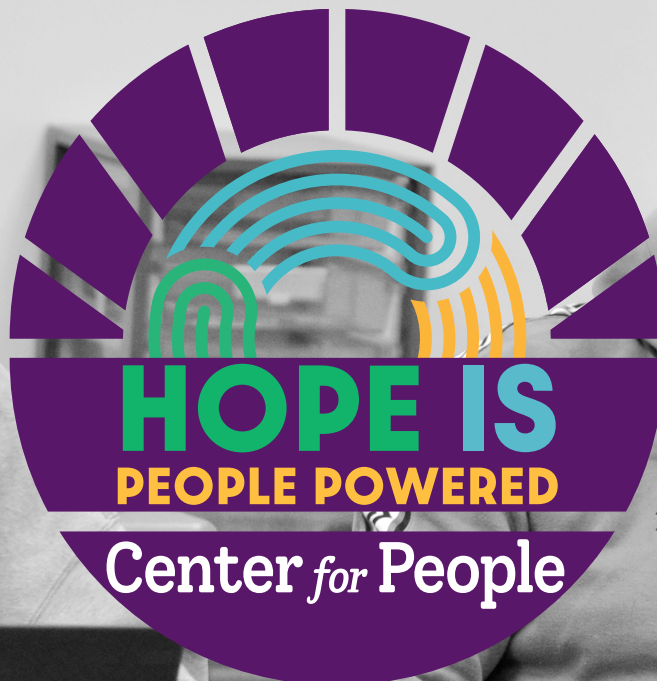




# the People's **PROGRESS**

EDITION 2 | MAY, JUNE 2025



give **EDITION**  
TO LINCOLN DAY



**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.

**Support us on give...**  
TO LINCOLN DAY

Donate online at  
**[GIVETOLINCOLN.COM/NONPROFITS/CENTERFORPEOPLE](https://GIVETOLINCOLN.COM/NONPROFITS/CENTERFORPEOPLE)**





## FINANCIAL LITERACY CONFERENCE

Financial literacy is a powerful tool for building long-term stability, and on April 10, our community took a major step forward.

Center for People was proud to host our first-ever Financial Literacy Conference welcoming the participants into our space for a day of learning, connection, and empowerment.

We extend our deepest thanks to the organizations that made this event possible: Nest 529 Education Savings, Lincoln Federal Savings Bank, Chase Bank, UBT, First State Bank, the Nebraska Department of Banking & Finance, and the Nebraska Council on Economic Education. We look forward to growing this event and continuing to support our community on the path to economic independence.

## CAREER FAIR: BUILDING BRIDGES TO BRIGHTER FUTURES!

The first People's Career Fair of 2025 was a game-changer! Over 150 job seekers walked through our doors, ready to connect with top employers in healthcare, construction, public service, hospitality, and more. We're excited to see where these new opportunities take them!

A huge thank you to all the employers and job seekers who made this event a success.

Couldn't make it? No worries—the next People's Career Fair is on June 3. And in the meantime, we're here to help with resume assistance, career coaching, and our Talent Marketplace.

WANT TO SPEAK? MOTIVATE OTHERS?

**TALK  
TO US**

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







## DODGE. DUCK. DONATE!

We came. We dodged. We had **SO MUCH FUN!**

Our first-ever dodgeball fundraiser was a smash hit, and it's safe to say this will be a new annual tradition.

Huge thanks to the 12 teams who brought the energy!

We're already looking forward to next year—who's in?



**Shoutout to the Nebraska Huskers Football team for refereeing**



**Congrats to Graham Tire Company, our champions!**



## MILESTONE CELEBRATION: A MORNING OF FIRSTS (AND SOME TEARS)

From earning diplomas to landing jobs, our learners prove that it's never too late to rewrite your story. On March 28, we honored their incredible achievements—including our first two high school diploma graduates (yes, there were tears).



And another first? Our **LIVECAST**, which let even more people (friends and family members, past and future programs participants) witness the magic of learning in action. By popular demand, it will be back!



Even Lincoln's mayor, Leirion Gaylor Baird, was inspired



Our first two high school diploma graduates

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## RICO & SERENITY'S STORY:

"I came from a bad childhood. No real options, no doors open for me. School wasn't in the cards. I just had to survive. But then I walked into the Center for People and talked to career engagement specialists, and everything started to change. People who work here understood that it's not just about what you need today—it's about who you can become tomorrow.

