



# the People's PROGRESS

**WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESS**



At the Center for People, we believe that progress isn't about perfection—it's about the courage to start, the commitment to keep going, and the community that supports you along the way. That's why we're thrilled to introduce The People's Progress, our every-other-month newsletter that takes you behind the scenes of what we do, who we serve, and the milestones—big and small—that shape our shared journey.

The People's Progress is more than just a name. It's a reflection of what we stand for: the belief that change is possible for anyone, on any day, as long as you have the right resources and people who believe in you. Whether it's a family finding stability, a learner gaining the skills to secure a better job, a donor seeing the tangible impact of their support, or a volunteer feeling the unique connection that makes the Center for People so special—progress looks different for everyone. But it always starts with hope, action, and a community that cares.

This newsletter is also about you. **WE WANT THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESS TO BE A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION**—a space to share not just what we're doing, but to hear from you. Have a story to tell? A life hack to share? An observation or bit of inspiration? We'd love to feature your voice. Reach out to Irene at [ihargan@centerforpeople.org](mailto:ihargan@centerforpeople.org), and let's keep building this community together.

**HAVE A STORY? WANT TO VISIT?**

**“ TALK TO US ”**

**[IHARGAN@CENTERFORPEOPLE.ORG](mailto:IHARGAN@CENTERFORPEOPLE.ORG)**



**FRONT  
CENTER &**



**COMMUNITY  
current**



**THE  
ripple  
EFFECT**

Stay up to date with the latest news, events, and initiatives shaping the Center for People.

Meet someone whose life has been changed through our programs. Their journey is a powerful reminder of the impact we make together.

See how generosity spreads! Hear from the donors and volunteers who make our work possible—and discover how their support creates lasting change.

# Join the progress...

Learn more and donate at  
**[CENTERFORPEOPLE.ORG](https://www.CenterforPeople.org)**





## OUR PEOPLE

We are the Center for People... and cats. Meet Frank, our official cat-in-residence, morale booster, and an occasional supervisor.

But if you're curious about the people who make the Center for People what it is, we've got you covered. Kyle has been hard at work revamping **OUR PEOPLE section on the website**, and let's just say—what a crew!

Hardworking?  
Dedicated?  
A little quirky? Oh, absolutely.

We're a mighty team of 28, and now you can get to know us better [centerforpeople.org](http://centerforpeople.org)—or better yet, come visit! We're even more fun in real life (just ask Frank).

## MILESTONE CELEBRATION: A BIGGER, BRIGHTER FUTURE

Every few months, we come together to celebrate progress, but our January 10 Milestone Celebration was extra special. With more attendees than ever and the debut of our new, expanded education space, this event truly reflected what growth looks like—both for our learners and for the Center for People.

At Milestone Celebration, we recognize the hard work of community members who are moving forward—completing courses, advancing in ELL classes, taking steps toward meaningful employment, and more. From inspiring speeches to well-earned certifications, the day was filled with moments of pride, progress, and possibility.

Next Milestone Celebration: March 28!

WANT TO ATTEND? BE A SPEAKER?

“ TALK TO US ”

[ABEDORE@CENTERFORPEOPLE.ORG](mailto:ABEDORE@CENTERFORPEOPLE.ORG)



BROUGHT TO YOU BY





## A FRESH NEW SPACE FOR LEARNING & GROWTH

It's simple: you learn better when the space around you is welcoming, modern, and built for success. Thanks to grants from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and the City of Lincoln, we've transformed our education spaces to do just that—because where you learn matters.



### HERE'S WHAT'S NEW:



This isn't just about new walls and desks, it's about creating a space where confidence grows, opportunities expand, and futures take shape. We're grateful to everyone who helped make this possible, and we can't wait to see the impact in 2025 and beyond!



*A dedicated space for Opening Doors courses*



*A larger classroom for English Language Learning classes*



*A completely reimagined computer lab 2x bigger!*





### **FROM FOOD TO FOOD FOR THOUGHT: NUTRITION KITCHEN DEMOS**

A healthy mind and a healthy body go hand in hand. At the Center for People, we believe in taking care of the whole person, and that's why we're excited to go beyond simply providing food—to providing food for thought. Because when people feel strong, capable, and informed, they can take on life's challenges with confidence.

January 2025 started with an exciting new addition to the People's Pantry: Nutrition Kitchen Demos! Our community can join us every Tuesday and Thursday for hands-on lessons right in the People's Pantry. These interactive sessions will show how to turn everyday pantry staples into delicious, nutritious meals—maximizing flavor, minimizing waste, and making the most of what's available.

So far we've explored Leftovers Reimagined, Crockpot Creations and Heart Healthy Recipes. Next up: soups, frozen/canned food, and meals in 20 minutes or less.

### **LISTENING, LEARNING, AND GROWING: 2025 FOCUS GROUPS**

Too often, organizations talk at people. We want to talk with them. We don't want to assume we know exactly what our community needs—we want to hear from them, learn from them, and be guided by them. That's why one of our biggest priorities for 2025 is listening.

To better understand the needs, challenges, and goals of the people we serve, we've launched a series of focus groups that will run throughout the year. These conversations will help shape our services, ensuring we provide the right tools, resources, and support for real, lasting progress.

