

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Alegent Creighton Health Faith Network recognized by Governor for volunteer service**

**Lincoln, Neb.** – Faith community nursing or parish nursing is the intentional integration of faith and health from a nursing perspective. The Alegent Creighton Health Faith Community Health Network (FCHN) started in July 2005, and is presently comprised of 50 congregations and 73 active faith community nurses and health ministers. The FCHN builds capacities in congregations by leveraging the resources of Alegent Creighton Health and the strength of faith communities to build a culture of health and healing within the congregation and community it serves. This empowers people to make positive choices for whole-person health.

Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem honored the volunteer based service group today with the Governor’s Points of Light group award at a ceremony in the Warner Chamber at the State Capitol. The awards are sponsored by ServeNebraska and are presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

The faith community nurses (FCNs) and health ministers (HMs) volunteer in their congregations to promote health of body, mind, spirit, relationships and earth, and solicit other congregational volunteers to help grow their health ministry. These professionals collaborate with state and community agencies and groups to share resources and expertise.

With chronic conditions on the rise and the population aging, changes in health care are making preventable re-hospitalizations a priority issue, and the need for prevention and health promotion is increasingly important. Rather than practicing from a medical or home health model, FCNs and HMs strive to promote healthy lifestyles for all ages, advocate for those who are ill, encourage social justice, and refer when necessary.

Those that have benefited from the ministry have commented; “After your blood pressure screening, I saw my doctor, and he admitted me that day for bypass surgery. I’m doing great!” “The Jerusalem Journey walking program got me started on my long journey to lose weight. I’ve lost 87 pounds, continue to walk 4-5 times a week and do resistance training at the gym. I am eating very healthy and feel terrific!”

In data gathered from 2006 to 2012, the Network has impacted over 13,000 individuals, over 700,000 groups through education, screening and group support, logged over 105,000 volunteer hours, and saved over \$1.9 million dollars by avoiding emergency room visits, surgical procedures, advocating for treatment, and providing no cost fitness classes and health screenings.

These wonderful, caring volunteers have made a great impact in people’s lives in Omaha and Council Bluffs and outlying Nebraska towns.

To nominate individuals and groups for the Governor’s Points of Light Awards who have made a difference through volunteerism and service, visit the ServeNebraska website at [www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov). The next nomination deadline is March 15, 2014.

ServeNebraska pursues its mission of mobilizing Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration and national service programs.

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