

Our Mission

Stephen Center partners with the community, families and individuals to overcome homelessness, addiction and poverty.



STEPHEN
center
HELP · HOPE · HEROES

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Gorgia sits in her living room, surrounded by boxes, household supplies, bedding, and furniture. Her children, a seven-year-old daughter and twin four-year-old boys, are talking and laughing in the next room. It's moving day! The atmosphere in this new apartment is very different to what Georgia experienced just 16 months ago...

In September 2020, Georgia had just finished a 60 day jail sentence for violating her probation. She got a ride to the house she and her husband rented. Her van was parked out front, and inside the house there were kids' toys, clothes still in the closets, family photos, and furniture, but Georgia's children were gone. Her husband took them out-of-state permanently, thousands of miles away, without telling her.

Unable to pay the rent, Georgia filled her van with clothing, shoes, and family photos, and went to a hotel. After two nights of binge drinking and wondering what she should do, a friend convinced her to go to Stephen Center for help.

Georgia had never been at a shelter before. "Everybody was pretty welcoming," she said. "Miss Maggie helped me settle in." Once her basic needs for food and shelter were met, Georgia met with a case manager to create goals for housing and more.

"Alcohol was my drug of choice," Georgia said. "My case manager helped me get a drug and alcohol evaluation, and I attended intensive outpatient treatment in the HERO program." Georgia had tried treatment before, but the HERO program was different, she said, because she had more time to work through her addiction.

After three months in the shelter, working with her case manager and a counselor, Georgia moved to Stephen Center's Permanent Supportive Housing apartments. She continued in her treatment, while focusing on her next goals. "I was trying to use resources to get my kids back," Georgia said. She filed for divorce, and full custody. "I tried to be the best mom I could be, even though the kids were on the east coast."

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From the Desk of the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



Where Hope Happens

I recently celebrated my sixth year as Executive Director of Stephen Center. Year after year, I am in awe of the community support our organization receives. Even as we enter our third year of the pandemic, our volunteer numbers are strong, our partnerships are growing and our outcomes are successful.

Stephen Center volunteers provided 38,620 service hours in 2021. That's the workforce equivalent of more than 18 full-time employees! Tasks included chatting with clients, preparing and serving meals, deep cleaning classrooms, doing laundry, and sorting donations, landscaping and more. If Stephen Center were to pay for these services, it would cost over half a million dollars!

In 2021, Stephen Center also hosted 46 students in internships or practicums from College of St. Mary, University of Nebraska – Omaha, Bellevue University, and more. Clinical treatment students taught life skills classes and led groups, occupational therapy students provided 346 sessions to 75 Stephen Center clients in just 4 months, and social work students worked with shelter clients to develop and achieve goals.

As noted on the next page, over 1,197 unique individuals received services at Stephen Center in 2021. That means that moms, dads and kids needing emergency shelter had a place to sleep. Hungry men and women without a home had access to three meals a day plus snacks. And over 400 people struggling with addiction and mental health concerns received treatment services. Ninety-percent left Stephen Center to positive housing destinations.

I think the best way to learn about the Stephen Center is to visit. You'll quickly learn that HOPE HAPPENS HERE. It inspires people, and invites them back again and again. Come for a tour and you will see it and feel it. But be prepared – you just might end up volunteering, serving and making a difference in the lives of others!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Wehling'.

Michael Wehling

P.S. – Call Beth at 402-715-5445 to schedule your tour today!

2021

IMPACT STATS



1,197
Clients Served



Average Shelter Stay:
32 Days



212,181
Meals Served



69,687
Nights of Lodging



84% of clients
Moving to Positive Housing Destinations



38,620
Hours of Volunteering
(Savings of \$521,370)



Donation Center
Provided items to 87 households moving into housing

NEW Board Members

Four New Directors Join Stephen Center Board

Stephen Center is pleased to announce that four new directors have accepted terms on the Stephen Center Board. The new directors are David Amburn, Grant Empson, Dr. Donna Faber and Shannon McNeil.

