

FALL WISH LIST

Changing seasons and cooling temperatures bring new challenges for our guests. Please help us meet urgent fall needs by donating any of these items.

- Sweatpants and sweatshirts
- Long johns and underwear
- Coats, hats, and gloves
- Fitted twin sheets/blankets
- Hygiene items: deodorant, razors, shampoo and feminine products
- Large cans of fruits and vegetables

Contact Lily Black at lblack@sienafrancis.org or 402-341-1821, ext. 1113, for more information.



Your generous donations will keep guests safe and cared for this fall.

GET CREATIVE AND HOST A DRIVE THIS SEASON

Hosting a drive at your workplace, children's school, or church is a fun way to connect with others and do good at the same time.

Contact Lily Black at lblack@sienafrancis.org or 402-341-1821, ext. 1113 for help getting started or to let us know about your drive.



Have fun, make friends, and flex your creativity with a drive to benefit Siena Francis House guests!

SIENA FRANCIS HOUSE MISSION AND VALUES

Siena Francis House is Nebraska's largest provider of services to individuals experiencing homelessness and is committed to achieving our goal to end homelessness by helping every guest secure positive housing. This list of values is the "moral compass" we use to not only set policies, but to guide our staff daily as we serve our neighbors in need.

- 🏠 Advocacy
- 🤝 Collaboration
- 📋 Stewardship
- 🌟 Integrity
- 💡 Innovation
- 🤲 Compassion

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SIENA FRANCIS HOUSE 1975-2025 50

Fifty Years of Impact & Inspiring Hope

Love, Gratitude, and Community Building — Here's the Latest from Siena Francis House

HOPE NOTES

FALL 2025

'MANY ORGANIZATIONS ONLY HELP CERTAIN PEOPLE — WE HELP ALL'

When Siena Francis House opened, we provided food and shelter for 12 women and children. Soon, a second building offered the same for 20 men.

Fifty years later, our shelter accommodates 375 guests every day, serves 400,000 meals annually — and does much more. In addition to basic essentials, Siena Francis House has evolved with the needs of our community to provide life-changing support, rooted in progressive, evidence-based programming.

"In the 20-plus years I've been part of this organization," said Rod Bauer, *"I've seen case management grow and improve greatly. We can now help people navigate the journey to permanent housing."*

"Outreach," added Janis Boos, Street Outreach, *"has allowed us to connect directly with the unsheltered population by bringing services to them. It truly embodies meeting people where they are."*

Taking a person-centered approach, our case managers address unique obstacles to get people off the streets and out of shelters. Today, we're fortunate to have the physical infrastructure to support those efforts.

"When I started here 15 years ago," said Jenilee Rapp, Veteran Care Manager, *"we had no direct housing options on campus. Now, we have 98 permanent supportive housing units."*

In 2023, The Cottages opened, providing 50 more units for chronically homeless people with disabilities.

"It was an absolutely brilliant idea," said staff member and Miracles graduate, Terrence Byrd. *"The Cottages give residents a real sense of independence."*

Terrence's words speak to what has set Siena Francis House apart throughout our history — a housing-first strategy. Providing a stable place from which to receive support, guidance, and health care often makes a world of difference.

That's why the Miracles Addiction Treatment & Recovery program has provided free, residential treatment since 1996. Housed in the recently renovated Baright building, participants can work through treatment in a safe, state-of-the-art facility.

We're proud of our evolution and determined to keep finding new ways to treat the most vulnerable. Because as Rod pointed out, everyone deserves compassion and dignity:

"Our guests are the hardest to serve. Many organizations that help the homeless only help certain people. We, on the other hand, help all. Every individual is someone's sibling, parent, or grandparent. They are a human being, and that's why we'll continue serving them."

Thank you for helping us do this important work for 50 years. It simply would not be possible without our dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters. We look forward to continuing to lead the movement to end homelessness, together with you.

GROWING TOGETHER

Your support has helped us evolve to serve Omaha's unhoused neighbors for 50 years.

- 🍴 1975 Shelter and meals
- 🧑‍🚒 1996 Miracles Program
- 🏠 2012 Permanent Supportive Housing
- 🤝 2020 Street Outreach
- 🏥 2022 Medical Respite
- 🏠 2023 Cottages Micro Community

In 1975, our shelter housed and fed up to 12 people. Today, we are the state's largest provider of services to individuals experiencing homelessness.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW CHARITABLE GIVING TAX LAWS

Starting in 2026, taxpayers taking the standard deduction can claim up to \$1,000 (\$2,000 for joint filers) for direct cash donations to qualifying charities. Itemizers can deduct cash donations that exceed 0.5% of their income.



