MEGHAN IS DOING GREAT, THANKS TO YOU!

In a letter this summer, we told you about Meghan, a young woman who arrived at the Siena/Francis House homeless and addicted. She decided to do something about it and entered our Miracles Addiction Recovery Program.

In our Miracles program, Meghan had regular appointments with her counselor, and was required to attend recovery meetings and other life skill-building classes. With the help and guidance of her counselor, Meghan started the slow but steady process of working on herself — and to be of service to others, an integral component of our recovery program.

Meghan did well in our Miracles Program, and was given increasing responsibility. Meghan learned to work at our front desk and answer phone calls — gaining invaluable customer service skills. She also became a source of comfort and stability to the women guests of our shelter.

"Serving our guests takes me out of myself and makes me feel good about doing something good, something helpful to others who are truly in need," Meghan said. "The people who come here literally may have no worldly possessions, and they need everything. I help them get those things, and in doing so, I try to show them they are worthy and deserving of the same kinds of things that I’ve received here, and that everybody deserves."
A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (continued from page 1)

I am happy to let you know that our three injured staff members are all safe and recovering. In addition, we are working with our insurance partners to cover their medical bills, and we are ensuring that each employer is receiving full salary and benefits while they mend.

Throughout this difficult time, the Siena/Francis House’s services haven’t skipped a beat. Our organization continues to feed and provide housing to nearly 500 individuals every day. However, even while our services remain uninterrupted, our staff continues to heal. We are clearly not over this unprecedented event. It struck an emotional nerve, which is why we are providing professional counseling to both staff and guests. It will take time, but we will heal, and we will emerge stronger.

While this incident has truly tested the mettle of our staff, and myself, it has also helped reaffirm my decision to accept the position of Executive Director of the Siena/Francis House. I very much look forward to seeing our organization through this difficult, challenging episode, as well as serving in this capacity for many years to come.

In closing, as these storm clouds pass, our focus – with your help and support – is clear. We are open. We are serving. And we are strong.

Gratefully yours,

sincerely,

Linda Twomey
Executive Director

P.S. – In the past 10 months, I have been overwhelmed by the amazing support donors continually provide to the Siena/Francis House. Our organization is only able to offer services to people experiencing homelessness because of this support. On behalf of the more than 500 individuals who stay at Siena/Francis House each night, and the nearly 4,000 who seek our homeless services over the course of every year, thank you.

MEGHAN IS DOING GREAT (continued from page 1)

As Meghan was approaching graduation from our Miracles Program this summer, she was able to find an affordable apartment in the midtown area, which she shares with another program graduate. Meghan also found employment working for a local Omaha business as a dog groomer – a job she absolutely loves.

Meghan declares her time at Siena/Francis House gave her a new lease on life. Out of a sense of gratitude to our organization, she often returns to volunteer. Meghan helps sort women’s clothing or just chats with and offers support to the women who are still here in our program.

“I am so grateful to Siena/Francis House, to my counselor and to the whole staff. I was at my lowest when I got here, but these people helped me remember that I really am a good person with a lot to offer the world,” Meghan said. “I’ve also learned how amazingly well the Siena/Francis House is supported by folks from the community who care enough about people like me to provide donations of food, clothing, money – everything! I especially want to thank these really nice people who I’ve never even met. They are just as responsible for helping me change and become a person I really am proud of when I look in the mirror.”

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE #SIENASTRONG!

You make us #SienaStrong!

We cannot say thank you enough to our supporters – thank you for volunteering and providing in-kind and monetary donations. Your amazing generosity makes it possible to shelter the homeless, feed the hungry, provide counseling and recovery to veterans, serve the disabled and help people find housing. The Siena/Francis House simply cannot fulfill our mission without you. We are grateful that you are #SienaStrong which helps make us #SienaStrong!
STAFF TRAINING FOCUSES ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS QUICKLY AND PERMANENTLY

On July 30 and 31, Siena/Francis House hosted Housing Innovations consultant Andrea White, an expert in homeless housing strategies, to provide training regarding the role of homeless shelters in a community’s crisis response system. According to White, best practices show that the most effective crisis response system provides immediate and easy access to safe shelter to anyone who needs it, as well as aims to rehouse people as quickly as possible. The Siena/Francis House already provides low barrier shelter services and care, and we welcome individuals experiencing homelessness, without bias or restriction. This training enhances our staff’s ability to make every interaction with our guests housing-focused, and reaffirms the importance of case management throughout the housing process.

Our staff learned a great deal in the two days that White was here on our campus, and we are excited to continue incorporating new ideas into our current strategies to help people find and keep housing. Siena/Francis House Executive Director, Linda Twomey, summed up the benefits of this training: “By increasing our staff’s and agency’s knowledge and skills related to providing services to our clients, we are – in turn – reducing the amount of time an individual experiences homelessness.”

