Giving back...
Former resident receives gifts of compassion and confidence

The phone rang at Children’s Inn the week before Easter—but this time the caller did not need the help and services offered. Instead, this mother of three was reaching out to ask if she could do something for those women and children that Children’s Inn would be serving during the coming Easter holiday.

In the course of their conversation, the caller shared the history of her own stay at Children’s Inn during the holiday season years ago.

After suffering for many years in an abusive marriage, Debby finally made the decision to get out. With no family living in the area, she sought safety and shelter for herself and her three young children. Desperately in need of help, she called Children’s Inn. Debby and her children made a safe escape and began their journey of healing.

Now, years removed from the terror and abuse that haunted her daily life, Debby was reaching out for a very different reason—she wanted to give “something” back.

As they talked, Debby shared how Children’s Inn had changed her life. She said she knew staff went above and beyond for her, and she has never forgotten the effort staff put into helping with her situation.

Yet Debby was still struggling to understand why this effort was made for her. Never before had she experienced this type of kindness—with nothing expected in return.

Debby also recalled that her situation had required a longer stay than usual, but staff was beside her every step. As she talked, the same small hint of the doubt that existed years ago when she believed she was unworthy of being treated with dignity and respect crept into Debby’s voice.

The crisis worker asked if Debby understood why Children’s Inn had provided such compassion and care.

Debby drew a deep breath and that sliver of doubt was replaced by a calm, confident voice. She responded, “I know now it’s because you guys loved me and cared about me...”

To which the staff member replied: “And, because YOU are worth it.”
Time is one of those things we often complain about—either we don’t have “enough” time or we can’t believe how it “flies” by. One day while shopping with my five-year-old son, he noticed a display of watches. One particular watch caught his eye, and he soon discovered there was a knob on the watch that could be turned and the time would change. He excitedly said to me that he wanted to buy that watch because then he could change time so that I could spend more time with him and not have to go to work. Needless to say, we walked out of the store with that watch!

It’s likely that the women and children who come to Children’s Inn think about time in an even different way. The moment they arrive at Children’s Inn is often filled with both apprehension and hope. It may be the first time they feel safe and one of the first times they don’t feel alone.

Statistically, a woman leaves her abuser seven to nine times before she is able to end the abusive relationship for good. With each time she knocks on our door or picks up the phone to call us, she is one step closer to freeing herself from a home where she is unsafe, disrespected and devalued.

Every time a child witnesses the abuse of his or her mother, the chances of that violent behavior continuing from one generation to the next increases. If we can reach that child sooner rather than later, we have the potential to change the future of not only that child but of families and our communities as a whole. This is why Children’s Inn educates thousands of children and adults in our community each year about domestic violence and child abuse.

If we could take the watch my son and I bought that day and turn back time to prevent abuse from ever occurring, I know that is something we would all do. Unfortunately, we know that isn’t possible. Instead, Children’s Inn will continue to provide much needed services that give victims of abuse the time they need to heal and the hope of a brighter future.

“Yesterday’s the past, tomorrow’s the future, but today is a gift. That’s why it’s called the present.”

~ Bil Keane
Random acts of kindness produced an unexpected gift for Children’s Inn when one boy’s effort led to The Butterfly Effect.

It all started in December when an anonymous donor gave $5 to every fourth grade student at Fred Assam Elementary School in Brandon with instructions to use it for a random act of kindness. One of the students, Kaden Rieffenberger, sat down with his family that night to talk about what he could do with his $5.

Kaden’s parents, Jim and Tanis, discussed various ideas with him. His Dad quoted Luke 8:8 from the Bible: “Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop a hundred times more than it was sown.”

Kaden decided he was going to do as the Bible verse states. He set a goal of turning his $5 into $500 by asking others to give to his chosen cause—buying Christmas gifts for the kids at Children’s Inn!

With the supervision of his Dad, Kaden went to work by contacting friends and family to support his cause with donations. Jim’s co-worker heard about the project and was moved by Kaden’s efforts. He offered matching funds if Kaden reached $500. Kaden surpassed this goal—and raised over $1,100 in the end!

Using the wish list from Children’s Inn, Kaden bought presents for the kids who were staying in the shelter due to domestic violence or child abuse and neglect. He delivered the gifts to Children’s Inn just in time for Christmas.

“IT felt really good to give to the children...” said Kaden. “...It is amazing to see what God can do with the smallest of gifts!”

From the donation of an anonymous giver of $5 to a fourth grade student who asked for gifts from dozens of caring individuals, Kaden’s seed money was paid forward to many children who needed safe shelter—a gesture of kindness that resulted in the butterfly flapping its wings to produce a hurricane of gifts for Children’s Inn.

Thank you to Kaden for his collaboration on this story!

