



## Dear Friends:

Recently, over dinner, my second of four children, a 17-year-old high school junior, announced his viewpoint that our family is dysfunctional.

"No offense, Mom and Dad, but you have a lot of messed up people in your families."

My wife immediately rushed to the defense of our grandparents, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. And my son, just as quick to lob back a retort, responded: "I know! I didn't stand a chance!"

After I stopped chuckling at the scene, I realized his comments contained a valuable kernel of truth. Our family, like most, is not perfect. Oh, sure — there is plenty evidence of success. But a lively assortment of dysfunctions and skeletons are still locked away in our closets.

This month, Heartland Family Service celebrates families with our annual Salute to Families events honoring families in Nebraska and southwest Iowa (you can read about them on our website). Like my family — and most likely yours — these families aren't perfect. Rather, despite the challenges, obstacles, personal failings and shortcomings reflective of our humanity, these families have done what great families do best: they have supported and loved one another through it all.

In that regard, despite my son's protestations to the contrary, I feel very blessed. I know — one day — he'll feel so, too.

Sincerely,

John H. Jeanetta, MBA, MSW  
President and CEO



## Volunteer Spotlight

Sarah Andersen and Kim Williams have been actively involved with the Heartland Family Service Friends Guild volunteer auxiliary for a number of years. As one of their projects for the year, Sarah and Kim are creating welcome baskets for all new clients who are admitted into our Omaha Family Works program. The baskets have items for mom and baby, too. Each basket will be placed in an apartment upon the family's arrival. Sarah and Kim thought this would be a great way to show support for the clients who are getting the help they need in order to get back on track.



Consider a donation or bequest to the "Family Legacy Society," Heartland Family Service's endowment fund, created to support the future needs of children and families. For more information, please contact Laura Iloff at (402) 552-7443.

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## Claire Finds Her Path

The grief she suffered from her father's death pushed Claire off the path to the future he wanted for her. She dropped out of college, started using drugs, and fell under the spell of an abusive man. Eight years passed in a fog of alcohol, drugs and domestic violence.

In that time, four children were born, and she was pregnant again. Then her five-year old daughter Stephanie, who suffered from asthma, came down with pneumonia and died in the hospital. Claire's depression was so severe she neglected her other children, and the State finally removed them from her home.

Losing her children was the final blow—she had to get off drugs and away from the abuse. Claire's friend made some calls and learned

about our Family Works residential treatment program for women and their children.

Family Works proved to be the right decision. Claire stayed with us for six months while she received treatment for her alcohol and drug abuse, therapy for her depression, and parenting classes to become a better mother. Because of the help we provided, her baby was born drug-free.

But before the State would return her other children to her care, she needed a safe home that was free of drugs and abuse. First, she divorced her husband. Next, the Family Works staff consulted with our Heartland Housing Solutions staff, who arranged for Claire to move to a small home. Through that program

Claire received financial assistance to pay the rent, case management to keep her situation stable, therapy to cope with her depression, and life skills development for employment and socialization. Soon her housing was stable, and Claire was reunited with her children.

Today, Claire has been sober for more than a year. She is working full-time, paying her bills on time, and working toward a nursing assistant certification. Therapy has taught her how to manage her depression and grief and how to maintain her recovery. She is an involved parent and her children are thriving. Most important, Claire has found her way back on the path to a productive life.

## Upcoming Events:

ANNUAL GALA  
February 20, 2010 @ 6:00 p.m.  
Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Ctr.  
La Vista, NE  
(402) 552-7424

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEB SITE:  
[www.heartlandfamilyservice.org](http://www.heartlandfamilyservice.org)



## 2009 Salute to Families Honorees

Eight heartland families were honored this fall for their commitment to strong family life and community at our 27th annual Salute to Families celebrations.

The families were honored at two events, one in Council Bluffs and the other in Omaha. "Local families are nominated by the general public, selected by volunteer judges and honored at this event," said John Jeanetta, president and CEO of Heartland Family Service. "Any family in our community who has made a significant effort at strong family life is eligible – single or two-parent families, adoptive and foster families, blended, extended or traditional families."

Please consider nominating a deserving family today for our 2010 celebrations. Call 553-3000 or 322-1407 for a nomination form, or visit [www.HeartlandFamilyService.org](http://www.HeartlandFamilyService.org).

