

# MORE together



ANNUAL REPORT 2018  
PATH  NORTH DAKOTA





**DR. MICHELLE K. MURRAY**

Board Chair



**NANCY MCKENZIE**

PATH Executive Director

### ON A MISSION TOGETHER

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and thank our community partners, our staff, and our foster parents for their incredible work in meeting the needs of children and families in North Dakota and Idaho.

As an affiliate of Nexus: Youth and Family Solutions, we work with our partner agencies in the organization to assure that present and future services are efficient and effective, through provision of evidence-based practices, continuing professional development for our staff, and use of data to inform our practice.

Although PATH has long been recognized as the major provider of treatment foster care in North Dakota, we know that nothing stays static, and this is obvious in the arenas of healthcare and social services. Many changes, including new federal legislation, are placing strong emphasis on maintaining children in home environments wherever possible. Here at PATH, our Community-Based Services now include the PATH Trauma and Stress Clinic to provide outpatient therapy for youth and families.

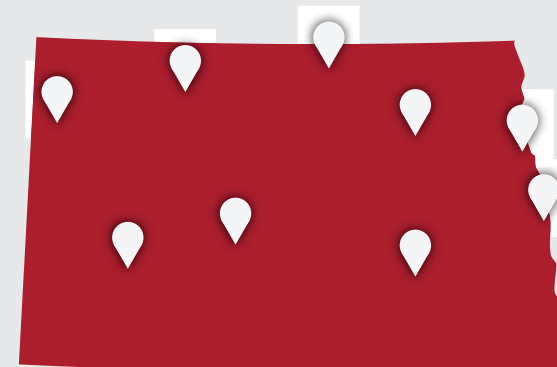
Change continues to go on around us, and as good stewards of our resources, we maintain constant awareness of how those changes may impact our work and our future sustainability. We continue to be proactive in identifying needs throughout our state and responding to those needs for other preventative services to keep children at home. We look forward with excitement to the new opportunities these changes may bring.

Nancy McKenzie  
PATH Executive Director

Dr. Michelle K. Murray  
PATH Board Chair

# TOGETHER

we built hope



### PATH SERVICES

#### Community-Based Support Services

Family Support Program  
Voluntary treatment to help prevent a youth's out-of-home placement through family mentoring from PATH foster parents.

PATH Trauma & Stress Clinic  
Outpatient clinic in Fargo, ND, specially trained in treating traumatic stress.

#### Foster Care

Transition & Assessment  
Immediate placement for youth needing emergency care.

Treatment Foster Care  
In-home care for children with severe emotional and behavioral problems.

Independent Living Program  
Provides skills, knowledge, and support for youth who are transitioning out of foster care into adulthood and self-sufficiency.

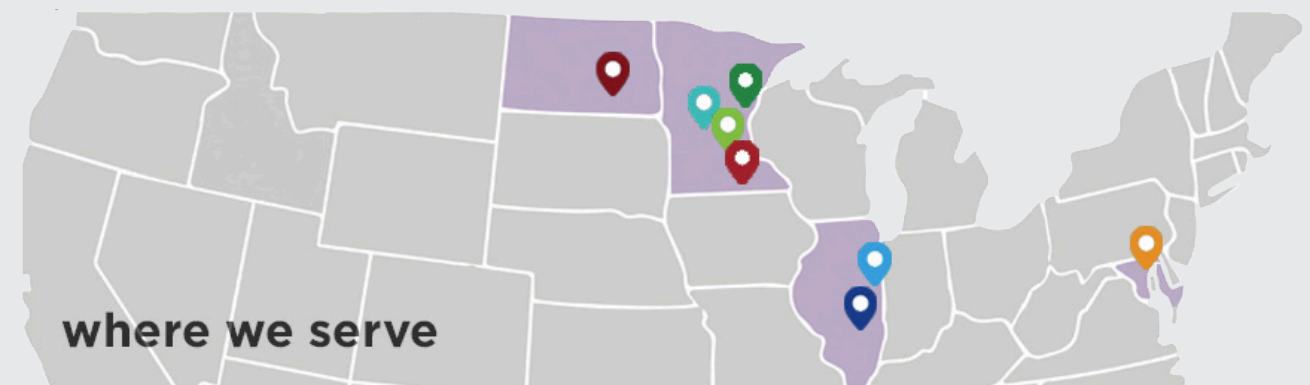
#### Adoption

Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK)  
Adoption services for youth in foster care (a collaborative program with Catholic Charities of North Dakota).

