

LHA Today

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Friends Forever

Hernandez was recognized by Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler before the Jan. 11 City Council meeting, where she was awarded a plaque and \$100 U.S. savings bond, as well as a day off with pay.

Hernandez is one of 12 monthly winners under consideration for the annual Award of Excellence, which comes with a \$500 U.S. savings bond, two days off with pay and a plaque.

Although it had been about 20 years since she received CPR/first aid training, Hernandez recalled what she had learned. She was glad she was able to help.

“I was scared, but knew I had to do something at that moment,” she said. “Every day I think about the fact I was able to save someone’s life.”

And every day, Caha comes in and reminds her and anyone nearby of that fact, professing her gratitude for her “friend forever.”

“If she wasn’t there, I probably would have died,” Caha said. “She saved my life and she’ll be my friend forever. I respect life more now.”

Courtesy Living Well magazine

Esther Hernandez, right, holding flowers, chats with Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler after receiving the December Mayor’s Award of Excellence.



Evelyn Caha, left, is grateful Esther Hernandez, Crossroads House resident, was at the right place at the right time.

Evelyn Caha sits down to play beautiful music on the piano at the Downtown Senior Center. She turns and says the music plays on thanks to heroic actions of her “friend forever” who saved her life when she was choking.

Caha recalls the Oct. 3 incident at the center when she was eating lunch and started to choke on a carrot. Sitting by herself, she tried to cough, but was struggling to breathe.

At an adjacent table was Esther Hernandez, who also was eating lunch. Hernandez, a Lincoln Aging Partners volunteer front desk reception, noticed what was happening and sprang into action.

“To me, she came out of nowhere,” Caha said. “I just felt arms around me.”

Hernandez, who has worked for the City of Lincoln since July 2009, performed the Heimlich Maneuver and dislodged the carrot, likely saving Caha’s life.

For her quick thinking and heroic actions, Hernandez was awarded the Mayor’s Award of Excellence for December. The award recognizes city employees who consistently provide exemplary service and work that demonstrates personal commitment to the City of Lincoln.

FSS Graduate Enjoys *Helping Others*

Moving to a new community is rarely easy — especially when it is on the other side of the planet.

When Lucia Morgan came to the United States from Sudan with her four sons, the transition was difficult. But, it was made easier with the help of Lincoln Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency program.

Morgan, a recent FSS graduate, learned of the program through a friend. She called LHA and applied, and eventually was accepted to the program, which assisted her with her rent, school tuition and emergency car repairs.

"The program really helped me when I needed it the most," she said.

Morgan is an honor graduate of Southeast Community College with an associate degree in human services.

She plans to return to school next fall to earn her bachelor's degree in human services at the College of St. Mary in Lincoln.

Employed by Lincoln Public Schools as a McPhee Elementary School paraprofessional, Morgan works six or seven hours a day with special education students.

She is no stranger to teaching. In her homeland of Sudan, Morgan taught elementary school.

Now that she has completed the FSS program, Morgan's long-range plans include becoming a case worker or manager for the Department of Health and Human Services or some similar agency.

"I've always enjoyed helping people and doing what I can for others," she said. "There are many in my



Lucia Morgan is grateful for the help she and her family received from the FSS program.

community who don't speak English, who I could help translate and just get by day to day.

In addition to her sons, Morgan has one granddaughter, Elizabeth, who is 1. Her husband still lives in Sudan.

Take Time To Be Counted

Ten minutes and 10 answers to questions is all the 2010 Census needs from you.

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau takes a snapshot of the country's population to determine how many people live within the United States' borders.

Census data is used nationwide to determine areas in need of fire stations, hospitals, public housing, roads, schools and other organizations and services. It also helps determine the number of seats in state legislatures and the U.S. House or Representatives.

United States™
Census
2010

Census forms will be mailed to households in March, and must be returned by mid-April. Census workers visit households that don't return forms, as well as homeless shelters, jails, nursing homes and other locations to ensure everyone is counted.

This year's census is being conducted on a shorter form than previous years.

The City of Lincoln and the U.S. Census Bureau have formed a committee designed to encourage widespread participation among residents to help ensure an accurate account.

2010 Census Jobs

The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting temporary, part-time census takers for the 2010 Census.

These short-term jobs offer good pay, flexible hours, paid training and reimbursement for authorized work-related expenses, including mileage accumulated while conducting census work.

These jobs are excellent for those who want to work part-time, for anyone between jobs or anyone who wants to earn extra money providing an important service for their community.

For more information, contact the Lincoln Census office at 402-479-2320.



Volunteers for the Lincoln SHARE program separate food for individuals orders.

