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Orient of Nebraska

January-February 2024

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Membership

This past November, Nebraska Scottish Rite Masons celebrated a historic Reunion, welcoming Candidates from across the state as well as Prince Hall Masons. Over the years, many of us have made connections with our Prince Hall Brethren and Brethren from around the state through meetings, appendant Masonic bodies, or annual communication.

It was fun to catch up and share a laugh over meals or donuts with Brethren from Kimball, Kearney, Lincoln, Scottsbluff, North



Percy Newton, Sr. (left), Grand Commander James D. Cole, 33°, and Brian Stewart, 32°

Platte, and all points in between. We made good friends with our Prince Hall Brethren, and fellowship was at its best throughout this historic Reunion.

The concept of the friendships we enjoy through Masonry can't be emphasized enough. Most of us have friends we've

known from high school or college, and we all have friends from work, church, or just people we've met along the way.

But even with these social circles and the benefit of social media connections, how often do we really socialize with these groups? Studies repeatedly show that we don't really connect beyond the occasional get-together. Sure, a few guys from work get together for a drink, but

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plan on it!

a RiteCare vision for the future

Recently, Scottish Rite Masons received the annual appeal for the 101-Club, which supports RiteCare speech therapy services for children through the Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska.

Last year, this appeal raised \$15,868, the equivalent of 158 sessions of therapy for children. 21 Brethren stepped up as SGIG Society donors, giving \$300 or more for the year, which equals the cost of 3 sessions of speech therapy for a child.

In all, Nebraska Scottish Rite Masons underwrote 3,586 sessions of therapy in 2022 for 520 children. Scottish Rite Masons will donate an estimated \$814,675 to provide these services at RiteCare Clinics at the University of

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Orient Calendar

- Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 Wednesday Lunches (H)
- Jan 13..... KSA Members Dinner (O)
- Jan 20..... Scottish Society of NE Robert Burns Dinner (O)
- Jan 26..... Scotch Tasting (O)
- Jan 27..... Robert Burns Celebration (L)
- Feb 1-3 Annual Communication (Kearney, NE)
- Feb 6 KCCH Seafood Boil (O)
- Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Wednesday Lunches (H)
- Mar 2 Hastings Spring Reunion (H)
- Mar 6, 13, 20, 22 Wednesday Lunches (H)
- Mar 24-25 Alliance Spring Reunion (A)
- Apr 18-20..... Leadership Conference (Kansas City, MO)
- Apr 3, 10, 17, 24..... Wednesday Lunches (H)
- May 15..... Spring Outing (O)
- June 6, 7, 8 Omaha Spring Reunion (O)
- Sept 25..... RiteCare Classic (O)
- Sept 25-28 National RiteCare Conference (O)

**Please check with your
Valley for most current updates to
Scottish Rite events**

Lodge of Perfection meetings:

Alliance, 4th Friday of each month

Jan 26, Feb 23, Mar 22, Apr 26, May 24, June 28
July 26, Aug 23, Sept 27, Oct 25, Nov 22, Dec 27

Hastings, 1st Tuesday of each month

Jan 2, Feb 6, Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7, June 4
July 2, Aug 6, Sept 3, Oct 8, Nov 5, Dec 3

Lincoln, 3rd Wednesday of each month

Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar 20, Apr 17, May 22, June 19
July 17, Aug 21, Sept 18, Oct 16, Nov 20, Dec 18

Omaha, 3rd Monday of each month

Jan 15, Feb 19, Mar 18, Apr 15, May 20, June 17
July 15, Aug 19, Sept 16, Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 16

**For more information,
contact the General Secretary in your Valley**

- Art Stricker, 33° (Alliance) (308) 762-4324
- Phil Odom, 33° (Hastings) (402) 462-5813
- Bruce Wood, 33° (Lincoln)..... (402) 435-2144
- John Maxell, 33° (Omaha)..... (402) 342-1300



I want to start with congratulating our newest 32° Scottish Rite Mason, Kevin Wynne who received the Degrees at the Nebraska Scottish Rite Reunion in Omaha in the special Reunion with our Nebraska Prince Hall Brethren. I wasn't able to be present, but Kevin and John Ferguson tell me the degree work was excellent and the fellowship with our Prince Hall Brethren even better. By the time this hits your mailbox, I think most people will know that Kevin will be Grand Tyler for the Grand Lodge of Nebraska for John Ferguson. It makes me proud that John Ferguson will be representing all brethren of the Panhandle as Grand Master in 2024.



