

SEPTEMBER 2016

# LHA Today

Published by the Lincoln Housing Authority | 402-434-5500 | [www.L-Housing.com](http://www.L-Housing.com)

## All aboard for fun-filled day trips

The wheels on the van go round and round — but only because volunteers take turns driving all ‘round the town.

“One day I might need help myself, but for now, I like driving the van because it’s a way to help others. It gives me a sense of purpose,” said Sharon Kelly, Burke resident and volunteer van driver. “It’s important to keep that.”

Mahoney Manor resident and former tanker driver Peggie Weatherford agreed, adding that she appreciates the social element of shuttling around her peers.

“I like to be around people and drive,” she said. “It’s a lot of fun.”

An added bonus of volunteering to chauffeur is the opportunities to visit new places, see new things and try new activities. With 12-16 trips each month, destinations include museums, farmers markets, plays, concerts, restaurants and casinos. Drivers are involved in planning the outings, and get the assignment based on matching interests and availability.

“It’s a passion for me to help people, and I like the different places we

go,” said Crossroads House resident Don Spies. “I like to go out to eat, the chatter and singing.”

The same goes for Barb Hageman, a Mahoney Manor resident who has driven the van the past three years.

What’s more, residents can offer suggestions about where they’d like to go. Linda Hecht, resident services specialist, said this empowers residents and enables them to get out more.

“They can get away from the building and go where they want to go,” she said.

Because only a few Burke Plaza, Crossroads House and Mahoney Manor residents have cars, access to transportation creates many opportunities for freedom and independence they might not otherwise have.



From left, Don Spies, Peggie Weatherford, Barb Hageman, Jim Dibbert and Sharon Kelly. Not pictured: Paul Hanks

“The interaction people have on these trips is important,” said Gina Grosenbach, resident services specialist. “We do a lot of joint trips between buildings, so they get to meet and see people they may not know well.”

Though his wife worked in the Burke Plaza kitchen, Jim Dibbert did not know many of his passengers when he became a volunteer driver 10 years ago.

“I like doing it because you get to meet people,” he said. “It fills my time since I retired.”

Additional van drivers always are needed. For anyone who has an interest in safe driving, helping others and sightseeing excursions, contact Gina Grosenbach, 402-434-2618 or Linda Hecht, 402-434-5570 or [info@L-housing.com](mailto:info@L-housing.com).

## “The interaction people have on these trips is important.”

— Gina Grosenbach, resident services specialist

# Lincoln's Fresh Start offers homeless women just that

Since opening its doors in 1991, Fresh Start has served more than 1,500 homeless women by providing a place to live, and giving them the necessary support and resources to get back on their feet. By partially covering Fresh Start shelter costs, LHA has helped keep the doors open.

"We are thankful for LHA; they've been with us for the majority of our existence," said Monica Zinke, Fresh Start executive director.

Fresh Start clients come to the shelter through various means, usually transferring from another program, shelter or incarceration. Zinke said the average stay is five or six months, but women are allowed to remain in the shelter for up to a year. Residents set goals, take classes, and learn how and where to take care of their ongoing needs once they leave the transitional program, all with the objective of becoming self-sufficient. Classes are available on a variety of topics and life skills, such as budgeting, meal planning, dealing with stress and assertive communication.

"We do a lot of case management and goal-planning, with an emphasis on connecting them to resources in the community," she said. "People have varying needs, but many don't know where to start to get on track; our staff helps them with that and cheers them on."

When Fresh Start moved in 2007 to 6433 Havelock Ave., its capacity grew from 16 beds to 24. Zinke said the house is consistently full, and a three-month waiting list exists for admission within the program's target population: women with no children,

or those whose children are grown or in the custody of another.

"In Lincoln, when limited services are available, priority is typically given to women with children," Zinke said. "Fresh Start founders didn't want to duplicate services, but instead chose to offer services to those waiting the longest."

Whatever the woman's situation, she said, Fresh Start provides a safe, comfortable, encouraging home base for its residents. The home is staffed 24/7 and maintains security measures, including locks, an intercom system and video surveillance.

"We strive to keep the balance between a program and a home," Zinke said. "We are a secure facility, but residents can let us know that

a family member or friend is coming to visit."