SHARE-ing Savings on Food

Saving money in today's economy is a must. While trimming the monthly entertainment budget might not be much fun, paring down the cost of groceries can seem downright impossible.

After all, you have to eat.

But money-saving help for the grocery bill is available through a volunteer-run, community-based food distribution program.

Self Help and Resource Exchange is a non-profit, food-buying organization that offers good, nutritious products at reduced cost. The SHARE program can save participants as much as 50 percent on their grocery bills in return for volunteer hours.

SHARE was originally brought to Lincoln with the Lincoln Housing Authority through the Family Resource Center. Every month, the organization purchases wholesome, nutritious food on the national wholesale market, just like a grocery store.

Under the program, participants can purchase a \$35-40 supplemental food package of frozen meats, fresh fruits and vegetables at a reduced cost of \$22 in cash or food stamps through a food cooperative. To be eligible, each volunteer must present proof of at least two hours of volunteer work when they pick up their food.

Orders for the following month can be placed when the food is picked up. Additionally, a variety of other specialty packages are available each month through the program.

Glenna Showalter is one of three

site coordinators in Lincoln, along with Sharon Doll and Vi Johnson. Showalter's site at First Christian Church, 16th and K streets, handles about 100 orders per month.

Showalter became involved with SHARE about 15 years ago, learning of the organization through her neighborhood association.

"It's the best-kept secret in town," she said. "It's a great program, but unfortunately, not as many people know about it as we'd like."

Program participants receive their food about two weeks after they place their orders.

Food is delivered each month to Lincoln's three distribution sites, where volunteers unload the boxes from trucks, then count and record what has been delivered. Volunteers then put together each individual order before informing participants their food has arrived. When participants pick up their food, they present proof of at least two hours of volunteer work.

Showalter said participation in the program has declined the past six months, partly due to other food programs available in Lincoln.

"My goal for this year is to spread the word and let people know about the program and what it can do for them," she said.

For more information on SHARE, call Showalter at the Lincoln chapter at 402-805-3656, or call toll-free at 1-800-344-1107.

Spring Cleaning

Arnold Heights' annual spring cleaning is on the way.

The yearly neighborhood cleanup is scheduled for April 24 from 8 a.m. to noon. Anyone interested in helping with the cleanup should gather at the Carol Yoakum Family Resource Center, 4621 NW 48th St., at 8 a.m., where they will be treated to a light breakfast.

Jeff Schwebke, a member of the Arnold Heights Neighborhood Association and one of the cleanup's organizers, said the annual event is important to the general well-being of the neighborhood.

Schwebke has been involved in the neighborhood cleanup efforts nearly 10 years. Typically, he said, 50 to 90 volunteers participate.

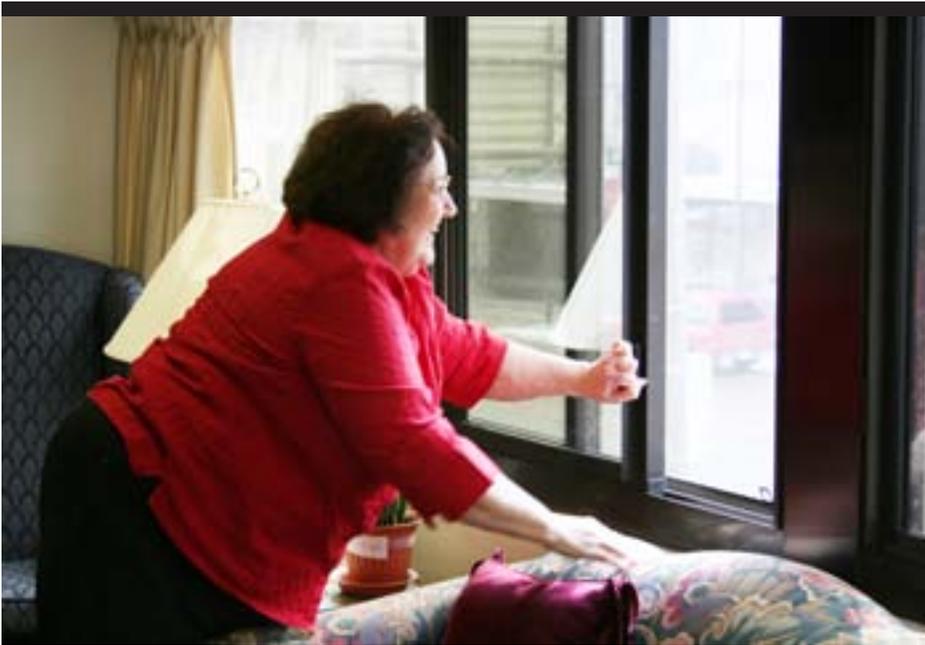
The event is sponsored by a grant from Keep Lincoln and Lancaster County Beautiful, an organization within the Lancaster County Department of Health.

