ON A MISSION TOGETHER

Nexus is an ever-evolving organization, adapting to meet the changing needs in children and families' mental health. We have a strong history of positive impact, stemming from our roots of caring for individuals who couldn't find the right help elsewhere. We exist to heal the past, break the cycle of harm, and change the future of children and families who struggle with trauma and mental health challenges.

More and more children are experiencing trauma that takes a toll on their physical and mental health, creating a greater need for high-level providers who are well-versed in the effects of trauma. Unfortunately, we are seeing providers across the nation close their doors because they simply can't handle the severe mental and behavioral issues that many youth are experiencing. This is why your support is critical.

Our mission to change the course of a child's life by stabilizing families and strengthening mental health addresses these issues that often create serious health and social consequences into adulthood.

With your help, Nexus will continue to grow services to meet these ever-changing and more severe needs of youth and families.

Thanks to your support in 2018, we made impactful changes to our services to expand and provide additional resources to children and families in need of mental health care. Together, we can make a difference for children, families, and communities.

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Nexus President & CEO

Natalie McGrady
Nexus Board Chair

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NEXUS RECEIVES 100% INVOLVEMENT IN BOARD GIVING!
Richie is a teenager who has overcome many struggles in his life. He was born with a heart disorder, undergoing three surgeries before the age of two. School also created hardships. Richie’s physical limitations and learning disability brought on bullying from his classmates. At one point, the family even lost their home, all their belongings, and family pets in a house fire.

Richie remained friendly and outgoing through all of this pain. He found ways to be involved in school athletics, like becoming the football team’s manager, even though his physical health prevented him from playing.

As Richie continued to age, his past experiences started to overwhelm his thoughts. This resulted in the development of several maladaptive coping skills and an overall hopeless outlook on life. Richie began to isolate, withdraw, and wished that he were dead. He stopped talking to his mom and would refuse to leave the house.

His family knew something had to be done. Gerard Community Mental Health Services (GCMHS) was recommended to Richie’s family and he started seeing GCMHS Outpatient Therapist Matthew Tallmadge on a weekly basis.

The two really “clicked,” said Richie’s mom. He began to trust Matthew and shared the thoughts and feelings he was struggling with. Through therapy, Richie learned new coping skills to use when feeling overwhelmed and hopeless.

Richie’s mom acknowledged, “Matthew has been instrumental in Richie being able to open up and talk about his feelings again. He has given us our Richie back.” She cannot believe the changes Richie has made this past year. “He laughs again. He does things with the family without being forced to. He is Richie again.”

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PATH revamped their Specialized Family Care program, helping youth as they transition from the State’s care into a foster family setting, and from foster care back into the community. Their efforts helped youth get into a family setting faster, starting the path to success sooner, and ultimately prevented homelessness and other struggles by connecting the youth to resources in their community.

PATH’s new program model won the Program of the Year award by the North Dakota Family Based Services Conference.
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!”
Felecia Brown, a senior youth care professional at Indian Oaks Academy, has given to Youth Now for over 14 years ago.

“I have been donating since I first got hired,” she said. “I was taught to always give to others who may not have what I have. I consider it a blessing to be able to have a job, so I wanted to extend that and help others who may need a blessing too.”

Felecia said, “The most rewarding part of my job is seeing change, supporting and teaching youth. Having them call back years later thanking you, reminiscing on their experience, things that they’ve learned and now use. This reminds me that it’s all worth it.”

She is a true advocate for giving back to the youth, saying, “To the employees who haven’t considered donating, it doesn’t take a lot to make a difference in someone’s life. Any small amount makes a big difference in the youth’s opportunities and towards their growth.”

In 2018, you showed up for our kids. Your generosity allowed the youth in Nexus care to experience new activities, grow their life skills, and rediscover what it’s like to be on the path to success.

- You donated tickets to professional sports games and concerts.
- You brought holiday feasts to our campuses to make it feel more like home.
- You helped us add therapeutic tools to our programs.
- You supported new vocational opportunities to get kids on the track to a lifelong career.
- You built bikes for our kids to call their own.

