



Together For Good

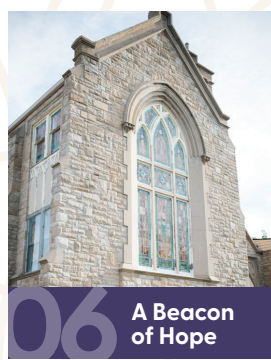


Lincoln
Community
FOUNDATION

FALL 2025



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Greetings:

Fall is always a busy season here at the Foundation. Our calendars are filled with meaningful opportunities to collaborate with donors, partners, colleagues and neighbors on the issues at the forefront of our community.

As the national and global landscape continues to shift and critical needs escalate, it can be easy to become discouraged and surrender to the uncertainty of the moment. But I was recently reminded of the **power of connection and hope** at the latest E.N. Thompson Forum, which featured a conversation between former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy and Dr. H. Dele Davies, interim chancellor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Dr. Murthy said something that really resonated with me:

"I want to tell you that our children's future depends on us being hopeful. And we can find hope in each other. We don't have to always be the perennial source of optimism and hope. It's okay to have moments where maybe we worry, or we doubt. But that's why we have to have each other's backs. That's why we have to lift each other up."

This fall issue of Together for Good exemplifies what we can accomplish when we lift each other up. Celebrating the good in our community, we have highlighted stories of connection like:

- Transforming a historic Lincoln church into a symbol of stability. With Eden Child Care Center providing 24/7 care and early learning on the main floor and affordable housing above, the Bell

Tower project on Holdrege Street supports working families in every part of their daily lives.

- Childcare providers, employers and local leaders coming together to explore solutions and strengthen partnerships at the Lincoln Littles Early Childhood Summit – connecting the pieces of the early childcare puzzle to build a brighter future for Lincoln's littlest residents.
- The HUB Central Access Point for Young Adults walking alongside young people facing immense barriers – offering unconditional support, mentorship and hope – with the help of an Open Door Grant.
- An evening celebrating LCF's Legacy Society, Benefactors and Trustees, whose generosity is shaping Lincoln for generations to come.

I invite you to reflect on your own connections at home, at work and in your neighborhood. And whether it's returning someone's cart at the grocery store or simply returning a smile, we can all find small ways to lift each other up this season.

As the days get shorter, these powerful acts of connection will light the way towards hope.



Gratefully,

Tracy
Tracy Edgerton,
President

Meet the Prosper Lincoln 3.0 Drivers

Bringing people together to create community-based solutions

Inspired by the 2025 Lincoln Vital Signs report and informed by hundreds of community conversations, Prosper Lincoln is moving forward with renewed energy in three updated focus areas – Connections, Housing and Early Childhood – with the help of three incredible leaders:



AMANDA BARKER, director of community engagement and partnerships at LCF, is the driver for the **Connections** focus area. Amanda's work centers on amplifying voices, building resident-led initiatives, and increasing opportunities for people to improve their financial security.



ALEX LABENZ, director of policy and strategic engagement at the Coalition for a Strong Nebraska, is the new driver of the **Housing** focus area. With a deep understanding of systems change and public policy, Alex will help align local efforts and advocate for solutions that ensure quality housing all residents can afford.



ANNE BRANDT, executive director of Lincoln Littles, continues as the driver of **Early Childhood**. Through community engagement, advocacy and collaboration, Anne is committed to helping all children flourish socially, emotionally, physically and educationally.

These leaders are joined in these efforts by community champions who are central to the Connections, Housing and Early Childhood sectors. The Prosper Lincoln work groups will identify key partnerships and people-first solutions that address gaps and promote prosperity for all – building a stronger and growing community where everyone can reach their individual potential.

Prosper Lincoln is a strategic initiative of Lincoln Community Foundation.
To learn more, visit ProsperLincoln.org.



LCF awards more than \$1.8 million to nonprofits

Designated grants fulfill philanthropic dreams in perpetuity

Thanks to the foresight of many generous donors, Lincoln Community Foundation made grants in August of \$1,838,100 for 223 nonprofit organizations.