David Amburn is the Logistics and Operations Manager at CORE Construction. He is also an Air Force Veteran who served in the Gulf War. David resides in La Vista, and is the proud father of two adult children. He enjoys spending his free time golfing and riding his Harley Davidson.

Grant Empson is Senior Vice President and Corporate Treasurer at American National Bank. An Omaha native, Grant currently resides in Elkhorn with his wife and 1-year-old son. He enjoys running, drumming, and is an active volunteer with United Way of the Midlands.

Donna Faber is a family medicine physician; she has practiced at One World Community Health Centers since 2006 with obstetrics at Bergan Mercy Hospital. She lives with her husband and their two teenage children. She enjoys reading and travel, and keeps busy running the food pantry at One World.

Shannon McNeil is Vice President and Risk Consultant at Collaborative Planning Group. Shannon lives in Omaha with her husband P.J. McNeil, and their two young children. She is active in the community, with many years of experience in event fundraising for multiple non-profits.



David Amburn



Grant Empson



Donna Faber



Shannon McNeil

“David, Grant, Donna and Shannon bring a lot of energy and experience to our board of directors. Their community involvement to date is impressive, and I look forward to the impact they will have on Stephen Center’s mission to partner with the community, individuals, and families to overcome homelessness, addiction and poverty,” Executive Director Michael Wehling said.

Volunteer Spotlight

REMEMBERING BENNY

Benny Benschoter became involved at Stephen Center in 2002. His wife Reba sorted through donated clothes every week, and frequently told Benny about how difficult it was to come by donations of new underwear and socks. "Let's take care of that," Benny said. The couple made it a family project to purchase new socks and underwear for the shelter, a tradition that continues at Christmas each year. Their impact is so deep at Stephen Center that the supply room in the Pettigrew Emergency Shelter is named "Reba's Closet" in honor of the Benschoters.

"Any time that you have something truly yours that wasn't somebody else's to begin with, it gives dignity, it gives you a feeling of, I am somebody. And that's what our family gets the joy from," Benny explained.

Home Is Where The Heart Is *Continued from page 1*

Georgia attended classes while living at Stephen Center. Rentwise taught her about tenant's rights and responsibilities, and she learned about budgeting and financial management in a class called Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By-World. Georgia's case manager also helped her take care of herself – born with a heart defect, Georgia has had four open heart surgeries, most recently in 2008. After a blood transfusion, she suffered from seizures. During her time at Stephen Center, Georgia was able to have a seizure study done. She now has fewer seizures, making her feel more in control.

Shortly after Christmas, Georgia received word that her divorce was final, and her children were coming back to Omaha to live with her permanently! At the same time, she was ready to leave the Stephen Center for an apartment of her own. Stephen Center staff helped her find a 3 bedroom rental – perfect for her family to spread out.

The kids took a two day train ride to join Georgia in Omaha, arriving in early January. Georgia hadn't seen



Benny passed away in December 2021. His commitment and dedication to the homeless will always be remembered.



them in person for over a year and a half. "They are more rambunctious than I remember, but it's just going to take time," she said. "They have to test me and learn boundaries. It's a transition for all of us, but I think it will turn out okay."

Georgia is grateful for the Stephen Center. "They are resourceful and patient," she said. "They gave me clothes for the kids because they didn't come with any. If anyone was in my situation, I'd refer them here."