SFH PROGRAMS RECEIVE FUNDING

Several Siena/Francis House programs were recently awarded funding by local organizations.

United Way of the Midlands

The Siena/Francis House Homeless Shelter is pleased to announce it was recently awarded a $98,600 grant from United Way of the Midlands. The grants will fund three programs – Emergency Shelter for Men, Women and Children, the Meal Program, and the Rehousing and Reintegration Services Program.

Lincoln Financial Foundation

The Siena/Francis House Homeless Shelter received a $25,000 grant from the Lincoln Financial Foundation to support the Emergency Shelter Program and Meal Program.

Pacific Life Foundation

A grant of $7,500 to be used for the Rehousing and Reintegration Services program was awarded to the Siena Francis House from the Pacific Life Foundation in 2018.

“This community’s support for our programs is greatly appreciated by Siena/Francis House, and many lives will change in a positive way,” Executive Director Linda Twomey said.

ACT NOW TO REDUCE YOUR TAXES AND REACH YOUR CHARITABLE GIVING GOALS

In January, new tax cuts went into effect for 2018. While the tax overhaul certainly included some major changes, many provisions relating to charitable giving remain intact. Most prominently, qualifying donors can still make direct transfers to charities from individual retirement accounts (IRAs) without first having to recognize the distribution as income.

People over 70 ½ years old are required to make minimum yearly distributions from their retirement accounts – distributions that are taxed by the government. But qualifying donors are still allowed to give up to $100,000 per year from these accounts to charity, which counts toward the minimum disbursement, without being taxed. You may make tax-free transfers from your IRA or Roth IRA if:

- You are 70 ½ years old or older.
- Your cumulative tax-free transfers to charity do not exceed $100,000 per tax year.
- Your tax-free transfers are made directly from your IRA or Roth IRA to a qualified public charity, like the Siena/Francis House, and NOT to donor-advised funds, supporting organizations or private foundations.

Transfers completed by December 31, 2018 will be free of federal income tax this year, and such gifts qualify for the 2018 required minimum distribution from donors’ IRAs. Please act now to support the Siena/Francis House – and to fulfill your own charitable goals – by taking advantage of the planning options available to you.

If you would like us to coordinate with your fund custodian a direct transfer of funds from your IRA or Roth IRA to the Siena/Francis House, please contact our Development Director, Tim Sully, at 402-341-1821 or by e-mail at tsully@sienafrancis.org.

Thank you for considering this excellent charitable-giving opportunity!

ANOTHER 4-STAR RATING BY CHARITY NAVIGATOR!

Donors to charitable organizations are appropriately interested in knowing that their financial support is used efficiently, ethically and responsibly. Please know that the Siena/Francis House is absolutely committed to these principles, as well. Please take a moment to review Charity Navigator’s – America’s largest independent charity evaluator – recent evaluation of the Siena/Francis House. Just go to: http://www.charitynavigator.org to read why the Siena/Francis House has once again earned their highest – 4-Star – rating for fiscal responsibility. Type in “Siena/Francis House” in their charity search box to learn the details of why Charity Navigator has the confidence to award our shelter with their highest, “exceptional” designation.
Siena/Francis House staff members are uniquely poised to serve homeless military veterans and let them know that their military service is truly appreciated. In 2017, nearly 10% of all individuals who stayed at the Siena/Francis House were veterans – 300 veterans stayed in our emergency shelter, 48 veterans participated in our Miracles Addiction Recovery Program, and 11 veterans lived in our Permanent Supportive Housing apartments.

In order to provide quality care for the many veterans who are on our campus every day (and night), our organization goes to great lengths to welcome, to provide hope and healing, and to educate veterans about the services available to them:

**VETERAN’S DINNER**

Each month, the Siena/Francis House hosts a Veteran’s Dinner – an evening meal specifically for veterans. Homeless veterans staying at Siena/Francis House, veterans from our organization’s next door neighbor, New Visions Homeless Services (which has a transitional housing program for veterans) and our staff are all invited to attend. These dinners are also attended by representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs and other non-profits, such as Metro Community College’s Upward Bound Program, the U.S. Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, Marines for Life and Guitars for Vets, all of which also provide important services and support to veterans. It is not uncommon for these special get-together dinners to draw as many as 40 veterans for a meal and fellowship. These occasions also provide a great opportunity for our staff and representatives from other organizations to connect with these veterans, to ensure they receive the services they need, in order to be housed out in the community. One such veteran is Joseph Sturgeon, who had been a guest at the Siena/Francis House, and was recently housed, thanks to the hard work of one of our case managers, Brenda Finnegan. Joseph (pictured to the left) shared with us the following reflection regarding the Veterans Dinners he attended: “These dinners were wonderful, just wonderful. I attended around four of them, and I enjoyed them so much. I learned a lot about services that are out there for guys like me. Actually, that’s how I was able to move into a place of my own. I am SO grateful.”

