

Connection

A Nexus Family Healing Newsletter

Celebrating 50 Years of Restoring Hope & Reshaping Futures

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

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Story of Hope

Learning Trust: Charlotte's Story

Charlotte*, 5 years old, started her kindergarten year of school extremely dysregulated. She would not last more than 10 minutes in her classroom before exhibiting some form of challenging behavior. Charlotte would sleep in class, run the halls screaming, show physical and verbal aggression to peers and teachers, and at times, law enforcement would be called because she would leave the school, and no one could help her calm down. She made it clear she could not trust the adults around her.

Charlotte was referred to Nexus-PATH's School Case Management. Her case manager worked with both her and her parents to build relationships and identify what she needed to be successful. Charlotte began seeing a therapist through the Nexus-PATH outpatient mental health clinic and was referred to occupational therapy.

An Individualized Education Plan was created at school through Special Education for her. Her case manager

provided direct support to Charlotte in the school, as well. Months later, Charlotte is now able to stay in her classroom all day with support and has built trusting relationships with key school staff. She participates in therapy, rarely runs the halls, and is even reminding her peers about the importance of being nice and listening to the teacher!

**Names and other details have been changed to maintain privacy.*



A child's education has a profound impact on their success in life. By success, I mean the ability to thrive – to hold a job, to work through problems, handle social situations, to just manage their daily lives. Nexus Family Healing is so committed to supporting the educational success of the youth in our care that we have on-campus schools for our youth in residential treatment. Earlier this year, we also brought on board our first-ever Executive Director of Education, Ra Shone Franklin (see Voices of Inspiration) to guide the high quality, trauma-informed work of each of these schools.

We also know that we can support youth in our community schools; the earlier we can help to address mental health issues, the better. As we look to fill the gaps in mental health needs, there is a large role for Nexus in partnering with schools. We have already begun this critical work through our school case management programs in North Dakota through Nexus-PATH. We are currently serving 11 districts and are in 25 school buildings, coordinating care for youth who are struggling with school to improve their social and emotional wellbeing. And, through partnerships with Austin Public Schools in Minnesota, Nexus-Gerard is providing additional support to those youth and families who may need it.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Murray".

Dr. Michelle K. Murray, LMFT
President & CEO



Family Focus A Bright Future Ahead

"It's crushing to see ... you can't help but feel like you did something wrong," admits Elyssa. "As a parent you just want the best for your kids."

Elyssa is a proud parent of five-year-old twin boys. While in preschool last year, Elyssa and the boys' teachers noticed that their social play was a little "off" and that they were not participating in groups or playing with the other children.

"As a parent, you just want the best for your kids."

The preschool referred Elyssa to Nexus-FACTS where a diagnostic assessment was completed, and the children received a preliminary diagnosis of Autism. "Nexus-FACTS helped us get into family therapy and even went the extra mile to secure a grant that allowed us to receive free services," says Elyssa.

Elyssa meets twice a week with a therapist who provides parenting support while the boys meet with a skills trainer at the same time.

"The boys love coming to Nexus-FACTS and saying hello to all of the staff," says Elyssa. "The boys receive services and I interact with them with our therapist guiding us, which provides me with hands-on support and learning.

"My children are gaining skills to have a normal life and everything for our family has become easier."

Your Support Impacts Lives

Updates from Minnesota, North Dakota, Illinois, and Maryland

MINNESOTA

A huge thank you to the Minnesota Vikings for giving **Nexus-Mille Lacs** youth a once in a lifetime experience at a recent Vikings game. Our group relished the chance to go down on the field before the game and see some of their favorite players up close!

Nexus-Gerard broke ground on a new Family Center addition in September! A dream for many years, this addition will create space for youth and families to spend quality time together and provide



Groundbreaking for Nexus-Gerard Family Center addition.

offices for our “Parent Partners” who support families during a very difficult time in their lives. Ongoing fundraising will help bring this vision to life. We are grateful to our supporters!

Thanks to Ticket to Dream Foundation, BK5K supporters, and other Nexus Foundation donors, **Nexus-Kindred** provided a special picnic lunch and day at Valley Fair Amusement Park for nearly 200 foster and adoptive families and youth. This was a great opportunity that allowed our families and staff to enjoy time together.

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Voices of Inspiration

Ra Shone Franklin, Executive Director of Education



Ra Shone Franklin was recently selected as the first-ever Executive Director of Education at Nexus Family Healing.

Mr. Franklin provides oversight and direction for all our school campuses. This includes leading development and implementation of educational programs and curriculum with a trauma-informed approach to enhance outcomes for the youth we serve.

“Creating exceptional outcomes for troubled youth is a phenomenal opportunity.”

Mr. Franklin first joined Nexus in 2021 as Principal of Safe Harbor School at Nexus-Indian Oaks in Illinois after more than 20 years as a school administrator for Chicago Public Schools. “I’ve worked with thousands of students and several hundred teachers,” says Franklin. “I can emphatically say that Nexus has some of the best and brightest working in our schools. They provide our youth with the skills and information needed to be productive members of society.”

“Working with youth is the most honorable profession there is,” Franklin states. “The daily work can be difficult. The adverse childhood experiences our youth face can be daunting. However, being in a role that supports the healthy development of struggling youth inspires me.”



YOU MAKE THIS POSSIBLE!

Imagine the needs that would go unmet if Nexus wasn't here? Now imagine how many more children and families will find hope and healing with your support. 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!

Your Support Impacting Lives, continued...

ILLINOIS

Nexus-Indian Oaks is partnering with Olivet Nazarene University's Interior Design program to remodel their Family Rooms. The Interior Design students will create plans, drawings and mock-ups, and budgets for the renovation of these spaces. The Family Rooms are a key in the process of restoration for the youth and families with whom we work.



Hartogensis/Chao Family in the new sensory room at Nexus-PATH Luther Hall

Grand Prairie School at **Nexus-Onarga** is collaborating with Executive Director of Education Ra Shon Franklin and Kankakee Community College in strategic conversations about job training and workforce development for our youth. This partnership will lead to opportunities that increase success for young persons as they embark on the next stage of their healing journey.



Nexus-Woodbourne youth enjoy a Baltimore Raven's game.

MARYLAND

On Saturday, August 27, families from our Treatment Foster Care Program were able to enjoy the Ravens' preseason game against the Washington Commanders together as a community! Special thanks to the Baltimore Ravens for donating 35 tickets, valued over \$1,200, to bring **Nexus-Woodbourne** families together for the evening!

NORTH DAKOTA

Youth at **Nexus-PATH's** Luther Hall are enjoying a new underwater themed sensory room thanks to some very generous donors!! Alexia Hartogensis, her sister Penelope, and their mother Grace Chao visited Luther Hall last year and were inspired to enlist friends and family to help create a new calming space so our youth can focus internally. Thanks to all who donated to this project!

UPCOMING EVENTS – GET INVOLVED!

- Oct. 27 - Building B'more Connections**
Mt. Washington Tavern, Baltimore, MD
- Nov. 10 - Path to Hope Breakfast**
Avalon Event Center, Fargo, ND
- Nov. 15 - Virtual Foster Parent Inquiry Meeting**
MN
- Nov. 17 - Give to the Max Day**
Online, MN
- Nov. 29 - Giving Tuesday**
Online, all locations
- Dec. 20 - Virtual Foster Parent Inquiry Meeting**
MN

For more information, visit NexusFamilyHealing.org/events

Helpful Resources



Did you know Nexus Family Healing has a Resource Library? Updated with new resources every week, this database provides families with tools and information related to mental health, parenting, relationships, and more.