



# THE FURNITURE PROJECT

Omaha

*One Community, Lifting Together.*

Omaha's Centralized Furniture Warehouse



## About us

The Furniture Project was started by Omaha firefighter, Drew Gerken, in 2013. Going into homes as a firefighter, Drew saw first hand the impoverishment many families in Omaha were experiencing. Children with no beds, families with no tables or chairs, people living in desperate conditions. Drew began delivering donated furniture as a volunteer, and has carried the organization to its current non profit status.

## Current Situation

There is no centralized furniture warehouse in Omaha. Agencies rely on duplicated small donation centers scattered around the city. Caseworkers struggle to obtain donated furniture, and often have issues finding storage and transportation.

## Problem Solved

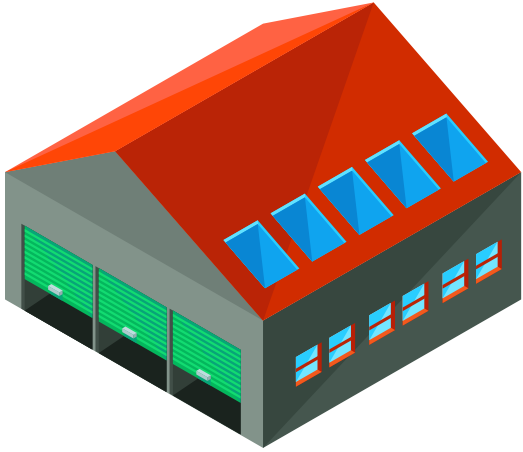
A centralized "one stop shop" warehouse will provide a solution for Omaha. Agencies can focus on providing quality services, instead of worrying where they will obtain household items for clients. Duplication of furniture collection and storage can end.

# Agencies Currently Utilizing The Furniture Project

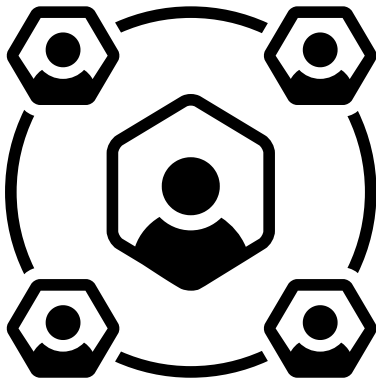
- Lutheran Family Services
- Refugee Empowerment Center
- Omaha Public Schools
- Heartland Family Services
- Together, Inc.
- Lydia House
- Women's Center for Advancement
- Westside Community Schools
- Restoring Dignity
- Child Savings Institute
- Compassion in Action
- 3Sisters
- Child Protective Services
- International Council for Refugees and Immigrants
- Carole's House of Hope
- Avenue Scholars
- Urban League
- Center for Healthy Families
- Apex Family Care
- Metro Community College
- Catholic Charities
- CUES
- Benson Are Refugee Taskforce
- Team Bike Rescue
- Omaha Fire Department
- Omaha Police Department
- UNMC



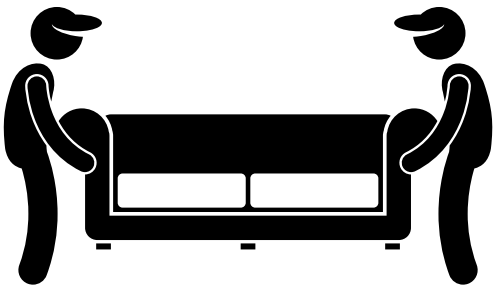
# Vision for Omaha



Full service  
centralized  
furniture  
warehouse  
(15,000 to 30,000  
square feet)



Available for any  
social service  
agency to utilize



Donated furniture  
delivered to  
families in need





## Modeled after 'Bridging' in Minneapolis

- Bridging (501(c)3 non profit) is a centralized furniture warehouse that collects donated household items and then distributes requested items through social service agencies throughout the Twin Cities Metro area
- 48,000 square foot warehouse
- Serves 4,000 households a year (100,000 households since 1987)
- Families can visit the warehouse to "shop" for items. All items are then delivered to the family's home or are made ready for pickup.
- Agencies can request furniture for clients, shopping on their behalf, if appropriate (Appointments are \$60 and delivery is \$180 for a truckload of furniture).
- <https://bridging.org/>





