

# Connection

A Nexus Family Healing Newsletter

Nexus-FACTS • Nexus-Gerard • Nexus-Indian Oaks • Nexus-Kindred • Nexus-Mille Lacs • Nexus-Onarga • Nexus-PATH • Nexus-Woodbourne

**INSIDE:**

STORY OF HOPE	1
FAMILY FOCUS	2
VOICES OF INSPIRATION	3
YOUR IMPACT	3
UPCOMING EVENTS	4
HELPFUL RESOURCES	4



## Story of Hope

### Collaboration Brings Life & School Success

Like many small, rural districts across North Dakota, Wilton Public Schools was limited in supporting students with needs outside of the classroom — especially when it came to helping families navigate the complicated web of community resources.

**“We have had families that we just cannot do enough for because we don’t have the resources, the staff, or the time to really be able to help them,”** said Wilton Elementary Principal Macy Wood.

To bridge the gap between homes, schools, and communities, they began a partnership with Nexus-PATH Family Healing to begin offering Targeted Case Management services in their district.

Wilton’s Nexus-PATH case manager has formed incredible bonds with students and their families. Since January, eight students have received a range of support from help accessing food to just having a trusted confidante to talk to.

*Story of Hope continued pg. 3*

**“It’s an amazing feeling to know that you can help kids...and know that probably wouldn’t have happened without Nexus-PATH.”**

**— Wilton Elementary  
Principal Macy Wood**





The last year has been challenging for so many. The pandemic escalated issues that were already difficult and mental health challenges rose exponentially from this situation. We see it in the headlines, we feel it at home, and at Nexus, we have seen demand for our services grow substantially.

With increasing challenges and greater need, we believe that partnership offers the greatest opportunity to make a positive difference. For Nexus, this means growing our community mental health programs to provide more prevention and intervention services that can avert the need for more critical care later.

This past year, Nexus partnered with other organizations and communities to launch a handful of new programs to help children and families and fill the gaps, one of those being the Southeast Regional Crisis Center, a 24/7 mental health crisis center, in Rochester, Minnesota.

The day after opening the center, a couple came into the facility with their granddaughter and asked for a tour. Their granddaughter struggles with schizophrenia and often relied on emergency rooms to get her through difficult times. These loving grandparents wanted her to see the center, know where it was located, and become familiar with it just in case she needed it in the future. She now has a welcoming place to go when she's struggling that can specifically focus on her mental health crisis.

This is the exact type of support we can provide to our communities as we continue to partner to develop innovative services. We are focused on offering care that reaches children and families when and where they need it most, and look forward to what the future brings for Nexus.

With sincere gratitude,

Dr. Michelle K. Murray, LMFT  
President & CEO



## Family Focus

### Nexus-Gerard saved Zack & our family

Zack, a 13-year-old boy, was spiraling out of control. He was struggling with worsening anxiety and aggression, and his parents, Tracy and Wendy, were the targets of his aggression. He was emotionally and physically attacking them and destroying their property. They spent many days in and out of emergency rooms and inpatient hospital stays, but these visits were band-aid solutions.

Zack was on 15 different medications and his psychiatrist was concerned that they were causing more harm than good. Zack struggled with making friends and started sharing suicidal ideations, saying he didn't want to live anymore. Wendy and Tracy were running out of options. They researched the 5-state area and finally found Nexus-Gerard.

They recall what it was like dropping Zack off at Nexus-Gerard for the first time. "It was the hardest thing we've ever had to do," Wendy says. "We live an hour and a half away, so we drove down, sat outside for 10 minutes, and said goodbye. Then we sobbed the entire drive back home," Tracy shares.

Zack spent seven months at Nexus-Gerard; his medications were reset and he learned coping skills for his anger and aggression and how to communicate his feelings. "Zack is able to tell us what he needs now, he couldn't do that before," says Wendy.

"If Nexus-Gerard didn't exist, Zack would either be dead or in jail," Tracy says as tears well up in her eyes. "Nexus-Gerard saved Zack and our family." Wendy puts her hand on her chest and adds in, "They helped our family go back to how we wanted our family to be. We can now have a family dinner or a movie night. We couldn't do that before."

## Story of Hope, continued...

“Those are eight kids that I don’t lie awake thinking that we don’t know how to help, or we can’t get them the services that they need,” Wood said.

One of these children is 10-year-old Allie\*, who quietly shared her dream of playing softball with her Nexus-PATH case manager. The case manager helped Allie join a team and even drove her to games, taking Allie’s entire family out for ice cream afterward.