Because of the Nebraska Reunion in Omaha, we did not have a Fall Reunion in Alliance, but we are gearing up for a Reunion on March 24-25th, with several Candidates lined up and ready to join us as our newest 32° Scottish Rite Masons. I hope you will plan to join us - we always need help with Degree work, the stage crew, or simply to sit on the sidelines and watch the Degrees and welcome our newest Brethren. Our work is the equal of every other Valley, so I hope you'll plan to come out for the Reunion.

I am proud to tell you that the Valley met our 2023 commitment to Nebraska's RiteCare Speech and Language Clinic, and we are going to be the first Valley in the state to meet our 2024 commitment to our RiteCare kids. It is certainly no secret that Alliance may be the smallest Scottish Rite Valley in Nebraska, but this Valley will excel in everything we do, including our obligations to children with speech disorders across the state. I'm also proud to tell you that we continue to host and support Community Table, serving anyone facing food insecurity in Box Butte County.

I hope you'll plan to be here for meetings, Reunions, and events, and make 2024 an even better year for the Valley of Alliance!

*~Art Stricker, 33° General Secretary
artstricker77@gmail.com
(308) 762-4324*



The two 33° Dans: Dan Deffenbaugh and Dan Wellendorf

The dan Dan

In martial arts, the term *dan* indicates a practitioner who has surpassed the basic ranks, and is recognized as having a high degree of competence across multiple techniques.

In the context of Freemasonry, Dan Deffenbaugh, 33° easily meets that criterion, having served as Master of Hastings Lodge #50. Dan has been a tireless member of the Hastings Valley, providing first-rate Masonic education whenever asked, served as Venerable Master for the Lodge of Perfection, communicating Scottish Rite degrees with his deep knowledge of the biblical history and philosophy behind the degrees, and participating in the degree work at Reunions whenever called upon. Dan Deffenbaugh has also been a founding member and presenter with the monthly Lyceum education series via Zoom.

This past October 3rd, Dan Wellendorf, 33°, Sovereign Grand Inspector General for Nebraska, traveled to Hastings and communicated the Inspector General Honorary degree to Dan Deffenbaugh, reminding him of the lessons of the Thirty-Third Degree to serve mankind where his influence may best be felt and to develop the good in human nature.

Dan currently serves as Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences at Central Community College on the Hastings campus. He has authored a book and has a wide range of interests, including playing bluegrass music, fly fishing, biking, hiking, art history, and the continual study of world religion and philosophy.



Hastings Celebrates the Feast of Tishri

On November 14th, the Central Nebraska Valley in Hastings celebrated the annual Feast of Tishri. A York Rite meeting was happening in the adjoining dining room, and members of the Commandery joined the Scottish Rite members for a great dinner of chicken cordon bleu, mashed potatoes, carrots, and pie and ice cream.

Before dinner began, Ron Nielsen, 32° KCCH presented a 50-year certificate to Hugh Nehls, 32°, who joined the Hastings Valley in November, 1972. Members of the Scottish Rite made the traditional toasts, followed by an excellent presentation by Dan Deffenbaugh, 33° covering the history of Israel and Palestine, beginning with pre-Roman times.

Photos: Top (Kirk McNeal, 32° proposing a toast); top right (Hugh Nehls, 32° receives his 50-year certificate from Ron Nielsen, 32° KCCH); bottom right (Richard Johnson, 32° KCCH proposes a toast)



Hastings Valley Working on NRHP Application

Many years ago, Stephen Pittman, 33° began researching and writing the application to include the Hastings Masonic Center on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Unfortunately, this was never completed. The Valley is reviving this project, which would help secure grants in support of building restoration. The Valley is seeking help with additional research and writing. If you are interested, please reach out to Phil Odom, 33° at podom@hastingsmasonic.org.



