

Donate Today!  
HeartlandFamilyService.org



The individuals and families we serve need help now more than ever!  
As Heartland Family Service navigates a changing landscape, our programs and services continue to deliver life-changing help to thousands in our community. Your donation can make a positive difference in their lives. Your generosity will help us create a community of opportunity... so everyone can.  
Thank you in advance for your gift!  
If you would like to learn more, call me directly at 402.552.7443.  
With deepest gratitude,  
marzia



Marzia Puccioni Shields  
Chief Development Officer  
MS Shields@HeartlandFamilyService.org

Help the children and families with a generous gift.  
Please visit [HeartlandFamilyService.org](http://HeartlandFamilyService.org)



**Child & Family Well-Being**

From early childhood education programming to crisis intervention for troubled teens to social and nutritional offerings for seniors, participants in our programs receive education and support today to have a brighter future.



**Counseling & Prevention**

Programs in this area share a central focus on therapeutic services in order to treat current mental health and substance use issues, manage chronic illnesses, and intervene earlier through education and prevention services.



**Housing, Safety, & Financial Stability**

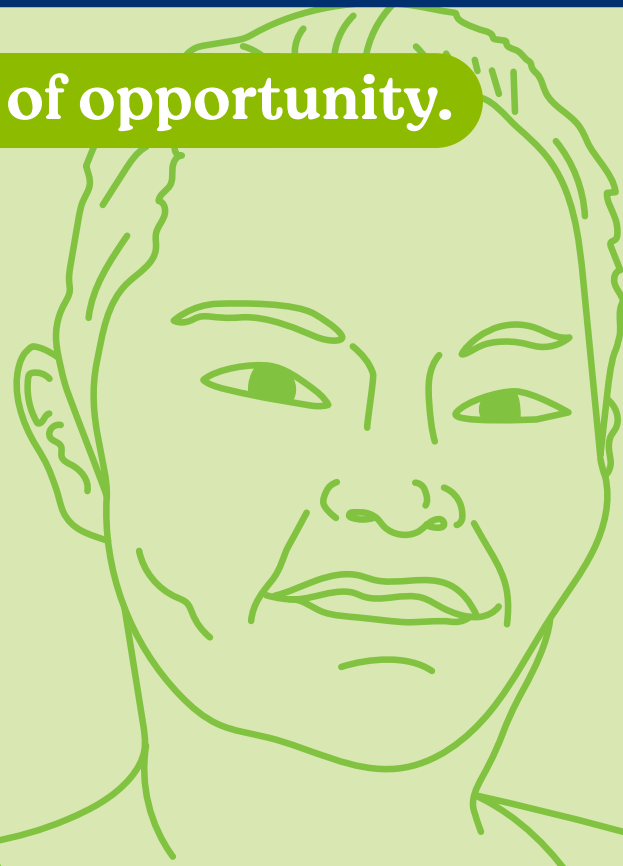
The goal of programs in this area is to provide immediate, as well as long-term assistance to members of our community experiencing issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, homelessness, and financial crisis.

2101 S. 42nd Street, Omaha, NE 68105 | (402) 552-7443 | [HeartlandFamilyService.org](http://HeartlandFamilyService.org)

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Let's create a community of opportunity.

So everyone  
can. HEARTLAND familyService







John Jeanetta,  
President & CEO



## You can help people like Desta.

At **Heartland Family Service**, we believe the programs and services we offer are life changing! Families and children need housing, individuals struggle to cope every day with their mental health, a mother and her children seek safety from abuse, and a refugee child needs extra preparation getting ready for American kindergarten. Many are struggling and need our help, especially as the effects of the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic continue to ripple through our community.

**Heartland Family Service** is here to create a community of opportunity for each person we serve. We know that transforming our world into a place of limitless opportunity is a huge goal and is only possible with the help of our community.

When you assist **Heartland Family Service** in helping individuals, children, and families, you create opportunities to guide them towards well-being, stability, and healing from their past or current trauma or struggle. Your support is needed, now more than ever, to aid us in this vision of opportunity.

If you have any questions or would like additional information on how YOU can help create a better life for children and individuals in our community, please contact **Chief Development Officer Marzia Shields** at (402) 552-7443 or [MShields@HeartlandFamilyService.org](mailto:MShields@HeartlandFamilyService.org).

Thank you for your continued support! Together, we can center our neighbors' needs. So everyone can.

With Warm Regards,

John Jeanetta, President & CEO



## Desta Can.

Since she was a teenager, Desta was a fighter. To cope with severe childhood trauma, she began using substances and getting in trouble frequently. As she grew older and had children, those children were removed from her care multiple times. It came to the point that Desta knew she needed help, so she contacted the **Heartland Family Service Family Works** program in Iowa. She arrived in the program angry at the system that removed her children, at her partner and father of her children for enabling her substance use, but most of all, Desta was angry at herself, her choices, and her recent relapse that landed her back in treatment.

A fighter her whole life, Desta's initial response to the **Family Works** program was to fight back and preserve herself and the only life she knew. She questioned the expectations and motivations of the staff who were trying to help her. Because of this paranoia and self-defense response, she made it clear that she was only in the program to "get her kids back".

The purpose of the **Family Works** program is to promote stable sobriety and economic self-sufficiency for mothers, and enhance a strong, protective maternal bond for their children. Desta's children, ages six and one, arrived at the program dysregulated, and so pushed back at her attempts to put into place the things she was learning through the parenting curriculum.

Instead of giving up, Desta began the additional difficult work of Dyadic Therapy with both children. She met weekly for Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) with the **Family Works** child and family therapist to build attachment, increase her ability to set limits, and create safety with her oldest child. She also met for weekly therapy with her one-year-old to increase attachment, and to learn new ways to nurture and parent emphatically. Desta began to use the fighting spirit she had always had, to begin fighting for her children.

Desta also began to recognize her own self-worth, participating in the **Heartland Family Service Mental Health Counseling** program, as

well as therapy sessions to challenge some of the negative beliefs she held about herself resulting in her noticeably increased self-esteem. She even physically began carrying herself differently, speaking of her willingness to accept help and immersing herself fully in all aspects of the **Heartland Family Service** programs she participated in.

Diving deeper into the program, Desta began challenging some of the relationships in her life outside of treatment, setting out to heal her relationship with her partner of 16 years, participating in weekly couple's therapy offered through the program. She began setting boundaries with people and was able to now identify destructive forces in her life.

As Desta continued her healing journey, she even mentored new clients, co-facilitating groups and taking on other program related responsibilities. She grew in her understanding of trauma and substance use, beginning to heal mentally from the significant childhood trauma she experienced. Desta learned to turn her anger into assertiveness.

Like so many women in residential treatment, Desta's time at **Family Works** was filled with outside challenges to her continued progress and commitment to sobriety. Yet she continued to push herself to grow and find new ways of coping. With the help of **Heartland Family Service** advocates and programs, **Now Desta Can.**

**The mission of Heartland Family Service is to strengthen individuals and families in our community through education, counseling, and support services.**