For those unfamiliar with Fresh Start and/or those who would like to support its mission, she encourages a visit to The Daisy Thrift Store, located on-site. The shop, which is run by volunteers, offers high-quality clothing at low cost to the community.

"The costs are low because we want people in community who cannot afford higher-cost things to get them, regardless of their income level," Zinke said.

And shoppers are buying. In 2015, The Daisy raised more than \$43,000. With such sales, combined with the support of organizations such as LHA, Fresh Start's doors will remain open to women in need for years to come.



Fresh Start Home staff from left, Red Nelson, Monica Zinke, Meg Damme, Deanna Jaynes, Christine Zavodny and Julie Demarre. Not pictured: Stephanie Woods.

## Fresh produce provides resident opportunity

A variety of in-season, fresh vegetables and fruits make their way to Mahoney Manor and Burke Plaza, courtesy of Leon Page of Valparaiso.

Cherries, honey, onion, squash, peas, peaches and more arrive weekly for residents to purchase.

"I know it's fresh and it tastes good," said Peggy Hartmann-Parker, Mahoney Manor resident.

Page accepts farmers market coupons many residents receive.

"It's convenient for residents," said Linda Hecht, resident services specialist. "Going to a farmers market requires transportation and mobility, and a lot of them can't go because of that."



Mahoney Manor residents shop the fresh produce Leon Page brings weekly. Inset: Peaches are a popular item.



# Lower utility bills by weatherizing through Community Action

Weatherization is the process of optimizing home energy efficiency. It can lower utility bills while creating a safer, more comfortable home in which to live.

The weatherization process keeps hot and cold air from leaking through the home, thus helping it stay cool in the summer and warmer in the winter. It may include insulation, furnace tune-ups or replacements, water heater replacement, weatherstripping and caulking, door and window repair, exterior ventilation of exhaust fans, installation of CFL bulbs, carbon monoxide detectors and low-flow showerheads.

To be eligible to receive weatherization services from Community Action, households must fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (annual income of \$48,500 for a family of four).

The weatherization program serves renters and homeowners, as well as mobile homes, duplexes and multiplexes. Households that receive Social Security, LIHEAP utility assistance or Aid to Dependent Children automatically qualify.

For more information regarding application and eligibility, visit [communityactionatwork.org/programs/housing/weatherization.html](http://communityactionatwork.org/programs/housing/weatherization.html) or call Community Action Partnership at 402-471-4515.



Beau Ault, weatherization quality control inspector, checks the carbon monoxide levels in a water heater flue to ensure proper combustion within the unit.

## Summer is for learning, too

Although school was not in session, 116 students broadened their knowledge this summer with the Expanding Horizons program at Arnold Elementary.

The summer enrichment classes were provided at no cost thanks to Woods Charitable Fund, Gallup Community Builders, and Lincoln Housing Charities.

Children learned how to make solar ovens to cook s'mores and how to grow an herb garden, enjoyed a visit from a beekeeper and used their detective skills to uncover footprints with cocoa powder.

Students also visited the zoo, Morrill Hall and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. Other partners included Lux Art Center, which provided two art classes, and UNL 4-H to offer a WeCook Club.

Classes were taught by certified teachers or college students majoring in education.

A student holds a tarantula during Animal Antics at the Lincoln Children's Zoo.



Making footprints in Daring Detectives class.



# Renovations boost community pride



Residents can socialize in the new community room. **Right:** Common spaces on each floor receive new wall art, paint and furniture.

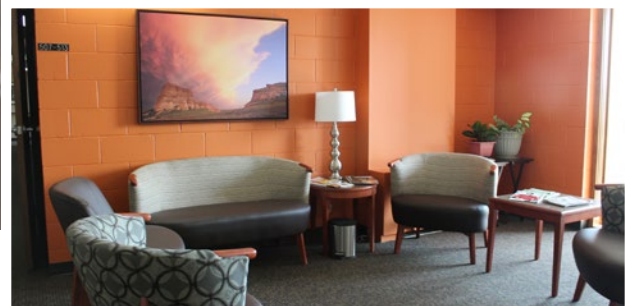
Built in 1973, Mahoney Manor's common spaces were small, not functional and didn't meet current accessibility standards. So Lincoln Housing Authority began work to upgrade the community spaces using federal funds.