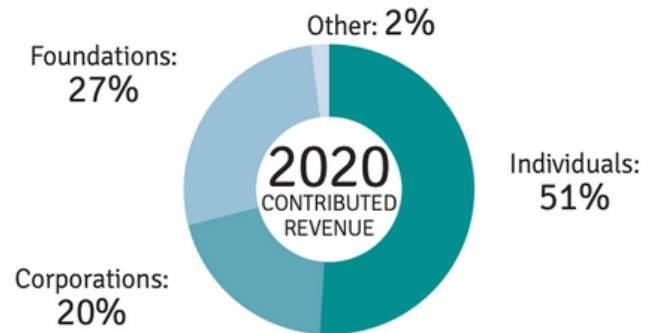
# 'Bridging' 2020 Report

## 2020 FINANCIALS

Revenue	2020	2019
In-Kind	\$4,020,804	\$6,295,912
Foundations, Grants, Contributions	\$1,911,851	\$1,251,516
Service Fees	\$707,021	\$1,130,861
Other Revenue	\$753,477	\$844,624
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$7,393,153</b>	<b>\$9,522,913</b>
Expenses	2020	2019
Program Services	\$6,391,154	\$9,128,586
Fundraising	\$310,173	\$303,797
Management & General	\$282,690	\$266,104
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$6,984,017</b>	<b>\$9,698,487</b>
Balance Sheet	2020	2019
Current Assets	\$2,949,729	\$2,781,832
Property & Equipment	\$4,763,940	\$4,713,306
Assets	\$7,777,515	\$7,505,186
Liabilities	\$484,965	\$621,772
Net Assets	\$7,292,550	\$6,883,414
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$7,777,515</b>	<b>\$7,505,186</b>

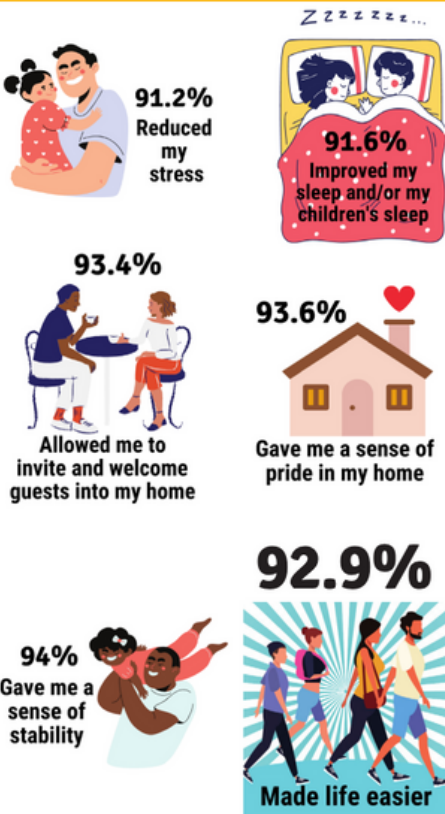
Go to BRIDGING.ORG for full financial statements, including our audit, form 990 and 2020 financial and in-kind donors.

## 2020 CONTRIBUTED REVENUE BREAKDOWN



The community was there for us during every step - before, during and we know they will be there after the COVID pandemic ends. Thank you!

## CLIENT SURVEY RESULTS



## HOW THE COMMUNITY HELPS



## THE ITEMS WE GIVE



## TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK



## THRIFT VALUE OF ITEMS KEPT OUT OF LANDFILLS



# How Do We Get There?



- Need 15,000 to 30,000 square foot warehouse
- Hire Executive Director for The Furniture Project
- Hire 1 full time warehouse staff member
- Hire 2 part time delivery drivers
- Hire volunteer coordinator
- Purchase one additional delivery truck (currently own one truck)
- Consolidate other smaller donation centers around Omaha (through partnership and then by merging)
- Advertise The Furniture Project as Omaha's "one stop" for donating furniture and household items
- Create citywide referral process
- Visit 'Bridging' in Minneapolis to see their model and learn how to replicate in Omaha







## Testimonial

*The Furniture Project has already been an invaluable resource to Lutheran Family Services, the largest refugee resettlement agency in Omaha, Nebraska. By complementing our capacity and stepping into the gaps--providing furniture, home supplies, and transportation, all in a timely fashion--the Furniture Project has been a force multiplier in our ability to set up new homes for incoming refugees looking to start a new life in our community.*