Laying the cornerstone at the Hastings Masonic Center on September 14, 1928



The Valley of Lincoln Celebrates the Feast of Tishri

The Lincoln Valley celebrated the Feast of Tishri on Sunday, October 29th, welcoming about 45 members and their ladies, who enjoyed an excellent dinner catered by the Venue.

Oscar Sinclair, 32° served as Master of Ceremonies for the evening, and led the Brethren in the traditional toasts.



Afterward, the Valley hosted a round panel conversation on the Future of Freemasonry in Nebraska, with Don Albrecht, 32° KCCH, David Bloomquist, 32° KCCH, MW Alex Straatmann, 32°, and Dan Wellendorf, 33°, SGIG in Nebraska. Each shared their own perspectives on the current state of Masonry and their view of what is needed to grow the Craft in the future. Dan Wellendorf shared the view that while marketing and promotion have their place, his actions and behavior best advertise to the world what a Mason should be, and if he does nothing more than leave the world a little better, he will have done his part to preserve Freemasonry's unique position in today's society.



Edward Boone invested with 32° KCCH at Special Investiture Ceremony

During the statewide RiteCare Conference on October 6th, Edward Boone took a break from Army Reserve training to be invested a 32° Knight Commander of the Court of Honour by Dan Wellendorf, 33°, SGIG in Nebraska.

The Supreme Council, at the insistence of Grand Commander Albert Pike, created the KCCH rank in 1870 to honor those Brethren who have shown significant achievement. It is considered one of the highest honors in the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction to hear the Acting Sovereign Grand Commander say at the investiture's culmination, "I dub and create thee a Knight Commander of the Court of Honour, and may our Father in Heaven make thee a good Knight in the service of our fellow man."

Edward served as Venerable Master for the Lodge of Perfection and is a member of the Lincoln Knights of St Andrew. He continues supports the Valley with Degree work at Reunions. Outside of Masonry, Edward is a Staff Sergeant in the Army Reserve and serves on the board of the Mental Health Association of Nebraska. He is Chief of Staff to the State Treasurer, and is an avid cat enthusiast.

Lincoln RiteCare Clinic Hosts SPOOKTACULAR Trunk or Treat



The Lincoln RiteCare Clinic hosted the annual Trunk or Treat at the UNL Barkley Memorial Center on Sunday, October 29th. This year, Clinicians Holly Schlautmann and Suzie Budzinski invited the UNL Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) as well as organizations in Lincoln serving families affected by Apraxia, Down Syndrome, Autism, and other intellectual or developmental disabilities. Not only did these organizations set up tables, but also invited their families, and Trunk or Treat provided candy to over 300 children over the course of two hours.



One parent thanked the Scottish Rite Masons, saying "thank you for a fun event that welcomes kids of all abilities and helps them enjoy Halloween!"



"I truly can't say 'thank you' enough - thank you for what the Scottish Rite Masons all are doing. It means the world to me and to so many others!" ~Christian Vihstadt, 2023-2024 scholarship recipient

Scottish Rite Masons Meet 2023-2024 UNO Scholarship Recipients at October Lodge Dinner

The Omaha Scottish Rite welcomed six of our UNO scholarship recipients at the October Lodge dinner.

John Hardy, 32° KCCH welcomed our scholarship recipients and presented each of them with a certificate and a beautiful pen on behalf of the Scottish Rite. He welcomed Christian Vihstadt to the podium, a Junior majoring in Music Education at the College of Communication, Fine Arts, and Media.

Christian began by thanking Scottish Rite Masons, telling members "that there is no possible way for me to sufficiently thank you for all the incredible investment you have made in education at [the University of Nebraska at] Omaha." This scholarship, he told members, gives him the security in his education to take more opportunities that he might otherwise have taken. He spoke about joining the UNO Concert Choir, performing at Carnegie Hall in New York, and an opportunity to study in Kenya, learning about different teaching practices around the world to create a more inclusive classroom environment.