North Dakota Post Adopt Network  
Offering support services and training for adoptive and guardianship families.

### A NETWORK OF CARE

PATH is an affiliate of Nexus, a national nonprofit organization, serving children, youth, and families through accredited education programs, community-based mental health programs, foster care/ adoption services, and residential treatment programs.





## TAILS OF COMFORT

The PATH Trauma and Stress Clinic has three therapists who work with clients experiencing symptoms of trauma and stress. In 2018, the clinic added a Bernese Mountain Dog named Moose to their staff. Moose's owner, Amanda Logan, is a therapist at the clinic and had Moose complete obedience and therapy dog training specifically to join her practice.

Moose is not a stranger to foster care as she was adopted from a local rescue. Amanda and her wife noticed Moose's flat affect right away. It took over a year for Moose to trust them and begin to bond with her new family. Amanda says, "Moose went through the same process as many kids in our clinic have. It takes time to trust and bond."

Moose seems to know when youth are struggling, as if they connect on a deeper level. Amanda says having Moose in sessions significantly decreases client anxiety and nervousness. She recently completed Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) with a 10-year-old named Kate. During her first two sessions, Kate's whole body would shake with anxiety. Then, Kate was introduced to Moose.

At first, Moose would sit next to Kate's chair and patiently wait to be pet. As Kate began to process her experiences of horrific abuse and neglect, Moose knew that Kate needed her and put her head in Kate's lap. Kate has since successfully completed therapy and is no longer experiencing symptoms of anxiety.

Moose has helped many clients, including a teen diagnosed with autism who lays on the floor and hold hands with Moose during her sessions. New clients often feel their anxiety subside when Moose greets them in the lobby.



# TOGETHER we did more

With the help of our staff, donors, and community partners, we took the leap to expand our community behavioral health services and foster care resources, and collaborate with other agencies to provide more options for the families who need it most.

## MORE SUPPORT FOR OUR COMMUNITY

In 2018, PATH worked to change lives through expanding outside of foster care into school and community-based behavioral health services.

The PATH Stress and Trauma Clinic, an outpatient behavioral health clinic based in Fargo, saw great growth in its first full year of operation. In 2018, we hit client capacity and served over 100 clients, showing that our community is seeking quality services locally. The Clinic also brought on its first therapy dog, Moose, opening up the opportunity for therapy animal services.

Part of PATH's expansion also included a joint effort of the North Dakota Full-Service Community Schools Consortium to bring behavioral health services to schools throughout the state.

The Consortium, comprised of representatives from PATH, Central Region Education Cooperative, and South East Education Cooperative, was awarded nearly \$2.5 million dollars from the U.S. Department of Education. With this funding, the Consortium is supporting schools to provide comprehensive academic, social-emotional, physical, and behavioral health services for students, families, and communities.

With the immense need for students to have support that extends beyond the classroom, PATH jumped in to develop and implement school-based targeted case management services that are poised to meet the higher needs of students and their families.

## MORE STABILIZATION FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

In collaboration with Catholic Charities North Dakota, PATH provides adoption services for youth in foster care through the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) Program. Through the North Dakota Post-Adopt Network, AASK also provides post-adopt and post-guardianship services to families throughout North Dakota.



In early 2018, North Dakota Department of Human Services allocated funds for two additional full-time positions for this program, which has only ever had one funded full-time coordinator. Even though family needs have always been met, stakeholders continually noted the need for additional workers to grow support across the state.

Post adopt services are expanding rapidly in North Dakota as calls and emails from families experiencing difficulties stemming from attachment and trauma-related issues continually pour into AASK. With the addition of two employees, AASK is now providing an array of crisis case management, advocacy and referral, support groups, adoptive family events, social media support, and family-to-family mentoring across the state.

