

# LHA Today

## EXPANDING HORIZONS BRINGS FUN & LEARNING TO KIDS

July was a time of discovery and fun for children who participated in the Expanding Horizons Summer Clubs program, hosted by Arnold Community Learning Center.

The program ran July 7–25, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. each day, offering breakfast, summer reading activities, a variety of engaging clubs and lunch. Students had the chance to explore new interests, strengthen academic skills, and enjoy time with friends in a supportive environment.

This year, 80 students participated in the free program. The blend of academics and enrichment helps children stay

connected, learning, and growing during the summer months.

Club topics included Little Mages, Melody Makers, Messy Art Masters, Voices of Adventure, Planet Pals, Spring Creek Nature Club, Amazing Animals, Pioneers Park Nature Club, Move and Groove Crew, Eagle's Big Top, Act It Out!, Gadgeteers Guild, Arty Explorers, Inventor's Playground, Storybook World, and Outdoor Explorers.

This year's Outdoor Explorers Club was featured by Lincoln

Public Schools, highlighting students' fishing adventures at Bowling Lake Park, just one of many camps offered during Expanding Horizons' 23rd year of existence.

Funding for this year's clubs was provided by Lincoln Housing Charities, Community Learning Centers Interlocal Fund, Beyond School Bells and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. Other community partners included Pioneers Park Nature Center and Big Gumdrop Outdoors.



# Families celebrate success at LHA's first FSS graduation

Lincoln Housing Authority marked a milestone on Aug. 17, hosting its first-ever Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) graduation ceremony and family event at the Lincoln Children's Zoo.

Fifteen graduates of the 2024 program were honored for achieving their personal and financial goals. Among them, four families attained homeownership — a major step toward independence.

Collectively, the graduates received \$82,244 in final escrow payments, which represent the savings families earn as their household income increases during the program.

## About the FSS Program

Since 1993, the Family Self-Sufficiency program has helped hundreds of LHA families pursue long-term goals such as earning a GED or college degree, completing job training, or purchasing a home. Participants work closely with FSS coordinators, who provide guidance, encouragement and resources along the way. By focusing on increasing household income, families build financial stability and the foundation needed to reach self-sufficiency.

This year's graduation highlighted the hard work and determination of families who committed to the program, as well as the positive outcomes that can be achieved when communities invest in opportunities for growth.

For more information on FSS and to apply, visit [www.L-housing.com/FamilySelfSufficiency.html](http://www.L-housing.com/FamilySelfSufficiency.html) or email [awagner@L-housing.com](mailto:awagner@L-housing.com) or [carrie@L-housing.com](mailto:carrie@L-housing.com)



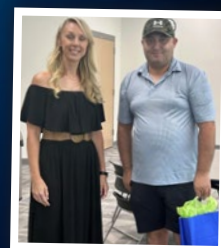
*FSS Coordinator Amy with Rebecca, FSS graduate*



*FSS Coordinator Courtney with Shelly, FSS graduate*



*Lincoln Housing Authority Executive Director Chris Lamberty congratulates families on their hard work.*



*FSS Coordinator Courtney with Sam, FSS graduate*

## Crossroads residents step up for seniors, students

Residents at Crossroads House are making a difference for their neighbors and the broader community. Recently, they raised \$226 to help purchase a new community van for the three Lincoln Housing Authority senior apartment buildings.

Crossroads residents hosted an ice cream social to raise funds for a second van. The vehicles are vital for shopping trips and recreational outings, with volunteers driving so seniors can



*Crossroads residents collected donations for students at a nearby elementary school.*

remain active and independent even if they no longer drive themselves.

“This van will continue to support our residents getting out into the community and living their lives as independently as they can,” said Vicki, resident services specialist.

Residents also organized a Back-to-School drive, collecting supplies for students at Saratoga Elementary. From backpacks and notebooks to pencils and crayons, the donations helped ensure students had the tools they needed to start the year off strong.

# Jordan joins LHA as family support specialist

Lincoln Housing Authority welcomed Jordan as a family support specialist on June 9.