Nexus employees also went the extra mile in giving back to the kids we serve.

In 2018, we revamped our internal employee giving program and created Youth Now. This program allows employees to make a payroll deduction that goes directly into a fund for youth support purchases.

In the past, these funds have been used for:

- glasses and hearing aides.
- properly-fitting clothes, winter necessities, and work uniforms.
- transitional living expenses for the youth as they leave treatment and need support getting started on their own.
- educational opportunities and school supplies.
- gang tattoo removal to get them ready for a fresh start after treatment.
- transportation expenses so a youth can visit their family.

We appreciate everything you do to provide opportunities that make life a little easier and a little more joyful for our clients and their families. Together, we are changing futures!

Bill Spotts serves on the Board of Directors for Woodbourne Center and the Nexus Foundation. His family shares the hardships that many face when a family member is struggling with mental health issues. Bill and his wife, Beth, have been generous financial contributors to the organization; in fact, their own experience inspired them to pledge one of the largest private gifts supporting the new vocational building that opened on the Woodbourne Center campus in 2018.

The teenage years are often difficult for both parents and kids. But for Bill and his family, they were years of crisis. From the age of 13, their daughter began behaving differently and more dangerously: smoking, drinking, drugs, self-harming, expressing suicidal ideation, and more.

On several occasions, the Spotts turned to their local mental health system and had their daughter hospitalized when her thoughts of suicide became severe. She was always released in a matter of days, which was never enough to get to the root of her problem. They knew she needed more intensive treatment, but admittance into a residential treatment facility was nearly impossible.

At age 15, their daughter shoppedlifted from a local mall and entered the juvenile justice system. It was then that she was finally connected with the long-term residential treatment she needed.

Their daughter was admitted into a residential facility for 18 months, a long time to be separated from family, but a standard stay in 1997. Family connections were limited during the first 90 days; it was an emotional time for the entire family.

The financial costs of treatment and the process of navigating the mental health system were overwhelming, but the benefits of the residential setting were clear. Their daughter was supported through consistent therapy and learned from interacting with other girls that she was not alone in her experiences and struggles.

The family rebuilt their trust of one another through family therapy. The on-site school helped keep their daughter on track to graduate from her local high school when she returned home. This set her on course to complete a vocational program that bolstered her confidence and set the stage for gainful employment as an adult.

Fast forward 20 years: having experienced the challenges of dealing with mental health crises, Bill wanted to make a difference for other families.

The Spotts sought out a mental health organization close to their Baltimore-area home as the facility that helped his daughter has since closed (a scenario playing out across the country, creating a critical gap in care). The leadership and board members involved with Woodbourne Center respected them as parents and business professionals. There is great energy about improving and adding programs to help youth while also finding ways to make the organization more productive.

The Spotts are excited to invest their time and resources into the success of youth supported through Woodbourne Center and Nexus while also inviting others to support this work.

“Nexus is helping youth create a path for life beyond treatment. As philanthropists, this is important to Beth and me.”
Today, we know that many children are feeling the lifelong effects of emotional and physical trauma on their mental health. With your help, Nexus 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 Nexus 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 Nexus stabilize families and strengthen mental health.

www.changingonelife.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
Nexus is a national nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, that serves children, youth, and families through Community Mental Health Services, Foster Care/Adoption, and Residential Treatment Programs. Nexus, Gerard Treatment Programs, LLC, Kindred Family Focus, and Woodbourne Center, Inc., and PATH North Dakota, Inc. are each separate legal entities, organized or treated as nonprofit organizations under their respective State’s law, and qualified for state and federal tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status of the Internal Revenue Code. Mille Lacs Academy, Indian Oaks Academy, Onarga Academy, Nexus Glen Lake programs are not separate entities, but rather programs operated directly by Nexus with an underlying adherence to the Nexus Cornerstone Values and Guiding Principles.