Standard Deduction
UP TO \$1,000 FOR INDIVIDUALS
UP TO \$2,000 FOR JOINT FILERS



Itemized Deductions
DONATIONS THAT EXCEED
0.5% OF INCOME

For more tax information and help planning your year-end giving, contact John at jbendonr@sienafrancis.org or 402-341-1821 ext. 1124

'SHE WENT OUT OF HER WAY TO MAKE SURE I WAS OKAY'

After moving to Omaha from out of state, Frank Whitlow stayed in a motel while he tried to find support from family. He soon realized his only choice was to enter our shelter.

Frank had a history of seizures, but they had been mostly dormant for years. But the stress of living in a shelter caused them to return. Over just a few months, the seizures worsened until one finally landed Frank in the hospital in January. After that, he entered our Medical Respite program and connected with case manager, Jessica.

"Getting to meet her was the most valuable part of my experience at Siena Francis House," Frank said. **"Jessica went out of her way to make sure I was okay."**

Eventually, Frank's seizures diminished, and he was able to find a job and save up enough money to move into his own apartment five months ago. Today, he's saving again, this time to purchase a car and return to school. Frank's grateful to supporters like you for helping him reach this point.

"Thank you for your donations!" he said. **"You're helping a good cause."**

Like many of our guests, Frank has a complex condition that requires skilled care. Your commitment allows us not only to shelter those most in need, but to also address the root cause of their obstacles to better ensure recovery and permanent housing.

After months in our shelter and Medical Respite program, Frank is employed and living in his own apartment.



'MEALS ARE COOKED FROM THE HEART'

Every other Saturday, a group from Misión Ruah visits our emergency shelter guests. Siena Francis House provides the food. The volunteers provide meals made with love.

"When preparing the dishes, we ask ourselves, 'What food brings me comfort?' Meals are cooked from the heart, with the same care as if cooking for our own families," said Carmen, Misión Ruah volunteer lead.

Initially, those meals were served outdoors and could feed up to about 180 guests. But during their first visit, Carmen explained, **"We witnessed the scale of need — far greater than expected — which motivated our volunteers to continue coming back regularly."**

Over time, the partnership between Misión Ruah and Siena Francis House grew. Today, meals are prepared in our kitchen and served in our dining room, which makes it possible to feed 500 guests per visit.

"Serving a greater number of people means we can spread more love and happiness," Carmen said.

Ask any diner, and they'll confirm that. One guest said, **"It was the best meal I ever had."** Another shared, **"The food reminds me of home."**

The Misión Ruah team also leaves each lunch feeling nourished.

"We feel joy knowing that guests in difficult situations had a good meal," Carmen said. **"It's worth the effort to cook for so many when the result is joy, comfort, and full hearts."**



Every other week, Misión Ruah lovingly prepares up to 500 meals for shelter guests.



'IT MEANS A LOT TO HELP OTHERS'

In 2013, Tim Stephan began volunteering with his church to provide turkey dinners to Siena Francis House at Thanksgiving. **"It started with 40 birds,"** he recalled.

Little did Tim know that more than a decade later, he'd be leading the effort — having transformed and expanded it along the way — after his church could no longer afford to do it.

With Tim at the helm, each year, he and his army of about 60 volunteers thaw, season, prepare, and fry more than 100 turkeys to donate to Siena Francis House. Tim stresses that he relies on others to pull it off, including people he works with at the Omaha Public Power District North Omaha station.

"I definitely want to thank my co-workers who have helped out and donated," he said.

Even with all-hands-on-deck, it's a huge undertaking for Tim. **"We plan for this all year long,"** he said, **"and I usually take one or two weeks of vacation to prep."**

But Tim insists it's worth the effort. **"It means a lot to help others who are less fortunate. My family always looks forward to it, and people call me each year to ask when it is because they love helping so much."**

"We know we're all making a difference by giving people a traditional Thanksgiving — plus, we've gotten a lot of great feedback about how good the turkey tastes!"



Tim and his team of volunteers prepare around 100 turkeys for our guests every Thanksgiving.