

LHA Today

THREE DECADES

Nearly 30 families helped, countless student skills cultivated

For three decades, a partnership between Lincoln Housing Authority and Lincoln Public Schools has provided low-income families with a brand new home. This year, the program will celebrate the completion of its 30th home at 5010 Starr St.

Built by Lincoln Northeast High School (LNE) residential construction students, this year's home features three bedrooms, two baths and an unattached two-car garage. It also includes an unfinished basement with egress window and plumbing for a future bedroom and bathroom.

LNE students gain hands-on experience throughout the school year, completing the framing, drywall, trim, painting, cabinetry and other projects under the supervision of teacher Bob Freese. Licensed contractors perform the electrical and plumbing work.

Students see the value in helping others, but also learn skills for the future.

"While this may not apply to the future occupation I choose to go into, it allows me to learn every day things I can use," said Derek Williams, senior.

"This is a good learning experience, and someday I'll know how to repair my own home because I helped build this house," said Brian Trumblee, senior.

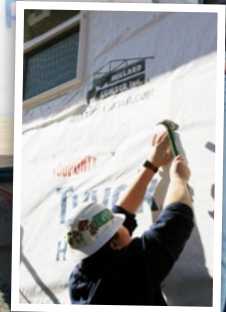
Sam Roberts, senior, chose to take the class for the second year for the other benefits it provides.

"This teaches you how to work in the extreme heat and extreme cold," he said. "This class is great for anyone looking to get their first job, because you have to work in a team atmosphere and learn how to do the work and communicate."

Once the house is completed, it will be sold to an eligible family involved with LHA. The price hasn't been set, but interested LHA families can determine their eligibility to purchase the house or take advantage of a lease-to-purchase contract by contacting Susan Tatum at SusanT@L-housing.com. Applicants are encouraged to take homeownership preparation classes through NeighborWorks at <https://nwlincoln.org/the-work/homeownership/education.html>.



Lincoln Northeast High School students are building a home for a family in need at 5010 Starr St.





Getting books into little hands to improve reading

Lincoln Housing Authority's Reading Matters works toward providing kids involved with the agency books to help improve literacy and educational goals. In December, the program hosted two book giveaways, where all children ages 0-18 received a book. Parents and guardians could pick out a book for their children, or kids could come to pick out their own.

The giveaways took place at the LHA

Main Office, 5700 R St., Dec. 19; and the Carol Yoakum Family Resource Center Dec. 21. In total, 58 families were provided 148 books.

A special thank you to staff who helped, including Amy W., Sara M., Dayna, and volunteers from Mahoney Manor: Linda Crauwels, Cindy Horney, Barb Hageman. Also thanks to Ali Bousquet with Lincoln Libraries, who provided information and prizes at both events.



Family Self-Sufficiency Program hosts financial literacy workshops

Financial literacy is an important factor in making informed decisions regarding money, budgeting and investing.

To better help its Family Self-Sufficiency participants, LHA is partnering with Union Bank & Trust to offer FSS Financial Literacy workshops. The first workshop took place Feb. 28, with Union Bank & Trust's Financial Literacy Manager Brittany Planos. During the class, participants learn about the types of loans and types of collection accounts.

For more information about future workshops, contact Courtney at Courtney@L-housing.com or 402-434-5529.



Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) is a voluntary no-cost program for LHA tenants, and with support from FSS caseworkers, individuals work to take steps toward their goals such as creating an emergency fund, paying off debt, preparing for homeownership, earning a degree and job training.

The program lasts up to five years, and individuals won't lose housing assistance by participating. Typically, when you or someone in your household earns more money, rent goes up. That can make it difficult; but with FSS, your rent increase is deposited into an escrow savings account instead. Over time, the savings amount increases while you receive one-on-one support and coaching. Once you graduate, you can use your savings however you want.

For more information about FSS and to see a video explaining the program, newsletters and more, visit www.l-housing.com/FamilySelfSufficiency.html. LHA also has a Facebook page, which can be found by searching "Lincoln Housing Authority Family Self-Sufficiency," with resources and more information. To apply for FSS, contact Courtney at Courtney@L-housing.com, 402-434-5529, or Amy at AWagner@L-housing.com, 402-434-5527.

New housing manager ready to help

On Jan. 29, Ruth joined LHA as housing manager, properties and leasing, and will oversee the Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8 and LHA property applications. If approved, applicants go onto the wait list for the properties they requested. That can be a big task — in January, LHA received more than 350 applications.

