

# Connection

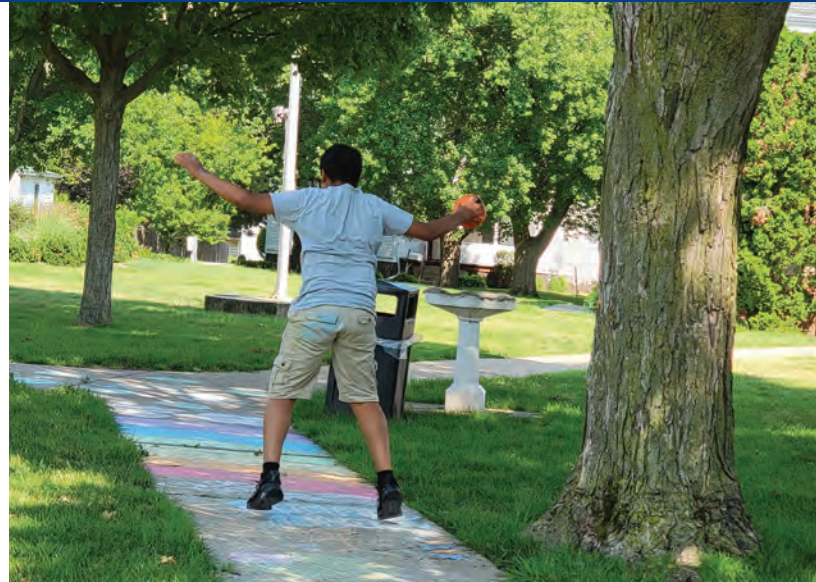
A Nexus Family Healing Newsletter

*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

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Nexus-Woodbourne waterslide at the Summer Carnival and summer sensory walk at Nexus-Onarga.

## Story of Hope

### Your Generosity Provides Healing, Stress Relief, and Joy

The end of a school year brings the excitement of traditions like prom and graduation and the anticipation of a summer break filled with warm weather and fun events.

A summer carnival, a trip to the beach or amusement park, a camping excursion or baseball game may be “givens” for most children. However, many youth served by Nexus Family Healing have never had these experiences. Supporters like you can help make these opportunities possible.

These experiences can’t be underestimated. A new suit or dress for prom boosts self-esteem. A trip to the beach or amusement park can be both calming and exhilarating. Play and stress relief are important for all of us, and especially for those who have experienced trauma and mental health challenges.

**“We don’t function well when we’re under stress and chronic stress is a part of these kids’ lives. The ability to have fun and memorable experiences is so beneficial; particularly for youth who suffer from traumatic situations,”** says Luke Spiegelhoff, MSW, LICSW, Clinical Director Specialist at Nexus Family Healing.

School is now back in session. Summer may be a memory, but the importance of summer play, recreation, and celebrations are critical for all children and especially the youth we support through Nexus Family Healing.

Thanks to all of you across Minnesota, North Dakota, Maryland, and Illinois who have made these experiences possible for the children and families we serve.

Your ongoing support allows youth who have experienced trauma and mental health challenges the opportunity to enjoy stress-relieving, joyful experiences all year long. Scan the QR code or visit [NexusFamilyHealing.org/donate](https://NexusFamilyHealing.org/donate)







## Family Focus

# Your Donations Support Foster Families, Create Hope for Youth

Youth in foster care often face multiple traumas in their young lives, in addition to the disruption of being removed from their home. It's critical to keep siblings together to avoid further trauma and separation whenever possible.

Meet the Vogel's. The Vogel's are a family who, for two years, created a safe home for four siblings between the ages of 5 and 14 in rural Minnesota.



Caring for siblings is a rewarding, yet challenging experience. The Vogel's quickly discovered they needed additional resources to meet the growing list of needs to provide the youth in their care the same everyday life experiences at school and in their activities.

**“A big part of foster care is that children who come from traumatic backgrounds don't always receive the things they need or want as kids.” – Cheryl Vogel**

Thanks to a Minnesota funder, the Vogel's were able to purchase a playset as well as two computers, desks, and a printer. These donations directly impact the children's development as well as learning needs that all kids typically experience in childhood.

Donations help foster families provide items and experiences they may not otherwise be able to afford for youth in their care. Computers for doing homework, trips to the zoo, or to a sporting event all make a difference.

## Change is in the Air

It's been an active summer for the youth in our care, full of sports, nature, and summer activities. Thanks to your support they experienced the “fun stuff” of just being kids.

As the weather begins to change, for many of us, there is this buckle down, back-to-school feeling – and it's not a surprise.

Education has a profound impact on our lives. For the youth we serve, it lays the groundwork for success as an adult, providing important tools for social, emotional, and mental strength.

It is why education is such a critical component at Nexus. From full educational programs for youth in our residential care, specialized training for foster parents, or mental health resources for all through our website, we believe in the power of education.