### IOWA



**The LeRoy and Janice Cobia Family**  
*Commitment to Family*



**The Betty Schmidt Family**  
*Community Service*



**The Alan and Sandra Byers Family**  
*Leadership*



**The Ruben and Yolanda Mendoza Family**  
*Challenged & Successful*

### NEBRASKA



**The Ehite Allison Family**  
*Challenged & Successful*



**The Jeff and Angie Busch Family**  
*Commitment to Family*



**The Bill and Jodie Mackintosh Family**  
*Leadership*



**The Myrna K. Red Owl Family**  
*Community Service*

## Program Updates

Heartland Family Service has joined Boys Town, Child Saving Institute, Nebraska Family Support Network and OMNI Behavioral Health in a common vision for an effective community-based system of care in Nebraska. Together we have developed the **Nebraska Families Collaborative** in order to partner with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to reform the child welfare system and achieve better outcomes for children and families. The partnership brings together the knowledge, expertise, and missions of four respected Omaha agencies which all have deep roots in the local community, representing over 400 years' experience caring for children and their families.

October 27 every year marks the actual day of the incorporation of our agency in 1875, which makes **Heartland Family Service** 134 years old this year! The agency was founded at 1421 Douglas as the "Christian Worker's Association" by eight local churches. The congregations wanted to reach out to more than 300 children described in the historical record as "... newsboys, boot-blacks and other children of the more neglected class." At that time, we provided visitation to sick and poor, and relief to the destitute. Today we continue in that tradition, evolving and responding to the complex needs of today's individuals and families.



## 2009-2010 Student League Kick Off

The 2009-2010 Heartland Family Service Student League year kicked off on September 20 with an ice cream social at Ironwood Country Club. The reception was an orientation to the school-year program which allows high school freshmen to explore and become involved in the human service profession in their own community. The Student League was created to honor families who have been active in the social service community and who want to pass that legacy on to their children. Fifty students are exposed to a year-long, hands-on experience in six of our programs: Children's Emergency Shelter, Family Works, Safe Haven Domestic Abuse Shelter, Sarpy County Emergency Services, the Senior Center and the Solomon Girls Center. This year's Student League chairmen are Laura Luther, Heidi Schneiderman and Jenelle Pritchard.



### Student League Class of 2009-2010

Madison Albers, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Albers

Mackenzie Anderson, daughter of Ms. Stephanie Horeis and Mr. Rod Anderson

Alexandra Baxter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nick Baxter

Katherine Baxter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nick Baxter

Christopher Chavez, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bart Chavez

James Coyle, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Coyle

John Davis, III, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Davis, Jr.

Patrick Davlin, son of Ms. Ann O'Connor and Mr. Tim Davlin

Trevor Douglas, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hall and Mr. and Mrs. Jim Douglas

Claire Dyer, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Dyer

Cole Edick, son of Mr. Robert and Dr. Nancy Edick

Jacob Falk, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Falk

Kaitlyn Fitzgerald, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Fitzgerald

Marshall Fritz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lance Fritz

Matthew Gay, son of Senator and Mrs. Timothy Gay

Jocelyn Gerdes, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kyle Gerdes

Cybill Hanson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joel Hanson

Owen Harry, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Harry

Magdalin Heim, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Heim

Theresa Kennelly, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Kennelly

Zachary Knicky, son of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Knicky

Emily Knuth, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Brad Knuth

Michael Koch, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Koch

Alec Koukol, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Koukol

Connor Koukol, son of Dr. and Mrs. Steven Koukol

Caroline Kozlik, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kozlik

Leigh Lindquist, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Lindquist

Mitchell May, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael May

Mr. Michael Mellen, son of Ms. Lisa Mellen and Mr. Michael Mellen

Greta Morris, daughter of Ms. Brenda Christensen and Mr. Michael Morris

Riley McQueen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Todd McQueen

Nicholas Mullen, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Mullen

Travis Nelson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Craig Nelson

Rebecca Olson, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Olson

John Perry, son of Mr. and Mrs. Troy Perry

Allyson Pietrok, daughter of Mr. Gary and Dr. Cassandra Pietrok

Claire Pritchard, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Pritchard

John Ricceri, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ricceri

Caroline Rockman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Rockman

Laurel Rothamel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rothamel

Sara Schnackel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Schnackel

Casey Seline, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Steven Seline

Carly Silverberg, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. David Silverberg

Anna Skold, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Karl Skold

Katherine Slosburg, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Slosburg

Elizabeth Stevenson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Randy Stevenson

Rachel Sullivan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sullivan

Michelle Thommi, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. George Thommi

Anne Torson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Torson