These grants came from funds created by individual donors to support their favorite nonprofits and houses of worship. Endowed funds provide annual financial support to the organizations specified by the donors, helping both the community and the nonprofits grow and thrive.

“It is a great honor to serve as a connector between donors and the charities they wish to support forever,” said President Tracy Edgerton. “These gifts will continue to grow through the power of endowment and sage financial management and investment by our team.”



Oh, what a night!

Recognizing LCF's Legacy Society, Benefactors and Trustees

In September, members of LCF's Legacy Society, Lincoln Benefactors and Board of Trustees gathered at one of Lincoln's newest event spaces, Venue 5 Twenty-Two, to be recognized for their transformative leadership and generosity.

LCF Board Chair Mark Hesser welcomed attendees and introduced President Tracy Edgerton for remarks and recognition of new members.

"Tonight is certainly a special moment in our year where we honor and thank you – not only for placing your trust in us, but for your generous gifts that open doors to a brighter future," said Tracy.

Tracy also shared how donor generosity and strong community partnerships continue to move the needle for LCF's strategic initiatives including affordable housing, early childhood and Give to Lincoln Day.

"As we embrace the transformative

energy of autumn, we hope you feel as excited about the great things happening in Lincoln as we do," she said. "In any season of life, the Foundation is committed to supporting your dreams for a better tomorrow – however your generosity unfolds in our community."

LEGACY SOCIETY

As you develop your estate plans, remembering your favorite organizations and community can leave a lasting philanthropic footprint.

There are several ways to make a future gift through LCF, whether it's to benefit an organization, an area of interest or the community as a whole. You can include LCF in your will or trust, or you can name LCF as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy, retirement or other accounts.

After you work with your attorney or financial advisor to create your gift, we can help you customize

your specific instructions in a fund agreement that can be changed at any time.

LCF created the **Legacy Society** to honor our special friends who have made a gift through their estate or beneficiary designations. We're grateful for the opportunity to recognize these donors for their generosity and memorialize their gifts for generations to come.

LINCOLN BENEFACTORS

The support of our benefactors strengthens and fortifies the Foundation by providing long-term stability for our organization and significant benefits to local nonprofits. In recognition of their gift, a benefactor's name is etched on the glass display located in the foyer of our building – a testament to their timeless generosity.

With a current or a planned estate gift, you can become a **Lincoln Benefactor** three ways:

- Individual gifts of **\$50,000** or more to the LCF's operating endowment.
- Gifts of **\$500,000** or more to any endowed fund at LCF.
- Gifts of **\$1,000,000** or more to any LCF fund made during a 12-month period.

LCF's **Board of Trustees** serve as our ambassadors in the community and share with others how we can be a resource for all things charitable.



Please join us in applauding the new members of our Legacy Society and Lincoln Benefactors:

NEW LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

Don & Robin Brester
 Paul & Ruth Few
 Alan H. Frank & Barbara Johnson Frank
 Teresa & Lewis Littlejohn
 Carolyn S. Otte & Hon. Robert R. Otte
 Debbie Petersen

NEW BENEFACTORS

David Clark
 Jay Conrad
 Carolyn S. Otte & Hon. Robert R. Otte

Ready to create your meaningful legacy through expert stewardship?
 Contact Susan Crotteau at
 402-474-2345 or susanc@lcf.org.



Quick tips for your year-end game plan

Whether you're looking to make a difference now or interested in leaving a legacy for the future, our Philanthropy Services team is ready to help you advance your charitable game plan – just in time for the end of the year.

Here are a few giving strategies and tools that may be helpful as 2025 winds down:

- A donor advised fund to organize annual giving to favorite nonprofits, including utilizing “bunching” techniques to front-load contributions and take advantage of itemizing charitable tax deductions.

- A designated fund to support a specific favorite charity or cause forever.
- A gift to LCF's unrestricted Lincoln Forever Fund so critical issues can be addressed as our community needs change over time.
- If you are 70 ½ or older, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a great way to transfer up to \$108,000 (2025's per taxpayer limit) income-tax free to a qualified charity, including some types of funds at LCF.