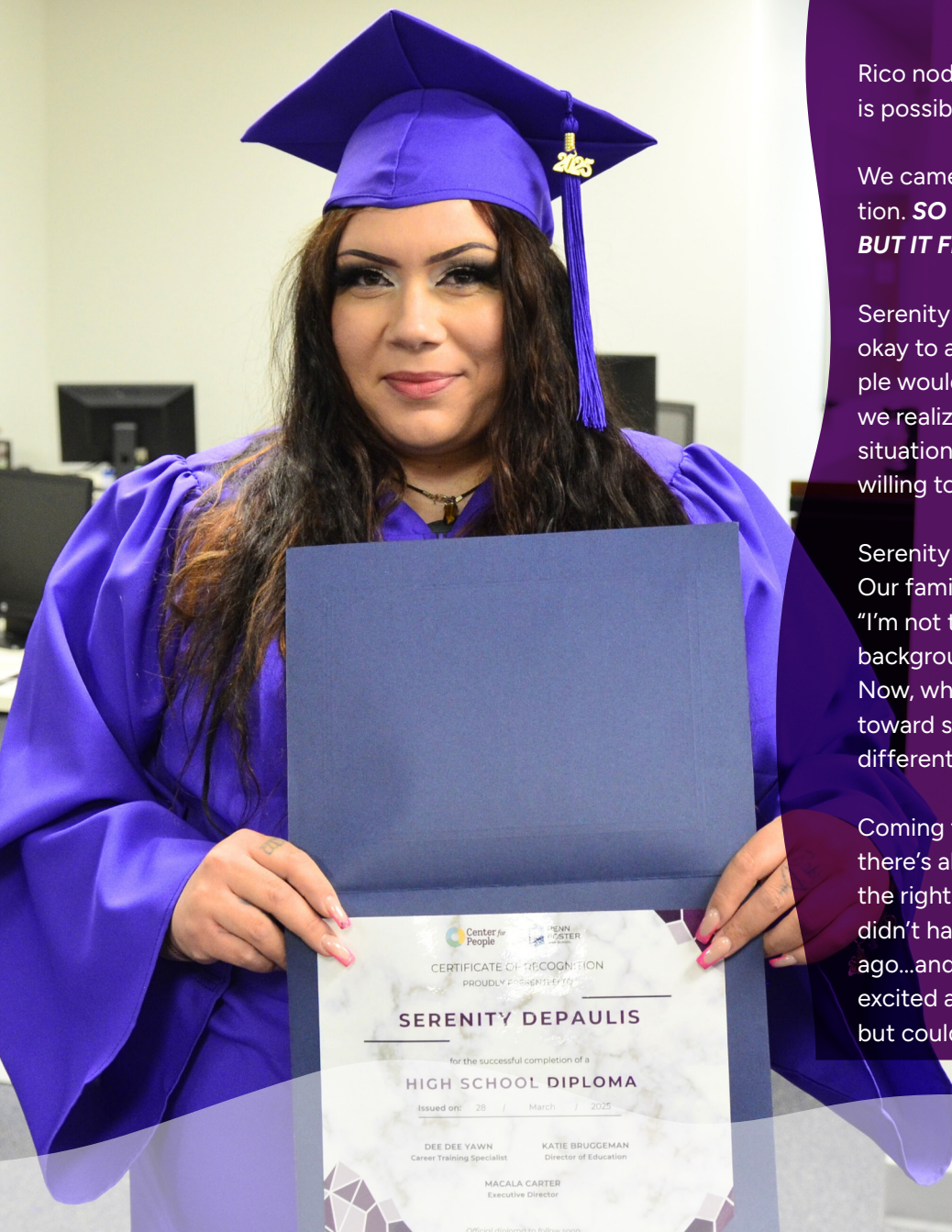
I want to be a diesel mechanic. I want to work on trucks, farm equipment. One day, I want to be a farmer. I've worked on machines before, but it was just hands-on learning, I wasn't accredited. And people wouldn't take me seriously because of that. Education I get here is definitely opening the doors for so many other things."

Serenity, his partner, came that first time just for moral support. "That's what I told career engagement specialist when she asked what I wanted to do. But next thing I know, I'm signing up for Penn Foster. I study every single day. And on April 3rd, I graduate. I finally get my High School Diploma. I could have taken until 2027, but why would I? I've got places to go. A whole new career. I'm a teacher now. I work in childcare."

