

Michelle Finds Her Road to Success

As a child, Michelle Kaczmarek watched her mom live a life of drugs and alcohol. And after her mom and step-dad divorced when she was 12 years old, she and her younger sister often didn't know where they were going to sleep.

"I swore when I was younger that I would never fall into that pattern that she fell into, and I ended up falling into that pattern anyway," Michelle says. "That's when my life exploded and I decided I don't want to be that mom."

Michelle and her husband began rebuilding their lives with their four children, and she decided to enroll in college and work toward an associate degree. Then her car broke down.

After Michelle missed some classes, her husband was looking through *The Reader* newspaper and saw an ad for the Heartland Family Service Ways to Work program, which provides small, short-term, low-interest loans to families with challenging credit.

"All loans are repaid, so instead of handouts, Ways to Work gives families a helping hand-up toward a more stable financial future," says Lisa Picker,

Ways to Work Program Coordinator.

Michelle "thought it was too good to be true," but decided to call anyway and went through the loan application process.

She has had her 2004 gold Ford Explorer for six years now, and her loan has been paid in full.

"Ways to Work is more than a car loan program," Picker says. "It is a chance for families to begin to develop a sense of consistency, because the factor of 'How do I get there?' has been taken out of the equation."

Michelle has continued her education, recently graduating with a master's degree in Business Administration. She is currently working toward starting her own business.

"Even though it was just a vehicle they helped me out with, in a way they saved me just by showing there is someone, there is a program that cares," Michelle says. "I just think the help Heartland Family Service gave us opened doors for us."



Learn more about the Ways to Work program at <http://bit.ly/HeartlandFamWaystoWork>



Child & Family



Counseling & Prevention



Housing & Financial Stability

“Strike A Chord” 12

Nearly 300 guests took a Road Trip USA on Friday, June 17 at the 12th annual “Strike A Chord” to help Heartland Family Service raise a record \$78,114 for children and families throughout southwest Iowa.

As guests entered the casual-attire event at the Mid-America Center, they were taken on a retro road trip around the U.S. and treated to Tire Toss and Wine Toss games, a Polaroid photo booth, map pin board, as well as cocktails and appetizers from around the country as they bid on more than 100 silent auction items. During dinner, which also was a culinary trip around the U.S., featured musical act VeeJay DJ Rob played retro road songs as images of landmarks played on video screens. After dinner, the crowd watched videos featuring the amazing journeys of each honoree, Verne Welch, who received the Salute to Leadership Award, and Michelle Kaczmarek, who was presented with the Salute to Achievement Award.

The evening ended with the live auction and the crowd sending up a huge cheer as the heart graphic on the projector screens overflowed after surpassing the event goal of \$75,000.

- **Host Couple:** Jason & Shari James
- **Fundraising Total:** \$78,114
- **Proceeds Benefit:** HFS programs and services in southwest Iowa

 View additional “Strike A Chord” photos at [Facebook.com/HeartlandFamilyService](https://www.facebook.com/HeartlandFamilyService)



HFS Program Director Jenny Stewart (left) nominated Michelle Kaczmarek for the 2016 Salute to Achievement Award.



Master of Ceremonies Matt Wilber checks on the status of the fundraising goal on the big screens in the shape of a heart.



Host Couple Jason and Shari James (left) pose with HFS President and CEO John Jeanetta.



Rachael Wittler White (left) and Angie Kistaitis get silly at the Road Trip USA photo booth.



Longtime community supporter Verne Welch accepts the 2016 Salute to Leadership Award.

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2016 Senior Prom

The Heartland Family Service Junior Friends volunteers hosted more than 50 area senior citizens and their families for the 16th annual **Senior Prom** on Sunday, April 17 at The Field Club.

Many of the attendees who never had the opportunity to go to their high school dances finally were able to get all gussied up and enjoy dinner, flowers and traditional prom pictures next to balloon towers. After the seniors enjoyed a plated meal, Steve Pschenica and Ana Ochoa were crowned this year's prom king and queen and kicked off the dancing.

The **Junior Friends**, a group for high school students who want to deepen their commitment to volunteerism, provided companionship throughout the enchanting evening, twirling the seniors around the ballroom to lively classics and leading them in popular group dances.


The event is organized annually by the Heartland Family Service **Generations Center** (formerly Senior Center), which supports the recreational, social and nutritional needs of senior citizens over 55 years of age in the Omaha metro area. Seniors also are given the chance to mentor the teenagers in our **Youth Links** residential crisis stabilization program.



