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## Press Release

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### **New Beginnings receives *Pathways* grant for their Bisonte Food Service Communal Food Program**

#### **Reno County, Kansas – March 4, 2024**

Shara Gonzales, President and CEO of New Beginnings, Inc., with Isaac Dimitt, Executive Chef/Kitchen Supervisor for New Beginnings, Inc., accepted a check for \$10,000 on Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, for the New Beginnings Bisonte Food Service Communal Meal Program as part of the *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas (Pathways)* implementation grant, a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) initiative, in partnership with Heal Reno County and the Substance Abuse Center of Kansas (SACK). Claudio Faundez, Group Sales Advisor with BCBSKS, presented the check with Candace Davidson, Reno County Health Department Health Educator and Heal Reno County.

The Bisonte Food Service Communal Meal Program is designed to provide balanced meals and nutrition education to people in recovery in a communal meal setting, so they can support and sustain their recovery. The Bisonte Food Service is made up of and managed by people who have substance use disorders, are in recovery, and are either graduates of New Beginnings Transitional Jobs Program or are members of Oxford House Chapter 13. The Bisonte Food Service provides dietary meals for the detox and residential treatment unit of SACK and for Horizons Mental Health Center's Crisis Unit.

The Bisonte Food Service will begin developing and implementing a Nutrition for Recovery Program using funds provided by the *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* implementation grant consisting of:

\$500 for stipends for five Transitional Jobs Program members to develop the program (5x\$100.)

\$300 for research materials including books.

\$3,500 for a communications firm to develop presentation materials, handouts and posters including printing costs.

\$3,000 for educational meals accompanying presentations.

\$2,700 for horse trough garden beds and start up garden materials including soil, irrigation and seeds or starters for a garden to be built at the SACK site and maintained by people in recovery.

\$10,000 grant total.

"This is the next step in treatment as we work with people in recovery. There's a nutritional need and while we're in treatment facilities, we can start to change the diet for people that are in recovery, or at least in the beginning of their journey into recovery. Every type of substance misused has a nutritional deficiency that comes with it so it's specific to the drug of choice. The hope is that this is a program that can be copied at other treatment facilities within Kansas," said Gonzales.

According to the American Addictions Centers, “Proper nutrition can help both the brain and body heal from chronic substance abuse and increase the user’s odds of getting and staying sober.”

As part of the grant, the Bisonte Food Service has agreed to have a written policy that includes nutrition standards that follow evidence-based standards and are specifically focused on the population to be served by the communal meals program. The policy also includes a comprehensive tobacco-free space for any on-site food service program. They commit to continue this effort for at least two years and apply nutrition standards for up to five years if the program is still on-going for those five years.



**About Pathways to a Healthy Kansas**

*Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* is the largest community grant program ever funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. The *Pathways* program provides 16 community coalitions with the tools and resources needed to remove barriers and engage their communities in ways that enable healthy eating and tobacco-free, active living to become a way of life. The grant funding for each community includes a coordination grant along with the opportunity to apply for non-competitive implementation and achievements grants. For more information, visit [bcbsks.com/pathways](http://bcbsks.com/pathways).

**About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas**

For more than 75 years, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas has built a reputation of trust with its members and contracting providers by providing outstanding customer service while quickly and accurately processing claims; fairly administering benefit plans and contracts; offering programs, services and tools to help members improve or maintain their health; and operating under the highest ethical standards while being good stewards of premium dollars. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and is the state’s largest insurer, serving all Kansas counties except Johnson and Wyandotte. For more information, visit [bcbsks.com](http://bcbsks.com).

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