## MORE SUCCESS FOR YOUTH

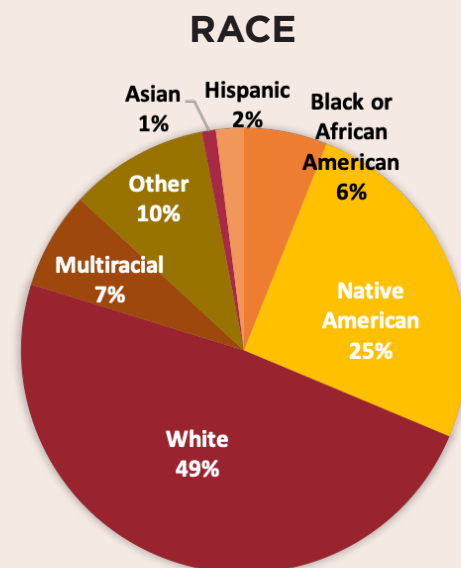
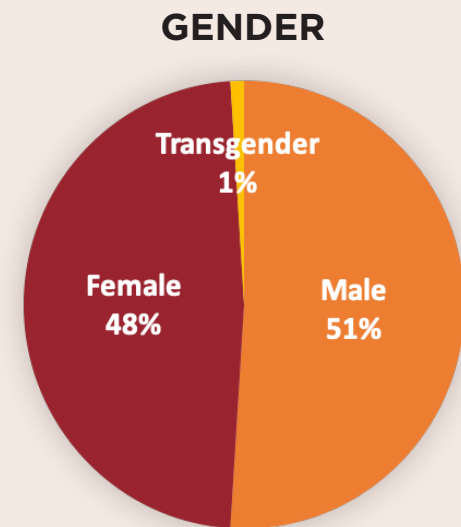
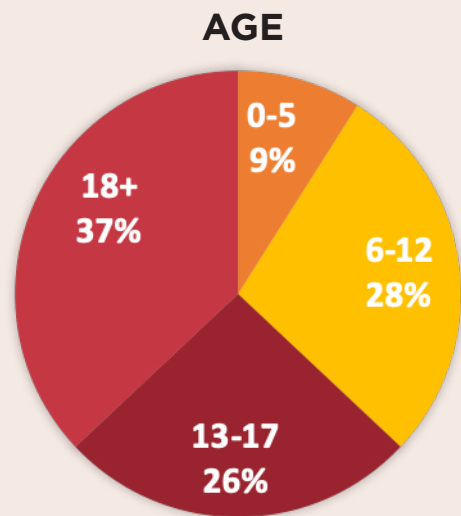
PATH also made great strides in supporting youth as they enter and exit foster care with a revamped Specialized Family Care (SFC) treatment foster care program. The program helps youth as they transition from the State's care into a foster family setting, and from foster care back into the community.

The program remodel allowed youth get into a family setting faster with additional supports, starting the path to success sooner.

The new SFC model won the Program of the Year award by the North Dakota Family Based Services Conference.



## CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



# TOGETHER we made an impact

We know that trauma and adversity can have a profound impact on children. One of the greatest challenges is understanding how those scary life experiences affects each child.

In July of 2018, PATH social workers implemented the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strength (CANS) tool to enhance PATH's ability to detect both the needs and strengths of each child and family we serve. Starting in 2019, we will have complete data on each youth's strengths and needs in the following areas:

- Trauma Exposure
- Traumatic Stress Symptoms
- Child Strengths
- Cultural Factors
- Life Functioning
- Emotional/Behavioral Needs
- Risk Behaviors
- Caregiver needs and strengths