Construction began in October 2014 and renovations were completed this summer. Renovations included a new community room addition, kitchen, lounge/game room, sunroom, conference room, mailboxes, accessible restrooms, additional on-site parking, reconfiguration of the main entrance to improve accessibility and enlarge the waiting area, addition of a maintenance workshop, storage areas, and new decor and furnishings in all the renovated spaces and the library/computer center.

Residents enjoy socializing in the new spaces.

"They put new furniture, accent walls and pictures on each floor and I think everything looks fantastic," said Jim Williamson, a three-year resident. "I thank them for doing that — it looks so much better."

Pictures on each floor's lobby were purchased by the Resident Council. Pictures in the community room were purchased in memory of Elayne Weickum, a longtime resident, and artwork was donated by local artist Anne Burkholder.



## Residents color their worlds

Thanks to resident volunteers, three senior high-rise residences recently received colorful additions.

Residents Beverley Biggs and Carol Eilts at Burke Plaza; Helen Donlan and Terry Lewis at Crossroads House; and Annamarie Czajkowski, Donna Free, Ginni Metcalf, Wayne Patton and Lois Spencer at Mahoney Manor dedicated time and effort to beautify landscaping around the high-rises.

Thanks to all who took the time to make home a little more vibrant.

# Aging Partners provides free legal services to seniors

Legal matters can be frustrating and confusing. But for seniors 65 and older, Aging Partners can provide help through legal services.

Services provided cover help with Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, debt collection, landlord/tenant, consumer issues, protective services or estate planning. They also

prepare wills, power of attorney and other legal documents, along with providing representation for Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security appeals. Legal representation is not provided for criminal or traffic matters. The services do not file bankruptcies, but can help determine any income or resources a creditor could attach or garnish for unpaid bills.

If necessary, staff can provide referrals for further assistance. Often, however, questions can be answered without additional action.

As we age, it is important to prepare a will, power of attorney or other legal documents to take care of matters should anything happen. It also is important to let your landlord know a contact person to access left-behind property.

Landlords are required to make a reasonable attempt to contact this person, if known, within 10 days after death. The authorized person has 20 days after being contacted to notify the landlord that he/she will claim the property and remove it from the unit or obtain it from where it is being stored. If the property is not entirely removed, or if the landlord is unable to contact the authorized person, the landlord may dispose of the remaining property as prescribed in the Disposition of Personal Property Landlord and Tenant Act.

To request legal services, call Aging Partners at 402-441-7070 to schedule an appointment. Phone appointments or home visits can be made for those without transportation. Legal services are free, although donations to Aging Partners are encouraged.



## Clinic offers more than medical services

For many, being treated for a behavioral or mental illness is a stigma. But getting needed help is important.

Health 360 is changing that, encouraging individuals toward healthier lifestyles.

Health 360, 2301 O St., is an integrated care clinic that offers mental health, substance use and primary care health services. A partnership between Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska and the People's Health Center, the clinic also has an on-site pharmacy and some dental services.

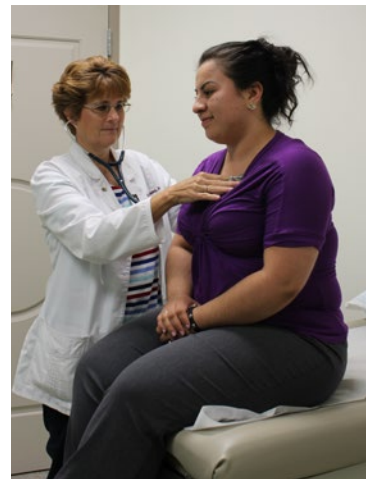
"The stigma of a mental illness causes individuals to avoid treatment," said Brad Meyer People's Health Center CEO. "But Health 360 features one entry, exit and a common reception area for all clients."

The clinic offers mental health therapies, alcohol/substance use assessment and treatment, pregnancy counseling, adoption and health care. It also offers resettlement, education, and employment and support services for refugees.

Health 360 services are available for anyone seeking care and are provided on a sliding-fee scale. No one is turned away based on inability to pay.



Health 360 offers medical, behavioral and dental services, often at reduced rates.



Health 360 Nurse Practitioner Kelly Hanau listens to a patient's heartbeat.

