



Nexus
FAMILY HEALING

Connection

A Nexus Family Healing Newsletter
Spring 2025

Story of Hope

From Uncertainty to Independence: How Your Support Changes Lives

When Olivia entered foster care as a young child, she faced a future filled with uncertainty. Separated from her biological family, she struggled to trust others and found herself moving between different homes, never knowing what tomorrow might bring.



After receiving mental health support through a residential facility, Olivia found hope through Nexus-PATH Family Healing's Independent Living Services in North Dakota. Through the program, Olivia works with our dedicated team that celebrates her strengths, supports her mental health, and guides her through the challenges of young adulthood.

"Olivia is self-motivated," said Amna, Transition Coordinator with Nexus-PATH, "and everything she has set her mind

to, she has done." Today, Olivia is living independently and thriving — attending college, maintaining steady employment, and managing her own finances. Most importantly, she's building a foundation for a successful future.

Because of her journey with Nexus-PATH, Olivia feels good about the support system she has in place to successfully finish college and maintain her newfound independence in adulthood.

With your support, we can help more young people like Olivia successfully transition from foster care to independent adulthood by providing safe and stable housing, ongoing mentorship, life skills training and continuing support systems young adults can count on.

Give today and help write the next chapter in a young person's journey to independence!



"Every child is one caring adult away from being a success story, and I'm a part of a team that invests in that commitment every day."

- DENVER

Voices of Inspiration

One Volunteer's Journey to Transform Lives

When Denver Ritz-Vorwald relocated to Austin, Minnesota, for his role at Hormel Foods, he felt something was missing in his life. Drawing from his experience leading a youth leadership institute in Iowa, Denver became involved in a pilot volunteer program at Nexus-Gerard Family Healing.

"I come for the youth," Denver shares, explaining his weekly commitment working with youth receiving residential mental health treatment. "I want to be a person who consistently shows up for them. To be their encourager, the listener, the mentor, or just a positive energy in their sights."

Denver also engages his colleagues at Hormel Foods in supporting Nexus-Gerard. Hormel employees organize a staff appreciation luncheon - complete with "Swag Bags" - and even purchase and deliver gifts for youth at Nexus-Gerard during the holidays.

Denver's consistent presence and engagement creates a lasting impact on the lives he touches - so much so that the youth and staff recently honored him with an award for his unwavering commitment.

Nexus Family Healing is developing opportunities for volunteers.

We'd love your input! Contact JoLanne Hanson at 612-716-0902 or jhanson@nexusfamilyhealing.org.

Hope Through Kinship: A Family's Journey to Adopt

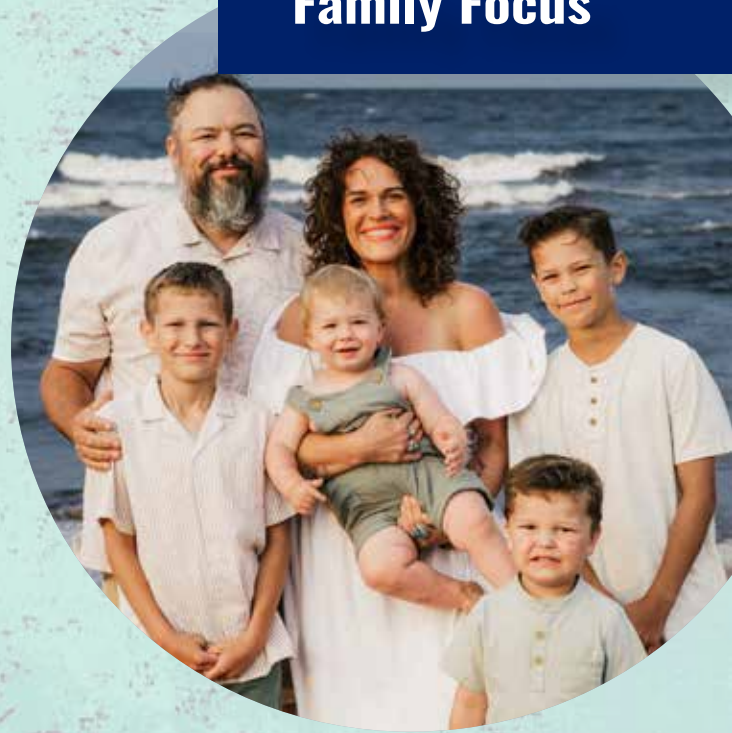
Matthew and Ingrid, parents to three sons, weren't planning to add more children to their busy family, however, when Matthew's biological nephew, Kash, needed a forever home, they found themselves in the position for a kinship adoption. Kinship adoption is a type of adoption where a relative of the youth can adopt them into their family, providing family stability and connection.