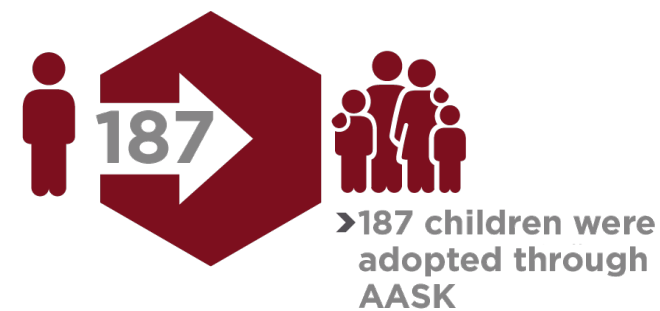
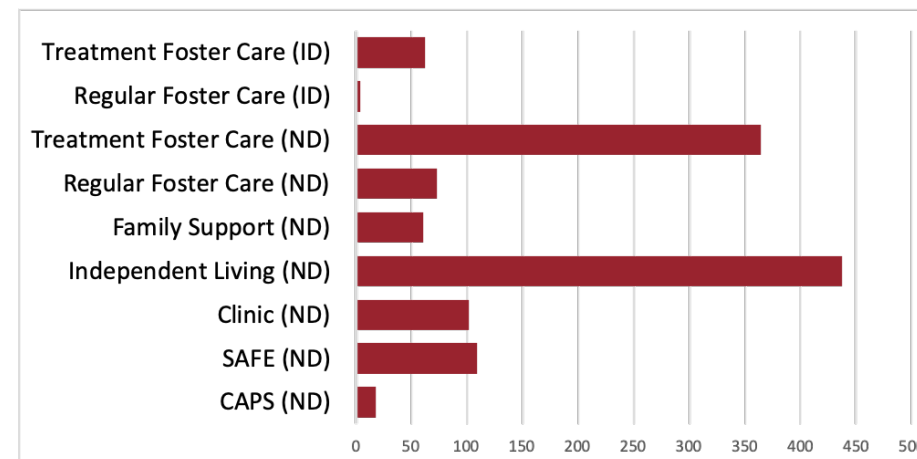
In 2018, youth entering PATH foster care had already experienced **an average of 5 or more traumatic events in their life so far** — that includes experiences such as abuse, neglect, witnessing violence, and family disruptions. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that most kids in foster care — 61% — enter the system due to neglect and are almost twice as likely as combat veterans to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

PATH works to help youth and families heal painful emotions and recover from the impact of disruptions so that:

- **families get along better;**
- **youth improve their performance in school;**
- **youth have healthy social interactions; and more importantly,**
- **youth no longer repeat the same harmful behaviors of their past.**

During 2018, PATH provided services and supports to **996 children and families in North Dakota and 64 children in Idaho; the PATH Trauma and Stress Clinic served 102 individuals.**

## CLIENTS SERVED



\*Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) collaborative with Catholic Charities North Dakota

## CREATING FAMILIES

Margo has been a PATH treatment foster parent for 13 years. She changed the lives of many kids through foster care, but her biggest impact was with three girls who she now calls family.

Margo has two grown sons and was an empty-nester, but felt there was something more for her to do as her heart tugged her toward foster care. She had heard two local sisters were going back to foster care in Minnesota due to a disrupted placement in Fargo, and would potentially be separated; she was compelled to step in. Margo knew these girls from a young age and couldn't bear to see them removed from their friends, family, or potentially each other. She called PATH to start her licensing and training process, and together, they worked to get the girls into Margo's care.

Just a year after taking in the sisters, Margo decided to permanently add them to her family, adopting both of the girls. Her two daughters are now adults and living successfully. Both daughters work in professions helping disabled adults.

"It's the toughest job you've ever loved," Margo said, "You're going to meet kids that you won't want to let go of."

Margo continued to foster for the joy of helping teens find their way to adulthood and independence, not expecting to add any more children to her family. But, when she opened her home to Tiana, she knew their relationship was meant to be.

"Everyone needs a forever family," Margo said. "I love this little girl."

Tiana was in Margo's care for three years before Margo moved forward to finalize the adoption paperwork. She planned out the adoption announcement, keeping it a secret until the annual North Dakota Heart Gallery—an event that promotes the adoption of children waiting for forever homes. When Margo slipped a yellow sash around Tiana's head, indicating she was one of the lucky kids to be adopted, shock and joy lit up Tiana's face. Tiana had her forever family!

Through tears, Tiana remarked, "I'm finally home!"





## MAKING THE BIGGEST IMPACT

*We could not do our work without the great foster parents who open their homes and their hearts to children of North Dakota. Here are some quotes from our foster families about why they choose to give back every day.*

*"We chose to become foster parents because we love kids."*

*"I love everything about PATH, what they stand for and how much they help the children in our society today. Our family is a family who loves others and helps whenever we can. It has always been a passion of mine to foster children."*

*"The rewards of fostering are watching the children grow, building relationships that they might not have ever had, making changes to better their lives, getting the stability that they need, letting them know that they are a part of your family and that they are loved as such. Consistency in whatever they do, and just knowing that they can trust and count on you. We wouldn't change our life for anything. We will continue to help these children as long as we can."*

*"The idea of foster care came when we realized how many children are in need of good, stable homes. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives when we see how safe and happy our children are."*

*"We do foster care to provide a safe and nurturing environment for youth in need. It is wonderful to include them in our family - even if it's for a short period of time."*

*"It has been a blessing in our lives to open our hearts & home to children in need."*

*"One reason we became foster parents was to help children that don't have a loving and safe home."*

*"Watching a child come to life with a spark in their eye and know you were a part of helping them is one of the most amazing feelings."*

# TOGETHER we gave back

Many of the youth in foster care come from difficult backgrounds where they may not have had the same opportunities that most of their peers experience. Thanks to many generous donors, we were able to help youth in our programs build new memories!