A Physics Concept... applied to a random Act of Kindness

The Butterfly Effect is the idea that a single butterfly flapping its wings on one side of the globe can, in theory, start a hurricane on the other.
Human trafficking victims can find refuge at Children’s Inn

Human trafficking is a widespread issue that is being heard about more and more in South Dakota. By definition, human trafficking is modern-day slavery that involves commercial sex acts, or labor or services that are induced through force, fraud or coercion.

Trafficking victims are controlled and held against their will in extreme ways because they are a source of profit to the trafficker. Many are unable to communicate with their family or friends and may not even know where they are because they are often transported from one place to the next unwillingly.

Children’s Inn can and does serve as a place of refuge and support for trafficking victims, just as we do for all domestic violence and sexual assault victims. While there are similarities with trafficking and domestic violence victims, there are many differences as well. We provide staff with ongoing training on what to look for and how to respond to trafficking victims. Our goal is to respond to those who come to Children’s Inn with care and compassion, ensuring that they know they deserve to be free. Victims are provided with safety, security and the resources needed to begin their journey to a life free from violence.

Children’s Inn welcomes Allison!

Children’s Inn is excited to introduce a new staff member to Children’s Inn! Allison Parsons is taking over the role of HR Representative and Volunteer Coordinator. Allison is no stranger to the Children’s Home Society family—she previously worked at Sioux Falls Children’s Home for five years.

Legacy of Love & Hope
Amundson Challenge Endowment Update

The Amundson Endowment Challenge was announced by Children’s Inn in 2013. Long-time friends, Loren and Mavis Amundson, graciously agreed to match gifts given to the Endowment, up to $200,000! We are excited to share that we are almost halfway to meeting our goal!

But, we still need your help in completing our challenge! A gift of any size is appreciated.

You may send your gift in the envelope provided or contact Staci Kropuenske at (605) 338-0116.

Donations may be made online at: www.chssd.org/childrensinn

(Please specify Children’s Inn Endowment Fund.)
Big numbers are not always a good thing at Children’s Inn. It was hard to witness an average of 32 people in safe shelter per day in 2014. Answering 2,584 crisis phone calls in a year shows the demand for a service we wish wasn’t necessary to begin with.

So when we get the chance to celebrate big numbers that are a very good thing, we do! The numbers for Children’s Inn Gift Wrap Booth in 2014 were a huge success!

From Black Friday through Christmas Eve, 904 volunteers gave over 2,400 hours of their time to wrap over 7,500 gifts in The Empire Mall. That’s no small feat!

With the help of Life 96.5, many supplies were donated for use at the Gift Wrap Booth. All month long, the station asked listeners for donations and received over 600 different items that were dropped off in collection boxes at local Lewis Drug Stores. Life 96.5 staff and listeners also volunteered to wrap gifts for an entire day at The Empire Mall.

Sammon’s Financial Group provided extra help by issuing a $5,000 challenge to match donations for one day. Listeners responded by exceeding this initial challenge—donating $6,582!

In turn, Sammon’s Financial Group not only matched the listeners’ gifts but increased their own contribution to $11,200. Added to listener donations, the one-day fundraising grand total was $17,782!

The Miracle on 41st Street Toy Drive for Children’s Inn was also a resounding success. The collections sleigh was filled many times over with toys that were given to children for Christmas and for other special occasions.

In total, $46,300 was raised at the Children’s Inn Gift Wrap Booth in 2014. Now those are some numbers to celebrate!
How can I help?

Did you enjoy reading The Porch Light? It is our way of keeping you informed of Children's Inn news and events, and the work we are doing with children and families.

Please consider making a gift to support our mission and work. As long as domestic violence and child abuse and neglect continue, we will need friends to help sustain our mission.

### 4 EASY WAYS to make a gift today!

1. **To donate online, visit:**
   
   www.chssd.org/childrensinn

2. **To make a gift by credit card, call Staci Kropuenske at (605) 338-0116**

3. **NEW OPTION AVAILABLE!**
   
   Call Children's Inn to learn more about setting up a one-time or ongoing gift electronically from your checking or savings account (ACH payment)!

4. **Or return this slip with your gift. Please complete the following:**

   Name _________________________________

   Please use our gift of $ __________

   □ Where most needed
   □ Legacy of Love & Hope: Amundson Endowment Challenge

   Make checks payable to: CHILDREN’S INN
   All gifts are deductible for tax purposes.

**Help us go GREEN!**

To receive electronic communications, email GO GREEN to childrensinn@chssd.org and provide your email address:

Please complete the following:

INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME in the text of the email.

Your email address is for internal use only and will not be shared outside Children's Inn or Children's Home Society.

**Media One Partner and Funski Founder Greg Blomberg points to another successful year of Funski 2015 winter events that raised $28,000 for Children’s Inn. Inset photo: The KSFY TV anchors covered the news from their snow-news desk at Funski.**

**Snow news is good news!**

The 26th annual Media One Funski was full of good news! And KSFY TV was there to cover the weekend happenings in full force as they anchored the 5:00, 6:00 and 10:00 news from their own personalized snow-news desk on Friday evening!