With a smile, Wood said, “Allie would come by our office with a huge grin on her face and tell us about her games. It’s an amazing feeling to know that you can help kids...and know that probably wouldn’t have happened without Nexus-PATH.”

\*name, image and other details changed to maintain client privacy. Story adapted from original article by B-HERO, a partnership between Central Region Education Association (CREA) and the ND Behavioral Health Division.

## Your Support Impacts Lives Updates from Minnesota, North Dakota, Illinois, and Maryland

### NORTH DAKOTA

Thanks to the United Way of Cass-Clay, Nexus-PATH is expanding Targeted Case Management Services in Fargo and West Fargo Public Schools.

“We are thrilled to partner with United Way to expand this innovative service,” says Heather Simonich, Operations Director. “Funding and community partnerships are critical to meeting the growing behavioral health needs of children and families in our community.”

*Continued pg. 4*



**Voices of  
Inspiration**  
Natalie  
McGrady,  
Nexus  
Foundation  
Board Chair

“ I believe that any child or family can run into hard times. It is my duty to give back and to be a helping hand where I can. The children and families likely have no idea who I am, but I know I was instrumental in helping to provide a pathway to positive outcomes for them. ”

As the first woman of color chair of the Nexus Family Healing board, Natalie has been instrumental in launching philanthropy at Nexus and spearheaded the establishment of the Nexus Foundation in 2019. Natalie’s dedication runs much deeper than board oversight; she and her family have volunteered at numerous events, secured donations, share our mission with their networks and have made significant personal contributions to support the youth and families we serve.

Natalie says she joined the Nexus board for the chance to help children and families address mental health and trauma. Most important to her is that our services are inclusive of children on the autism spectrum, something near and dear to her family. She is also very proud to have helped select the first female CEO in Nexus’ nearly 50-year history.

Nexus is extremely grateful for Natalie’s guidance and support over the years – her legacy will continue for years to come.

## YOU MAKE THIS POSSIBLE!

Thanks to your support, Nexus Family Healing is able to restore hope for thousands of children and families each year. Your continued financial contributions help us innovate, expand, and respond to the growing mental health needs of our communities. Thank you for considering a gift today!

Visit [NexusFamilyHealing.org](https://NexusFamilyHealing.org) to learn more.







Jeanne & Jim Sheehan



Supporters at the Cornerstone Cafe



Trying out a new keyboard

### Your Support Impacting Lives, continued...

#### MINNESOTA

*"Is this for ME...A BRAND NEW BIKE?"*

Children in **Nexus-Kindred** foster homes were bursting with excitement thanks to 53 new bikes built and donated by members of the **Crossfit Una Stamus gym in Elk River, MN, and Together We Rise**. Younger children enjoyed summertime fun and teens were grateful for transportation to activities and jobs.

**Nexus Foundation Board Member Jeanne Sheehan, and spouse Jim Sheehan**, shared their enthusiasm for **Nexus-Gerard** during their backyard gathering of key community members and leaders in Austin, MN. Executive Director Karen Wolf and teacher Kretta Menuey highlighted the need for mental

health services and the transformation they see when youth receive the right support and treatment. Guests were inspired and offered financial contributions, volunteer support, and more to help continue this mission.

#### ILLINOIS

**Nexus-Indian Oaks** is a member of the **Illinois LGBTQIA+ Roundtable** with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Department of Children and Family Services and other supporting organizations working to understand and ensure the rights of LGBTQIA+ youth in residential care. Youth from **Nexus-Indian Oaks' Pride and Purpose** group had the opportunity to virtually share their experiences with Illinois educators and lawmakers.

**Nexus-Onarga** welcomed supporters at an open house highlighting the new kitchen they made possible at the Cornerstone Cafe, run by youth gaining real-life work experience during treatment.

#### MARYLAND

Youth musicians at **Nexus-Woodbourne** raced down the stairs to help unload the truck when they heard a new drum set and two new keyboards had been delivered. They were thrilled! These gifts were **made possible by donor Teresa Deason and her friends in Texas!** Teresa is committed to raising more funds to fulfill the wish list of instruments needed, knowing that "music can change the course of a life."



### UPCOMING EVENTS – GET INVOLVED!

**Path to Hope Breakfast (ND) – Nov. 4**

**Give to the Max Day (Minnesota) – Nov. 18**

**Giving Tuesday (All Locations) - Nov. 30**

To learn more and register: [nexusfamilyhealing.org/events](https://nexusfamilyhealing.org/events)

### Helpful Resources



Nexus offers a variety of mental health tips and resources, such as this month's focus on Parenting Tips for Suicide Prevention and other Acts of Hope to support someone who may be struggling.