive. 🌱

Our donors are the power behind the work we do at Nebraska Children. Without them, positive change for children could not happen.



Young people from the Project Everlast Council and the Governor's Advisory Council met with state senators in February 2014.



Project Everlast Lincoln

For the last five years, Omaha has been the only city in Nebraska to have a complete Project Everlast initiative, serving the youth who make up nearly 40% of Nebraska's state wards. The needs are great in every part of the state. Based on lessons learned in Omaha, input from Lincoln's Project Everlast Youth Council, and cooperation from stakeholders and funders from every sector of the Star City, Project Everlast Lincoln is now up, running and serving youth transitioning out of foster care.

Youth input. Strong partnerships. Community commitment.

PROJECT
EVERLAST



First there was the youth.

Like everything else Project Everlast does, the Lincoln initiative started with the youth. The Project Everlast Lincoln Youth Council has been going strong for many years. Council members learned to speak publicly about their experience in the foster care system. They became friends and partners in advocacy. And they provided the input required to build a community-based system of care for other youth like them.

"Without the youth council, Project Everlast would have no direction," said Jason Feldhaus, Associate Vice President of Project Everlast Expansion. "Project Everlast is youth driven—it's the experiences and input of the council that tells us what services and system of care we need to create."

Then there was planning.

Beginning in 2012, community planning meetings for Project Everlast Lincoln brought together youth, nonprofit service providers, health care practitioners, faith-based organizations, educators, DHHS representatives, law enforcement and more. Together, these stakeholders spent months crafting the outline of what would become Project Everlast Lincoln.

"We also looked at what Omaha had done," said Betty Medinger, Nebraska Children's Vice President of Systems Integration. "We learned that there are seven components of life that need

to be covered for youth aging out of care—housing, transitional services, permanency services, employment, education, health and transportation."

The plan developed by the youth and community members addressed each of these issues. With planning complete in year one, year two was all about putting the plan into action for Lincoln's youth with foster care experience.

Ready, set, launch.

True to the collective impact philosophy, implementation of Project Everlast Lincoln drew from the strengths of existing resources in the community.

"The goal was to work with organizations who already provided some of these services, build their capacity, align their activities around youth with foster care experience, and share the measurement and data of those activities," said Jennifer Skala, Nebraska Children's Vice President of Community Impact.

Lincoln's Project Everlast System

Central access navigation/Need Based Fund—The Hub (hublincoln.org)

"The Hub has been doing this type of work with youth for years—it's what they do," said Medinger. "We were able to contract with them to have a full-time employee work specifically with the foster care population." The Hub will also collect data for all youth who enter the Project Everlast system, and their outcomes.

Opportunity Passport™—

Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Lancaster and Saunders County (communityactionatwork.org)

"Community Action Partnership was already working with Individual

Project Everlast Lincoln

continued

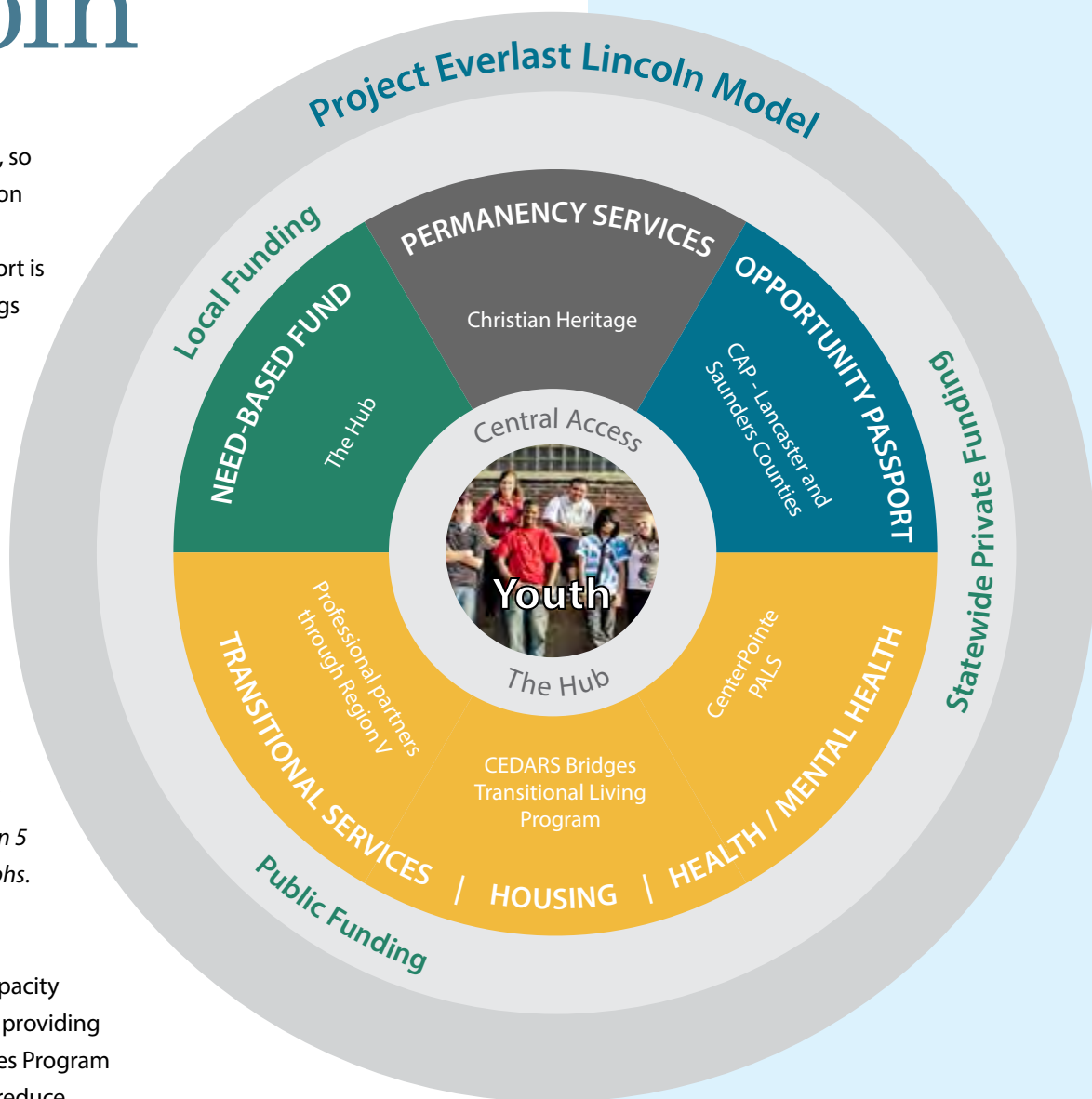
Development Accounts (IDAs), so they were a natural fit to take on Opportunity Passport,” said Medinger. Opportunity Passport is a program that matches savings that youth put into their IDAs in order to purchase a car, college tuition, housing or other assets that are critical to independence. Project Everlast provided CAP with funding for an additional full-time employee to administer Opportunity Passport and to start their matching funds account.