Our focus groups will include alumni and current participants in programs like Opening Doors, English Language Learning, the People's Pantry, the POP Scholarship, and more. We hope these sessions will create a welcoming space where individuals can share their voices, ideas, and experiences—helping us build a stronger, more responsive Center for People.







## **JASON'S STORY:**

"I didn't know what I was going to do with myself. Eight to sixteen years—that's the sentence I was handed. I thought, 'What am I going to do with this time?' But I made a choice. I used that time for schooling, for personal growth and development. When I got out, I promised myself I'd find a way to build something better. That's when I found the Center for People.

At first, I didn't know much about it. I saw the bulletin board, started asking questions, and volunteering. I worked in the food pantry and back in the warehouse. I got my forklift certification. I went through the CORE class, where I learned how to build a resume, job-seek, and even practice interviews on camera. Every step was about growth.

**PROGRESS ISN'T EASY. IT'S A SLOW PROCESS. BUT YOU GRIND IT OUT, TRUST THE PROCESS, AND KEEP GOING.**





The turning point was Toyland. I was volunteering, helping out with the event, and someone approached me. They said, 'We want you to be part of our team. How can we make it work for you?' It came out of nowhere. One day I was a volunteer, and the next, I was the Warehouse and Safety Specialist.

Now, I get to see things from the other side. Every day, I watch people walk through our doors—picking up food, learning English, taking classes. The gratitude on their faces is huge. It's a reminder of what this place stands for: giving back, lifting people up.

Progress isn't easy. It's a slow process. You're going to stumble, make mistakes. That's life. But you grind it out, you trust the process, and you keep going. For me, that's what progress is: grit, patience, and the willingness to ask for help."

**THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE HELPS YOU SEE THE POTENTIAL YOU MIGHT NOT EVEN KNOW YOU HAVE**

# Join the progress...

Learn more and donate at  
**[CENTERFORPEOPLE.ORG](http://CENTERFORPEOPLE.ORG)**



# THE ripple EFFECT



## LIZ AND DON'S STORY:

"We've lived in many places, volunteered with a lot of organizations. But this—this feels different. Here, you see the people you're helping. You see the smiles, you get the hugs. You're not just helping out; you're part of something bigger.


When we moved back in 2022, we started looking for places to support financially. Someone mentioned the Center for People, so we made a donation. Then came an email about volunteering. The first thing we did was Toyland. It's evolved since then, and this past year? The best we've ever seen!

After the People's Pantry launched in its new format, we started volunteering weekly. Wow—just seeing the gratitude on people's faces when you hand them something as simple as a box of pasta or say, "You can take four of these"—it's heart-warming. It's humbling. It makes you feel like you're doing something real, something that matters.

And the best part? It's flexible. You can schedule it, make it fit your life. It's not a huge time commitment, but when you show up regularly, you become part of a team.

The staff here is incredible. Everyone pitches in, working together to make sure people feel welcome. Because it's not just about food. It's about dignity. It's about a smile. It's about making sure people know they matter.





*"IF SOMEONE'S ON THE FENCE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING,  
I'D TELL THEM THIS: JUST DIP YOUR TOE IN. TRY ONE SHIFT.  
YOU'LL GET HOOKED, JUST LIKE WE DID. IT'S FULFILLING,  
IT'S UPLIFTING, AND IT'S A REMINDER OF WHAT COMMUNITY  
REALLY MEANS."*



**Join the progress...**

Learn more and volunteer at  
**[CENTERFORPEOPLE.ORG](https://www.CenterForPeople.org)**



# DUCK, DODGE, + DONATE

**THE ULTIMATE DODGEBALL SHOWDOWN  
FUNDRAISER**

**MARCH 22 / 9:30 AM**



**A GREAT TEAMBUILDING EXPERIENCE**

**FRIENDLY COMPETITION THAT  
SUPPORTS THE COMMUNITY**

**ALL GAMES WILL BE JUDGED BY OUR  
OFFICIAL REFEREES -**

THE **NEBRASKA  
CORNHUSKERS**  
FOOTBALL TEAM

*(referees will also participate in an autograph session!)*

- **\$5 ENTRY FOR SPECTATORS**  
(ages 5 and above)
- **\$500 TEAM REGISTRATION**  
(up to 10 players per team)
- **CAPPED AT 20 TEAMS**
- **REGISTER BY MARCH 4**

**SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE!**

**SCAN TO REGISTER  
OR SPONSOR NOW**



# MARCH 2025

All events held at Center for People on 3901 N. 27th Street Lincoln, Nebraska

04

TUES

CAREER FAIR

BEGINS AT 10AM

06

THUR

LEGAL CLINIC

10AM-12PM

10

MON

OPENING DOORS  
SUPPORT  
GROUP

BEGINS AT 12PM

22

SAT

DODGEBALL  
TOURNAMENT

BEGINS AT 10AM

28

FRI

MILESTONE  
CELEBRATION

9AM-10:30AM

# APRIL 2025

All events held at Center for People on 3901 N. 27th Street Lincoln, Nebraska

03

THUR

LEGAL CLINIC

10AM-12PM

10

THUR

FINANCIAL  
LITERACY  
CONFERENCE

BEGINS AT 10AM

14

MON

OPENING DOORS  
SUPPORT  
GROUP

BEGINS AT 12PM

23

WED

FAIR CHANCE  
EMPLOYER  
PLEDGE LUNCH

12PM-2PM

24

THUR

VOLUNTEER  
APPRECIATION