As in past years, general trash, appliances and yard waste will be collected. Additionally this year, household waste will be collected.

Insecticides, wood stain or mysterious bottles of unrec-

Continued on page 5.





Phyllis Vensky opens a window to let in some fresh air in the second-floor community room at Crossroads House.

CROSSROADS HOUSE RECEIVES FACELIFT

Residents at Crossroads House have a new outlook on things — at least while looking out.

To the delight of its residents, Crossroads House, 1000 O St., recently received new energy-efficient, operable windows.

Each of the residence's 58 apartments on the second through seventh floors received operable windows in the living rooms and bedrooms. The windows are paired with screens, so residents can let in fresh air, and are tinted to reduce summer glare. The second-floor community room also sports new windows, which face O Street.

The new sets replace the building's original windows, which dated back to the building's origins as a hotel. The window-replacement project, which began last fall, was completed in November.

The Crossroads House project was funded through Lincoln Action Plan's Weatherization Assistance Program, through which renters and owners of mobile homes, multi-units and single-family dwellings in Lancaster County may be eligible for free weatherization services.

Funding for LAP's weatherization fund is part of the 2009 Economic Recovery and Reinvestment stimulus package.

Weatherization makes a home more energy efficient, saving money on utilities bills by sealing in heat and keeping cold air out.

To be eligible, a household must fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, and the home cannot have been previously weatherized since Oct. 1, 1994.

For LAP assistance, tenants of a property must request weatherization from the property owner or manager.

For more information, call the Lincoln Action Program at 402-475-4515.

EITC May Benefit Some Taxpayers

With tax season in full swing, taxpayers should be aware that new tax law implemented this year may be beneficial to many individuals and families.

The Human Services Federation and the Lincoln Tax Assistance EITC Campaign will provide free tax preparation services at various sites throughout Lincoln until April 15.

Free electronic filing for both Federal and Nebraska state returns began Jan. 23. Direct deposit refunds generally are received seven to 10 days after filing. Free assistance is available every day of the week at sites available to help low-income families make this tax season less of a burden.

Taxes will be prepared by Internal Revenue Service-trained and certified volunteers and electronically filed for a rapid refund.

EITC may mean a larger refund if a filer is able to meet the qualifying rules, and if earned income is less than:

- \$48,281 for married-filing jointly for three or more children.
- \$45,295 for married-filing jointly with two or more children.
- \$43,281 for single or head of the household with three or more children.
- \$40,463 for married-filing jointly with one child.
- \$40,295 for single or head of the household with two children.
- \$35,463 for single or head of the household with one child.
- \$18,440 for married-filing jointly with no qualifying children.
- \$13,440 for single or head of the household with no qualifying children.

For more information on EITC eligibility and other tax questions, visit the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov or call 800-829-1040, or visit the nearest volunteer income tax assistance site.

Arnold Heights Getting a Spring Cleaning

Continued from page 3.

ognizable liquid under the sink can be brought to the Lincoln Housing Authority's Arnold Heights maintenance facility at 4721 NW 48th St.

While the general cleanup is intended for the Arnold Heights neighborhood, the drop-off site will accept hazardous household waste from anywhere in the city.

Exceptions for hazardous household waste materials, according to the City of Lincoln Web site, include the following products that should NOT be brought to the collection site:

- Ammunition and explosives
- Antifreeze
- Asbestos

- Batteries
- Electronics and computers
- Fertilizers
- Fire extinguishers
- Large propane cylinders, gas grills
- Latex paint
- Medicine/pharmaceuticals
- Tires
- Used oil

For information on proper disposal of these items, call 402-441-8021.

Also, Schwebke said, anyone in the Arnold Heights area wishing to dispose of appliances or other large items who are unable to transport those items to the drop-off site can

arrange for pick-up by calling LHA's maintenance facility before 5 p.m. Friday, April 23, at 402-434-2610.



Neighborhood cleanups are important to community health and well-being.

LHA Offers Guidance On Overnight Guest Rules

When tenants have overnight guests at their home, they have to be careful to follow the rules. LHA rules specify guests cannot stay in a unit on a repetitive basis. The definition of repetitive is something that recurs at intervals or something is repeated. When guests are allowed to stay in the unit on a repetitive basis, they become unauthorized tenants; that becomes a problem.