Ruth comes to LHA with approximately 30 years of property, real estate and legal experience. She has previously worked for the State of Nebraska, in private law, and is familiar with the Fair Housing Act, low income tax credit, NIFA and other areas of law.

Looking forward to getting know more of LHA's processes, Ruth is also eager to communicate with tenants.

"I've always enjoyed working with those in need," she said. "And this is an opportunity I jumped on when I saw it."

In this role, Ruth anticipates catching up on applications and cross-training staff to better serve tenants.

"I look forward to working with tenants to assist and ensure they have comfortable, well-maintained and affordable housing," she said.



Planning and development adds Josh

Ready to help bolster property upkeep and development, Josh joined LHA as planning and development manager Feb. 5.

With related experience, Josh spent the last eight years as the executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Lincoln. During that time, he helped construct, rehabilitate and repaired six to eight houses annually for homeowners.

"That was really where I got involved with development," he said. "Affordable housing is still a passion of mine."

Looking for a similar role, Josh came to LHA and will help oversee short- and long-term planning, new development of affordable units as well as improvement of existing housing units.

He looks forward to getting to know more about LHA and all the agency offers, and is grateful for the staff who have been welcoming and willing to answer questions. Josh looks forward to getting more into the tasks of the position and helping those LHA serves.

"I know how important affordable housing is, and having the stability of a home that is affordable is really the foundation of having a good life," he said. "Making improvements in other areas can be hard to do when you don't have a stable, affordable place to call home."



Lincoln mayor tours Yoakum Family Resource Center

Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird acquired a better understanding of the services and programs the Lincoln Housing Authority offers while at a tour of the Carol Yoakum Family Resource Center Jan. 30.

LHA Tenant Services Manager Susan Tatum provided the tour, detailing the what LHA does for its tenants, the Reading Matters program, the management of current and new rental properties under construction and ways the community can help boost affordable housing and connect landlords to the Housing Choice Voucher program.

On Jan. 16, a similar tour was provided to a staff member from Sen. Pete Ricketts' Lincoln office. The staff member wanted to learn more about services in the community, how to promote those services, and how to better assist anyone with a concern, complaint or question of eligibility or benefit as it relates to a federal agency.



From left, LHA Tenant Services Manager Susan Tatum provides a tour to Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird.

Set yourself up for success through the **Getting Ahead** workshop

Do you feel like you've spent most of your life struggling to get by? That the idea of actually getting ahead might seem out of reach? Even if your story has been full of barriers, vanishing opportunities or setbacks, the next chapter can change that.

Getting Ahead is a 10-week workshop that offers participants, called investigators, a new set of tools and perspectives for viewing their lives and building their future story.

The focus is not on where you are, but what comes next to build the life you want, learning:

- The realities of conditions in the community and how they impact you.
- Some of the "hidden rules" for getting ahead.
- Skills that give you confidence to do what it takes to get ahead.
- How to build resources and make connections at work and home.

- Ways to deal with change and create stability in your life.

Check for open workshops and register by scanning the QR code or visiting www.lincolnfoodbank.org/getting-ahead-in-a-just-gettin-by-world. Workshops begin each quarter in April, July and October 2024.



Those wanting to attend should commit to attend all 10 classes, actively participate in discussions, complete lessons, engage in work that may occur outside of class.

Meals and snacks provided. Upon completion of the course at week 10, participants will receive a \$300 VISA card for sharing their thoughts, ideas and experiences.

For questions, contact Georgann Roth at groth@lincolnfoodbank.org or 402-819-6481.



Scan for more information

MyLink provides community resources information in more languages

The mobile phone app, MyLink (formerly MyLNK), allows users to find community resources and services anonymously from organizations and programs in Lincoln. The app is free, easy to use and updated regularly with accurate information. Resources are provided for children and families, victims of domestic violence, disability services, senior services, military and veteran resources, employment, education, food, housing, transportation, COVID-19, tax preparation, health, legal, LGBTQ+ resources and more.



The app can be downloaded for Android and Apple phones. Once downloaded, it doesn't require an internet connection or data plan to look up information within the app. The information is also available at mylnk.app.

Information is provided in Arabic, English, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese, and has recently added Dari, Kurdish Kurmanji, Kurdish Sorani, Pashto and Ukrainian.