Donors and community partners made a huge impact for youth just entering foster care to the teens who are moving on to adulthood with gifts like:

- Gift cards to buy things of their own
- Diapers, formula, and pajamas for the youngest children who need basic necessities
- Winter clothing for all ages
- Toys, teddy bears, board games, and books to make the holiday season a little bit brighter
- Blankets that they can bring wherever they go
- Bags imprinted with inspirational sayings to let each child know that they are important
- Hand painted suitcases with kids' favorite cartoon characters
- Small appliances and home goods to get teens started as they transition to independence



Each gift, large and small, made a positive impact on the life of a child or teen in a PATH program. Your support helps ease financial stress that foster parents may feel when trying to provide for additional family members, especially when they are already giving so much.

Thank you to everyone who supported PATH, our foster parents, and the kids in our programs in 2018.

Together, we can change lives!

## A PASSION FOR PARENTING

When you imagine great foster parents, Kim and Dwight fit the bill every time. Their foster care journey started 15 years ago with a simple act of kindness.

During one of her many volunteer shifts, Kim was working with youth at a local residential care facility. She learned that one young girl would not have a home to go to once she finished her treatment. Kim knew she had to take action; she went home and told Dwight that they were going to become foster parents so they could take care of this little girl.

After completing the licensing process, the couple was able to welcome the girl into their home. She stayed with Kim and Dwight until reaching adulthood. Today, they consider each other family and maintain a close relationship.

Kim and Dwight already have two biological children and a grandchild, but they are still changing lives through foster care. They currently are caring for two boys and have welcomed over 20 youth into their home over the years.

Kim and Dwight say some experiences have been quite challenging, but with over 40 years of experience parenting their own kids and through foster care, they've been able to figure out their kids' triggers and stressors and help them understand their own behavior. Their patience in parenting has contributed to many success stories and they believe that providing stability and consistency, with a sprinkle of creativity and humor, are key components to helping these youth succeed.

Dwight likes to debunk the myth that you need to be young to be foster parents, saying that working with kids and teens keeps you young. They are always running to baseball games, family activities, appointments, and even make time to go on family vacations in their motorhome where they create special memories with the kids in their care.

