

Connection

A Nexus Family Healing Newsletter

Over 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

INSIDE:

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



Story of Hope

Philanthropy Supports Family Connections & Physical Well-being

Thanks to the amazing support of the community, some big dreams are coming true for the youth, families, and employees of Nexus-Gerard Family Healing in Austin, MN.

The Hormel Foundation, in cooperation with the United Way of Mower County, committed \$500,000 to create a new Family Center addition to campus. This includes providing private visiting areas for families, space for parent support and youth groups, and a more welcoming environment for youth, families, visitors, and volunteers. **Additional grants of \$100,000 each from Otto Bremer Trust and the Nexus Foundation for Family Healing,** along with gifts from local community members, provided the extra support needed to bring this project to life!

The Thielen Foundation, founded by NFL wide receiver Adam and his wife Caitlin, donated \$150,000

to create a new playground for the youngest children on campus, refurbish a well-used rec room, and support a new Recreation and Wellness Coordinator to lead outings, gardening, and physical wellness. A very tired baseball field will also be updated thanks to matching funds from the Minnesota Twins “Fields for Kids.”

“These projects simply wouldn’t have been possible without these contributions!”

“We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of these community partners and our neighbors, friends, and businesses in Austin,” says Nexus-Gerard Executive Director Karen Wolf. “These projects simply wouldn’t have been possible without these contributions!”



Family Focus



The Spaces We Create

The spaces we create for ourselves and others, can greatly impact mental health and well-being. A space that is welcome and warm can immediately create a sense of safety.

A space that allows for physical activity can help manage stress and anxiety. A space that is designed with trauma-informed principles in mind, can support healing.

At Nexus, we are focused on creating comfortable and secure spaces for our youth, families, and employees. From our residential facilities to our community and foster care programs, the importance of space can show up in unexpected ways. A warm smile, a helpful attitude, a place to play ball, dedicated family space, or a space that creates calm through our senses – are all examples that contribute to a healing environment.

Our “space initiatives” this year include a new family space, campus renovations, youth basketball courts, programs that encourage self-care for staff, and a welcome process for new employees.

The youth and families we serve deserve spaces that boost healing. Our dedicated staff, who have chosen to help others, deserve that as well. We thank you, our supporters, for helping make these spaces possible.

With sincere gratitude,

Dr. Michelle K. Murray, LMFT
President & CEO

“... He’s like a whole new kid!”

– Monique Fulton

At thirteen, Josh was a withdrawn and shy boy, traumatized from his past experiences. He had been part of Nexus-Woodbourne’s Treatment Foster Care program for a few years, but over time it was clear he needed a different type of home better equipped to support his level of therapeutic needs and better help his healing process. Nexus-Woodbourne Clinical Supervisor Monique Fulton reached out to foster parents, Roxanne and Stanley, to see if they could take in Josh. They said yes and welcomed Josh the next day.

When Josh first arrived at the home, he was reluctant to connect. He was so timid, he struggled to say simple greetings like “good night” to Roxanne’s family.

But Roxanne and Stanley were patient with him and focused on having honest conversations. Josh began to thrive living with this supportive family and the stability helped him heal, both emotionally and behaviorally.

“He was so shy at first,” Monique shares, “He was so scared...it makes me cry to think about it. Now he’s like a whole new kid.”

In August 2022, Roxanne and Stanley became legal guardians of Josh. Today, Josh is a 16-year-old honor roll student, excelling in extracurricular activities, thriving socially and emotionally with peers and family, and maintaining a healthy relationship with his birth mom. And best of all, Josh found his forever home.

MAY IS FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH. TO SUPPORT KIDS LIKE JOSH IN YOUR AREA, VISIT:





Voices of Inspiration Brooke Biederstedt Director of Independent Living Services

Brooke Biederstedt, Director of Independent Living Services, has been with Nexus-PATH since 2015 where she quickly recognized a passion for helping youth transition from foster care into independence. Brooke provides education to professionals, foster parents, and community members and ensures youth have tangible experiences and the information needed to transition to adulthood. Brooke believes it is important to “redefine definitions of success,” as we often promote large accomplishments and do not take time to celebrate the small victories our youth experience. Brooke also advocates for permanent connections to help youth find success and realize there are people ready to support them so they do not have to walk through life alone. Her passion for her work and her ability to connect with youth and community partners has helped Nexus-PATH’s programs expand to support more youth as they leave foster care.