Please reach out anytime at **402-474-2345**. Together, we can develop a plan that reflects your vision and your passions.



Back row (left to right): Emily Asboe, Rhonda Page, Susan Crotteau
 Front row: Sandi Hansen, Chip DeBuse



A foundation for the future

How one building became a hub for housing and childcare

By Brittany Wren

Next door to Clinton Elementary, a historic church with a proud bell tower still stands. Inside, a new kind of hope is taking root. On the main floor, you'll hear the sounds of laughter from a 24/7 childcare center. Upstairs, new affordable housing units are being framed.

This isn't just a renovation; it's a revolutionary model for community stability, born because a group of local entrepreneurs, architects and funders looked at the intertwined needs of families and said, "Yes, this is hard. But our community needs this."

This is the story of what happens when a community dares to solve

its own problems – when it decides that every parent deserves to keep their job, every family deserves a place to live and every child deserves a safe place to dream, no matter the time of day.

It's a story about a building, yes, but it's really about building a future where everyone belongs.

An architect's vision

The story begins with a holistic vision. It belonged to Scott Sullivan, a local architect who saw more than an aging United Pentecostal Church with a Late Gothic Revival architectural style. He saw a comprehensive solution to the

challenges families face. His idea was to create a mixed-use space that addressed two of Lincoln's most pressing needs at once: affordable housing units upstairs and high-quality early childhood education downstairs.

Scott purchased the building, recognizing the building's potential to become an anchor in a diverse, low-income neighborhood. He knew that for a family to be stable, they needed both a safe home and reliable care for their children.

"I just kind of enjoy the envisioning, the solution," Scott shared, reflecting on his passion for restoration.

And this solution wasn't simple.

To make the restoration work financially viable and allow for mixed-use development (residential spaces as well as businesses), Scott worked with the City of Lincoln to secure Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and to change its zoning to a landmark overlay. This public-private partnership helped save an older building while simultaneously creating two major community assets: affordable housing and 24/7 childcare.

The church building needed everything – new windows, modern infrastructure, a paved alley, a complete reimaging – but its bones were strong and its potential to serve the community was undeniable.

A provider's dream

At the same time, Hibah Jabbar, the founder of Eden Child Care Center, was busy planning an expansion. For her, the name is a promise – “Eden” means heaven, a safe, nurturing place for every child. She saw a critical gap in Lincoln's support system. Her first childcare center was thriving, but she knew families were struggling.

"Many parents who work overnight, they need a safe place for their kids," Hibah explained.

She dreamed of opening a second center, one that would offer the radical flexibility of 24/7 care, providing a lifeline for parents working in healthcare, manufacturing and other essential, around-the-clock industries. Her center would have the typical childcare amenities like outdoor play areas, napping rooms for overnight care and, she hoped,



Hibah Jabbar, the founder of Eden Child Care Center, poses with Lincoln Littles Associate Director Suzanne Schneider.

affordable apartments nearby where employees and parents could live.

They had the vision. They had the passion. What they needed was a connection.

The power of a community that convenes

That connection came from Lincoln Littles. As an integral part of Prosper Lincoln's Early Childhood initiative, their work is to build bridges. They are the conveners, the matchmakers, the tireless advocates who see the big picture. When they learned of Scott's building and Hibah's dream, they knew they had found a perfect match.

The project's innovative model – combining quality, affordable housing with high-quality early childhood education – was exactly the kind of multi-faceted solution the Lincoln Community Foundation seeks to champion. It directly

addresses two of the core pillars of the Prosper Lincoln community agenda. It's a recognition that a family cannot thrive without a stable home, and a child cannot get a strong start if their parents are struggling to find housing or childcare. This project tackles both.

"Access to 24/7 childcare is a game-changer," said Lincoln Littles Executive Director Anne Brandt. "It's the missing piece for so many parents working in our city's most essential industries. This project isn't just about creating 60 new spots; it's about giving parents peace of mind and children a wonderful place to grow, at any hour."