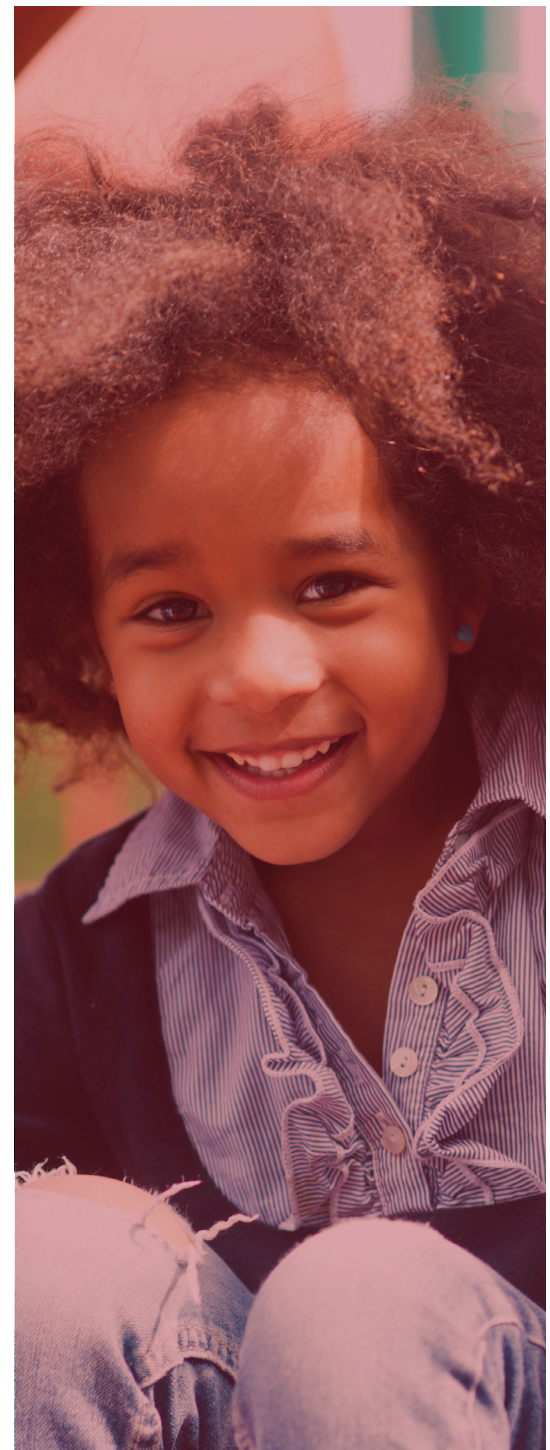


Even though it can be hard to let go, Dwight and Kim enjoy the opportunities to stay in contact with many kids and their families. One of their former foster youth expressed to them, "I hope you are around long enough to see my family and my kids one day."

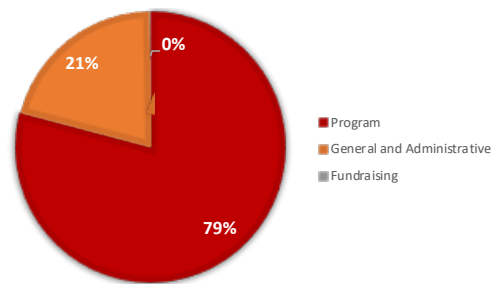




# TOGETHER we can change lives!



## PATH FUNCTIONAL EXPENSE ALLOCATION



PROGRAM	GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE	FUNDRAISING	TOTAL
\$20,154,512	\$5,259,063	\$68,467	\$25,482,042
79%	21%	0%	

Today, we know that many children are feeling the lifelong effects of emotional and physical trauma on their mental health. With your help, PATH can continue to expand our services and build innovative programs to respond to the growing need for resources to help stabilize families and support mental health for children.

As PATH is able to provide care and healing to more people, you will start to see a difference in your community. That difference may be in the way mental health is perceived, the way care is delivered, or a change in the actions of your neighbors.

We hope to see less violence, fewer suicides, decreased child abuse and neglect, and start seeing more support, more hope, and more success. **Together, we can change lives.**

### Your philanthropic investment will:

- Support the Mental Health Workforce
- Create Alternative Education Experiences for a Child's Lifelong Success
- Provide Family Healing and Support during Foster Care
- Increase Access to Mental Health Treatment
- Provide Opportunity for Increased Family Stability, Safety, and Well-Being

Thank you to everyone who donated their time, gifts, and money in 2018 to help PATH stabilize families and strengthen mental health.

## PATH FUNDING BY SOURCE



CONTRACT REVENUE	OTHER	DONATIONS, GRANTS, EVENTS	TOTAL
\$25,569,239	\$87,749	\$237,686	\$25,894,674
99%	0%	1%	

**PATH BOARD**  
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Executive Director, PATH ND Inc.

**Dr. Michelle K. Murray**  
President & CEO, Nexus

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Foster Parent, PATH ND Inc.

**Michelle Beyer, Vice Chair**  
Foster Parent, PATH ND Inc.

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[www.pathinc.org](http://www.pathinc.org)

## Join our mission!

- Be a Foster Parent
- Volunteer
- Donate
- Host a Fundraiser
- Attend an Event
- Join our Board
- Work with Us
- Be an Advocate





# PATH X NORTH DAKOTA

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PATH is an affiliate of Nexus, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, that strives to stabilize families and strengthen mental health through providing community mental health services, foster care and adoption resources, and residential treatment.

## NEXUS

### Nexus in Illinois

INDIAN OAKS X ACADEMY

ONARGA X ACADEMY

### Nexus in Maryland

WOODBOURNE X CENTER

### Nexus in Minnesota

GERARD X ACADEMY

KINDRED FAMILY X FOCUS

MILLE LACS X ACADEMY

NEXUS X GLEN LAKE

### Nexus in North Dakota

PATH X NORTH DAKOTA



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