Interpreters are available for Arabic, Burmese, Karen, Laotian, Spanish and Vietnamese. A language line is used for other languages.

For more information, visit [health360clinic.org](http://health360clinic.org) or call 402-441-6642 to schedule an appointment.

## Get your free credit report

Managing your finances is an excellent way to ensure you have good credit, but the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau recommends you review your credit report annually.

Reviewing your credit report periodically will ensure your credit is in good shape when you are

ready to apply for new credit, and any errors are often the first indicator that you are a victim of identity theft.

You can access a free copy of your credit report from the Federal Trade Commission at [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com) or by calling 877-322-8228.



# Resident Advisory Board needs you

If you are a tenant interested in joining the Resident Advisory Board, the Lincoln Housing Authority wants to hear from you.

The board reviews, plans and influences LHA programs and policies. Board members meet two or three times each fall from October through December. Meetings typically last as long as two hours, and LHA assists board

members with the cost of transportation and child care, if needed.

Participants in any LHA rental assistance program are eligible to become Resident Advisory Board members.

If interested, contact Amy Wagner as soon as possible at 402-434-5527 for an application or more information.



## Dispose of your unwanted meds

Do you have a medicine cabinet full of unused, expired medications, and are unsure of what to do with them?

Leftover medications can be taken to participating pharmacies near you for proper disposal.

Participating pharmacies accept unwanted medications either by use of a locked box, in which medications are shipped to Sharps Compliance Inc. treatment facility and incinerated, or by an envelope system. This allows patients to dispose of their unwanted, controlled medications from home by placing them into a prepaid and pre-addressed envelope, which is sealed and mailed to the treatment facility. To do this, bring your unwanted meds to the pharmacy, where they will be sorted into controlled and non-controlled categories.

Medications accepted include pills, tablets, capsules, ointments, creams, inhalers, nebulizer solutions and pet meds. Liquid medicines under 4 ounces also are accepted. These must be wrapped in a paper towel and placed in a plastic bag. All medications should be left in their original packaging.

To find a location, visit [leftovermeds.com](http://leftovermeds.com) or call 800-222-1222.

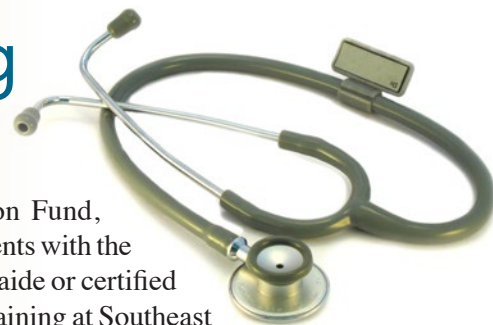
## Free tuition assistance for health care training

Thanks to the Keno Human Services Prevention Fund, LHA can help students with the cost of medication aide or certified nursing assistant training at Southeast Community College. Funds are available for fall and winter enrollment.

"The classes take about three months to complete, after which individuals can become employed," said Susan Tatum, grant manager. "We want people who are ready and able to start school, and then are ready to go to work."

The next round of classes begins in SCC's fall quarter. Registration continues until the courses are filled. Priority is given to Family Self-Sufficiency participants.

For more information about the program or registration, contact Tatum at 402-434-5538.



## Medicare Part D enrollment

Available to those 65 and older, and some disabled people under 65, Medicare Part D is prescription drug coverage for those with Medicare.

Part D open enrollment for those wanting to change their plan or enroll is from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7. Plans take effect Jan. 1.

Last year, Nebraska featured 26 Part D plans from which to choose. Not all drug plans may cover your specific combination of prescriptions, so it is important to compare options.

You can compare plans at [mediare.gov](http://mediare.gov), or contact Aging Partners, which has Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) trained counselors. You can make appointments during open enrollment to help analyze the plans to find the best plan for you for 2017.

To schedule an appointment with Aging Partners, call 402-441-7070. The Nebraska Department of Insurance SHIIP program also will have enrollment assistance available. The SHIIP toll-free hotline is 800-234-7119.

# Protect yourself – fire safety



Each year, more than 4,000 Americans die and 20,000 more are injured in fires. In just 30 seconds, a small flame can turn into a major fire and it only takes a few minutes for the whole home to be engulfed in flames.