Transitional Services/Health—CEDARS (cedars-kids.net), PALS (central-plains.org/pals), Region 5 Professional Partners (region5bhs.org/ppp) and CenterPointe (centerpointe.org)

Project Everlast focused on capacity building and filling gaps here, providing funding for the CEDARS Bridges Program to expand their program and reduce the waiting list for local youth seeking services. “Transition services focus on supporting the youth while teaching them the basic skills required for independence,” said Medinger.

Permanency Services—Christian Heritage (chne.org)

With funding for a new full-time employee, Christian Heritage is taking on family finding. “Every young person needs people who care,” said Medinger. “Family finding focuses on tracking down adult connections that are meaningful to a young person, so they have a network



of interpersonal support to help them as they transition to adulthood.”

Youth Voice—Project Everlast Lincoln Youth Council (projecteverlast.org)

“We’re adding another part-time youth advisor to build a more robust, active Project Everlast youth council,” said Medinger. “Youth voice will continue to be at the center of Project Everlast—from planning to implementation to ongoing adjustments.” The council also serves as an invaluable venue for young people to build relationships with peers

and caring adults, helping them develop the social capital to succeed as adults.

Rural Youth Services—Blue Valley and Southeast Nebraska Community Action Partnerships (CAP)

The needs of youth aging out of care doesn’t stop at the Lancaster county line. PALS workers serve the rural counties of the Southeast Service Area, but they are spread thin and the distance between youth and workers is expensive to overcome. So to better serve youth in the southeast service area, Project

Everlast has contracted with Blue Valley CAP and Southeast Nebraska CAP to provide transitional support services in their respective coverage areas. These organizations will work with The HUB of Lincoln and CAP of Lancaster and Saunders Counties to serve southeastern youth with central access navigation services, access to the Needs-Based Fund and Opportunity Passport.

Community-based funding

Much of the initial funding for the Lincoln initiative was provided by statewide supporters—such as The Sherwood Foundation and the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation. As implementation neared, it became critical to secure local funding—not only to power operations, but to ensure a local commitment to Project Everlast.

“We’ve been working hard to get local matching funds,” said Medinger. Project Everlast has since secured \$45,000 in local funding, which is a great start. “It’s important for the local community to show it has some skin in the game. If local funders aren’t showing their support, why should state or national funders step up?”

Local organizations, like Woods Charitable Fund, the Cooper Foundation, the Lincoln Community Foundation, Women Investing in Nebraska (WIN), City/County Keno and Rotary Club #14 are among the first local funders, as well as individual donors.

“Woods Charitable Fund especially appreciates the collaborative nature of Project Everlast,” said Tom Woods. “It’s a group effort, benefiting from both the input of community experts in the field and the youth who have personally experienced the foster care system.”

“The Lincoln Community Foundation is proud to support Project Everlast Lincoln,” said Sarah Peetz, LCF’s Vice President for Community Outreach. “This program represents the type of investment that will impact our community now and in the future.”