*As LFS prepares for this new wave of Afgans fleeing persecution and terrorism--perhaps the largest US refugee resettlement effort in our history--we see this as an opportunity to think anew and creatively and as part of this, would be very interested in exploring improvements in our community's resettlement 'infrastructure.' For example, an even more capable Furniture Project, able to serve as the regular, ongoing furniture hub for the Omaha community and as a partner with LFS may offer significant, real advantages and increase efficiencies for multiple interested parties--for social service orgaizations such as LFS, for the Furniture Project, for the funding community, and most importantly, for the people we serve.*

*I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further, and until then, I applaud the Furniture Project for their dedication to all the people in our community and offer my sincere thanks to a dedicated, collegial organization with which we are fortunate to be able to work with side by side.*

Matt Martin AVP, Community Services  
Refugee & Immigrant Programs  
Lutheran Family Services



## Testimonial

*The Furniture Project is a lifeline for the work we do at Restoring Dignity. We have partnered with this organization for years, and we clearly see the need for a centralized warehouse where families from all walks of life can acquire much needed furniture. Restoring Dignity's current donation center has outgrown our space, and the need for furniture continues to grow. We are in full support of a furniture warehouse that could serve all of Omaha. Our overall goal, which we have discussed with Drew numerous times, is for our donation center to merge with The Furniture Project. We would then send our clients to the larger warehouse, where they will have more options and opportunities to find what they need for their homes.*

Hannah Wyble  
Founder and Executive Director  
Restoring Dignity



## Testimonial

*Over the past four years, I have been honored to collaborate with the Furniture Project in helping families access beds, dressers, couches, tables and chairs, refrigerators, washers and dryers and many other pieces of furniture. The Furniture Project has been able to fill the gaps and provide necessities to hundreds of families in our school district. As a School Social Worker, I see how deficits at home often affect the students at school. Not having a bed to sleep in or a table to eat at, can often cause students additional stress and affect their grades and concentration. When Drew delivers furniture to a family, the smiles and surprise on their faces are priceless. The positive impact Drew has made for so many children is unmeasurable.*

*I believe a centralized warehouse would allow the Furniture Project to serve so many more children and their families. I know the Furniture Project works with many different school districts, non-profit agencies, refugees, and other populations. We would love to continue to collaborate with the Furniture Project in order to provide families with their basic needs, as well as furniture needs. Anything that would help Drew continue to serve the families of Omaha, especially District 66 families, would be wonderful. Again, I cannot express the impact this organization has made for so many students and their families. Thank you Furniture Project!!*

April Anderson, LCSW  
School Social Worker  
Westside Community Schools



## Testimonial

*When refugees arrive in Omaha, they come with only the clothes on their backs and a small suitcase. As a refugee resettlement agency, one of our first tasks is to make sure that our newly arriving families have a clean, safe and furnished apartment.*

*The Furniture Project is one of Refugee Empowerment Center's most important partners. They help supply furniture (and just as importantly, they help us move the furniture too!). Without the Furniture Project, families would have to pay for the furniture themselves out of the very meager \$1,200 stipend they receive. There are lots of generous people in Omaha willing to donate furniture, but without a great organization to manage, store, and distribute those donations, we lose out on this generosity.*

*With an estimated 5 times more refugee families arriving this year than in years past, the more storage space we have for furniture, the better!*

Amanda Kohler | Executive Director  
Refugee Empowerment Center

# Media

## **"Omaha Firefighter Honored for Helping Families Replace Destroyed Furniture."**

Omaha World Herald, July 2020.

[https://omaha.com/news/local/omaha-firefighter-honored-for-helping-families-replace-destroyed-furniture/article\\_d02fd27f-65d8-547b-9557-dd763b3408c0.html](https://omaha.com/news/local/omaha-firefighter-honored-for-helping-families-replace-destroyed-furniture/article_d02fd27f-65d8-547b-9557-dd763b3408c0.html)

## **"Returning the Favor - The Firefighter Providing Furniture."**

Mike Rowe, March 2020.

<https://mikerowe.com/2020/03/returning-the-favor-the-firefighter-providing-furniture/>

## **"They'll be there to help you out and give you a hand."**

KETV, December 2019.

<https://www.ketv.com/article/theyll-be-there-to-help-you-out-and-give-you-a-hand-omaha-firefighter-runs-the-furniture-project/30287393>



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Website: <https://www.thefurnitureproject.org/>