**SUBSTANCE-ABUSE DISORDER AND MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

Siena/Francis House has a partnership agreement with Department of Veterans Affairs to provide substance-abuse disorder and mental health treatment, with transitional housing services, to up to 14 veterans at a time through our Miracles Addiction Recovery Program. This partnership has been in place since 2008, and has extraordinary success in helping veterans overcome these terrible diseases, as well as to deal with trauma they may have experienced while serving our country.

**VETERAN’S DAY**

Each year, Veterans Day is a particularly special day here at the Siena/Francis House. Our 2018 Veteran’s Day celebration will be held on our campus on Sunday, November 11. The tentative order of events honoring veterans includes:

12:30 p.m. – Flag Raising Ceremony, with honor guard, singing of the National Anthem, prayer for veterans and their families and Taps.

1 p.m. – Veterans Day Luncheon with musical entertainment, exclusively for veterans. The luncheon will end with a ceremony recognizing each veteran, by name, their branch of service and additional information regarding their service (e.g. where they were stationed, timeframe). In addition, each veteran will receive a gift-filled backpack, specially prepared for the occasion…and for them. We anticipate honoring approximately 75 veterans at the event.

Siena/Francis House is grateful for our donors, whose continued support allows us to serve those who served our country through their military service. If you would like to assist with our monthly Veterans Dinner gatherings or with our upcoming Veterans Day event on Sunday, November 11, please contact Siena/Francis House Activities Coordinator, Sister Stephanie Matcha, at ssmatcha@sienafrancis.org or at 402-341-1821.
GOLFING FOR CHARITY!

On Thursday, September 6, Esprit Whispering Ridge - an Assisted Living and Memory Care Community, located here in Omaha – hosted an 18-hole scramble, with proceeds coming to the Siena/Francis House. In all, 15 foursomes participated in the golf outing, all of whom had an excellent day of golf in nearly perfect weather.

Beth Karstens, Memory Care Activity Director, summed up their staff’s motivation for putting on the golf scramble to support the Siena/Francis House. “Our staff had a lot of excitement and energy to put on an event where any money raised would go towards helping address an important need in our community. It didn’t take long for us to know that the Siena/Francis House was the perfect organization to support, knowing that the funds would be put to great use in helping to address homelessness in Omaha.

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About Whispering Ridge: Esprit Whispering Ridge is an Assisted Living and Memory Care Community, with 89 apartments, consisting of 43 Assisted Living units and 46 Memory Care units.

GUESTS STAY COOL WITH

Our guests enjoyed a special treat on Thursday, August 2, when the Kona Ice Truck visited campus. United Healthcare made the free flavored shaved ice possible.

Sarah Hughes is a housing navigator for the United Healthcare Community Plan of Nebraska. She works with individuals who are covered by United Healthcare and in a housing crisis, whether facing eviction, living on the street or living in a shelter. Sarah’s job is to connect these individuals to area resources and help them find safe, affordable and permanent housing.

Siena/Francis House is grateful to United Healthcare for their partnership.

HAVE YOU REMEMBERED THE SIENA/FRANCIS HOUSE HOMELESS SHELTER IN YOUR WILL?

Estate gifts go a long way in caring for those most in need from our own local community.

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CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT SIENA/FRANCIS HOUSE

The Siena/Francis House has much to be thankful for this year. And, at the top of our gratitude list are our wonderful donors and volunteers who have been so generous in supporting our mission of serving the more than 3,500 individuals who experienced homelessness and sought assistance this past year. As Christmas Day approaches, the Siena/Francis House is asking for your help in making it a truly special one for the hundreds of individuals who will wake up on our campus that morning...and for their family members. Will you please consider purchasing an extra Christmas item or two to donate to the Siena/Francis House? These items will become presents for our homeless guests or for the family members of men and women who are in our Miracles Treatment Program this Christmas season. Please know that it will take the combined effort of many individuals, families, organizations, schools and businesses in order to bring smiles, cheer, and Christmas gifts to individuals staying at the Siena/Francis House – and to their family members – this Christmas Season.

• We ask that all gifts be unwrapped when you deliver them. Please deliver your gifts to the loading dock of our Baright Shelter, located at 1111 North 17th Street. The dock is open from 8 am until 5 pm every day. You will be given a receipt for your donation at the time you deliver your gift(s).

• We would appreciate it if all gifts could be delivered to the Siena/Francis House’s loading dock by no later than Sunday, December 9, 2018.