Memorials & Honorariums

Tributes

July 16, 2021 through
January 15, 2022

You can memorialize a loved one or pay tribute to someone special in your life while helping those in need in our community. When you make a Memorial or Honor Gift, Stephen Center will send an acknowledgement card to the family or honoree. Gifts are also recognized in this newsletter. You may use the enclosed envelope to send your gift.

in memory of:

Joanne Ahlers
Sheila Ahlers

Linda Allison
James Allison
Scott & Jennifer Sather
Bert Wise

Virginia Arfeld
John Arkfeld

Judy Barelman
Herbert & Judy Barelman

Robert & Helen Barry
Dennis & Patricia Kennedy

Deacon Skip Baughman
Barbara Baughman

Ralph & Ruth Bellinghausen
Jean Bellinghausen

Bellus/Elker Families
Cecilia & Henry Elker

Gene Benash
Shirley Benash

Joe Beninato
Mary Clare Beninato

Ziggy Benkis
Helen Benkis

Leon (Benny) Benschoter
Anita Bahle
Gerhardt & Jeanette Bahle
Tammy K. Baker
Reba Benschoter
Sandy Benson
Stacy F. Bertinelli
Marsha Botos
Ronald & Shelley Brougham
Jennifer L. Dahir
John Dailey Development Resources Inc.
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Ann & Leroy Galles
Bruce & Patricia Hageman
Tim Higgins & Patricia Zieg
Bev & Don Hoschar
Lindy Hoyer
Paul & Roxanna Jokela
Betty Ann Karolski
Patricia J. Kidd
Karlene Kingery
Rachel Kraft
Donald Krupa
Larry Kruse
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Elizabeth Miller
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Gardner Auto and Trailers

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Mark & Kelle Herse
Kyle & Keerthi Hoback
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Molly Hurley
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Joyce Duffy

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Gustav & Carol Dworak

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Patricia Ficke

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Paula Gallup

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Therese Bollerup
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John T. Carpenter
Cas Corporation
Timothy & Marleen Evans
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Maureen Garrigan
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Lorita Gradoville
William Gradoville
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D. Paul Hartnett
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Kathleen Kurtz
Celann LaGreca
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Maureen Macan
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Paul & Ruth Maginn
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- Waneita Grandgenett**
Rich & Lynda Grandgenett
- Alban & Lavina Gross**
Duane Gross & Liz
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Mary Hall
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Russell & Jean Hankins
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- Susan Hartigan**
Timothy Hartigan
- Alida J. Hartog**
Martin Hartog
- John and Alida Hartog**
Martin Hartog
- Bob Headlee**
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- Hildegard Herzfeldt**
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Andrew Thompson

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Don & Joan Roth

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Micheal Schincke

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Robert & Mary Vacek

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Joseph Vukov
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Jeff Zaayer
David F. Rabideaux

Richard Ziola
Adrienne C Ziola

**Charles, Lawrence, Bev &
Walt Zyyla**
Vernon & Christine
Muhlbauer

**All poor souls & all aborted
babies**
Rita Blum

Jerome
Mary Ann Cooley

Michael & Neil
Stephan & Sally Hutflless

Mike & Brett
Sandra Miller

Sister T
Tez, Inc.

in honor of:

American Legion Post 211
Russell G. Quimby

Bernie Baratta
Joan Baratta

Shannan and Brad Brommer
Breeane Peterson

Steve Carpenter
Joseph Kirby

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Gerald & Kathleen
Koraleski

Dr. Roger Curry
Bill & Cindy Strasser

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Richard & Pamela Jepson

Nick Dober-Elite Decks
Thomas Franzluebbers

Bob & Kate Flanagan
Eugene & Mary Hart

Ron & Pam Garofolo
Arlyn & Peggy
Montgomery

Micah Gilbert
Steve & Cathy Gilbert

Matt Good
Jim Eiting

**Rev. Michael Grewe's
Birthday**
Caroline Parys

John Gubbels
Judith & James Gubbels

Jean Hartwell
Jacquelyn & Herbert
Crowley

Joe & Kate Heiler Family
Joe Theiler

Anita Hicks
William & Lesa Lindsay

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Charles E. Lakin Foundation**
Lawrence Dostal

Don Honz
Jared & Molly Gaston

Dean Jungers
Terri A. Garvey

Josie Kaiser
Daniel & Arlene Zack

**Rev. Roger Kalschuer's
Birthday**
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Bill & Ann Kenney
Bob Kenney

Bunnie Kizer
Kathryn Kerrigan
Richard & Maureen Kizer
Edward & Susan Kizer

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Renee O'Brien

Shayla O'Brien
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Renee O'Brien

