

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

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Story of Hope

A Cry for Help

Sara* is young and afraid. At just 15 years old she struggles daily with mental illness, and her nights are filled with faceless, headless monsters in the form of hallucinations. Sara’s family had exhausted all resources available in their small Minnesota town and were running out of options. On one bad night, they found the **Southeast Regional Crisis Center (SERCC)**.

SERCC, a collaboration of 10 counties and community partners, recently opened in Rochester, Minnesota, to

support children and adults through mental health crises. Our Nexus Family Healing staff welcomed Sara and her family into the brand new facility. After talking, our team determined it would be best for Sara to spend a few days in the residential crisis unit to keep her safe and receive the immediate professional support she needed. This also provided her parents a break while working with our team to develop a plan for Sara’s care once she returned home.

Children and adults alike are experiencing more mental health challenges than ever before. Nexus Family Healing is committed to making the right care available at the right time. We’re doing our part to fill the gaps that exist in our mental health care system. Together, with our partners and supporters, we will work diligently to ensure that no one is left behind during this crisis.

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



The U.S. Surgeon General recently released an urgent advisory on youth mental health. Numbers show an alarming increase in the prevalence of mental health issues in young people. One in five children ages 3 to 17 have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder. One in three high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

The Surgeon General’s advisory calls for a swift and coordinated response to this crisis, and at Nexus, we are ready to take action.

Every day, our staff see this reality first-hand through our foster care, residential, and community services. These programs are essential, but they do not fulfill the current need. We are determined to fill the gaps with innovative solutions, just as our organization has done for the past 50 years. We will expand our resources to include crisis centers, youth shelters, and psychiatric residential treatment options. And we will continue to partner with schools, law enforcement, and health care professionals.

When we ask our staff why they do this difficult work, they say they believe everyone deserves hope and healing. I am so grateful for their dedication to serve others. And I’m thankful for your support in recognizing access to mental health is critical. Our country is facing unprecedented mental health needs and it will require all of us to make sure no one is left behind.

With sincere gratitude,

Dr. Michelle K. Murray, LMFT
President & CEO



Family Focus

Eric, Jeremie, and Dan’s Story

Eric and Jeremie’s son, Dan, first experienced mental health challenges in middle school. As things became more difficult, their family sought out support.

“Trying to help your child with a mental illness is tough,” says Eric. “You want to think that because you love them you can do whatever they need to take care of the problem, but we struggled. It became a life-or-death situation. We were terrified.”

Dan explained, “It’s like feeling alone in a huge crowd – you can be with as many friends as possible, but you feel like you are alone in the world.”

The family tried several options before finding Nexus-Gerard. “The difference was Dan being able to stay on the campus where he could have support around him all the time,” says Jeremie. “We were part of his recovery and Nexus helped us learn how to support him when he returned home.”

“Nexus helped guide us and gave us the tools to rebuild our family.”

“It’s changed our whole family dynamic,” says Eric. Jeremie adds, “Dan is doing amazingly well, and my other kids see how strong he is and what he has overcome.”

“Nexus helped me find myself – and finding yourself is one of the most important things,” says Dan. “Now I have a great career, great life, amazing friends, and the most supportive family you can imagine. And when I’m feeling sad, I reach out.”

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

MINNESOTA

Nexus-Mille Lacs youth recently enjoyed an incredible day at Discovery Horse Farm. One boy,

Aiden*, truly connected with one of the animals and took extra care to groom and hug it. By the end of the day, Aiden shared “the biggest smile we’ve ever



Discovery Horse Farm

seen.” **Thank you, Benton Telecommunications Foundation, for making this healing experience possible for our youth!**

A \$25,000 Reimagine Grant from PwC Charitable Foundation is helping low income and BIPOC families access critical mental health care at **Nexus-FACTS**. These funds help reduce financial barriers that can often keep children and adults from getting the care they need.

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

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“*There’s no greater reward than watching these young people grow...*”

Voices of Inspiration

Monique Davis, Nexus-Indian Oaks Employee

Monique Davis recently received one of Nexus Family Healing’s Ambassador Awards, a peer-nominated award highlighting her dedication to our core values. She is also celebrating her 20th anniversary with Nexus-Indian Oaks where she’s grown from a case manager to unit coordinator, and now wearing multiple hats in leading teams and supporting youth.

“I always desired to work with children,” Monique reflects on her career. She first learned of Nexus-Indian Oaks at a career fair and after meeting with agency leaders, she was sold.

When asked what she wants people to know about Nexus and the youth we serve, Monique says, “Social workers don’t do this because of pay or accolade – but out of genuine care and compassion. We can help reshape the negative narratives youth have of their abilities to succeed, despite the challenges they’ve faced. All it takes is for someone to care enough to help show them they’re worth it.”

March is National Social Work Month. We applaud Monique and the many other social workers who make an extraordinary difference in the lives they touch.

Read Monique’s poem “Why We Do What We Do” at NexusFamilyHealing.org/inspiration.



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!



OMS alumni



New bedding for youth



New household goods

Your Support Impacting Lives, continued...

ILLINOIS

Nexus-Onarga was formerly the Onarga Military School (OMS). For many years now, **OMS alumni** travel back to reminisce and provide gifts and a special meal for our youth. Their message to our youth: “Know you are never alone and are loved by those who guide and care for you.” Thank you!

MARYLAND

Thank you to our generous supporters who donated brand new “bed-in-a-bag” sets to youth through **Nexus-Woodbourne’s “Comforts of Home” program in Baltimore**. This initiative is supported by donors and provides youth with new bedding, towels, and other items to make their stay more secure and comforting!

NORTH DAKOTA

Slumberland Furniture (Bismarck) recently provided an abundance of household goods to stock furnished apartments for the **Nexus-PATH Supervised Independent Living Program** for youth aging out of foster care. Plus, Slumberland (Fargo) provided new mattresses for our youth at Luther Hall!

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS – GET INVOLVED!

April 20 - Nexus-PATH Virtual Foster Care Inquiry Meeting
At your discretion (ND)

May 4 - Path to Hope Breakfast
Sixteen03 Main Events
Bismarck, ND

May 19 - Building Connections
Omni Viking Lakes Hotel
Eagan, MN

Sept. 30 - Night for Nexus Gala
Metropolitan Ballroom
Golden Valley, MN

Oct. 27 - Building B-More Connections
Mt. Washington Tavern
Baltimore, MD

Nov. 10 - Path to Hope Breakfast
Avalon Event Center
Fargo, ND

To Learn More and Register:
nexusfamilyhealing.org/events