• Please email or call Siena/Francis House staff member, Beth Haig, for further information. Beth can be reached at BHaig@sienafrancis.org or via her cell phone at 402-677-3085. Thank you for considering this request. Merry Christmas from our house to yours!

DO YOU ENJOY FOOD?

Five Omaha restaurants will make the holiday season a brighter one by donating a portion of their sales on the first Tuesday in December to the Siena/Francis House Homeless Shelter. Tuesday, December 4, 12% of all food and drink sales at these five local Shucks Fish House & Oyster Bars (119th & Pacific Street, the southwest corner of 100th and Center Street) – as well as at Bailey’s Breakfast & Lunch (120 & Pacific Street), and the Dundee Dell (5007 Underwood Avenue) – will be donated to the Siena/Francis House. So, please consider stopping by one of these five terrific restaurants on Tuesday, December 4 for a bite to eat...and support the Siena/Francis House Homeless Shelter at the same time!

SIENA/FRANCIS HOUSE DONOR BILL OF RIGHTS

Philanthropy is based on voluntary action for the common good. It is a tradition of giving and sharing that is primary to the quality of life of our community. To assure that philanthropy merits the respect and trust of the general public, and that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in our organization, the Siena/Francis House declares that all donors have these rights:

1. To be informed of the Siena/Francis House’s mission, of the way our organization intends to use donated resources, and of our capacity as a charity to use donations effectively and efficiently for their intended purposes;

2. To be informed of the identity of those serving on the Siena/Francis House’s Board of Directors, and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities;

3. To have access to the Siena/Francis House’s most recent financial statements;

4. To receive appropriate acknowledgment and recognition;

5. To expect that all relationships with individuals representing the Siena/Francis House will be professional in nature, and that information about your donations is handled with respect and confidentiality;

6. To be assured that donor information will never be shared with any other organization;

7. To be assured that those seeking donations for the Siena/Francis House are not hired solicitors, and that 100% of your donations are utilized by the Siena/Francis House;

8. To be assured that all funds will be used for the purpose of furthering our mission of providing food, shelter, clothing and re-housing and addiction recovery services to those most in need in our community;

9. To have the right for your name to be deleted from our mailing list;

10. To feel free to ask questions when making a donation, and to receive prompt, truthful, and forthright answers.


DAILY NEEDS LIST (continued from page 10)

CLOTHING (FOR MEN AND WOMEN)
socks
shoes/boots
footwear inserts (odor-eliminating)
gloves/scarves
belts
shower shoes/flip flops

MISCELLANEOUS
MAT bus ticket books
pens, pencils, dry-erase markers
spiral notebooks
maintenance tools
backpacks
duffel bags

FOOD
canned fruits & vegetable (larger, #10 cans preferred)
frozen meat (professionally-processed)
lunch “meat” items (for sack lunches)
chips/treats/snacks (for sack lunches)
bottled water
coffee (caffeinated, non-flavored)
coffee creamer
eggs
butter/margarine
peanut butter
cheese
milk
pasta/egg noodles
pasta sauce
tomato sauce/tomato paste
pancake mix (larger bags or boxes preferred)
syrup
ketchup/mustard
mayonnaise
salad dressing
tartar sauce
vinaigrette
cooking oil
spices (especially chili powder, oregano, granulated garlic, parsley)
salt & pepper packets
salt & pepper (in bulk, for cooking)
sugar
fruit juice
soda
instant potatoes
rice
flour
soap (larger, #10 cans preferred)
fresh produce
CAMPUS EXPANSION

Preparation is underway for the construction of a new emergency shelter, here at the Siena/Francis House. The new shelter is scheduled to be open and usable by late 2019.

“As we reflect on our blessings during the fall season at Siena/Francis House, we are grateful for the support of many donors and the City of Omaha who have made the plans for a new shelter possible,” Siena/Francis House Executive Director Linda Twomey said.

The new shelter:
• Will be for men and women who experience homelessness;
• Will contain 450 shelter beds and commercial kitchen and dining room;
• Will also house central offices for case management staff in our Rehousing and Reintegration Services Program, as well as offices for the staff of partnering agencies to utilize when they’re on our campus providing services.

Gifts to Siena/Francis House are used to provide food, shelter, clothing, and care of the people who turn to us during their hour of need, and are greatly appreciated. All of our services are provided at no cost to our guests. All gifts to Siena/Francis House are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Our audited financial statements are freely available by writing to Siena/Francis House, P.O. Box 217 DTS | Omaha, Nebraska 68101. Our donor information is kept in strict confidence; our donor lists are never rented, shared, or exchanged with other organizations. The stories in our communications are real. Identifying details have been changed and file photos may be used to protect the privacy and therapeutic interest of our guests. For more information about Siena/Francis House or to include us in your estate planning, please contact Siena/Francis House Development Director, Tim Sully, at (402) 341-1821.