the journey

STORIES OF HOPE

Just One Meal

Fraser Child Care

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE
Happy Spring!

In her book *The Secret Garden*, Frances Hodgson Burnett wrote “if you look at it just right, the whole world is a garden.” We are reminded there exists a circle of life which brings a certain order to the universe. A mother dies, and her garden goes unattended until it eventually falls into disarray. Carefully tended the garden is eventually nurtured back to life, and through its therapeutic influence, a child regains his health and ability to walk. A tale of poor mental health is woven throughout the book. A story of depression and tragedy is turned around by healing powers found in nature and determination initiated by one small child.

As I read the book, I couldn’t help but wonder how things would be for some of our people at Fraser if only we could find that garden! If all of our people affected by a disability, or tormented by poor mental health could simply be treated like everyone else and were allowed to be themselves.

“The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.”

– Henry Van Dyke

As I read, there were many lessons to be learned in Burnett’s garden; fresh air is good for the body and the soul, when we think unselfishly of others we can help give them hope, there is magic in the world, and if you give something care and attention it will flourish, and there is nothing quite as beautiful as hope. The author comments further, “At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to hope it can be done, then they see it can be done – then all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago.”

May is Mental Health Month. Perhaps if people would begin to see there is hope for those with mental illness, they would begin to hope for change, and we would all wonder why we didn’t see it before.

Sandra Leyland
President and CEO
Mission

THE OF FRASER, LTD.

“Supporting children, youth, and adults on their life’s journey to independence.”

This mission is carried out by providing residential and non-residential independent living services for adults with intellectual disabilities, comprehensive childcare services for children with special needs as well as those that are typically developing, and homeless prevention and intervention services for transitional youth ages 16 – 26. Fraser, Ltd. has provided residential services and support for disenfranchised populations for over 124 years.

WWW.FRASERLTD.ORG | 3
At Fraser, Ltd. we believe as we care for others, we also care for each other. As we foster independence, we offer encouragement, support, connection and motivation to each as a community as well as to those we serve. In this spirit “The Art of Humanity Project” was born.

This year our focus is compassion – an awareness of the life experiences and suffering of others and the desire to relieve it. On Wednesday, June 21, Fraser, Ltd.’s Third Annual Just One Meal is an opportunity to feed young neighbors in need.

We work with 1600 at-risk youth and young adults and their children experiencing homelessness each year in our Transitional Youth Services program. For the young adults we serve, focusing on the future is a major challenge when they aren’t sure when they will be getting their next meal.

We recognize the 1600 young people we serve are only a portion of this vulnerable population in our community, and summer tends to be hardest for many when they cannot rely on school lunch programs.

We are asking community members, families, businesses, churches, and civic groups to join us once again and donate the cost of one meal to make a meaningful difference in young lives. Please watch for more information on our website at fraserltd.org, Facebook, and in your mailbox. You will be able to donate online or by check.

For more information on sponsorships or how to get involved, please contact Barb Grabar, Public Relations and Special Events Administrator, at bgrabar@fraserltd.org.
Dwight was born in Detroit to teenage parents who became runaways shortly after his birth. Both his parents had grown up in chaotic homes with parents struggling with severe addiction and abuse. Once Dwight was born, his mother decided they were better off facing an unknown future in Minneapolis than going back to the chaos of the projects in Detroit.

Life in Minneapolis would not be easy. They were homeless and started a cycle of staying with people until they had overstayed their welcome. To make money, Dwight’s parents turned to the things they knew best to support themselves: drugs and crime. They sold drugs and would rob people. Before Dwight turned four years old, his father was murdered in an altercation over drugs.

Soon his mother would be serving one of many stints in jail, and he was shipped off to a relative’s home in Chicago. Over the course of his childhood, his mother was in and out of his life and he would stay with a variety of relatives and friends.

“There were no birthday parties. No holidays. No celebrations. I was always treated like a slave – scrubbing floors, cleaning... just to earn my keep,” Dwight recalls.

There were brief periods of time he remembers being happy. “My grandma was addicted to crack. All her kids went to prison for selling at some point,
Diana came to Stepping Stones Resource Center two years ago. She had moved from Missouri to the area at the age of five when her mother became terminally ill so that her family could be cared for by her grandparents. Once her mother passed away, she was victimized by her trusted grandfather. When Child Protective Services determined she and her sister were being sexually abused, they were removed from the home and put into the foster care system because there were no other family members to take them.

