



Friends of Nexus Family Healing

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER



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Story of Hope: Healing Her Past

Healing from trauma can sometimes be dark and painful. Heather, a 15-year-old girl at Nexus Family Healing, was experiencing that pain one night when she returned to her residential dorm after a long, difficult therapy session. All she could think about were the memories of her past abuse that had resurfaced during her therapy session. It was relaxation time on the dorm, but Heather could not stand the silence at that moment. She needed distractions to help her stop thinking about the memories. Heather began to argue with her roommates; anything to break the silence. This behavior was quite unusual for Heather. She was usually a positive leader for the group and often offered her peers support if they were struggling.

Jess, one of the staff working that night, noticed this was out of character for Heather. Rather than calling out Heather's behavior in front of the group and demanding compliance with the rules, Jess pulled Heather aside and quietly asked her if she was ok and if she would like to talk. Jess knew, at that moment, *Heather just needed someone to listen and understand, not reprimand her for her behavior.* Heather explained to Jess that she was not sure it was worth the emotional pain she was experiencing to continue to work through her trauma. She was struggling to see how this difficult journey could possibly make her life better.

Heather's Story of Hope continued pg. 3



We all know this past year has been a challenge. But when we look beyond the obstacles of shutdowns, distance learning, missed traditions and everyday activities, we are faced with a bigger issue at the core of our families – struggles with mental health.

But thanks to people like you, the youngest of children are getting the care they need, teens are finding understanding and support, and families are getting the resources they need to keep themselves and their families strong.

You've helped us expand mental health services to address the urgent needs of children and families – whether that's in a crisis or through a weekly appointment. You've also allowed us to help families find stability and stay together, avoiding more intense treatment outside of the home when possible and ensuring that the right level of support is available when needed.

There is still much to do. And with you by our side, we can make it happen.

Your generosity, paired with our team of staff skilled in helping children and families heal from trauma, makes a significant and lasting difference for the lives we touch.

With sincere gratitude,

Dr. Michelle K. Murray, LMFT
President & CEO



Family Focus

Farrel and Rachel Allison never intended to be foster parents, but after experiencing personal loss and the introspection that follows, the couple began to feel a call to action. For years, Rachel had worked with children and she began to wonder how she and her husband could watch the struggles families face yet not do more to help. Their “more” was becoming foster parents.

The first day Farrel and Rachel opened their home, they grew from a family of two to a family of five when three youngsters arrived together. The couple says they haven't looked back since. Farrel notes “It hasn't always been the smoothest ride, but it's been the most enjoyable ride I've ever had. I wouldn't give it up for anything.”

The couple has watched the children in their home make incredible strides, like a child refusing to take a car ride for fear they won't be coming back to their home to being excited to go everywhere, trusting that Farrel and Rachel will bring them back home.

Farrel and Rachel always had a team from Nexus-PATH Family Healing providing the support they needed for success, offering help when things were difficult and always championing for the kids in their home.

Nexus-PATH also provides specialized training to teach foster parents how to support the unique needs of children who have experienced trauma.

“The relationship does not have to be blood in order to be ‘family’. It's not by DNA. Family is closeness to heart and values...it doesn't matter who that is.”

For more information on becoming a foster parent in Minnesota, Maryland or North Dakota, visit:

NexusFamilyHealing.org/become-a-foster.



Story of Hope, continued...

To Heather, it was so much easier to numb herself with drugs and alcohol, or have control of the pain by cutting herself, than to face the trauma from her past. Jess just listened as Heather explained that, throughout her life, she has felt invisible and forgotten unless she was causing trouble. How, any attention, even being punished or beaten for making careless mistakes, was better than just being invisible. Jess continued to sit with Heather and just listened, not telling her what to do or how she should feel. When Heather had finished talking, Jess acknowledged how difficult it must have been for Heather to talk about her feelings and her past. Jess assured Heather that she does see her and all the hard work that she has been doing and looks forward to seeing her every day. Heather thanked Jess for listening and actually hearing her.