Steve Pschenica and Ana Ochoa are crowned Prom King and Queen during the 2016 Senior Prom.



HFS President and CEO John Jeanetta and his wife Mary (far left) do the Chicken Dance with seniors and Junior Friends.

 **View additional 2016 Senior Prom photos at [Facebook.com/HeartlandFamilyService](https://www.facebook.com/HeartlandFamilyService)**



Agency Updates

- Thanks to the 158 unique donors and the hoard of social media champions who were liking, sharing, and commenting on posts all day long, Heartland Family Service raised \$77,750 for **Omaha Gives!** on May 25.
- The Heartland Family Service **Friends Guild** held its annual meeting on May 12 at Happy Hollow Club. President Sheri Shonka, who led a board of more than 55 members who helped organize several events and volunteered for our programs, presented HFS President and CEO John Jeanetta with a check representative of the Guild's fundraising efforts in the amount of \$254,859 (top photo). Incoming Guild President Melissa Steffes and her officers for 2016-17 were then installed.
- The 2015-16 Heartland Family Service **Student League** class and their families celebrated its graduation on April 10 at Happy Hollow Club (bottom photo). The ninth-grade students gained practical leadership experience and first-hand experience in human services by volunteering for several agency programs and participating in experiential activities like the Poverty Simulation. This year's 49 students attended at least 13 educational and service events from September through April for a combined total of 880 hours.



For comments or suggestions, contact Media@HeartlandFamilyService.org

HeartlandFamilyService.org





Dear Friends:

A fairly constant theme I hear attending conferences, reading periodicals, and talking directly to our donors is the need for agencies like Heartland Family Service to do a better job documenting the impact of the services we provide to our clients. Stakeholders aren't interested in just knowing how many people we served or how many people completed a program. They want to know what difference the program made and how that difference endured over time. Was the help we provided durable?

Until recently, we were unable to answer that question. But thanks to generous donations from the Peter Kiewit Foundation and another anonymous donor, we have hired a researcher and a doctoral research student to help guide us in the development of an evaluation protocol to collect data every three months while clients are receiving services and for two years after services have ended. The evaluation project will be piloted over the next two months and fully launched in October. I look forward to sharing the results with you as we gather that information.

Sincerely,

John H. Jeanetta, MBA, MSW
President and CEO



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Supporter Spotlight with Donna Dostal,
Chief Development Officer

In our last issue, we launched a new look for this newsletter in order to tailor to what you as a community supporter need to see to stay up-to-date on all of our Good Works. We also kicked off our new Donor Spotlight survey series in which we ask you to go to our blog to take a survey and tell us what you think and what makes your heart swell. Going forward, we will use this space to recap the survey results and ask a new question. Here's the next installment:

This Quarter's Survey

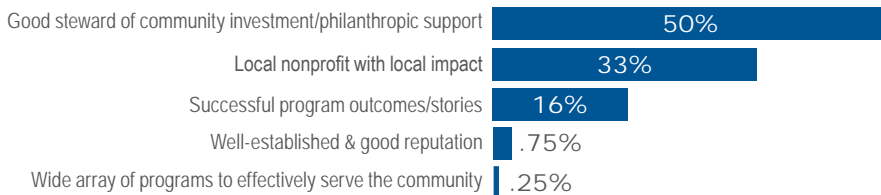
Question: What method do you most use in sharing the message of HFS with family and friends?

Please take a quick survey by visiting our blog at HeartlandFamilyService.org/blog. Your input is so valuable to us!

Last Quarter's Survey Results

Question: What most inspires you to support Heartland Family Service? Order the following 1-5.

Results: Percentage of respondents who rated each category No. 1.



Give Today!
Simply text
"HFS" to 72727



UPCOMING EVENTS

Comedy Night

August 13, 2016 @ 6 p.m.
Fremont Golf Club
Fremont, NE

Safe Haven Golf Tournament

September 16, 2016 @ 10 a.m.
Tara Hills Golf Course
Papillion, NE

Salute to Families

November 17, 2016 @ 6 p.m.
Happy Hollow
Omaha, NE

Good Works 101

Monthly Dates
Call for info
(402) 552-7475



For more information about our upcoming events, check out our Calendar page at HeartlandFamilyService.org or contact us at Events@HeartlandFamilyService.org

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Wish Lists