“I remember being so sad, and so angry,” says Diana. “I hated everyone and everything. I was not an easy foster kid to have.” Because of her severe trauma, Diana went through many foster homes and dealt with severe mental health issues. There were multiple suicide attempts.

“I had no idea how to work through my emotions,” she said. “I was a mess.” When she aged out of the foster system, she had nowhere to go. She eventually was referred to Stepping Stones Resource Center. “I didn’t trust anyone right away,” she said. “I thought if people were being nice to me, it was because they wanted something from me.”
Soon, however, Diana would begin to see the consistency of support and care of the staff. She moved into the Transitional Living Program, Fraser’s emergency shelter. There she began working on her goals of mental health stabilization as well as getting and maintaining a job.

Diana began working closely with one of the therapists at Valley Hope Counseling. “I learned how to channel my emotions without acting out. I never dealt with the grief or trauma before.” Soon, she would also have a full-time job.

When a single unit became available at Fraser’s permanent supportive housing, The Butler House, Diana signed her first lease. She has now maintained full-time employment for over a year, has been paying rent, and recently saved up to buy her first car. “For the first time in my life I feel hope. The staff have supported and encouraged me. When I needed it, they gave me tough love. I feel happy. And worthy.”

This summer will mark Fraser, Ltd.’s 16th Annual Volunteer Camp for children ages 9 – 13. The camp’s focus is giving back to the community, and each day is spent volunteering at various nonprofits throughout the Fargo-Moorhead area. Since 2002, volunteers of the program have contributed almost 6,000 hours to the community and served at 168 sites.

Participants have an opportunity to learn more about each nonprofit, the people they serve, and how they benefit the community. For example, the children help make food baskets and have discussions about where the food is going and who it serves. Some local organizations that have been volunteer sites include Great Plains Food Bank, Farm in the Dell of the Red River Valley Community Garden, and the Red River Zoo.

Participants see their contributions making real change, and campers meet new friends and explore their talents. At the end of camp there is a celebratory picnic of the participants and families along with representatives from the organizations where they volunteered.

The camp is for children of all abilities and costs $15 for the week. Scholarships are available. For more information, please call 701-232-3301.

Save the Date

VOLUNTEER CAMP AUGUST 7 - 11

This summer will mark the humble beginnings of what will become The Butler House Hope Gardens, offering sanctuary to transitional age young adults and their children living in our permanent supportive housing and transitional living program. Hope Gardens will be a space fostering a sense of community, relationship, and education of sustainable agriculture through the shared efforts of maintaining vegetables. The raised beds have been donated by the Patrick and Michelle Beyer Family and will be onsite at 711 South University Drive.

Someday will mark the humble beginnings of what will become The Butler House Hope Gardens, offering sanctuary to transitional age young adults and their children living in our permanent supportive housing and transitional living program. Hope Gardens will be a space fostering a sense of community, relationship, and education of sustainable agriculture through the shared efforts of maintaining vegetables. The raised beds have been donated by the Patrick and Michelle Beyer Family and will be onsite at 711 South University Drive.
John was 16 when he found himself on the streets, an angry, violent young man. “I grew up in a really abusive household,” said John, now 21. “I only understood one thing, and that was violence.”

After couch-surfing at a variety of friends’ homes, he went to a local homeless shelter who referred him to Stepping Stones Resource Center, the gateway to Fraser’s Transitional Youth Services (TYS). TYS is a continuum of care model beginning with Stepping Stones Resource Center – a drop-in center offering a place of respite, for many like John, to catch his breath, build a sense of community, and make connections with onsite case managers.

Stepping Stones Resource Center sees as many as 1600 at-risk youth and young adults experiencing homelessness between the ages of 16 – 26 each year.

**Every case is unique**
Adolescents and young adults on their own make up a fraction of the nation’s homeless population. Most face rejection or abuse from their families. Traditional programs aimed at the chronically homeless often place them in a potentially dangerous situation at a vulnerable age.

According to an annual survey conducted in January 2015 and reported to Congress in November, more than 610,000 people were counted as homeless. Of those, 200,000 were under 25, but only about 47,000 of those were estranged from their families, the report said.