The team at Lincoln Littles, along with partners like Kelly Ross from ECHO Collective, immediately wrapped their support around Hibah. They helped her navigate the labyrinth of state funding and licensing. This included securing a crucial \$90,000 startup grant from the Department of Health and



A classroom at Eden Child Care Center, a 24/7 center located next door to Clinton Elementary.

Human Services, which allowed Hibah to fill the new space with brand new cribs, toys and furniture, ensuring the children had the best from day one. At the same time, LCF became a crucial partner for Scott.

Half of renting households in Lincoln spend a large portion of their income on housing, according to the 2025 Lincoln Vital Signs report, so helping to bridge the housing gap in a low-income neighborhood was an LCF priority. LCF provided a direct investment in the project and facilitated a loan pool through Community Development Resources (CDR). This collaborative funding was the spark that ignited the entire project, allowing the extensive renovations to begin.

“The combination of housing and childcare was what drew LCF to the project,” said Michelle Paulk, Vice President for Grant Making and Operations. “It hits on two of our Prosper Lincoln pillars.”

This model proves that our community’s greatest challenges can be met when we bring the right people to the table and invest in their shared vision.

A beacon of hope on Holdrege Street

Today, the bell tower at 2980 Holdrege Street stands over a place reborn. Eden Child Care Center opened its doors in the summer of 2025, a stunning, modern facility licensed for 60 children. Sunlight streams through new windows that honor the building's original design. A once-muddy alley is now a safe, paved entryway for families.

Inside, every detail is filled with purpose. It is a welcoming place for the neighborhood's diverse families, serving both English- and Arabic-speaking children. There are cozy napping rooms for children staying overnight, a "movement classroom" for yoga and play and bright, welcoming spaces that inspire curiosity and learning. Within a month of opening, Hibah was already serving a growing number of families, a testament to the profound need in the community.

While the Eden Child Care Center is a thriving success, the building's transformation is not yet complete. The project is now entering its

next phase: the conversion of the original church section into 11 or 12 affordable housing units. According to Scott, the architectural drawings are nearly finished, and the goal is to have the entire project completed by the end of 2026.

This project is more than a childcare center with apartments upstairs. It is a vital piece of our city's infrastructure and a blueprint for the future. It is a haven for children, a stable home for families and a lifeline for working parents.

“The Bell Tower story is a powerful example of community stewardship,” said LCF President Tracy Edgerton. “By creating both stable homes and a nurturing learning environment under one roof, this project provides a powerful foundation for families to thrive. This is how we build a Lincoln where everyone has the chance to prosper.”



Historic stained-glass windows still need restoration at 2980 Holdrege Street.

To learn more about how our community is working together, visit ProsperLincoln.org.



Connecting the pieces to build a brighter future

Third annual Early Childhood Summit draws more than 200 supporters

Elected officials, donors, childcare providers and partners joined Lincoln Littles for their annual Early Childhood Summit and fall campaign kickoff on October 8 at Nebraska Innovation Campus.

“This year’s theme was inspired by one of our providers who reminded me that addressing early childcare is like working on a giant puzzle,” shared Lincoln Littles Executive Director Anne Brandt. “We see our role as helping to fit the pieces together. And it’s a perfect analogy – because this issue is both complicated and interconnected.”

Anne shared big news for early childhood in our community including Mayor Gaylor Baird’s recent commitment to support

children and families through tuition assistance as well as the new Lincoln Family Friendly Workplace certification – an initiative designed with the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development to recognize and support employers who prioritize family-friendly practices.

The morning also featured a dynamic panel highlighting the importance of cross-sector partnerships to support the early childhood workforce. Moderated by Associate Director Suzanne Schneider, the panelists shared a powerful success story from the Lincoln Littles Workforce Program, which opened a new career pathway for one of its graduates at Hamilton Heights Child Development Center.

LCF President Tracy Edgerton concluded the program with a reminder that everyone has a role to play in solving the early childhood puzzle.