Members then heard from Dr. Elizabeth Janssen, Department Chair of the UNO Special Education & Communication Disorders Department. She thanked members for and let them know how much it means to provide financial support for students. Dr. Janssen stressed the importance of the students, and how the Scottish Rite scholarships



Dr. Elizabeth Janssen (top) and Brooke Wilmesherr, Masters student in Speech Pathology, with John Hardy, 32° (bottom)

were furthering their careers. She spoke about how the UNO graduate department is preparing exemplary professionals through a competitive program that receives 80 to 120 graduate applications each year, and accepts 20 students.

The Scottish Rite Foundation of Omaha has given \$2,000 scholarships since 1992, awarding approximately \$820,000 over that time period. Each year, Scottish Rite Masons attend the UNO Honors Program dinner and meet several of our scholarship recipients whose research projects truly confirm the value of continuing to support scholarships for tomorrow's leaders.

1914 SOCIETY DONORS

THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024

Ed Anderson, 32°
 Kyle Beckner, 32° KCCH
 Tom Brummett, 33°
 Greg Carlson, 32° KCCH
 Scott Christiansen, 32°
 John Crouch, 32°
 the Culinary Masters
 Carl Diamond, 32°
 Micah Evans, 33°
 Wally Farley, 32°
 Alan Gardner, 32°
 Rick Gilmore, 33°
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 Michael J. Precella, 32° KCCH
 Tim Peters, 32°
 Matthew Schell, 32°
 Carl Simmons, 32° KCCH
 Wayne Stuberg, 32° KCCH
 Leland Terry, 33°
 Gary (Grip) Williams, 32° KCCH
 John Williamson, 32°
 Steven Zimmerman, 32° KCCH

1914 Society donations of \$250 or more for the 2023-2024 year will be recognized on the Omaha section of the Nebraska Scottish Rite Journal through the May-June, 2024 edition. 1914 Society donations support the upkeep of the historical Scottish Rite through the Building Fund. (Donations can not be considered tax-deductible for tax purposes.)

23 Golf Teams Raise \$24,000 in 25th Year for

RiteCare Classic GOLF BENEFIT



Jason Sullivan, Kraig Prange, Jake Lazano, and Jon Osborne

This year celebrated the 25th year of the RiteCare Classic – the Scottish Rite golf benefit, which has grown into a major benefit for the RiteCare Speech and Language Clinics. This year’s RiteCare Classic was held on September 29th at Dodge-Riverside Golf Course in Council Bluffs, Iowa, raising more than \$24,000 for the RiteCare Speech and Language Clinics.

RiteCare Classic committee chair Buzz Garlock, 33rd welcomed 92 golfers, thanking sponsors and donors for incredible support. “Thanks to you and our generous sponsors, Buzz said, “more than 500 children across the state will receive access to speech therapy services. Nebraska children,” Buzz said. “The families we serve are truly grateful for your generosity today.”

Buzz reminded players that the proceeds provide speech therapy, not just for children in Omaha, but across the state. Rural families who may not have immediate access to speech therapists can work with a clinician through telemedicine and receive the same level of services as a child at the Munroe-Meyer institute .

After the golf tournament at Dodge-Riverside, guests came back to the Scottish Rite for raffle prizes, flag prizes, and the flight winners. The Culinary Masters served an excellent barbecue brisket dinner with sides.