Jordan has a strong background in service-oriented work. She began her career as a case manager with Child Protective Services, spent five years as a parole officer and later worked in security. Through these experiences, she discovered her passion for the social work side of the job, which ultimately led her to pursue new opportunities in community-focused roles.



“This is another helping role, but in different ways and with different people,” Jordan said.

She’s learning that tenants are looking for support and help, and she works to determine barriers and do what she can to help in a variety of issues.

Jordan’s role includes providing short-term case management, connecting tenants to community resources, and supporting participants through programs such as the Homeless

Voucher Program and RentWise classes. She assists with apartment searches, job applications, and helps tenants gain access to food, cleaning assistance, and mental health resources. She can also provide guidance on budgeting, domestic violence support and applying for benefits.

The services Jordan provides are free, confidential and available to all LHA program participants. She can be reached at 402-434-5530.

“I’m here to help,” she said. “Call me if you need me — I won’t know you need help until you let me know.”

Jordan said she looks forward to gaining a deeper understanding of her new role and finding ways to build upon it.

*Jordan, LHA's family support specialist*

## Apply for free and reduced lunch this year

Families with students at Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) can apply for free or reduced-price school meals through a simple application process. To qualify, households must complete an application and meet income eligibility guidelines.

If your household income falls within the free meal limits, student(s) will receive both breakfast and lunch at no cost. If your income qualifies for reduced-price meals, lunch will cost just 40 cents and breakfast 30 cents per student.

Online applications can be found at [home.lps.org/ns/free-reduced](https://home.lps.org/ns/free-reduced). Paper applications can be requested by calling 402-436-1747 or pick one up at your school office or the LPS District Office, 5905 O St.

Applications are valid for the entire school year; however, a new application must be submitted each year to maintain eligibility. Applications for the 2025-26 school year will be accepted beginning mid-July, otherwise, they can be completed at any time due to job loss, decrease in income, or change in household size, including birth of a baby, marriage or additional people moving into the household. Until eligibility is determined, families are responsible to pay the full meal price students incur.

More information and answers to common questions can be found at: <https://home.lps.org/ns/free-reduced>.

If you need help with applying, call 402-436-1747 or email [freeandreduced@lps.org](mailto:freeandreduced@lps.org). If you need a bilingual liaison, contact the English Language Learners Office at 402-436-1997.

## Some LPS schools offer free lunch

Some Lincoln Public Schools qualify for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a special USDA meals option for schools with a high percentage of free lunch enrollment. CEP schools serve free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of free and reduced-price meal application status. This year, the schools include:

	Arnold	Lakeview	
	Belmont	Lefler	
	Brownell	McPhee	
	Campbell	Meadow Lane	
	Clinton	Norwood Park	
	Culler	Park	
	Dawes	Pershing	
	Elliott	Prescott	
	Everett	Randolph	
	Goodrich	Riley	
	Hartley	Saratoga	
	Huntington	West Lincoln	

Extras such as milk for a sack lunch from home or seconds will be charged at regular prices.

LPS encourages families to complete the income application to apply for free or reduced-price meals if they have a child attending another school not listed above.



# FALL SPORTS CAN BE A CHALLENGE FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH GAMBLING

As fall sports kick off, excitement runs high for fans. But for individuals struggling with problem gambling, this season can bring added temptation and stress.

### What problem gambling looks like:

- Preoccupation with gambling and an inability to stop.
- Bragging about wins while downplaying losses.
- Restlessness and irritability when not gambling.
- Trying to “win back” lost money.
- Borrowing money to gamble.
- Lying to hide time spent gambling or unpaid debts.
- Frequent, unexplained absences from home or work.
- Losing work time because of gambling.
- Engaging in illegal activity to finance gambling.
- Damaging important relationships or careers due to gambling.

Problem gambling can also take a toll on a person’s health. Risks include cardiac arrest, diabetes, damage to the bladder,

kidneys and liver. Mental health is another serious concern, with high levels of anxiety and depression common. Alarmingly, research shows that 40% of problem gamblers have considered suicide before seeking treatment. Despite these risks, fewer than 10% of people with gambling problems ever receive treatment.