ENROLL YOUR CHILD FOR FREE MONTHLY BOOKS

Through Linked2Literacy, families living in the ZIP codes 68508, 68510, 68017, 68336, 68358, 68461 and 68531 can sign up for the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program. This program provides children access to books at an early age, promotes literacy and cognitive development, stimulates creativity and encourages a desire to read.

Children enrolled will receive their first book "The Little Engine that Could" in 6-8 weeks, and a book monthly until the child's 5th birthday.

To sign up, visit imaginationlibrary.com/ check-availability or scan the QR code.



FREE BOOKS FOR KIDS!

If you have a child from 0-5 years old, register them today for free monthly books.

How It Works:

- Enroll your child online at (affiliate website)
- In 6-8 weeks, your child will receive their first book in the mail, 'The Little Engine That Could'.
- Books arrive in the mail monthly until your child's 5th birthday.

Easy to Enroll!



Scan this code to enroll your child in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. It's easy!

Linked ² Literacy

Lincoln Community FOUNDATION



Linked2Literacy
211 N. 14th St., No.214

Lincoln, NE 68508
www.Linked2Literacy.org

JOB AND BID OPPORTUNITIES

Under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Lincoln Housing Authority is required to publicly post employment and bid opportunities.

To learn about employment with LHA, visit www.L-housing.com/Employment.html.

LHA regularly issues public bid notices and request for proposals (RFPs) for ongoing repair, renovation and new construction projects. Review a list of current bid opportunities at www.L-housing.com/Vendors.html.

USPS now requires identity verification for change of address

Protecting yourself from identity theft is important, and that also means protecting your mail. Sometimes when an individual moves, it can take a few days for mail to catch up.

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has enhanced security protocols surrounding its change of address service by implementing additional take verification methods to further address global identification theft concerns. USPS has also seen a surge in mail thefts and letter carrier robberies.

The basics of filling out a change of address with USPS haven't changed, but USPS has added an additional step to verify a person's identity. How you verify your identity will depend on how you file your change of address online at USPS.com, or in person at your local post office

location. A change of address is only activated after the ID has been verified.

When filing online, you can opt-in to receive a verification code or link on your mobile phone. You will be required to pay a \$1.10 identity verification fee and the billing address on the credit card must match either your old or new address. If the online identity verification succeeds, the USPS will email you a confirmation code. Keep this code; you can use it to modify or cancel your request. If your online identity verification was not successful, you will need to complete a change of address in person at a post office location. You will receive an email with instructions and a barcode to verify your identity in person.

If submitting a change of address

form at a post office, bring two forms current and unexpired photo ID:

- State-issued driver's license or non-driver's license identification card
- U.S. Passport
- Uniformed Services Identification Card

If you use a passport or Uniformed Services Identification Card, you'll need to present a second form of ID that includes your name and an address. This may include a lease, Identification or deed of trust; voter or vehicle registration card; or home or vehicle insurance policy or card.

Remember that the name and address on any identification must match the old or new address on your change of address request.

Public meetings for Woods Park tennis expansion

The City of Lincoln is considering the Friends of Woods Tennis (FOWT) plan to expand tennis in Woods Park. The Lincoln Park and Recreation Department invites the public to participate in one or more events related to the proposal through:

- Online survey: a Woods Park user survey will be available until March 17 at lincoln.ne.gov/WoodsParkProject.
- Community meetings: three community meetings will be held:
 - Saturday, March 2, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
 - Monday, March 4, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday, March 5, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

All meetings will be held in the lower level of Woods Park Place, 3131 O St. Please enter through the east doors of the building. Meetings will include a presentation regarding the history of Woods Park

Master Plans and the FOWT expansion proposal. Ninety minutes of each meeting will be reserved for public testimony. Testimony is limited to 3 minutes per person.

The public is welcome to provide written testimony at the meeting or in advance by emailing parks@lincoln.ne.gov with the subject line as "Woods Park Testimony" or regular mail to Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, 3131 O St., Suite 300, Lincoln, NE 68510.

For more information regarding the community meetings or the survey, please contact Denise Pearce at dpearce@lincoln.ne.gov, 402-441-7804, or visit lincoln.ne.gov/WoodsParkProject. Accommodation and translation requests can be submitted by contacting dpearce@lincoln.ne.gov.



Free tax preparation services offered

As the countdown to the April 15, 2024, tax deadline approaches, consider using free community tax preparation services through the Lincoln EITC Coalition's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

VITA offers no-cost federal- and state-tax preparation and filing for low- to moderate-income households. VITA sites operate in various Lincoln area locations from January to April.