Those annual numbers come from a “Point in Time” survey, when all information is taken on a single night by volunteers on the streets and in shelters. Since it is unlikely volunteers can find everyone living on the streets, especially in urban areas, the actual numbers of homeless are apt to be larger. Many come from foster homes, having aged out of that system. Others were kicked out or fled from their families. Often, their parents have mental health or substance abuse issues or both.
“Every case is a unique mix of issues,” said Ann Leuthard, Transitional Youth Services Case Manager. “They left home for a reason. We have young people who’ve left home because their choice was to leave home or continue to suffer abuse from people who are supposed to be protecting them.”

John never knew his father; he was one of four boys his mother had by age 22. “She married a man who was very violent,” he said. “My mom would kick me out and tell me she couldn’t handle me. I was a pretty angry kid.”

Jason tells a different story. At 19, he seemed to have an idyllic life. “I grew up in an upper-class family,” said Jason, now 23. But his parents kicked him out when he told them about his sexual orientation. “I became homeless after telling my parents I was gay,” he said. “I had to be honest to be happy in life, but the truth came at a higher cost than I ever thought it would.”

There is a stigma attached to young people living on the street different from that for older, chronically homeless people, said Amy Dworsky, a senior researcher who studies youth and homeless issues at the University of Chicago’s Chapin Hall policy research center. “I think people who do see homeless youth out on the street do think they’re bad kids who should just go back to their parents,” Dworsky said. “Many of them can’t go back home to their parents. They left home for a reason.”

An array of assistance
Both John and Jason ended up needing to learn the life skills that are a pivotal part of TYS programming. “When you suddenly, abruptly become homeless,” Jason said, “that’s not something you’re ready for. A lot of the stuff we really take for granted in living independent is stuff we have to be taught.”

There are many types of assistance available at Stepping Stones Resource Center. The center is open Monday through Friday, offering a warm meal, food pantry, clothing, hygiene products, showers, and laundry. There are computers available for young people available for writing resumes, searching for jobs and studying for the GED. There are art groups, family-style meal preparation by staff and youth, and referrals made daily to local community resources.

Building trust is paramount in helping at-risk youth and young adults experiencing homelessness overcome their current circumstance as many have been through significant trauma. Leuthard notes the differences in brain activity between traumatized youth and those who haven’t been abused or neglected. Even in adolescence or early adulthood, people can learn to build healthy relationships and lives, Leuthard said.

Counseling is an important part of the continuum of care of Fraser’s Transitional Youth Services. Fraser has Valley Hope Counseling Services onsite which has three licensed social workers who specialize in trauma-informed therapy. Early intervention with youth and working through past trauma in a supportive environment is most effective to break the cycle of homelessness. These are hallmarks of Stepping Stones Resource Center.
Fraser, Ltd. is proud to be a member of Mental Health Advocacy Network (MHAN), a North Dakota Coalition advocating for consumer driven mental health services. MHAN was formed to assure consumer and family voices are included in recommendations for improvements and in decision making.

In December 2016, Mental Health Advocacy Network (MHAN) conducted an anonymous statewide survey regarding consumer and professional experiences within the mental health service delivery system. Of those 375 surveyed, 224 were professionals and 151 were consumers and families. These are some of the responses indicative of a greater need for more comprehensive, accessible care across the state of North Dakota:

**Professional Responses**
- 72% responded consumers and families do not have convenient access to mental health services in their local community.
- 86% responded consumers and families were experiencing wait times to receive mental health services.
  - 52% had a wait time of one to two months
  - 24% had a wait time of two to three months
  - 11% waited over six months to receive services
- 49% of consumers and families in crisis have a wait time of two weeks or less. 25% waited one to two months.
- 83% do not believe there are sufficient crisis residential facilities in the consumer and family's local community.
- 59% do not have sufficient services in their local community for individuals who may be suicidal.
- 88% are aware of children being in a detention center, youth correctional center, or jail due to a behavioral health issue.
- 92% are aware of children being involved with social services as a result of a behavioral health issue.
- 91% are aware of consumers being involved with the criminal justice system due to a behavioral health issue.
- 49% are aware of families who have been asked or recommended to relinquish custody of their child in order for their child to obtain mental health services.