So as that crispness fills the air, we hope you embrace that back-to-school feeling, be curious, learn something new, and remember to carry with you a little of the summer “fun stuff.”

With sincere gratitude,

Dr. Michelle K. Murray, LMFT  
President & CEO

You can help enrich lives and create positive memories. Please donate today  
[NexusFamilyHealing.org/donate](https://NexusFamilyHealing.org/donate) >>



## Voices of Inspiration

Carl O'Brien

Recreational Coordinator

Recreational Coordinator Carl O'Brien not only plans activities for youth at Nexus-Woodbourne Family Healing in Maryland; Carl inspires and mentors the kids he serves. Carl's life experiences are like many of the youth he works with. Fortunately, Carl found his path in life, went to college, and found a job that allows him to give back.

Nexus Family Healing knows the importance of how recreation and play affects healing and development. Recreational Coordinators, like Carl, provide these critical opportunities at each of our residential campuses.

With the help of donors like you, Recreational Coordinators have the resources needed to provide outings to sporting events, museums and waterparks as well as onsite summer cookouts and carnivals. Donor funding also provides on-campus recreational spaces, equipment, art supplies, and other opportunities that promote physical and emotional wellness all year round.

Your contributions to Nexus Family Healing are invaluable to a youth's healing.



"Making sure our youth have activities outside of school, therapies, and other scheduled programming is really important for their social connection, stress reduction, self-expression, and mood enhancement."

– Carl O'Brien

## Your Support Impacts Lives

### Updates from Minnesota, North Dakota, Illinois, and Maryland

#### MINNESOTA

The **Radisson Blu Hotel at Mall of America** is celebrating their 10-year anniversary by providing 10 **Nexus-Kindred** foster families with free two-night stays and passes to the mall's activities. Cherie Johnson and the children in her care were one of the lucky families. "This trip had so many blessings – I'm still trying to wrap my head around it! I can't thank Radisson Blu enough. So generous, so beautiful, and such a GREAT time! We will remember it forever!"

**Halestreet Foundation** granted \$5,000 to support suicide prevention efforts. The **Southeast Regional Crisis Center (SERCC)**, operated by **Nexus Family Healing**, provides crisis and suicide prevention support in southeastern Minnesota. SERCC created mental health workbooks for clients and community members thanks to the support of Halestreet Foundation.

The **United Way of Mower County** increased its giving to **Nexus-Gerard** Outpatient/Community Mental Health Services for 2023-24. Funds will support community and school-based mental health services for children, families, and adults in Austin and greater Mower County. We are grateful to the local businesses and community members whose United Way donations made this funding possible.



Family fun at Mall of America provided by Radisson Blu.

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*Your Support Impacts Lives, continued...*

**ILLINOIS**

Teaching staff at **Nexus-Onarga** have a vision of creating a “Teaching Kitchen” for youth to learn skills for independent living and for future employment working in commercial kitchens. This vision is closer to becoming a reality thanks to a generous \$2,500 donation from **HPS, LLC.**, to purchase a new stove and dishwasher for the Grand Prairie School at Nexus-Onarga.

**MARYLAND**

**Nexus-Woodbourne** youth had a fun-filled summer thanks to a very generous \$10,000 grant received from the **Thomas Wilson Foundation!** The Foundation’s support provided summer activities and recreation including evening cookouts, a summer carnival, field trips, swimsuits, beach towels, and other summer necessities.

**NORTH DAKOTA**

**Lake Region Community Foundation** contributed \$9,000 to support the successful transition of foster youth into independent adulthood. This funding will provide youth ages 16-23 in **Nexus-PATH’s** Independent Living Program with household furnishings and essentials, hygiene supplies, and other basic needs. This support is crucial in the success of our youth becoming independent.



Summer fun at the Nexus-Woodbourne Summer Carnival.



Nexus-Woodbourne outing at a local amusement park.

**UPCOMING EVENTS – GET INVOLVED!**

- Oct. 6 - Night for Nexus**  
Metropolitan Ballroom, Golden Valley, MN
- Oct. 26 - Nexus-Woodbourne Building B’more Connections**  
Woodberry Kitchen, Baltimore, MD
- Nov. 16 - Give to the Max Day**  
Minnesota's biggest day of giving!

Visit [NexusFamilyHealing.org/events](https://NexusFamilyHealing.org/events) for more information.



**Thank you** for helping us change more lives every year! Scan the QR code to read our **2022 Annual Report.**



**Helpful Resources**

This September for Suicide Prevention month, Nexus Family Healing is focusing on how to support children and teens before their mental health is a crisis. Scan the QR code to learn how you can be part of the prevention with our short “Before It’s a Crisis” video series, Works of Heart coloring pages, helpful blogs, and a Feel Good Songs playlist curated by Nexus staff.