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE TRAINING IN PRACTICE

This is just one example of the countless moments that occur every day at Nexus Family Healing. These moments do not happen by accident. Not only do the staff have a passion for helping youth but they are extensively trained in how to carefully listen to what is really being said and to identify the meaning behind the youth's words and behaviors. This training is crucial to developing staff able to support these children through the healing process. **We have made this a top priority because we believe that every child is worth it and every family matters. We know you do as well.**

Your Support Impacts Lives in Minnesota, North Dakota, Illinois, and Maryland

ONLINE

Parenting can be challenging! **Nexus-FACTS** welcomed nearly 300 Minnesota parents who registered for a new Resilient Parent series of webinars to learn ways to help their child develop and build mental strength, from coping with stress, managing anxiety and building confidence. Parents aren't alone – together we can tackle the challenges and raise confident and healthy kids. Thank you to our community partners who provided financial support that made this series possible! Watch for the next series this fall.

SOUTHEAST, MN

Preschoolers are showing increased anxiety, tantrums and other challenging behaviors due to the lack of structured schedules and other stressors related to the pandemic. At the same time, many families are feeling economically and socially stressed and have been isolated from their usual support network. Financial investments from the Hormel Foundation, Freeborn County Cooperative Services and other community members like you has allowed **Nexus-Gerard** Community Mental Health therapists to complete Early Childhood Therapy training and purchase additional play therapy supplies needed to meet the growing need for therapy services for our youngest clients in southern Minnesota, where such services are limited, particularly for un- and under-insured families.

Continued pg. 4

When you give to Nexus Foundation for Family Healing, you're creating the possibility of healthier children, hope for families, more stable communities, and a better world—now and into the future.

Visit NexusFamilyHealing.org to learn more.

Your Support Impacting Lives, continued...

EASTERN, ND

Sometimes, children and families need extra support to work through more significant challenges related to mental health and trauma challenges. Luther Hall, a 14-bedroom psychiatric residential facility for children and adolescents, has become part of **Nexus-PATH** in Fargo, ND, and extends the resources Nexus-PATH offers to families in the area. With a long history of providing specialized foster care as well as school and community based mental health treatment throughout North Dakota, the addition of Luther Hall allows Nexus-PATH to offer children and families a variety of services to meet their particular needs close to home.

EASTERN, IL

What if we could change the trajectory of a family's path by providing support and resources that keep the family together and avoid a child being placed in foster care or residential treatment? **Nexus-Indian Oaks** is striving to do just that with its new Community Services. Serving a 5-county area in eastern Illinois, therapeutic services are designed to increase parents' self-worth, personal empowerment, bonding, attachment, and understanding of their children's needs and ultimately give them the tools they need to maintain a healthy and successful family unit. Community support will be key to sustaining these new services.

TWIN CITIES, MN

A local family overwhelmed the teen girls at **Nexus-Mille Lacs Family Healing** Andover Group Home last month when they showered the girls with an amazing array of fashionable clothing and accessories. The house was filled with "oohs!" and "ahhs!" as the girls found the items that suited them best. Gifts like these boost self-confidence and self-worth among these youth, who are working hard to overcome many challenges.

BALTIMORE, MD

Huge thank you to Under Armour for donating over 300 pairs of tennis shoes to youth at **Nexus-Woodbourne** in Baltimore! These flashy new shoes boosted morale and inspired the kids to start planning a running group and basketball tournaments!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Building Connections – Coffee Break – (Virtual) - May 20

Night for Nexus Gala (MN)– Oct 1

PATH to Hope Breakfast (ND) – Nov 4

Foster Care Information & Inquiry Sessions

North Dakota:

- May 11
- May 25
- June 9
- June 22

Minnesota:

- June 15
- June 20
- August 17

To learn more and register:
nexusfamilyhealing.org/events

“We believe every child is worth it and every family matters.”



Restoring Hope. Reshaping Futures.

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NEXUS-MILLE LACS • NEXUS-ONARGA • NEXUS-PATH • NEXUS-WOODBOURNE