“When access to quality childcare is more available and affordable, we open doors to potential, promise and possibility,” said Tracy. “It truly takes all of us, fitting together with care and purpose, to give every child the strong start they deserve.”

To support Lincoln Littles programs, operations and initiatives visit LincolnLittles.org/donate or use the enclosed envelope in your magazine.

Checks may be written out to Lincoln Community Foundation with Lincoln Littles in the memo line.



Thank you to our generous lead donors!

ABC Electric • Abel Foundation • Acklie Charitable Foundation • Ameritas • Joyce Baird • Drs. Bob & Stacie Bleicher • Anne & Brad Brandt • Buffett Early Childhood Fund • Candy & Bob Campbell • Rosalind K. Carr in memory of Professor James D. Carr • David & Mary Cintani • City of Lincoln • Community Health Endowment • Shirley & Jerry Daugherty • Steve & Kathy Dickey • Donlan Foundation • Laura & Kendall Frantz • Larry & Robyn Frederick • Harbor of Dreams • Barbara Hoppe Johnson • Kile & Cuz Johnson • Jim & Penny Krieger Family Foundation • Lincoln Industries • Jim McKee & Linda Hillegass • Dave & Marilyn Moore • Mike Munro & Susie Keisler-Munro • Nelnet • Jim & Gail O’Hanlon • Pinnacle Bank Arena • Drs. Bob & Lisa Rauner • Reckmeyer Family Foundation • Rhonda Seacrest • Dottie & Bob Shapiro • Susan Sehnert Stuart • Tom & Sue Tallman • Art & Carol Thompson • Sue & Ed Tricker • Dr. Eileen C. & Richard W. Vautravers • Bill & Mae Whitmer Family Fund

Story of Impact: THE HUB



Forging pathways for unconnected youth through unconditional support

“The reality is – the bumps of life are going to happen.”

Rose Hood-Buss, executive director of The HUB Central Access Point for Young Adults, has spent her career supporting Lincoln’s youth in whatever life situation they may find themselves.

“If we can come alongside them and help in what seems like small ways – a car repair, a utility bill, a bus pass – that keeps them on the path of independence and on the path of their success,” she shared.

For The HUB, success often looks like someone taking the first step to walk through their doors at 1037 South 12th Street.

These are young people navigating life without permanent family support, including those who are pregnant or parenting,

experiencing homelessness or housing instability, involved in foster care or juvenile probation, survivors of trafficking or exploitation, or otherwise estranged from their families. Many have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and carry risk factors that increase their vulnerability to multi-generational system involvement.

“Asking for help is hard, especially for young adults that are system impacted,” said Rose. “They haven’t had an opportunity to advocate for themselves.”

At The HUB, they’re welcomed by a passionate team that’s able to walk with them as they achieve their goals.

“We focus on education, employment and empowerment, and everything is voluntary – it’s all up to them,” said Rose. “The core of our work is unconditional support on the path that they choose.”

Rose’s involvement with The HUB dates to its inception in 2003.

“I was working at Lighthouse when the concept of something specific to support this population came about,” she said.

Representatives from 25 organizations formed the Transitional Service Network, which identified a gap in services for youth in transition. As a member of the committee, Rose helped write the first grant applications to fund the organization. By 2007, The HUB received its 501(c)(3) status and became an independent agency.

In 2017, Rose returned to the organization as Executive Director, acknowledging that the longevity of the staff speaks to their unique culture.

“What we have here is a team of driven individuals who believe in the mission,” she shared.

Of The HUB’s staff of seven, 75% have lived experience.

“They would have walked through our door for one reason or another,” said Rose. “That just adds to their passion. They are committed to ensuring that these young adults have someone in their corner.”

Through wrap-around programming, The HUB connects young people to housing resources,

job readiness training, educational planning and supportive mentoring relationships. Last year, they provided 2,417 instances of support to 1,086 young people aged 14-24 in Lincoln and Lancaster County.