**Consumer Responses**
- 65% of consumers are experiencing wait times to receive mental health services.
  - 41% waited one to two months
  - 17% waited two to three months
  - 16% waited over six months
  - 14% waited two weeks or less
  - 11% waited three to six months
- 51% were in crisis during the wait period.
47% have been in need of phone crisis services to address emergency mental health needs. 44% of those rated their satisfaction with this service at 1 with 1 being the worst on a scale to 5.

84% do not believe there are sufficient crisis residential facilities in their local communities.

84% do not believe there are sufficient in-patient psychiatric services in their community.

79% do not believe there are sufficient services in their community for individuals who may be suicidal.

North Dakota Mental Health Statistics

18.1% of adult North Dakotans (roughly 105,523) have experienced some form of mental illness.

13% to 20% of children in North Dakota (between 22,610 and 34,785) have a mental disorder.

F-M Ambulance Services in North Dakota report that 1/3 of their calls are behavioral health related, including depression, suicidal ideation, and anxiety and depression.

70% of North Dakota judges have sentenced at least one person to prison (even if they were not considered high-risk) to receive mental health, alcohol, or drug addiction treatment.

89% of youth in juvenile corrections have mental health problems.

75% of youth in juvenile corrections have a serious emotional disorder.

56% of youth in juvenile corrections have a mental health issue requiring medication which must be monitored by a psychiatrist.

Approximately 70% of the inmate population is diagnosed with a mental illness and 30% are prescribed psychiatric medications.

*For citations, see www.mhan.org

SKILL ENHANCEMENT Training Program

In the spirit of Fraser, Ltd.’s commitment to supporting individual independence, the Skill Enhancement Training Program (SET) was created in 2004. Every summer transition age youth and young adults impacted by a mental health condition, emotional stressors, or borderline intellectual or developmental disabilities come together to develop life skills. Every participant, between the ages of 12 – 21, has individualized goals and have lessons focused on social living and independent living skills based on their needs. The goal of the program is to help each participant succeed in adulthood, increase self-esteem, and develop strong peer relationships. Participants are divided into age groups, and have many activities and lessons including:

- Creating budgets and money management
- Grocery shopping
- Living independently
- Learning to ride public transportation
- Volunteering
- Communication skills and self-advocacy
- Touring college campuses
- Learning how to look for employment and fill out job applications
- Employment skills
- Sporting and other recreational activities

SET activities are in a group format. SET is successful due to its structure – peer support. Peer support is key to any participant’s success. Music Therapy was a new service introduced in 2015 and was successful. SET daily lesson plans teach positive behavior and adaptive ways to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. To register or for more information, please call 701.232.3301.
Play is more than just fun for babies and children. It’s how they learn best, and how they work out who they are, how the world works and where they fit into it. Playing is essential for a child’s brain development. The time spent playing together gives a child many different ways and times to learn.

Play also helps children:
• build confidence
• feel loved, happy and safe
• develop social skills, language and communication
• learn about caring for others and the environment
• develop physical skills.

Unstructured, free play is the best type of play for young children. This is play that just happens, depending on what takes a child’s interest at the time. Free play isn’t planned and allows a child to use his/her imagination and move at his own pace. Examples of unstructured play might be:
• creative play alone or with others, including artistic or musical games
• imaginative games – for example, making cubby houses with boxes or blankets, dressing up or playing make-believe
• exploring new or favorite play spaces like cupboards, backyards, parks, playgrounds and so on.

As a child grows, the way she or he plays will change. Play will be more creative, and the child will experiment more with toys, games and ideas. This might mean he or she needs more space and time to play. Also, children move through different forms of play as they grow. This includes playing alone, playing alongside other children and interactive play with other children.

“Play is the highest form of research.”

– Albert Einstein

Explore the world.
Create art.
Make friends.
Celebrate diversity.
Investigate and experiment.

Join us at Fraser Child Care Center
We have immediate openings for 3-5 year olds with flexible hours available.
701-232-3301
Within Valley Hope Counseling at Fraser, Ltd., we see children and adults who struggle with a variety of mental health concerns. Recent statistics report that 1 in 5 people in the United States have a mental health diagnosis. Of those, only 60% receive mental health care. As a result, family members often step in and play a tremendous role in supporting and caring for them.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and we would like to take time to recognize and support the family behind the person with mental health concerns. Because mental illness is often seen as the “invisible disease”, it is difficult to understand. There are not any physical deficits, but more internal struggles. They are not missing a limb, going through chemo, or recovering from surgery. Because these struggles are inward- it is easy to forget. You often want to tell them to “get over it” or “suck it up”. It is painful at times to be present through the chaos. You often feel alone, used, exhausted, and frustrated. Many times, you want to walk away.

