

Adoption • Chemical Health Assessment & Outpatient Treatment

In-Home Services • Foster Care • School Based Services

Outpatient Mental Health Services

Residential: *Treatment Cottage, Boys Program, Teens in Transition, & Next Step*

Girls Program & Teens in Transition

I.T.A.S.K.I.N. Center: *Stabilization Shelter Unit,*

35 Day Evaluation & Detention Center



NORTH HOMES
Children and Family Services

February Newsletter, 2015 * North Homes Children and Family Services

The North Homes Connection

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A letter from Rochelle DelGreco

Chief of Operations

Over the course of the last few months, there have been many new developments at North Homes Children and Family Services that we are thrilled to share with you in this winter's newsletter. In September, the commons area of the Itaskin Center in Grand Rapids underwent major renovations. Changes included adding a central staff desk in the center of the students' living room to create two separate wings. The entire living space had a facelift with new carpet, paint, and furniture. Staff and students alike have commented positively on the new change. Take a peek inside the newsletter to see pictures of the new space!

In October, two new staff joined our mental health team: Dr. Donnie Farnsworth and Lisa Riggs. Dr. Donnie Farnsworth, licensed psychologist, specializes in psychological testing and is able to provide services to those ages 6 and older. Lisa Riggs, who is a psychiatric nurse practitioner, is able to provide medication management to those 13 years

and older. We are thrilled to have both of their expertise on board at North Homes Children and Family Services.

In January of this year, the Council on Accreditation visited both the Grand Rapids and Bemidji offices. Over the last year, many of our staff and directors worked diligently to prepare for their visit by collecting information regarding each of our programs to supply evidence that we are providing the highest quality of care to the children and families we serve. Although the official results of the visit have not been received, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our directors and staff who led this project. As you read this newsletter edition, you will find that it is the dedication and commitment of our staff that makes North Homes an exceptional child and family serving agency.

Sincerely,
Rochelle DelGreco

North Homes receives Safe Harbor funding for exploited youth

The Minnesota Department of Health has awarded \$900,000 to Safe Harbor grantees across the state to help free youths from sexual exploitation and to help them recover from the trauma it causes.

Minnesota's Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth Law went into full effect August 1, 2014. The law decriminalizes prostitution charges for youths under 18, increases the penalties for buyers (Johns), and creates a statewide system for helping sexually exploited youths that includes counseling and housing options. The law was implemented in phases after it was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Mark Dayton in 2011. North Homes aims to provide mental health services to identified youth in three locations, including Bemidji, Grand Rapids, and Duluth.

Employee Highlight: Jennifer Sheppard,

MSW, LGSW has worked at North Homes for 16 years and has an extensive history of working with children and their families in a variety of areas. Currently, Jennifer is an outpatient therapist and educational trainer. She has a passion for trauma based therapies and is trained in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy & Dialectical Behavior Therapy. Jennifer is easy to connect with and is very supportive of other therapists in the team. When Jen is not working, she is in the north woods with her husband. She is also the mother of two adult sons. Jen is recognized because of her commit and dedication to not only children and families but the agency and clinic as a whole.



Lisa (center) pictured with CEO, Jim Christmas and case manager, Amy Lindahl

Lisa Kaquatosh receives award at MCCA

Lisa Kaquatosh from Hawkins Home/Winnie Way in Bemidji was selected to receive the 2014 Sister Helen Louise Roth for Commitment to Youth Award by the Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies. She is the first ever recipient from North Homes.

The Sister Helen Louise Roth Award was instituted in 1990 to recognize a MCCA member employee who has gone beyond the call of duty in caring for children – someone who emulates the tireless, enthusiastic devotion of Sister Helen. Sister Helen was the former director of Home of the Good Shepherd and a founding member of the Minnesota Council of Residential Treatment Centers (the precursor to MCCA). Though Sister Helen died in 1991, her legacy of unconditional care for children lives on through the wonderful work of people.

In November, Lisa was honored at an award reception in Roseville where she officially received the award. She was honored for her hard work and dedication to the youth with which she works. Lisa has been one of the leaders at the Girls Programs since before the program opened. Her hard work and dedication has contributed to the ongoing success of both Hawkins Home and Winnie Way.



Renovations at the Itaskin Center

The Itaskin Center in Grand Rapids underwent major renovations in September. A new central staff station was added in the center of the commons area to create two separate wings.

