



Heart Ministry Center
DIGNITY FOR ALL

PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR NEIGHBORS EXPERIENCING POVERTY

Our Monen Healthcare Clinic is helping to address the lack of access to mental health care in our community with two full-time mental health practitioners, in addition to other growing free healthcare services.

Read more on Page 3.

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DIGNITY FOR ALL 

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Letter from the CEO

I first learned of the Heart Ministry Center as I worked with families at another organization. There was a young family that needed food and I came with them to assist in getting the items they needed. As I walked into Heart, I just knew right away that it was a place where I belonged. Within a couple of months, I had become its eighth employee.

I came to Heart in 2015, as Director of Case Management. We were doing pantry out of a garage and growing our programming at that time. Since then, we have grown to a staff of almost 50, including two social enterprises: Fresh Start Laundromat and FRESH Floral. Throughout the years, I have held several positions at Heart, including Associate Executive Director and Chief Human Resource Officer. I count it an honor and a privilege to be the next CEO of the Heart Ministry Center.

Although Heart has changed so much in the past nine years, it is still a place with loads of healing and hope. When growing up in North Omaha my family needed the same type of services that Heart provides, so when I see the faces of the families that come into our doors, I see myself. Our core values are at the heart of everything we do at the Heart Ministry Center and our guiding motto of Dignity for All is our creed.

I cannot thank our staff enough. They have been steady and resilient. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank and invite you to the Heart Ministry Center for a tour and/or to volunteer. Moreover, on behalf of our staff, we thank you for your thoughts, prayers, and continued support as we have traversed a difficult time. Although we will never forget Mark Dahir, our beloved leader, we are poised for what the future holds for us. These past six months have been pivotal at the Heart Ministry Center. What has been so vital for us is that we have explored and encouraged health wellness in our staff.

I appreciate your continued and unwavering support and look forward to sharing our many success stories with you.

Damany Rahn

Chief Executive Officer

Fresh Start Program Gave Alumna a Strong Foundation for Achieving Her Goals

“There is no place like Heart Ministry Center,” said Tiffany Wheeler. “There I found purpose and worthiness each day that I continue to carry with me.”

Tiffany Wheeler was in active addiction for nearly 30 years. During that time, she went to prison, experienced homelessness, and did treatment just to check a box, but the programming never worked for her. She was sick and tired of feeling sick and tired. In December 2021, Tiffany left an abusive relationship, and while she was in a domestic violence shelter, a staff member recommended she visit Heart Ministry Center and check out the Fresh Start program.

Tiffany completed the trial period and was accepted into the Fresh Start program. She trusted the process as she worked in the pantry, participated in mental health sessions and educational programming, and met with her facilitator to set goals.

The Fresh Start program is a holistic, intensive human resources training program empowering participants to achieve a fresh start in life and to be self-sufficient. It encompasses mental and physical health, financial and household management, communication, and job skills.

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At Heart Ministry Center, I was surrounded by people who had similar experiences as me and who loved me when I couldn't love myself.
TIFFANY WHEELER



Tiffany Wheeler celebrates Halloween with three of her granddaughters.

Graduates are placed with a community employer in a position that is suited to their aptitudes and that will balance their household budgets. Ongoing facilitation continues with graduates. Nearly 130 women and men have graduated from the program.

“Fresh Start gave me a solid foundation. I had everything to gain by being a part of the program. At Heart Ministry Center, I was surrounded by people who had similar experiences as me and who loved me when I couldn't love myself.”

Tiffany graduated in July 2022 and was hired by Heart Ministry Center as a facilities specialist. She saved her earnings and bought a car, continued to prioritize her sobriety, and completed her peer support certification in Nebraska. In June 2023 Tiffany was honored with the Aaron Schneider Fresh Start Excellence Award. The following month she achieved yet another goal of moving to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to be closer to her family.

“I missed a lot of time with my family. I'm repairing relationships and spending time with my grandkids. Being involved in their lives has been amazing!”