For more information, call 211 or visit vita.unl.edu. To make an appointment, go to vita.unl.edu/signup beginning Jan. 15.

Note: The scope of work that can be done within the VITA site is defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). If your return is considered "out of scope" for this site, VITA volunteers will not be able to prepare your return.

Please bring the following to tax preparation sites:

- Photo ID for all tax return signers. Both spouses must sign if filing jointly.
- Social Security cards or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number letters for everyone on the return.
- W-2s from employer, W-2Gs for gambling income, and 1099 forms for miscellaneous income including interest, dividends, unemployment, pension, 401(k) distribution and other income.
- Child care receipts, including provider's tax ID and address.
- Statements of any student loan interest, mortgage interest and property tax.
- 1095s showing credible health insurance coverage.
- Records of revenue and expenses for self-employment or home-based business.
- Checking or savings account information for direct deposit/debit.
- If you plan to visit a VITA site, please bring a copy of last year's tax return.

Free virtual community tax preparation 2023 federal and Nebraska state returns

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site schedule Make an appointment at vita.unl.edu/signup

When scheduling your tax preparation appointment, please choose a site location, date and time.

All sites listed below will be face-to-face and require an appointment.

Virtual preparation is available, in addition to facilitated self-assistance (FSA), limited walk-ins. All sites will follow local health department guidelines.

	Site name	Dates available
Monday	American Job Center, 1330 N St.	Jan. 22-April 8 (closed Feb. 19) 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
	Asian Community and Cultural Center, 114 N. 44th St.	Jan. 29-April 8 10 a.m. to noon
	Southeast Community College, 8800 O St., T-102	Jan. 29-April 8 (closed March 11) 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Tuesday	F Street Community Center, 1225 F St.	Jan. 30-April 10 4 to 6 p.m.
Wednesday	Victor Anderson Library, 3635 Touzalin Ave.	Jan. 31-April 10 4:30-6:30 p.m.
	Center for People in Need, 3901 N. 27th St.	Feb. 6-March 27 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Thursday	Loren Eiseley Library, 1530 Superior St.	Feb. 1-April 11 4:30-6:30 p.m.
	Southeast Community College, 8880 O St., T-102	Feb. 1-April 11 (closed March 14) 3 to 7 p.m.
Saturday	Nebraska East Union* **, 35th and Holdrege streets	Jan. 20-March 2 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Sunday	Bennett Martin Library, 14th and N streets	Feb. 4-March 24 1 to 3 p.m.
	Good Neighbor Center, 2617 Y St.	Jan. 28-Feb. 18 1 to 3 p.m.
	Native American VITA, JGMC-Ubuntu/202, 1505 S St.	Feb. 4-April 7 (closed March 10, 17, 31) 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

* East Campus: enter at 35th and Holdrege ** Bilingual site, Spanish



Apply for resident scholarship

Lincoln Housing Authority tenants can apply for the 2024 HAI Group's Resident Scholarship Program. The deadline is May 31.

There will be 20 scholarships, valued at \$6,000 each, awarded nationally in a drawing this spring. LHA residents have been awarded this scholarship in the past.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens or a permanent resident in the country with a green card; and have lived in a public housing

authority or property with a Housing Choice Voucher for six months. The applicant also must be attending an accredited or licensed technical school, two- or four-year college or university; or earning a master's degree or PhD program for the fall 2024 semester.

For more information or to apply, visit housingcenter.com/scholarships. For questions, email scholarship@housingcenter.com.





LPS 2024-2025 kindergarten registration

If your child will be age 5 on or before July 31, you need to register them for kindergarten. Go to lps.org and look for the Kindergarten Registration link beneath the red tab labeled Enroll.

For parents who are unable to register their child online, contact the school in your attendance area. During registration, the paperwork necessary for enrollment in Lincoln Public Schools will be completed. The child doesn't need to be present.

Families who wish to have a child

enroll at an LPS school outside of their attendance area should fill out a Special Attendance Permit, which is available at any school or on the LPS website.

Questions about kindergarten registration should be directed to the school the child will attend.

Documents needed at registration:

- Student's Certified Birth Certificate (or Notarized Affidavit/Passport/ Visa/Permanent Resident Card)
- Emergency contact phone number(s)
- Doctor and Dentist office contact information
- Immunization dates
- Custodial documentation (if applicable)
- Individualized Education Plan (if applicable)