Offutt Angels
Lena Henning

Rosie Ohri
Eddie Galas

**Our grandchildren & great
grandchildren**
Joseph & Judith Koziol

Kathy & Nancy Petrini
Pietro G. Petrini

Larry & Carmen Quint
Michael & Judie Quint

Suzanne Riley
Borsheim's

**The Deacons at St. Gerald's
Church**
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Irene Urzendowski
Kathy & Mike Gross

Virginia VanIngen
Michael & Mary Kelly

Michael Wehner
William Redinger

Theresa Wildalm
Dale Widhalm

David & Julie Wilson
Frances A. Wilson

Doug & Linda Wilson
Frances A. Wilson

Robert
Kathy & Mike Gross

With Gratitude to Our Generous Donors

Donors

July 16, 2021 through
January 15, 2022

We are extremely grateful to our generous donors... from the brand new to those who've been dedicated to the Stephen Center mission for many years. We appreciate every contribution and thank you for your generosity. We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please let us know.

Jeanne & Steve Aarhus	Mary D. Baker	Amy Besing	Max Burbach
Mary Abboud	Linda Bannister	Bethany's Circle St. Paul's UMC	Claudia Burchard
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WE'RE GOING BAREFOOT SO THEY DON'T HAVE TO.



What is One Day Without Shoes?

Cornhusker Bank started One Day Without Shoes in 2011 as another way to give back to the Lincoln community. In 2020 we began a partnership with Stephen Center in Omaha, to mirror our partnership with People's City Mission in Lincoln. In the eleven year history of the event, we have collected over 202,000 pairs of shoes and monetary donations totaling over \$96,000 for the Mission. In the two years of hosting this event in Omaha, Cornhusker Bank's Omaha location and numerous business partners collected over 3,200 pairs of shoes and \$450 in monetary donations.

One Day Without Shoes is a collaborative effort with local businesses who volunteer to help the bank collect new and wearable used shoes for free distribution by Stephen Center. These shoes are important to someone whose sole form of transportation is their ability to walk. Beth Robbins, Stephen Center Shelter Director noted, "The look on the faces of our clients when we provide them with shoes is priceless, providing them with joy they may not have felt in a very long time." All shoes and any cash donations collected in Omaha will stay in Omaha for distribution.

Be Part of the 2022 Event

Please consider being a part of the One Day Without Shoes Event in 2022 by becoming a collection site for this 2 week community campaign. A collection box will be delivered to your location by Two Men and a Truck and picked up for distribution at Stephen Center at the end of the campaign. Specific dates are listed below. All businesses who contact Cornhusker Bank for a collection box will receive recognition in Event Advertising.



Complete the form on our website to partner with us and collect shoes at your organization:

[CornhuskerBank.com/Day-Without-Shoes-Omaha.aspx](https://www.cornhuskerbank.com/Day-Without-Shoes-Omaha.aspx)

For more information or if you have questions please contact:

Carissa Bullock at 402-434-3788 or email:

Carissa.Bullock@CornhuskerBank.com

Event Dates

Collection Box Deliveries to Businesses: April 21st or 22nd

Collection Dates: April 25th - May 7th

Collection Boxes Picked Up: May 9th - 11th



Find out more at

<https://www.cornhuskerbank.com/Day-Without-Shoes-Omaha.aspx>

Stephen Center NEWS

Winter 2022

Published two times annually
by Stephen Center

Stephen Center

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STEPHEN center
HELP · HOPE · HEROES

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For Sponsor & Vintner Reception details:
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vinNEBRASKA

Join us when vinNEBRASKA brings a touch of wine country to Nebraska while helping to support and raise awareness for Stephen Center.

As a Sponsor, your support will directly impact Stephen Center's crucial direct service programs to restore hope and create stability for those most in need.

Please consider participating in this special weekend!