“I have never worked with another Fresh Start participant who knew what their short and long-term goals were and spent a year accomplishing each one,” said Cassandra Schmitz, Director of the Fresh Start program. “It showed such strength of character that Tiffany is the definition of what a Fresh Start Program graduate can be if they want to change their lives bad enough. I know quite a few people who have not faced the adversities and barriers that Tiffany did and who could have never accomplished what she has in such a short time with goals of that magnitude. I am proud to call her my friend.” ■



Mike Masek Joins Senior Leadership Team

Mike Masek joined Heart Ministry Center as the chief financial officer on April 1, 2024. He comes from Jesuit Academy where he served as president for the past six years. Mike's career reflects a strong commitment to strategic financial management and collaborative leadership. His experience

includes guiding institutions with fiscal responsibility and organizational goals. With a proven track record, Mike brings over three decades of work in the nonprofit sector, leading with expertise and fostering stability and growth in every role. ■



PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR NEIGHBORS EXPERIENCING POVERTY

Joe Van Trimmell, mental health practitioner, in the Monen Healthcare Clinic lobby

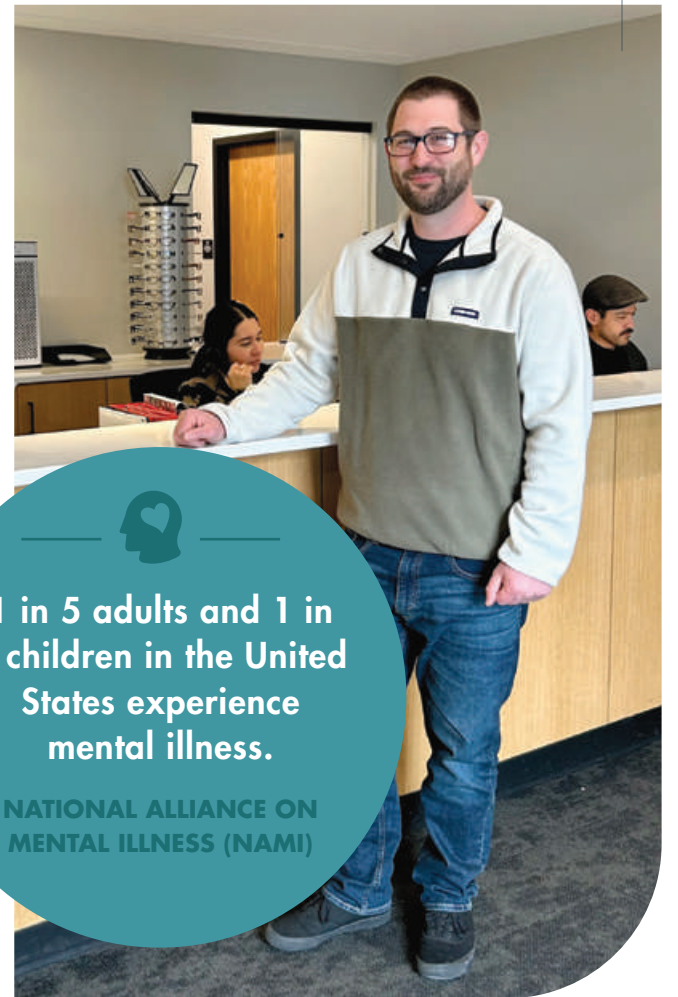
Millions of people across the country are affected by mental health conditions. According to data from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), one in five adults and one in six children in the United States experience mental illness. For families experiencing poverty, there are often many barriers to accessing needed mental health care.

Heart Ministry Center recognizes the importance of mental health care access, especially for individuals who visit the organization's campus on North 24th Street in Omaha. Many are impacted by food insecurity, lack of stable housing, and trauma. According to a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) report, living near or below the poverty line increases the risk of significant mental health problems.

Heart Ministry Center's Monen Healthcare Clinic provides free, comprehensive healthcare to community members and has two full-time mental health practitioners on staff to meet regularly with women and men participating in the Fresh Start Program along with graduates of the program and community members.

Joe Van Trimmell and Maryann Slack meet their clients where they are and build trust with them over time. Because mental health services are free, it removes any financial barriers that may have prevented people from accessing care in the past. Often, people had to choose between food for their families or paying rent and utilities and accessing therapy services. It is also convenient for community members to get meals at our choice food pantry, wash their clothing at the Fresh Start Laundromat, attend classes through the Willing Partner program, and go to their mental health appointment at Monen Healthcare all on Heart Ministry Center's campus.

