



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – JUNE 29, 2023**

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## **Children's Hospital & Medical Center Awards Community Impact Grants to 10 Non-Profit Partners**

**Omaha, Neb.** – Children's Hospital & Medical Center has named 10 regional non-profit organizations as Community Impact Grant recipients for 2023-2024. Each organization will partner with Children's to receive \$25,000 to implement strategies aimed at addressing financial stability, food security, healthy housing and/or pediatric mental wellness.

Rebranded in 2023, Children's Community Impact Grant program was established in 2013 to promote positive health outcomes in children by addressing family-based needs where children live, learn and play. The Community Impact Grants support health equity, and selected programs will reach underrepresented child populations, including children of color, children with disabilities and children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

All grantees will participate in a Learning Collaborative designed and hosted by Children's Community Health & Advocacy team and Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition. The collaborative learning sessions will encourage and promote shared learning among funded organizations through quarterly trainings and technical assistance.

"These 10 grant recipients will be reaching urban, rural, regional and statewide communities, having a significant impact on more than 15,000 children and families," shared Holly Dingman, director of Community Health & Advocacy at Children's. "We look forward to learning and partnering with these organizations to improve the lives of children and families."

Grant recipients include:

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands, Omaha, NE** ***A Community of Support: Connecting Families to Care***

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands (BBBSM) is committed to making a big impact on pediatric mental wellness in the Omaha metro. Their project goal is to ensure youth and families have their basic needs met to support the overall mental wellness of the whole family. With the introduction of the Family Resource Coordinator role, BBBSM will help hundreds of families in their mentor program gain greater access to resources to support financial stability, food security and healthy housing, in turn supporting overall mental wellness.

### **CEDARS Youth Services, Lincoln, NE**

#### ***Financial Literacy for Vulnerable Families with Children***

Those served by CEDARS face challenges related to financial stability, stable housing and other basic needs, and poverty is often considered a leading predictor of child maltreatment. Through this project, CEDARS will offer financial literacy instruction for low-income families on a monthly basis. Financial incentives and matched savings will be available to those who participate. The program will provide both concrete support and the education necessary to enhance financial stability.

### **Completely KIDS, Omaha, NE (South Omaha primarily)**

#### ***Youth and Family Mental Health Services***

Completely KIDS aims to increase access to youth and family mental health services for underserved populations by increasing culturally and linguistically matched programming for Hispanic/Latino families. A two-generation approach in programming will be implemented in 10 Omaha Public School (OPS) after-school programs for 3rd and 4th graders, offering a variety of wellbeing activities and mindfulness groups for the students and their caregivers.

### **Legal Aid of Nebraska, NE (Statewide)**

#### ***Healthy Housing through Free Civil Legal Assistance for Nebraskans with Low Income***

Legal Aid of Nebraska (LAN) aims to preserve safe, healthy housing for Nebraskans with low income. LAN will achieve this by providing free civil legal assistance related to preventing housing loss, enforcing the right to safe and habitable housing and preserving the right to obtain and maintain housing. LAN will support additional connections to community resources and programs for families to shift housing-related legal services to a stability model rather than the emergency response required at the height of the pandemic.

### **Lending Link, Omaha, NE & Pottawattamie County, IA**

#### ***Family Fund***

Lending Link will establish a Family Fund to improve health outcomes for low-income, minority children by providing their parents with affordable financing to improve their financial stability. By providing a fair, low-rate loan, Family Fund will help cover day-to-day expenses such as vehicle repairs, medical bills, rent/utilities and debt consolidation. Clients will receive individual budgeting sessions with a financial coach to address household financial stability by reducing debt load and financial stress, and in turn create an environment for improved health outcomes for their children.

### **Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, NE**

#### ***Reset and Re-Center Social-Emotional Tool Kits for Middle School***

Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) will improve Pediatric Mental Wellness in 14 middle schools across the district by expanding access to 70 Reset and Re-Center Social Emotional Tool Kits. Tool Kits will be utilized by LPS social workers, counselors and administrative behavioral team leads and will include interactive items proven to be successful at decreasing student tension such as liquid floor tiles, sound machines, speed/fidget cubes and more. By utilizing the Second Step curriculum, students work to refocus and recenter before a tough day escalates into a crisis, while gaining tools to promote better self-regulation in the future.

### **Nebraska Diaper Bank (NDB), Northeast NE**

#### ***NDB Changing Diapers, Changing Lives***

Nebraska Diaper Bank (NDB) will provide diapers through a collaborative partnership with Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership (NENCAP) to change lives and empower families in need. The Changing Diapers, Changing Lives project will support NDB's distribution expansion, increasing access to families across 14 counties in northeast Nebraska, rural areas that have previously been unsupported.

### **Nelson Mandela Elementary, Omaha, NE**

#### ***Harvesting Health: Establishing a School Greenhouse as a Sustainable Support for Food Insecurity and Nutrition Education***

Nelson Mandela Elementary aims to establish a school greenhouse to promote healthy eating, educate the next generation on sustainable food production and provide opportunities for all students in Pre-K through 5th grade to learn life skills through STEM. Through this project, Nelson Mandela Elementary will address food security by providing and teaching children and adults residing in two North Omaha zip codes (68110 and 68111) within an urban food desert how to grow and utilize fresh produce, as well as implement healthy meal routines. By addressing family-based needs where children live, learn and play, this project seeks to promote positive health outcomes for children and their families by fostering a community of wellness.

### **Restoring Dignity, Omaha, NE**

#### ***Welcome HOME***

Restoring Dignity aims to expand the Welcome Home Family Education Program by hiring two new Home Educators to create healthy home environments where Congolese and Afghan refugee families can thrive in Omaha. Through this project, Restoring Dignity will expand services to teach over 200 waitlisted families home-based education on how to use cleaning products, fire safety and home maintenance in the participating family's primary language. Restoring Dignity understands that the key to ensuring resettled families have a high quality of life is through a combination of community partnership, advocacy, linguistically appropriate education and culturally appropriate case management.

### **The Valley Child Development Center (TVCDC), Red Cloud, NE**

#### ***Growing Healthy Kids by Growing Healthy Food***

The Valley Child Development Center (TVCDC) will expand their Edible Schoolyard Garden program to ensure children from infancy through age 12 in rural southcentral Nebraska have access to healthy foods. TVCDC will use Children's funding to purchase fruit trees, a vertical aeroponic garden system and a storage shed. By expanding areas for gardening, TVCDC will offer new varieties of produce to families, such as peaches, pears, apples, grapes, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, kohlrabi, sunchoke and bok choy. In addition, TVCDC will expand parent education and community outreach efforts by offering a nutritious meal that incorporates elements of their garden at monthly community garden nights.

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### **About Children's Hospital & Medical Center**

*Children's Hospital & Medical Center is the only full-service, pediatric health care center in Nebraska, providing expertise in more than 50 pediatric specialty services to children across a five-state region and beyond. Children's is home to Nebraska's only Level IV regional Newborn Intensive Care Unit and the state's only Level II Pediatric Trauma Center. Children's is recognized as a 2023-24 Best Children's Hospital by U.S. News & World Report, ranked among the best in the speciality of Pulmonology. Visit us online at [ChildrensOmaha.org](https://www.childrensomaha.org).*