Funski added several new attractions at this year’s event held January 23-24 at Great Bear Ski Valley. A photo booth and a genuine Funski bean bag game added a little more fun for event participants.

Registrations were packed for the traditional skiing and snowboarding events, as were the snow sculpture contest and snow tube races.

The weather was just right and all events went off without a hitch. The perfect end to a perfect event was the net $28,000 raised for Children’s Inn!
Contemplating a gift through your will or trust?

Bequests are the most common way our friends make a gift through their wills or trusts. Simply provide your attorney with the following recommended language:

“I bequeath ‘x’ to Children’s Home Foundation to be used to support the operations of Children’s Inn, a program of Children’s Home Society of South Dakota.”

Can’t quite get around to making a will?

If there are obstacles preventing you from making your will, contact your bank, brokerage firm, insurance company, employers or financial advisor and name someone you love or a charity to receive your money or investments by using the following forms:

POD Form – (Pay On Death) Bank form that gives money from bank accounts to person(s) upon account owner’s death.

TOD Form – (Transfer on Death) Similar to a POD form but used for investment accounts and insurance policies.

Benefits:

• Easier than a bequest or beneficiary designation.
• Executed outside probate.
• Forms available at your bank.
• Faster, cheaper & more convenient than establishing a will.

You can visit www.chfgift.org for more information about estate planning or contact Staci Kropuenske at (605) 338-0116 or staci.kropuenske@chssd.org.

Volunteers from Sammon’s Financial Group assembled New Beginnings Baskets for Children’s Inn clients.

Women given New Beginnings Baskets

New beginnings can come with new expenses, and for many of the clients who leave Children’s Inn, starting over is expensive.

Sammon’s Financial Group recently chose to help with a gift of $9,000 to purchase basic household goods for New Beginnings Baskets. These baskets are laundry containers filled with many basic items needed such as household cleaning supplies, a first aid kit, towels, laundry detergent and dish soap.

These items are an expensive luxury to women who simply can’t afford basic supplies when they first leave shelter to start out on their own. Without the added stress on their budgets, some of these women are able to move into their new homes even sooner.

In April, volunteers from Sammon’s Financial Group came to Children’s Inn and assembled the New Beginnings Baskets. The baskets are now ready to be shared with women who have made the courageous step to leave their abusers and start a new life free from violence.

In addition to funding the baskets, Sammon’s Financial Group donated to the Gift Wrap Booth and provided a program support gift. Thank you for blessing Children’s Inn with gifts totaling $26,200!

FOOD ITEMS:

Canned vegetables: corn, green beans, baked beans, wax beans
Canned fruit: applesauce, fruit cocktail, peaches, pears, pineapple
Frozen meat: ham, turkey, chicken breast, hamburger
Grocery gift cards for perishable food items
Coffee
Syrup
Jello
Cereal
Snack cakes
Bottled water

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:

Sunscreen
Batteries (all sizes)
Backpacks
Alarm clock radios
Portable DVD players
Retail store gift cards
Gas gift cards
Arts & Crafts kits
Sandbox toys/buckets/scoops
Sandwich & gallon storage bags
Activity gift cards: movies, zoo, fast food, bowling, etc.

BEDDING:

Sheet sets (twin size)
Crib sheets & mattress pads

CLOTHING ITEMS:

Girls and Boys shirts & pants (sizes 2-14)
Children’s shoes (all sizes)
Children’s swimsuits
Infant sleep sacks/swaddle sacks

A more detailed list is available upon request.

CAN YOU HELP?

Please call Staci Kropuenske with any questions:
605-338-0116

Children’s Inn

Financial Summary Fiscal Year 2014

Government Funding 38%
Endowment Distribution 21%
Gifts & Special Events 24%
Salaries & Training 69%
Occupancy, Equipment & Direct Client Costs 21%
Administration 8%
Supplies 2%
17% United Way

Income: $2,156,593

Expense: $2,156,593

Save
2ND ANNUAL

Vern Eide Acura Golf Classic to benefit Children’s Inn

Children’s Inn is pleased to partner with Vern Eide Acura for the 2nd Annual Vern Eide Acura Golf Classic! The Classic will be held on Friday, May 29, at GreatLIFE Bakker Crossing Golf Course.

This event is open to all adults 18 years and older. Registration is $200 for an individual or $800 for a foursome, which includes green fees and carts, lunch, and many chances to win great prizes—including a new Acura TLX!

Register online at verneideacura.com or chssd.org/childrensinn, or contact Staci at (605) 338-0116/staci.kropuenske@chssd.org. The registration deadline is Friday, May 22.

Children’s Home Foundation President George Roberts didn’t win the hole-in-one at last year’s Vern Eide Acura Golf Classic, but he was cheering for the beautiful day of golfing to benefit Children’s Inn! Good luck this year, George!