State and local data underscore the need for this type of support. In Nebraska, only 77% of youth with foster care involvement complete high school or earn a GED by age 21, and just 65% are employed by that age. Nearly 40% of youth formerly in foster care have experienced homelessness after aging out.

“For young parents, barriers are even greater,” shared Rose. “With consistent encouragement and connection, we can work to prevent multigenerational cycles of poverty and system involvement. This is how we really influence change.”

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, supporting youth through these critical transitions could save the nation \$4.1 billion in costs related to homelessness, unemployment and public assistance.

While The HUB is primarily funded through grants and contracts, the support they receive can often be restricted, leaving a gap for operational expenses like rent, utilities and salaries. To help fill this gap, the organization was recently awarded an Open Door Grant from Lincoln Community Foundation for flexible, operational support.

“We’re proud to invest in The HUB through our Open Door Grant program,” said Michelle Paulk, Vice President for Grantmaking

“
Asking for help is hard, especially for young adults that are system impacted. They haven’t had an opportunity to advocate for themselves.

– Rose Hood-Buss, Executive Director of
The HUB Central Access Point for Young Adults

and Operations. “Helping youth in transition build stability toward independence and success is critical for our community to truly thrive.”

“This flexible funding allows us to meet urgent needs if there are items that are not covered under other grants,” said Rose.

As changes continue to roll out at the federal level – including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility requirements – Rose anticipates those needs will increase.

“The ripple effects that we feel are huge,” she said. “Who do young adults look to during times of uncertainty? Their go-to support system. We’re there as unconditional support – to sit, to listen and to ask: ‘How can we help?’”

Despite the evolving realities for young people, Rose and the team at The HUB continue to see hope rising.

“Through our Peer Support program, we have been using Hope Scores from author Casey Gwinn’s book *Hope Rising*,” shared Rose. “The young adults in Peer Support have

been assessing their Hope Score every month. One individual went from a score in the low 20s to the high 60s. It’s about their ability to see hope from themselves.”

“If individuals can find willpower, way power and agency, that path forward looks different,” she continued. “Ultimately, our effectiveness is measured by the stories of resilience and transformation we witness every day: a young adult securing stable housing, completing their GED or gaining meaningful employment.”

While young people find their path to prosperity, The HUB remains a safe, inclusive space where individuals facing barriers can access critical resources, build stability and pursue personal growth.

“No one organization can do this alone,” said Rose. “It takes all of us working together. The interconnectedness of the nonprofit sector, the funders and individual donors is how we move the needle for our community.”

To learn more about LCF’s Open Door Grant program, visit [LCF.org/helping-nonprofits](https://www.lcf.org/helping-nonprofits).



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LCF announces retirement of Vice President, Development-Legacy Planning, Chip DeBuse

Lincoln Community Foundation recently announced that Vice President of Development – Legacy Planning, Richard K. “Chip” DeBuse II, will retire at the end of 2025.

Since joining LCF in 2013, Chip has worked directly with donors and their advisors on all types of gift planning, including annual gifts to donor advised funds and legacy gifts through their estate. He has helped shape philanthropic strategies that support both immediate community needs and long-term impact.

“I have learned so much from Chip

over the years,” said President Tracy Edgerton. “But the most essential lessons have been the intangibles – bringing kind competence to every workday, putting people first and living his values of integrity and connection.”

Chip has been a part of Lincoln Vital Signs, three iterations of Prosper Lincoln, the South of Downtown Community Development Organization, the inaugural LCF Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy program and more in his role at the Foundation. He graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Law



and served as a trust officer for 25 years prior to his role with LCF.

“It has been a joy to have the opportunity to work with the staff and leadership of so many nonprofit organizations in their important work supporting our community,” said Chip. “I have been proud to be part of this incredible growth as a member of the Foundation's thoughtful, professional team.”

YOUR PARTNER FOR YEAR-END GIVING.

As 2025 draws to a close, there's still time to make a difference! The Lincoln Community Foundation is here to assist you with your year-end giving.



For more information call 402-474-2345 or visit [LCF.org](https://www.lcf.org).