Nebraska Children is still raising operating and sustaining funds for Project Everlast Lincoln. To contribute, visit NebraskaChildren.org/donate/. 🍷



Project Everlast Council vs. Project Everlast Initiative

Like several other cities across the state, Lincoln has had a Project Everlast Youth Council for years. “The councils are a critical component of Project Everlast,” said Jason Feldhaus, Associate Vice President of Project Everlast Expansion. “They provide youth perspective on what services are important and what system challenges need to be addressed. The councils are what make Project Everlast a ‘youth-driven’ initiative.”

With the councils to provide valuable insight, a Project Everlast initiative is a system of care for older youth in foster care and those transitioning out. “It’s a network of services designed to meet the needs of this population,” said Feldhaus. Lincoln is the second community in Nebraska to launch a full network—Grand Island, Hastings, Fremont and the Panhandle have already begun planning for their Project Everlast initiatives.



Collective Impact 101

Nebraska Children partners to bring globally respected trainers for Nebraska's communities

Nebraska Children partnered with the Peter Kiewit Foundation, The Sherwood Foundation, the Iowa West Foundation and the Lincoln Community Foundation to bring FSG to Nebraska to train state and local leaders on Collective Impact.

What's Collective Impact and who's FSG?

Collective Impact is a specific type of collaboration involving organizations from different sectors who commit to a common agenda, aligned efforts and sharing measurement systems and data to solve a social problem. The definition of Collective Impact emerged in 2011.

FSG (originally Foundation Strategy Group) is an international nonprofit consulting firm specializing in strategy, evaluation and research. They're credited with developing the concept of Collective Impact and supporting communities to implement this collaboration.

Training in Nebraska

Because Nebraska Children uses the Collective Impact model to work with

communities across the state, we were thrilled to have FSG here to train community leaders and service providers about the how-tos of successful Collective Impact initiatives.

On June 3 and 4, hundreds of Nebraska change-makers came together to deepen their understanding of Collective Impact, and learn how to make a more profound and permanent difference in the lives of their constituents.

Tuesday, June 3

Leading a Backbone Organization for Collective Impact (Omaha/Council Bluffs)
100+ attended this event on UNO's campus. During the full afternoon session, they learned from FSG Director Jennifer Splansky Juster on:

- Increasing their knowledge on the role and characteristics of successful backbone organizations
- Strengthening their ability to guide a Collective Impact effort toward desired results
- Successful backbone structures, staffing, and functions
- How to communicate the value and role of a backbone to funders
- Successful backbone experiences

Wednesday, June 4

Collective Impact 101 (Lincoln)

At the Lincoln Vital Signs breakfast, a speaker from FSG covered the basics

of Collective Impact and how it differs from other forms of collaboration. Attendees learned the structure of Collective Impact initiatives and how the approach has been successful for other communities.

Child Well Being Community Peer-to-Peer Training (Lincoln)

Nebraska Children brought together representatives from our statewide Child Well Being communities to discuss how each has successfully implemented the Collective Impact approach, and what challenges they're striving to overcome.

Nebraska Children Workshop

FSG leaders facilitated a conversation with state and community leaders around the Collective Impact structures Nebraska Children has put in place around child abuse and neglect prevention and promoting child well-being across the state. During the session, FSG and the participants discussed how to overcome barriers to Collective Impact, strategies for sustainability of state/community collaborations, and policy and practice implications associated with greater collaboration.

Why this matters.

At Nebraska Children, the Collective Impact model is at the center of child well-being work in communities. And a key component of our success is the trust among community partners and a real understanding of how a common agenda is a make-or-break proposition. Having FSG come in and train hundreds of statewide partners helped build and strengthen relationships within partnerships, while deepening understanding of the process of making positive change for Nebraska's children. It was a monumental success. 🙌

Project Everlast youth say Thank You!

Recently, Project Everlast Youth Councils across Nebraska celebrated the adults they admired most, thanking them for all they had done.



Judy Dierkhising

The Project Everlast Omaha Youth Council awarded its Chris Hanus Youth Champion Award to Judy Dierkhising of Nebraska Children for her leadership and long-term vision.

The Project Everlast Council in Fremont gave awards to Julius and Michelle Biggs, Father Peter, caseworker Seth Coates, guardian ad litem Leta Fornoff, Felicitas Cardenas and teacher Mrs. Penke.



Above: Fremont Council with Seth Coates. At right: Mrs. Penke



The Project Everlast Lincoln Youth Council awarded its annual Chris Hanus Youth Champion Award to Senator Amanda McGill. McGill was the driving force behind the bill that led to the new Bridges to Independence program designed to help youth as they transition to adulthood.

Donate Your Way

Every donation you make
has an impact.
Now, there are more
ways than ever to give.



- 1** Go to nebraskachildren.org/donate and contribute online.
- 2** Call Joanne Harse at 402-858-5397 to set up a one-time or monthly gift.
- 3** Mail a donation to the address above.
- 4** Talk to your estate planner about leaving a lasting legacy to the foundation.

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| Next Edition |

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