“Certainly, tenants can have guests” said Seanna Collins, LHA tenant-based housing manager. “But people need to be careful about the duration and frequency of the stays.”

The amount of time a guest stays in your unit can vary depending on individual property managers. If a landlord or property manager has more strict rules than LHA, those rules must be followed.

Landlords often observe signs there are people who are not on the lease staying or living in the unit. Some telltale signs include police calls which include names of guests mentioned as residents, accident reports using the



Seanna Collins, LHA tenant-based housing manager.

address, and individuals other than the tenant receiving mail at the address. Sometimes, neighbors or other tenants in the building complain. “All these things are red flags which indicate tenants may have someone living there,” Collins said. We probably get 80 complaints a month from people questioning the occupancy of units. The complaints, she said, come from a variety of sources, including family members, neighbors, and concerned taxpayers.”

Guests must have a permanent address elsewhere. They must be able to provide a lease of their own or be able to prove they own property in which they reside. When the information is provided to LHA, the housing authority will verify that it indeed exists and the individual resides there. That is accomplished through contact with the owner.

Often unauthorized guests include significant others, a child's father, an ex-husband, or someone else who is close to the tenant. Relatives, particularly those coming from other states or countries, pose problems when they intend to stay for extended time periods. The housing authority addresses these cases in its policies. Tenants should always contact their Housing Specialist or Leasing Agent when they have questions about a visitor.

Center Expands *Facilities, Assistance*

Thanks to a \$2.3 million grant, education and job training has become easier and more accessible for many disadvantaged Lincoln-area residents.

The Job Education Training Center at the Center for People in Need, 3901 N. 27th St.,

was recently expanded. The center assists more than 80 people a day in their efforts to gain a foothold in the work force.

The expansion was financed largely through funds obtained by Nebraska Sen. Ben Nelson as part of last year's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act economic stimulus package.

The center will partner with Southeast Community College and other organizations to train 400 disadvantaged people to work in energy efficiency construction.

The money comes from the labor department's Pathways Out of Poverty grant program, designed to help disadvantaged people escape poverty and become self-sufficient.

The training, which will prepare participants to work in construction, carpentry, roofing, electrical, plumbing and sheet metal, will take place in a



Diane Vesley-Robb, distribution coordinator at the Center for People in Need.

10,000-square-foot space SCC will lease in the Center for People in Need's newly expanded facility.

The grant includes providing support services to ensure the success of participants, who face obstacles such as homelessness and unemployment.

The center is a designated community work site for recipients of federal cash assistance like Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Targeting low-income workers, immigrants, clients with mental or physical disabilities and others, the center includes a 24-station computer lab, six meeting rooms and a commercial kitchen.

Additionally, thanks to a donation from Lincoln-based Class.com, interactive online instruction soon will be available.

Since its completion in October 2009, the conference center space — which includes a banquet hall that can accommodate about 560 for dining and 700 for meetings — has been used for the Giving Thanksgiving Food distribution event, Toyland for Kids toy drive and distribution and Project Homeless Connect, as well as other events, such



Courtesy of <http://centerforpeopleinneed.org/>.

as food handler permit training and flu shot clinics.

The space is available for rent to non-profit, commercial and private clients.

More than 4,000 people were served by the center's Thanksgiving food distribution drive and about 10,000 benefitted from the Toyland for Kids event, said Diane Vesley-Robb, distribution coordinator at the center.

"Without this new space, I don't know what we would have done," she said. "It was invaluable to our holiday efforts."

For more information, contact the Center for People in Need at 402-476-4357.

A Merry Mahoney Manor Christmas

Since 2002, Mahoney Manor residents have enjoyed Christmas parties each year thanks to members of Lincoln's Sunrise Rotary Club.

This past holiday season's event was Dec. 19. Residents enjoyed Christmas cookies and other treats, caroling and lots of socializing, all of which have become mainstays of the annual event. Each Mahoney Manor resident — in-

cluding those who could not make the party — receive a gift from Rotary volunteers.

The annual tradition began when the owner of the Engine House Restaurant in Havelock decided he wanted to do something for Mahoney Manor residents. He had such a good response, he recruited fellow Rotary Club members to help, and a tradition was born.



Santa Claus stopped by to chat with Mahoney Manor residents and guests during the Christmas party in December.

Renters Insurance Provides Peace of Mind

Life is filled with unexpected events, and some can be catastrophic. One tool to help make the unexpected more tolerable — and manageable — is renters insurance.