Ira Nathan, Larry Crowell, Jeremy Hollembeak, and Mark Pilley, MD



Bryan Kaufman, Gary Unger, Bob Gilmore, and Rick Gilmore



UNMC team: Allison Grennan, PhD, Christi Ives, Holly Roberts, PhD, and Keith Allen, PhD

The 2023 RiteCare Classic was generously sponsored by:

UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute
Presenting Sponsor

Eyman Plumbing Heating & Air
Alpha Dental & Orthodontics
Dr. Gregory Oliver
Dinner Sponsors

RBC Wealth Management
Golf Ball Sponsor

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Microfiber Greens Towel
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Keast Chevrolet
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Knights of St. Andrew
Omaha Home for Boys
Soar Wealth Strategies - Andrew Muska
Bob and Terry Pelletier
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Lodge of Perfection Officers
Council of Kadosh Officers
Chapter of Rose Croix Officers
Omaha Consistory Officers

Flag Sponsors

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
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| Tiburon Golf Course | Nebraska PGA Hope |
| Ashland Country Club | Tracy Willits |
| Schmidley's Golf Range | |
| Rivers Wild Golf Course | |
| Safari's Cigars and Lounge | |
| UNL PGA Golf Management - Ian Brandt | |

Friends of Rite Care

DINNER AND AUCTION

The Friends of Scottish Rite Dinner and Auction, hosted this past October 27th, continues to be one of the Valley of Omaha's best fundraisers of the year. This year, the Friends Dinner welcomed 140 guests for an evening with a hosted wine tasting and fine Scotch tasting, extraordinary silent and live auction items, including fine bourbons, jewelry, sports packages, and other items donated by area businesses and members.



spent more than fifty years as a powerful advocate and force for change for Nebraskans like her daughter Elaine. Joan served as the president of the Autism Center of Nebraska, Arc of Nebraska (a statewide advocacy group), and other organizations dedicated to championing the cause of Nebraskans with disabilities.

The Scottish Rite is indebted to the Nebraska Student Speech-Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha who volunteered for the evening, setting up, serving hors d'oeuvres and dinner, and cleaning up afterward. NSSLHA students have been involved for many years as volunteers, and continue to be recognized on the website, program, and invitation for their contributions.

The evening was a benefit for the Scottish Rite Foundation of Omaha's principal philanthropy, the RiteCare Speech and Language Clinic at the UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute, raising approximately \$20,000.

Our emcee for the evening was Sue Baggary Seline, former news anchor at WOWT-6. Our honoree this year was Joan K. Marcus, who raised her daughter with an intellectual disability, and

Our event chairs were Terry Pelletier and Nancy Pippin, who contributed numerous hours to selecting the menu,



Top: Howard K. Marcus and his mother, Joan K. Marcus; Bottom: RiteCare Clinicians Susan Fager, Nicole Santangelo, Beth Hughes, Paul Laikko, Leslie VanWinkle, and Dan Wellendorf, 33°

and decorating the dining room. The Scottish Rite is indebted to Terry and Nancy for their work for the Friends Dinner.

Next year's dinner will be on Friday, October 28, 2022 at the Scottish Rite. Plan to join us for another great Dinner and Auction!

Membership, continued

that's a one-off rather than a sustained gathering among friends.

Masonry seems to be the model for making friendships. Men come together with different backgrounds, different opinions, different professions, yet most of us will point to a strong bond with Masons that transcends those differences. This was certainly obvious at the Reunion as we sat together as Brothers and friends, regardless of our widely different views on tariffs, the eastern question, or the gold standard.

In fact, friendship and brotherhood is really the most valuable asset of Freemasonry. Any Brother who travels beyond his own Lodge winds up making friends across the state. This is certainly not a new phenomenon within the fraternity. In Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, the first charge reminds us that



Members of Centennial Lodge #326 got together for breakfast this past August.

"Masonry becomes the Center of Union and the Means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must have remained at a perpetual Distance."

The member who becomes active in his Lodge can't help but connect with other members engaged in the same work. Taking part in meaningful and worthwhile projects with other good men with whom we have a connection

creates a camaraderie which can't help but blossom into true friendship. The Mason who doesn't regularly attend or participate genuinely misses out in something special, as well as that extraordinary benefit of developing friendship out of these connections.

Expanding our Masonic connections through the appendant bodies - Shriners, Scottish Rite, York Rite, National Sojourner's, Widow's Sons, - only expands that network of connections and friends across the state.