Holiday celebrations at the Itaskin Center and Cottage

The Holiday Season was a busy one at North Homes Itaskin Center and Cottage. A variety of fun-filled activities were planned and enjoyed by students and staff in both programs. The spirit of Christmas began early and included a number of events with no shortage of things to do. Christmas shopping was completed online this year to ensure each youth received most of the gifts that were on their list. Personalizing made the Holiday Season both memorable and meaningful for our students.

The Itaskin Center students decorated their units, had door decorating contests, made handmade ornaments, spread holiday cheer by caroling the elderly at one of the local assisted living facilities and enjoyed holiday baking with Lynn from the kitchen. The smell of freshly baked cookies filled the halls. School staff and administrative staff joined in the festivities as the students decorated the Christmas tree with their handmade ornaments and played games of Christmas Jeopardy, Twas the Night Before Christmas and Christmas Bingo.



Mid December, students from the Cottage helped at the animal shelter with the Santa Paws Christmas party. Another event at the Cottage included the annual staff/youth Christmas party potluck. Staff members brought in delicious, home baked goodies for the students to indulge in. This year the staff participated in a Secret Santa exchange with the students. Each staff brought three small gifts for their assigned child and a bigger gift for the potluck. The following day included the Cottage's Holly-Day Party and everyone's family was invited to attend. Over the course of the week, each student baked their own treats from morning till afternoon with their staff coordinator for the party. There were over 20 different holiday style treats to try.

Foster care & adoption holiday support groups held in December

During the month of December, North Homes Foster Care/Adoption hosted three holiday parties in Duluth, Bemidji and Grand Rapids for our foster providers, adoption families and youth. CEO Jim Christmas and Regional Services Officer Kim Anderson were in attendance and thanked all of our families for their commitment to the service of youth and families. The celebrations began in Duluth. Families rode the Christmas Express and toured the Bentleyville light show. They also stopped at the train depot for a Christmas story, a tour of a classic train car and an exciting meet and greet with Santa himself. Following the train ride, cookies and hot chocolate were served and each child received an ornament from the Christmas Story.

Bemidji's celebration had horse drawn sleigh rides, hot chocolate, crafts for all ages and a tasty meal at the area's local ski resort, Buena Vista. Thanks to our gracious kitchen staff and volunteers from a local church, Grand Rapids' winter party closed out the celebrations with a delicious meal followed by an evening of roller-skating.

All three celebrations offered wonderful experiences for our families and a wealth of fellowship. Thank you to all who participated in the events and made each celebration a success!



How can you help a child in need?

North Homes Children and Family Services is a non-profit, 501c3 organization. In order to continuously improve our programming to the youth and families we serve, we accept tax deductible donations and memorial gifts.

If you would like to help the at-risk youth and families we serve, North Homes Children and Family Services accepts a variety of donations, big or small. Donations can come in the form of cash donations, memorial gifts, pledges, or through items such as clothing or other items.. For more information regarding giving to North Homes, please contact Toni Troumbly, 218-327-3000 or via email at toni.troumbly@northhomes.org.

Please Welcome to NHCFS!

Dr. Donnie Farnsworth, Ph.D, LP specializes in psychological testing (IQ, memory, learning, personality, developmental disability, and diagnostic clarification) with individuals 6 and older.



Dr. Farnsworth also provides individual, group, & family therapy, behavioral management strategies and court ordered forensic evaluations.

Dr. Farnsworth, Ph.D, LP grew up in Chisholm, MN and served 4 years in the Army before beginning his education at Hibbing Community College. He then went on to complete his bachelor's degree in psychology at Bemidji State University, his master's degree in clinical psychology at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and his doctoral degree from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

If you'd like to make a referral or schedule an appointment, please contact the North Homes CFS Mental Health Clinic at (218) 999-9088.

North Homes Children and Family Services will host **Dr. John DeGarmo, Ed.D, speaker, trainer, author, parent coach, & foster/adoptive parent on March 12th, 2015 at the Reif Center in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.**

Contact Jill Florek, (218) 327-3000, jill.florek@northhomes.org to register!

Congratulations, Andrea!

Andrea Hofstad was nominated for the Warrior Way Award and staff of the week at Deer River High School. Staff are nominated for showing courage, which is the willingness and ability to confront fear, pain, danger, uncertainty or intimidation.

According to the district, "Andrea Hofstad was nominated because she is never afraid to take on daily challenges and help solve complex problems. Her courage to help the community and stay positive everyday is truly amazing and such an inspiration! Thank you for being an important part of our team!"



We are very proud of Andrea for achieving this well deserved recognition!!

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