Available through most insurance companies, renters insurance pays you if your personal property is damaged or stolen, covering such events as fire

and smoke damage, explosions, theft, vandalism, wind, water, hail, plumbing problems and others. It also protects you from liability if an accident occurs in your home and may pay your temporary living expenses if an emergency forces you to temporarily relocate.

Generally, your landlord or property manager's insurance does not protect

your personal property; it only protects the building.

Regardless of income, renters insurance is a wise choice for anyone. Most renters policies are similar to homeowner's policies, covering the cost of furniture, clothing, appliances, electronic equipment and other personal property.

The cost of renters insurance — typically \$10-15 a month, but plans vary among different insurers — can be a tiny fraction of the price tag replacing uninsured items that are damaged or destroyed.

In some cases, renters insurance can even save renters money in unexpected ways. Some insurance companies offer reduced premiums for auto and renters insurance if both policies are purchased through the same company.

With the variety of policies available, it is best to shop around for the coverage that best suits your needs.

A July 2008 fire at Lincoln's Thomasbrook Apartments destroyed or damaged 23 units, 10 of which were not covered by renters insurance.



Tax Credit Still Available

Lincoln Housing Authority encourages first-time home buyers to remember they may be qualified for as much as an \$8,000 tax credit, which can be used as a down payment for their home.



The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 authorized a tax credit equal to 10 percent of the home's purchase price up to a maximum of \$8,000 for qualified first-time home buyers purchasing a principal residence — new or resale.

First-time home buyers who bought after Jan. 1, 2009, and before April 1, 2010, with closing to take place before July 1, 2010, would get the \$8,000 home buyer tax credit.

The tax credit is for first-time home buyers only, and does not have to be repaid. Single taxpayers with annual incomes up to \$75,000 and married couples with incomes up to \$150,000 qualify.

For more information, visit NeighborWorks Lincoln's Web site at www.nwlincoln.org/ownership/ or contact NeighborWorks Lincoln at 402-477-7181, or by e-mail at info@NWLIncoln.org.

TIPS FOR TOUGH TIMES

A Web site created and maintained by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln offers ideas and resources designed to help people through the economic recession.

The site, created and maintained by UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, can be found at <http://toughtimes.unl.edu/home>.

The site includes information on money-saving ideas — including these ideas on how to save money while grocery shopping — family relationships in difficult economic times, educational opportunities and ideas on saving money at home on food and utilities. The page also includes links to information resources for farmers and ranchers on livestock and crop production.

The site, which launched last spring, also provides a link to a Recession Survival Guide, which includes videos and other information from UNL Extension.



A UNL Web Site provides information and tips to help during the current economic instability.

Fourth Annual Lincoln Housing Fair

Sponsored by the Realtors Association of Lincoln, the fourth annual Lincoln Housing Fair provides attendees with the information, advice and assistance needed to make owning a home a reality.

The fair is April 10 from 9 a.m. to noon at Southeast Community College's campus at 301 S. 68th Place in Lincoln. It will feature representatives from all businesses involved in real estate transactions to provide attendees information, advice and assistance in taking the necessary steps to achieve their dreams of owning a home, and to answer questions about the processes.

In addition to builders, foreclosure specialists, lenders, realtors and representatives from insurance and title companies, Credit Counseling Services of Nebraska, NeighborWorks Lincoln and the City of Lincoln Urban Development also will be on hand to explain their programs.



Information on home ownership will be available at the Lincoln Housing Fair April 10.

LIFELONG LIVING FESTIVAL RETURNS

A spring tradition continues with the 14th annual LifeLong Living Festival, the area's largest and longest-running information and product show for older adults and their families.

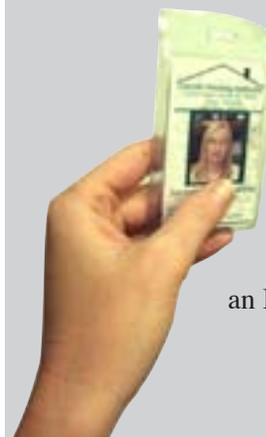
The event, sponsored by KFOR radio, will be May 15 at Lancaster Event Center. Free health screenings will begin at 7:30 a.m., and the information booths will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In addition to the health fair, more than 100 presentation booths from area businesses and organizations will be featured, providing visitors information, products and services for older adults with active lifestyles. The festival also will include live broadcasts from KFOR radio, which is sponsoring the event for the third consecutive year.

LHA Employees Have ID

Residents can verify the identity of Lincoln Housing Authority employees by asking for their LHA ID cards. The cards are plastic and include the employee's name and photo.

If an LHA employee comes to your home, ask for identification. If they do not have it, be safe and do not let them in. If they are with LHA, they will have an ID card with them.




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