It's been a long road. For years, they moved from motel to motel with their three kids, trying to stay afloat. "I used to cash out my paycheck every single day just to get by," Serenity says. "Now, we finally have a place of our own. We're building something."

**I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO SIT DOWN WITH SOMEONE AND CONSIDER WHAT I COULD DO LONG TERM, WHAT I COULD ENJOY DOING. BUT THAT'S WHAT WE DID HERE AT THE CENTER. NOW WE ARE HOPEFUL FOR THE FUTURE.**





Rico nods. "Center helped us understand that anything is possible. Anything."

We came here for food, for diapers. And now for education. ***SO WHAT YOU DO HERE, IT'S NOT UNLIMITED, BUT IT FEELS LIKE IT TO US.***

Serenity jumps in. "The biggest thing I've learned? It's okay to ask for help. For the longest time, I thought people would judge us. But when we finally took the leap, we realized something: there are more people in our situation than we ever knew. And there are more people willing to help than we ever imagined."

Serenity looks at Rico. "What gives me hope? Our kids. Our family. The right partner. And progress." Rico nods. "I'm not the person I used to be. I come from a violent background. A bad past. But that's not me anymore. Now, when I tell people I'm in school, that I'm working toward something—they see me differently. I see myself differently."

Coming to the Center for People, I've learned that there's always an opportunity. You just have to find the right place. It's never too late to go for your goals. I didn't have a goal for college until a couple of months ago...and I did it! And now I have my student ID, I'm excited about it, my mom who wanted to go to college but couldn't, is proud of me."

***EVEN THE SMALLEST STEP FORWARD MEANS SOMETHING. ONE LITTLE CHANGE, ONE SMALL MOMENT OF MOVEMENT—THAT'S HOW YOU BUILD A LIFE.***



# THE ripple EFFECT



## MIKE'S STORY:

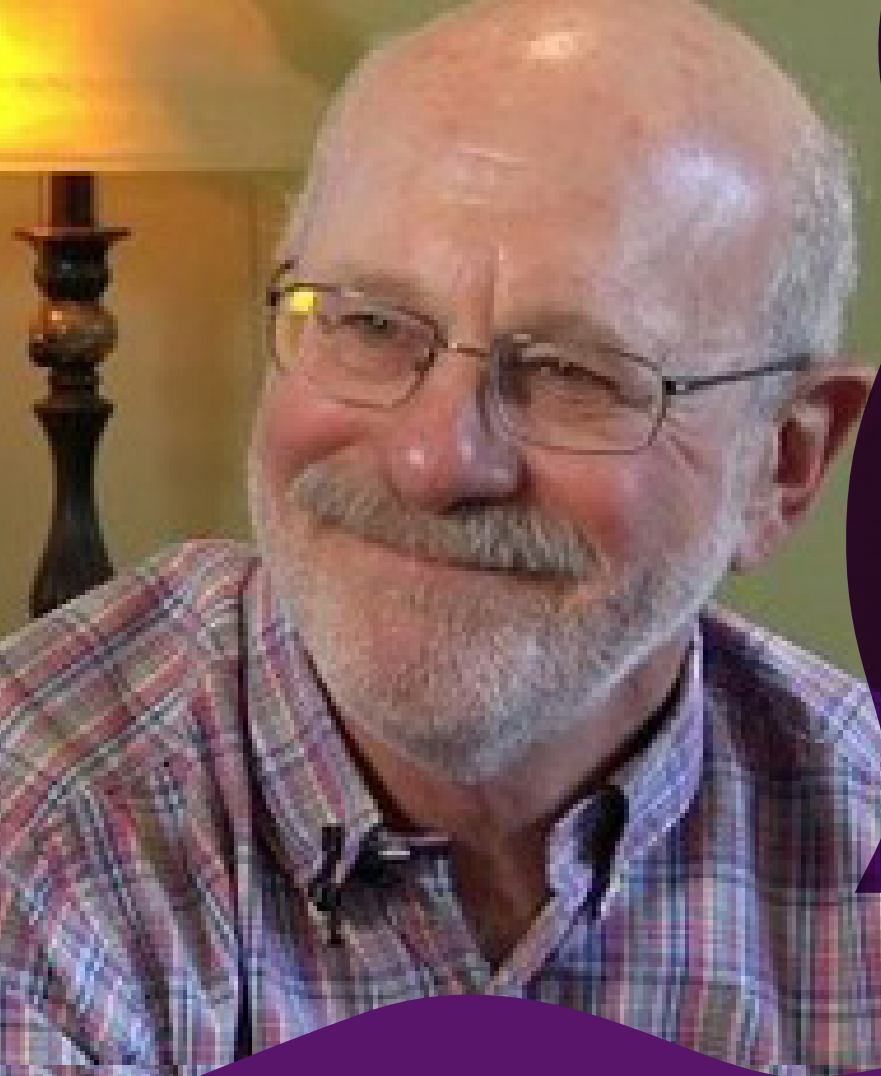
I was born and raised in New York and spent my career in education, working at universities in Virginia, Illinois, and California before coming to Nebraska 25 years ago for a position at UNL.