"Originally, our hope was we could foster him," Matthew recalls. But when Kash needed immediate placement, the couple stepped up without hesitation and started the adoption process.

The transition was quick and challenging, especially for their youngest son, who had been the family's "baby." "Every emotion you can feel, we felt," said Ingrid, "I was happy, sad, nervous...so many things, so much left to the unknown." The family adjusted with the support of friends, family, and the community. Meals, diapers, and other assistance were provided, and Ingrid was moved by the outpouring of support. Kash quickly bonded with his new brothers, and the family cherished milestones like his first steps and laughter.

Nexus-Kindred Family Healing in Minnesota supported Ingrid and Matthew with financial aid, daycare, and educational support. They helped the family navigate trauma-informed care, family dynamics, and local resources. While kinship adoption can be challenging and emotionally complex, Ingrid and Matthew felt it was the right decision for their family. Now, as Kash grows, they are focused on supporting his development and maintaining a relationship with his biological mother.

"I'm happy to be there for Kash," said Matthew, "I love him."



I think it's really hard, I can't imagine how we'd have done it, if we hadn't had the support.

- INGRID



Help transform young lives in your community today.

Your support will help make loving, forever homes possible for children in need. Please support these families by making a gift today!

Scan the QR code or visit nexusfamilyhealing.org/nlgive.



Agency Updates

YOUR SUPPORT **Impacts Lives**

Illinois

Life Church, Zion United Church of Christ, and Immaculate Conception/Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church of Gilman spread joy in the 2024 holiday season by donating an abundance of gifts to youth at **Nexus-Onarga** during the holiday season!

Thank you to the **Onarga Military School Alumni Association** for continuing their longstanding holiday tradition of providing a special dinner and gifts for youth at **Nexus-Onarga**. This ongoing support is so appreciated.

People's Church of Bourbonnais provided comforting gifts, while **Rotary Club of Manteno** and **4-H Best Evers Club** shared festive treats demonstrating a community of caring to the youth at **Nexus-Indian Oaks**.

Maryland

Thank you to **Ronnie Stanley, Roquan Smith** and **Kyle Van Noy** of the **Baltimore Ravens** for your generosity to **Nexus-Woodbourne**! **The Ronnie Stanley Foundation** funded outdoor fitness equipment, and Roquan Smith hosted treatment foster care families for games at the M&T Bank Stadium. **The Van Noy Valor Foundation** finished 2024 by treating two foster families to a holiday celebration at the Ravens' training center.



Corporate supporter **Integrity Advantage** granted the wishes of 20 **Nexus-Woodbourne** youth this past December through our Youth Holiday Wish List Program. They were also a Gold Sponsor of our Building B'more Connections event in November. We are grateful to Integrity Advantage for their continued partnership!



Thanks to our new partnership with **McCormick & Company, Nexus-Woodbourne** youth will receive enhanced programming and resources in 2025 that will be critical to their healing process and futures after returning to their communities.

Minnesota

The **Polasek Family and their friends** generously donated and filled thirteen "Welcome to Wellness Bags" with essential bedding and comfort items for youth at **Aspen House**, ensuring they'll have a cozy start when transitioning to permanent homes. Their generosity makes a lasting difference in young lives.



Thank you to everyone from the **Minnesota Vikings** who continued to support youth at our Nexus Family Healing agencies this past holiday season. Cam Bynum, his family, and Careless Vibez, a singing group from Miami, surprised youth at **Aspen House** with carols and gifts from **Bynum Faith Foundation**. Our youth at **New Trails Group Home** received holiday gifts from many of the Vikings players, making the season extra special.

Upcoming Events – Get Involved!

May 8, 2025 - Building Connections
Craftwell
Fargo, ND

Sept. 2025 - Building Connections
Rochester, MN

Oct. 24, 2025 - Night for Nexus
Metropolitan Ballroom
Golden Valley, MN

To stay updated on our events visit
NexusFamilyHealing.org/events



Thanks to **Operation Round Up Funds from the Mille Lacs Energy Community Trust, Nexus-Mille Lacs** youth enjoyed a special holiday celebration. Their generous support brought joy and festive memories to our young people during the season of giving.

North Dakota

A generous grant from **Otto Bremer Trust** will fund vital mental health services and specialized foster care **Nexus-PATH** provides for youth with complex needs. Their support ensures vulnerable children receive the comprehensive, individualized care they deserve to heal and thrive.

Carter's and their caring customers donated over 300 pairs of cozy pajamas to youth living in **Nexus-PATH** foster homes this past holiday season. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this heartwarming initiative!