For those struggling, help is available. While insurance typically does not cover gambling treatment, Nebraska Gamblers Assistance Program provides free services, including assessments, interventions for individuals and families, financial counseling and individual treatment. One preventative step to problem gambling is voluntary self-exclusion, which excludes individuals from all casinos in the state at no cost.

If you or someone you know may be struggling with gambling, contact Nebraska Problem Gambling Helpline at 833-BETOVER (238-6837) or text 402-806-7344; or the National Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER.

## Learn to prepare taxes and help your neighbors

Help your neighbors and get your taxes prepared for free with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program through University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the IRS.

VITA is a nationwide program that partners with community groups to offer IRS-certified, free tax return preparation and assistance. The UNL Center on Children, Families, and the Law coordinates several tax preparation sites throughout Lancaster County.

The program seeks volunteers to help low- to moderate-income families, senior citizens, disabled individuals, and people who speak

English as a second language, complete their tax returns for free. Volunteers also can use the program to prepare their own returns. VITA helps taxpayers get all the credits and deductions they are entitled to, leading to the largest refund possible.

Volunteers receive IRS-certified training on how to prepare tax returns using a computer and tax software, including electronic filing. Instruction will cover both federal and state tax returns. Online training will occur between November and January. Classroom training also may be available. Once certified, volunteers can spend as little as three to four hours per week volunteering in February, March and April. Volunteers can help by preparing tax returns, or by being a greeter, site coordinator, or quality reviewer.

For more information or to volunteer visit <https://tcan.unl.edu>, call 402-472-0857, or email [vita@unl.edu](mailto:vita@unl.edu).



## Fun family events keep kids engaged and learning at Krayon Campus

Krayon Campus has been buzzing with special events for families and students. Parents joined in for Donuts with Dads and Muffins with Moms, creating memorable moments with their children. Students were thrilled to meet players from the Lincoln Stars hockey team. Along with these events, the center keeps children engaged and learning every day through a well-rounded curriculum designed to spark curiosity and growth.

Krayon Campus NW is a child care center located at 4621 NW 48th St. inside the Carol Yoakum Family Resource Center. It is open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and provides care for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years. Services include a summer program for school-age children and before- and after-school care. Currently, the center is enrolling children ages 6 weeks to 4 years. Krayon Campus also has another location at 6001 Normal Blvd.

Krayon Campus NW is rated Step 3 in the Step Up to Quality program. Healthy snacks and meals are prepared on-site. The center accepts Title XX, Lincoln Littles Tuition Assistance, and VA Subsidy Assistance. A 5% discount is available for Lincoln Housing Authority employees and tenants, as well as parents working in local businesses near the center. Only one discount can be applied.

To set up a tour, call the center at 531-500-1221. For more information on child care costs and availability, visit [www.krayoncampus.com](http://www.krayoncampus.com) or [www.facebook.com/krayon.campus](http://www.facebook.com/krayon.campus).



## Reading Matters: Encouraging reading into autumn

While summer provides ample time for children to read, school can make it difficult for children to continue making reading for fun a priority. Reading can provide numerous benefits, including improved academic performance, enhanced cognitive skills and increased social and emotional intelligence.

Research shows children may experience a drop in leisure reading enthusiasm by age 9, primarily due to progress in school shifting toward more structured reading and less on choice and enjoyment, as well as increased demands of school, sports and other activities. Reading, which

was a leisure activity, may feel like an additional chore.

### Here are some tips to keep children engaged in reading:

- Create a family reading routine by implementing a bedtime story or dedicated reading time for everyone in the family — reading the same book or different ones. Consistency reinforces the habit and doing it together reinforces the value of reading.
- Read books aloud. Even older children benefit from listening to a parent read, and reading can help start

conversations about characters and plots.

- Pick a variety of reading material and topics. Reading can be done through physical books, audiobooks, magazines and other material. A variety of topics based on a child's interests can help them engage more meaningfully with the material and boost enthusiasm.
- Celebrate reading. Acknowledge a child's reading milestones, discuss completed books and continue to encourage them to explore the world through reading.