Lincoln has turned out to be the most welcoming place I've ever lived. Together with my wife we spend our time volunteering—and recently, we had the opportunity to sponsor a family from Afghanistan, and help them resettle here. They arrived just before Thanksgiving and came to Center for People the following week.

The staff was welcoming from the start. The mother had never been to school—never signed her name. Within minutes, staff were helping her fill out a form in Farsi, showing her how to write her name. That moment told us everything. Since then, the family has been coming for classes five days a week. Today, that same woman can introduce herself, talk about the weather, and write her address on the board.

**IF YOU ARE GOING TO HOPE FOR ANYTHING, YOU'D WANT TO HOPE FOR PEOPLE TO BE AS EDUCATED AS THEY CAN. AND CENTER FOR PEOPLE DOES THAT.**





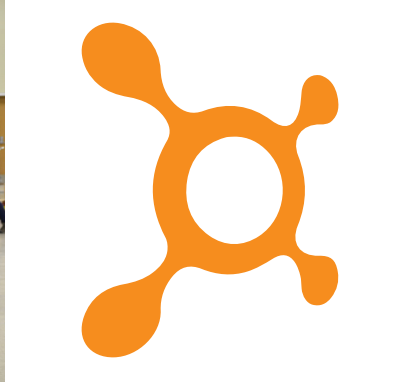
People think James Bond has a tough job—try teaching a classroom of 30 learners from 10 different language backgrounds. Some people came to the U.S. last week, others 12 months ago. But here, it's happening. Kathy, who teaches every day, is doing what many would think is impossible. There's real learning going on in these rooms.

I worked in education my whole life. 40 years. I'm totally committed to education. To get ahead you need to be educated. People come here to learn, to apply for jobs. There's training and support here to fuel people's hope for a better life. What's more exciting than that?

When I donate, I think of it as an investment—in people, in Lincoln, in the future. Hope is people-powered, yes. But at its heart, hope is learning. And that's exactly what's happening here.

Support us on give...  
TO LINCOLN DAY

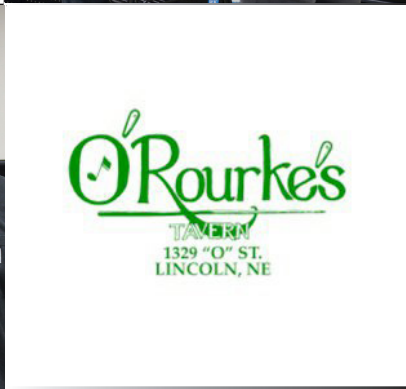
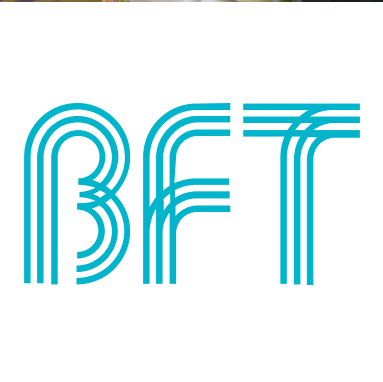
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## Kevin's Monthly Mission



**THANKS TO  
ALL OF OUR  
FABULOUS  
VOLUNTEERS!**







# MAY 2025

GIVE TO LINCOLN MONTH

01

THUR

LEGAL CLINIC

10AM-12PM

12

MON

OPENING DOORS  
SUPPORT  
GROUP

BEGINS AT 12PM

16

FRI

PEOPLE'S  
FARMERS  
MARKET

FROM 9AM-12PM

22

THUR

ALUMNI DINNER

FROM 5:30PM-7PM

# JUNE 2025

03

TUES

CAREER FAIR

BEGINS AT 10AM

05

THUR

LEGAL CLINIC

10AM-12PM

09

MON

OPENING DOORS  
SUPPORT  
GROUP

BEGINS AT 12PM