My own life is richer for these friends, and finding time to get together outside of structured Lodge meetings or events. We can't put a price on these connections, but I would certainly say that my membership in the fraternity has given me Brothers I'm truly proud to call my friends.

Giving the Gift of VOICE

... continued from page 1

Nebraska at Kearney, the Hastings Masonic Center, the UNL Barkley Memorial Center and the UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute.

This is a genuinely impressive record, and every single Scottish Rite Mason should be proud that we contribute these sums each year, regardless of the economy. The families who receive these services are profoundly grateful to you.

One RiteCare mom recently wrote us from Lincoln, "We are so thankful. We would like to express our gratitude for the support of the Scottish Rite Foundation to the RiteCare Clinic. The speech therapy sessions have meant a world of difference in improving his speech, communication and confidence. It has changed his world and ours. Although we have a ways to go, it is life changing and we want to let you know our heart-felt thanks. Thank you!!!!"

I ask you to consider a gift to the Nebraska Foundation as a member of the 101 Club, representing a session of therapy. Donations of \$300 or more will be recognized in the Scottish Rite Journal as SGIG Circle members. All donors of \$100 or more will receive the 101-Club pin, and I would ask you to wear it with pride and explain the significance to your Brethren at Lodge, your family, and your friends.



Thank you note from a RiteCare family

Freemasons are making a huge impact on our communities. Scholarships. Teacher of the Year awards. Shriners Hospitals for Children. Knights Templar Eye Foundation. Grottoes International Humanitarian Foundation. The list goes on and on!

Our legacy isn't in our Masonic temples. It is in the voices of children who have overcome speech difficulties, children who are walking, smiling, reading, and interacting, children who become successful adults thanks to the therapy and scholarships Masons provide.

Please reach out to me if you are interested in leaving your own legacy through a bequest to your Valley's foundation or the Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska. You can also consult free-will.com, a free website that provides powerful tools for anyone who wants to craft their estate and will.

As always, THANK YOU for being a Brother and a Scottish Rite Mason.

SCOTTISH RITE JOURNAL

OF FREEMASONRY ♦ SOUTHERN JURISDICTION ♦ USA

The Scottish Rite Journal is published bi-monthly by the Supreme Council, 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, USA. The Orient of Nebraska insert is prepared for members of the Alliance, Hastings, Lincoln, and Omaha Valleys, and is mailed to all current Scottish Rite Freemasons in Nebraska's Valleys. For submissions or articles, please contact Micah Evans at micah@SRNE.org or call (402) 342-1300. Whenever possible, please include a high-resolution photo with your submission. All submissions must be received at least 45 days before the date of publication, which occurs at the beginning of odd-numbered months. (Submissions for the March-April, 2024 Scottish Rite Journal must be received no later than mid-January for consideration.)

Micah I. Evans, 33°

Orient Development Director

(402) 342-1300

micah@SRNE.org

SGIG Circle Donors (\$300+) to the Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska: Sept. 1, 2022 - Sept. 30, 2023

| Name | Valley |
|-------------------|----------|
| Dan Alati | Omaha |
| Ken Beebe | Lincoln |
| Dennis Brydl | Lincoln |
| Charles Bukin | Lincoln |
| Warren Cooke | Omaha |
| William Cook, Jr. | Lincoln |
| Schadd Gray | Omaha |
| Peter Hartwig | Lincoln |
| Ben Harvey | Omaha |
| James Heinke | Lincoln |
| Gene Hokom | Hastings |
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| Ward Reesman | Lincoln |
| Michael Roe | Lincoln |
| Carl Simmons | Omaha |
| Ronald Stites | Omaha |
| Michael Stuhr | Omaha |
| George White | Hastings |
| William Workman | Lincoln |

Thanks to the generosity of Scottish Rite Masons, RiteCare children receive all the speech therapy they need, without regard to a family's ability to pay. SGIG Circle donors have pledged \$300 or more toward speech therapy for the year. **Please consider a donation or pledge and make a significant impact on our ability to provide exceptional speech therapy for Nebraska children.**