

‘EVERY MEAL, BED AND SUCCESS STORY HAS THE COMMUNITY’S FINGERPRINTS ON IT’

In this anniversary year, Executive Director, Linda Twomey, reflected on where Siena Francis House has been and where it's poised to go, in no small part thanks to its dedicated supporters, volunteers, and other champions.

How did the organization evolve over the years to meet the challenges of Omaha's unhoused population?

Our mission to welcome, shelter, and empower individuals experiencing homelessness as they navigate their path to housing has been our guiding light through decades of change — anchoring us in compassion while calling us to grow, adapt, and lead with resilience.

Since 1975, we've acted with open hearts and bold steps. What began as a shelter for women and children quickly expanded to welcome men in 1977. Our move to a new campus in 1994 represented a renewal of purpose, allowing us to offer more than shelter by launching the Miracles Program to support individuals in addiction recovery.

In 2003, we built a dedicated men's shelter. In 2012, we developed Siena Apartments, empowering individuals to move toward independence. In 2019, we opened a new shelter with 460 beds. The next year, we expanded our capacity to provide recovery services. And in 2023, we introduced The Cottages — 50 tiny homes offering a stable, supportive environment for people ready to rebuild their lives.



Linda encourages friends of Siena Francis House to make a special gift in honor of 50 years of hope and transformation.

What is unique about Siena Francis House's approach to addressing the problems chronically unhoused people face?

We're a low-barrier shelter, open 24/7. It's not just about offering a bed or a meal. It's about creating a space where people always have access to services, are respected, and supported — sometimes for the first time in a long time.

We meet people where they are, without judgment, and help them take steps forward when they're ready. That kind of unconditional presence is at the heart of what makes our approach different.

What are some of the accomplishments made possible with the help of volunteers and donors, and why is their ongoing support critical?

Their support has helped us grow from a small shelter into one of the largest service providers in the region. We've expanded our emergency shelter capacity, built permanent supportive housing units, and developed vital programs like our Miracles addiction recovery program.

What makes this even more meaningful is that less than 15% of our funding comes from government sources. That means every meal served, every bed made, every success story — you name it — has the community's fingerprints on it. This support isn't just helpful; it's absolutely critical.

What does the 50th anniversary mean to you, and what would you like to see happen in the next 50 years?

It's a testament to the power of compassion, resilience, and community. It means we've spent five decades showing up for people who are often overlooked. I feel pride and gratitude to be part of something that's had a lasting, life-changing impact on so many.

I'd love to see Siena Francis House continue to lead with compassion and innovation, rethinking what effective, person-centered support looks like. I hope we keep pushing for creative solutions that meet people where they are, expand access to permanent supportive housing, and strengthen mental health and addiction services. Ultimately, that we remain a place of healing and transformation — and that one day, we can say we played a key role in ending chronic homelessness in our community.