The expanded Monen Healthcare Clinic opened in the fall of 2020 to help meet the increased demand from the community, and everyone who comes for care is treated with compassion and dignity. In addition to mental health care, the Clinic offers a range of medical, dental, and vision services along with regular visits from occupational and physical therapists. Monen Healthcare Clinic sees more than 3,000 patients free annually, saving community members over \$600,000 in medical expenses. A pediatrician will join the staff in the spring of 2024. ■



1 in 5 adults and 1 in 6 children in the United States experience mental illness.
NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI)



Holiday Concert Spreads Joy and Raises Funds

Karly Jurgensen, Nikki Boulay and Natalie Hughes perform on stage with fellow musicians during the Harmonies for Hope Concert.

Renowned Omaha musicians Nikki Boulay, Natalie Hughes, and Karly Jurgensen shared their beautiful talents and raised awareness for Heart Ministry Center during the holiday season. The ladies hosted the sold-out *Harmonies for Hope: A Holiday Benefit Concert for Heart Ministry Center* on December 14 at Marian High School's Mary Joy and Tal Anderson Performing Arts Center. The concert raised \$29,134.88 for Heart Ministry Center!

Nikki, Karly, and Natalie performed several holiday songs live in our lobby during pantry distribution on December 6 for community members, volunteers, Fresh Start participants, and Heart Ministry Center staff to enjoy. ■

This year's *Harmonies for Hope: A Holiday Benefit Concert for Heart Ministry Center* is scheduled for two performances, December 4 and 5, 2024. Stay tuned for more information.

FRESH FLORAL

WEDDINGS
CORPORATE EVENTS
MOTHER'S DAY
PROM

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SAVE THE DATE
for the

19TH ANNUAL

HOLY SMOKES

GETTING THE BAND BACK TOGETHER

FUNDRAISER BBQ

— THURSDAY —

AUGUST 29 2024

STEELHOUSE OMAHA

MUSIC BY FINEST HOUR
and special guests

COCKTAILS, BBQ DINNER AND MORE!

Honorary Chairs:
Patty and CL Landen and Fr. Tom Fangman

SPONSORSHIPS AND TICKETS AVAILABLE SOON

Heart Ministry Center was humbled to be recognized as a Red Cross Hero in the Heartland on March 5, 2024. Congratulations to all the honorees.

Pictured are Red Cross CEO, Jill Orton; Heart Ministry Center CEO, Dom Rahn; Heroes in the Heartland Honorary Chairs, Amy and Todd Foje



Double your Impact in Moments with a Corporate Match

At Heart Ministry Center, we are grateful for the generosity of our many volunteers and donors who make the mission possible daily. By taking advantage of corporate matching donations or contribution-based volunteering opportunities, you can double the impact of your time, talent, and treasure with just a few clicks on your company's website.

One of our regular volunteers, Matt Peters, works for Experian Corporation and provides some insight on the corporate match program his company offers and encourages others to see if similar opportunities exist at their place of employment.

"Ask your Human Resources department if there are donation matching programs or volunteer hour currency matches within the company and if not, consider forming a group that could propose such a program to benefit both individuals and the organization overall."

Like many U.S. corporations, Experian offers staff members the opportunity to match up to \$500 or another specified amount of donations made to an approved 501c3 organization. After making a direct donation online or by check, an

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Spending time at a nonprofit might allow people to further their perspective, have a good work/life balance, and have a deeper impact through the matching programs their employers may offer.

MATT PETERS
Experian Corporation

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employee can submit it for approval, which results in a matching donation from the company.

Volunteering can result in more than just time well spent serving your community. Experian employees can volunteer and submit their time for an additional donation to be made to the nonprofit organization at \$25/hour served, up to \$1,000 annually. This benefit allows a team of staff members to not only experience the food pantry operations at Heart Ministry Center but also to see financial support for the mission as a result of their willingness to serve.

"Spending time at a nonprofit might allow people to further their perspective, have a good work/life balance, and have a deeper impact through the matching programs their employers may offer." ■

Heart Ministry Center
DIGNITY FOR ALL

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HeartMinistryCenter.org

GET CONNECTED TO OUR COMMUNITY TODAY

- Visit Heart Ministry Center's campus and take a tour to see our mission in action.
- Volunteer at our Choice Food Distribution providing fresh and shelf-stable food items to community members in need.
- Make a financial gift to Heart Ministry Center or donate in honor of a loved one.
- Follow us on social media.

Thank you for supporting Heart Ministry Center. You are making a difference with families experiencing poverty in the Omaha metro.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA heartministrycenter heartministrycenter

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