- Protect yourself by knowing what to do during a fire. Sit with family members and determine two ways out of each room, and agree on a meeting location.
- Fires most often occur when people are asleep, so be sure your smoke alarms are properly functioning. Choose a holiday or time change to test, and replace the batteries annually.
- Don't leave food cooking in the kitchen. Cooking is the leading cause of home fires. Wear clothes with tight-fitting sleeves and keep flammable material, such as potholders or paper towels, away from the stove. Double-check the kitchen before you go to bed or leave the house. Never pour water on a grease fire. Turn off the stove and cover the pan with a lid, or close the oven door.
- Don't overcrowd heat-generating appliances. Plug them directly into the wall outlet and don't daisy chain — plugging one extension cord into another. This can overload them and cause a short-circuit, which could result in a fire.

If cords are damaged or worn, replace them. They can increase the chance of electric shock and fire if heat from the wires comes in contact with anything that can burn.

- Clean out the lint on your dryer filter and check your dryer hose for lint once a year. The lint can collect on the filter, around the drum and in the vents, then catch fire from the heat.
- Never leave lit candles unattended. They can be blown or knocked over by pets.
- Never leave a grill unattended. Keep grills away from the house and clean often, removing grease or fat build-up. Let it cool before storing.
- During the winter, heat your home safely. If you use a space heater, keep it at least 3 feet from flammable material. Buy one that automatically turns off if tipped over.
- Always smoke outside and use deep, sturdy ashtrays on something that is hard to ignite. Make sure cigarette butts and ashes are not hot by dousing them with water or sand.
- Start up your lawn equipment or snow throwers outside of enclosed areas, especially away from where you fill it with fuel. Before filling with fuel, let it cool.

## Program can help lower phone bill costs

Nowadays, it seems nearly everyone has a cellphone. According to the Pew Research Center, roughly nine out of 10 Americans own a cellphone.

For many Nebraska families, the cost of their landline or cellphone has been reduced by \$12.75 per month, thanks to the Nebraska Telephone Assistance Program (NTAP).

NTAP helps keep telephone services affordable for qualifying low-income individuals by lowering monthly service rates. Some cellphone companies offer

the discount by providing minutes.

Andrea Grell, NTAP manager, understands the importance of being able to reach others.

"I'm proud to be able to help people in this way, especially when you consider that you often need a phone to get a job or to contact medical professionals if you're sick or need help," she said.

Grell said NTAP is a useful program, and she remains comforted knowing that it provides access to jobs and emergency services when people need it, when they

might not otherwise be able to.

"It would be scary to me if I was in that situation, so I'm glad it's an option for people who need it," she said.

Though not all telephone service providers participate in the program, those that do issue the discount as a credit on a customer's monthly bill.

The telephone bill must be in the name of, or contain the name of, the NTAP applicant. No cash or checks are distributed.

### Who is eligible for NTAP?

Individuals can qualify for NTAP by participating in any of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Kid's Connection (SAM, MAC or EMAC)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- National School Lunch Program
- Federal public housing
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- If household income is at or below 135 percent of the poverty level.

### How do I apply?

To receive an application form:

- Call the Nebraska Public Service Commission at 402-471-3101
- Mail an application request to: NTAP, P.O. Box 94927, Lincoln, NE 68509-4927
- Download an application at [psc.nebraska.gov/ntaps/pdf/ntap/NTAP\\_Application.pdf](https://psc.nebraska.gov/ntaps/pdf/ntap/NTAP_Application.pdf).
- Complete an application online by visiting the Public Service Commission page at [psc.nebraska.gov](https://psc.nebraska.gov).

**Nebraska  
Telephone  
Assistance  
Program  
at a  
glance**



Excited for the upcoming school year, this student picks out school supplies.

## LHA ignites excitement for school

Thanks to LHA properties at Prairie Crossing, Summer Hill and Wood Bridge, students got excited for the school year with the annual Back to School Barbecue Aug. 3-4.

The barbecue included food, games and prizes, along with free school supplies. Parents were thankful for the event.

Andy's Express furnished chicken,

Super Saver contributed baked beans and potato salad, and the LHA properties provided ice cream and toppings. Other local businesses donated prizes for the drawings.



Students leave with supplies for the upcoming school year.



Students enjoy the back-to-school barbecue.