Every young person deserves someone in their corner and every human deserves at least one person to support them without any strings attached.

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

MINNESOTA

The 2022 Night for Nexus gala was the most successful to date, raising more than \$180,000 to support the hope and healing of youth and families served by **Nexus Family Healing**. Nexus Board member, Chief Booker Hodges, of the Bloomington, MN, Police was a featured speaker highlighting the critical need for Nexus Family Healing services. Join us for the 2023 event on October 6!

The **Nexus-Mille Lacs** Annual Ice Fishing Derby took place this winter on Lake Mille Lacs! This event gives our youth a chance to learn ice fishing skills, prepare, and then put it all into practice out on the lake. Thank you to everyone who worked to make this event possible, including our sponsors Runnings of Saint Cloud and Walmart of Little Falls. And a special thanks to our special guest, local Conservation Officer Dan Starr.

Nexus-Kindred has expanded STAY in the Community services to youth in northwest Minnesota who are transitioning from foster care. This specialized support ensures that youth have the tools and resources they need to be successful adults, including collecting vital documents, finding affordable housing, building money management skills, and securing and keeping jobs.



Chief Booker Hodges of the Bloomington, MN, Police Department.



The Nexus-Mille Lacs Annual Ice Fishing Derby.

Continued pg. 4

Your Support Impacts Lives, continued...

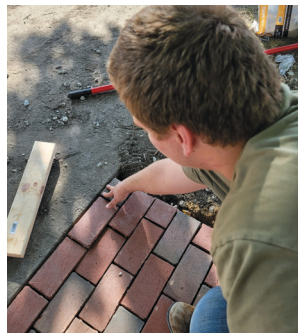
ILLINOIS

The **Nexus-Indian Oaks** basketball team participated in the Illinois Inter-Agency Athletic Association State Basketball Tournament. Participating youth earned their spot over the season by showing exceptional behavior on and off the court. Hard-fought by both teams, the final game ended in a tie and went into overtime where the Nexus-Indian Oaks youth prevailed winning the 2023 IIAA State Basketball Championship.

Nexus-Onarga recently celebrated its historic connection with the Onarga Military School (OMS) Alumni Association by dedicating the OMS Memorial Sidewalk.

Youth helped complete a walkway to the meditation area by creating a path with bricks honoring former OMS Cadets and Staff. A portion of the proceeds from the purchase of the bricks also supports Nexus-Onarga in creating hope, healing, and lifelong success for our youth. Learn more at

www.nexusonarga.org.



Youth helped install OMS Memorial bricks.

MARYLAND

Nexus-Woodbourne youth accepted into the Campus Work Program, kindly funded by the Charles Crane Family Foundation, have a new job to embrace – coordinating the Comforts of Home – Welcome to Wellness Program. Generous Nexus-Woodbourne supporter and friend, Tere Geckle, has gifted all 2023 incoming youth with a large duffle filled with soft sheets and towels, a blanket, comforter, slippers, area rug, and much more!

NORTH DAKOTA

Expansion of **Nexus-PATH's** School Case Management Program continues to fill the gap in mental health services in our communities in partnership with generous donors. Thank you to the Otto Bremer Trust for supporting our expansion to Devils Lake and St. John districts and Offutt Family Foundation for helping expand services to the Wahpeton school district.

UPCOMING EVENTS – GET INVOLVED!

- May 18 - Nexus Family Healing Building Connections**
The Beach Club, Minneapolis, MN
- May 23 - Nexus-Gerard Family Center Ribbon-Cutting**
Nexus-Gerard, Austin, MN
- Oct. 6 - Night for Nexus**
Metropolitan Ballroom, Golden Valley, MN
- Oct. 26 - Nexus-Woodbourne Building B'More Connections**
Woodberry Kitchen, Baltimore, MD



Helpful Resources

May is Mental Health Month and we are offering a free, downloadable Family Wellness Kit to help strengthen your family's health and well-being.



For more information, visit NexusFamilyHealing.org/events