## Rental listings for those with LHA voucher

Free to all LHA participants, Lincoln Housing Authority has a new online Rental Listing portal where landlords may include up-to-date rental listings accepting vouchers.

To view current listings, visit [www.L-housing.com/RentalAssistance.html](http://www.L-housing.com/RentalAssistance.html) and click on the “Rental Listings” building icon or scan the QR code.



Participants may also stop by the main office for a copy of the Voucher Friendly Landlord list which may have additional contacts. This list is generated every Tuesday. Remember: Please be aware of any type of rental scams and never pay deposits with bitcoin or gift cards.

Please note: Properties on the directory have NOT been preapproved by the Lincoln Housing Authority. All units must meet Lincoln Housing Authority program requirements, pass rent reasonableness, and meet Housing Quality Standards before assistance may begin.

# WANTED



If you're a tenant interested in joining the Resident Advisory Board, Lincoln Housing Authority wants to hear from you.

The board reviews, plans and influences LHA programs and policies. Board members meet two or three times from October through December. Meetings typically last up to two hours, and LHA assists

board members with transportation and child care costs if needed.

Participants in any LHA rental assistance program are eligible to become Resident Advisory Board members.

If interested, contact Jordan at [Jordan@L-housing.com](mailto:Jordan@L-housing.com) or 402-434-5530 for an application or more information.



## Tenants for Advisory Board



# FACING EVICTION?

## Help is available



If you're behind on rent or have received an eviction notice, you don't have to go to court alone. The Tenant Assistance Project (TAP) is a program that offers free legal and support services to tenants facing eviction in Lancaster County. TAP is operated by the Housing Justice Program at the University of Nebraska College of Law in partnership with the Nebraska State Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project. TAP provides free, same-day legal representation and support to low- to moderate-income residential tenants facing eviction.

Since 2020, TAP has been at the courthouse on eviction days to stand with tenants. When a TAP volunteer is present, 98% of cases are resolved without immediate eviction and people are able to stay in their homes or leave with more time and options instead of being forced out right away. The program has helped more than 2,000- families remain in their homes. TAP also helps connect tenants to rental assistance and other resources that can prevent homelessness.

**At court, TAP volunteers include attorneys, law students and trained community members. They can:**

- Review paperwork and explain what it means.
- Talk to a landlord's attorney on your behalf.
- Help you apply for rental assistance or payment plans.
- Go with you into the courtroom if needed.

### What To Do if You're Facing Eviction

- Don't skip court. Go to every hearing. TAP volunteers are at the courthouse to meet with tenants before their case is heard.
- Bring your documents. Take your lease, notices, proof of payments, or any letters you've received.
- Ask for TAP. When you arrive, look for TAP volunteers or ask court staff for help finding them.

If you need help before court day, contact Legal Aid of Nebraska at 1-844-268-5627 for advice and to get connected to other services. More information about TAP may be found by calling the Housing Justice Clinic at 402-472-2161.



### 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](http://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](http://www.L-housing.com/Vendors.html).

RENTAL FOR SALE

CALL NOW

BY OWNER

CAREERS

GENERAL HELP WANTED

WEDDING Reception

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## Understanding housing discrimination protections in Lincoln

Everyone deserves a fair chance at housing. That's why federal, state and local laws protect people from discrimination when they rent, buy or seek housing.

It is illegal for housing providers to deny housing or treat someone unfairly because of their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity or source of income.

Source-of-income discrimination happens when a landlord refuses to rent to someone because of how they lawfully

pay for housing. This includes Social Security, disability benefits, veterans' benefits, child support payments, Section 8 or Housing Choice Vouchers, other government or nonprofit assistance, or hourly wages.

While many protections are in place, the law does not currently cover every circumstance. Housing providers are allowed to deny someone housing based on their criminal record, eviction history or credit.

Lincoln Commission on Human

Rights investigates claims of discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Protected categories include race, color, sex (gender), religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, source of income and retaliation.

If you believe you've experienced housing discrimination, you can contact the commission at 402-441-7624 or visit its website at [www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/City-AttorneysOffice/LCHR](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/City-AttorneysOffice/LCHR).