That is why, it is so important for family members to practice the same things taught to our clients. Self care is important! Find something that brings you joy each day- the smell of coffee in the morning, the sunshine on your face, or a good song on the radio. Appreciate these little moments, as they are what gives you fuel to get through the day. Use coping skills that work for you. Take deep breathes when frustrated, count to 10 before responding, and have a healthy support system around you. Allow yourself to set boundaries that you can stick with. It’s ok to not be accessible 24/7, nor do you have to drop everything to be at their side. When you are doing more than they are, its ok to re-evaluate your role. Most of all, there is no shame is saying that your family member needs more support than you can give.

Being a family member of a person struggling with mental health is one of the hardest things to be. We, at Valley Hope Counseling, recognize this and thank you. Please know that we are here to not only support our clients, but you as well.
HOW CAN I HELP?

With your generous gifts in any amount, donations make a lasting impact on all individuals we serve and help make independence and self-sufficiency happen. A financial donation makes the biggest, most immediate impact. There are, however, almost as many variations on ways to make a donation as there are needs to be met at Fraser and to help us fulfill our work’s mission.

**Sponsorships**

Through a sponsorship, you can focus on your values and passions while committing to Fraser’s future success. Sponsorships are projected over 1 to 3 year terms and are available for Transitional Youth Services, Children’s Services, and Adult Independent Living. Sponsorships include, but are not limited to:

- **Butler House Hope Scholarship** – rental assistance for one year for multiple participants needed while they meet educational and employment goals, gain independent living skills, develop personal well-being by addressing mental and physical health and/or chemical dependency, and gain financial footing.

- **Rosie’s Fund** – Tuition assistance for Fraser Child Care for working families and single parents who have fallen on hard times, but need help so there is no disruption of the quality care we provide for children with special needs as well as their typically developing peers.

- **Independent Living Enrichment Fund** – Invest in the lives of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities by sponsoring those with behavioral needs requiring enhancements to insure quality of life to support independent living not covered by state funding.

**Recurring Monthly Gifts**

You can make an immeasurable impact and start a cycle of positive change by helping the people Fraser, Ltd. supports year round. When you join our monthly giving program, you help us use your gifts and plan for the future more effectively as we focus on housing and independent living skills for the children, youth, and adults we serve.

**North Dakota 40% Tax Credit**

North Dakota allows the opportunity for taxpayers to receive a generous 40 percent state income tax credit for charitable contributions to organizations like Fraser, Ltd. Your gift helps Fraser, Ltd. meet future needs: 1) Qualifying gifts over $5,000 benefit you through a 40 percent North Dakota state income tax credit. 2) The gift funds services to help people today. 3) Your charitable tax credit will provide a guaranteed source of income for Fraser, Ltd.
A Treasured Member

Denice Hall has been a beloved fixture of Fraser’s residential family for over thirty years. Over the course of these years, she has been active in the community, has a passion for art and animals, and enjoys helping others.

Denice was recently recognized for “25 Years of Exemplary Service” for her work with the Vocational Training Center (VTC) in South Fargo. She enjoys working with hangers and sorting, but also has spent her breaks and free time there to be of service to the community.

During her breaks at VTC, Denice began collecting pop tops to donate to The Ronald McDonald House of Fargo. She raised over $1,000 in pop tops and turned them in this year.

In her spare time, Denice can be found beading necklaces for her loved ones. “I like creating them because they are pretty, and I can share them as gifts,” she said. Denice was recently able to present her brother necklaces for his birthday on a trip to Arizona she made to see her family with one of Fraser’s staff members.

Denice speaks often of her siblings and nieces and nephews. Her other great love is animals. She chose the accompanying photo because she loves this dog. Her bedroom in her home is also filled with stuffed animals.

“I love it here,” said Denice. “The staff are really nice, and help me when I need it. They know sometimes I like to spend time alone with my beads. Other times I want to spend time with my friends at the house, so I like being here.”

We are grateful Denice has been such an integral part of the Fraser family for over three decades.
WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

6.21.17