



Planting Seeds

FOR NORTH DAKOTA'S FUTURE



*Catholic Charities
North Dakota*

**Annual Report
2020-2021**

Are you planting seeds for your future?



Dianne Nechiporenko
Dianne Nechiporenko
Executive Director

Have you established goals, values, and plans that become the seeds of our lives? The seeds you plant germinate and grow into life goals, whether intentional or not. Not all seeds germinate and blossom, and not all efforts result in a positive outcome, but the goal is to plant as many seeds as possible to pursue your life goals.

We plant seeds for all the important things in our life such as friendships, career, faith, health, and family.

Friendship begins with seeds of being there for others, giving without expecting to receive, being responsive, and reaching out. You make an effort to maintain friendships. You become the person others seek as a friend. Our careers begin as seeds of education. We get to choose what skills we build and what route we want our life to take. Faith is a seed many of our parents planted and nurtured in us, leading us in a direction through the word of God. We then plant the seeds of faith in our children and hope they will follow where we lead. Health is something you build over time. Choosing healthy food, exercise, and good life habits are all seeds we plant to help us maintain a healthy lifestyle.

*"Let us not lose heart in doing good,
for in due time we will reap if we do
not grow weary."*

Galatians 6:9

Planting Seeds...

The seeds we plant in our lives can grow into the most beautiful things but not every seed planted grows into something beautiful. Sometimes you're dealt a different hand but can make healthy choices within the plan. Family can be very challenging and requires seeds of patience, understanding, and forgiveness. Families are not perfect and positive family relationships take time, nurturing, and effort to grow.

Catholic Charities North Dakota (CCND) began planting seeds 98 years ago. Catholic Charities North Dakota is rooted in the charitable, diocesan-sponsored works of the sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Presentation Sisters) who came to North Dakota in 1882. They began planting seeds of charity, compassion, hope, faith, and caring. The seeds they planted have fallen on fertile ground. They have been nurtured by the sun and blessed with rain.

CCND started assisting the Presentation Sisters' orphanage to provide care and education to dependent children, as well as foster care and placement for adoption. From the original seeds CCND has been cultivated into providing compassion and care for those needing counseling, guardianship, and adoption/post adopt services. Through the faith and belief of our donors, we have been able to provide charitable giving to those in need of assistance because of hard times or the unpredictability of COVID.

We continue to cherish and depend on the faithful giving of our donors. Through your goals of charitable giving our garden continues to sprout new beautiful blossoms of caring for those less fortunate and in need of loving care. Thank you for your continued support, caring, and nurturing of Catholic Charities North Dakota.

OF CHARITY

Executive Director

In the **Pregnancy, Parenting, and Adoption Services (PPAS)** program, our social workers are honored to walk alongside expectant women and their families as they prepare for the birth of their children, prospective adoptive families on their journey to adoption, and biological families as they navigate the adoption search and disclosure process.

We consider it a privilege to help plant the seeds that will bloom for generations to come. All around us we get to see the budding of new life: babies being born, families growing, individuals gaining strength and confidence, and biological families reuniting. These are all changes that represent just the beginning of the beauty yet to bloom, changes that will bring a strong foundation and joy for years to come.

PPAS services provide hope, education, and support that blooms into compassionate, educated parents, a stable environment for kids to grow up in, positive relationships, and endless possibilities for a successful future.



You and many others have joined us this year in planting seeds. Many have donated gently used baby items for our Bundle Up Your Baby Bump Events or new baby items through the Catholic Charities Crib Projects and Giving Tree Projects. You have provided generous financial donations that keep the costs of adoption affordable for North Dakota families, you have spread the word about PPAS services so that those in need know that they are not alone, and most importantly you have offered prayers for those we serve.

We are forever grateful for the support we receive from you and others in the community and forever honored to be a part of planting seeds for the future of our beloved children and families in North Dakota.



FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

adoption.nd



Pregnancy, Parenting,
and Adoption Services at
Catholic Charities ND

11: Babies Placed *(includes ND infant,*

babies going out of state, and babies coming into ND)

15: Babies Born to PPAS Moms

14: Identifying Searches

30: Pregnancy Clients Served

5: Non-Identifying Searches

OF JOY

Pregnancy, Parenting, and Adoption Services

The **Counseling Services** program has many reasons to celebrate this year! Helping individuals, couples, and families are the reason we became counselors. Providing the best, evidence-based counseling services possible remains our focus. We would like to share some of the most recent ways we are staying up to date with evidence-based modalities for our clients.

Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) focuses on the individual's present concerns. The EMDR approach believes past emotionally-charged experiences are overly influencing your present emotions, sensations, and thoughts about yourself. These are called negative beliefs. For example, have you ever thought to yourself that you weren't good enough, or that you are not loved? EMDR processing helps you break through the emotional blocks that are keeping you from living an adaptive, emotionally healthy life.

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is a

"I wouldn't have been able to become the person that I am today without your support. I am a better mom, wife and coworker because of the things I've learned here."



short-term, specialized behavior management program designed for young children experiencing behavioral and/or emotional difficulties and their families. PCIT teaches caregivers to manage their child's difficult behaviors, while increasing their positive behaviors. PCIT works with the child and caregiver together to improve behavior and reduce parenting stress.

Over the last year the counseling program has been able to help many people from all walks of life due to the ability to serve people regardless of their ability to pay with the sliding fee scale. With the understanding that we all have times in our life where we may struggle and benefit from additional support or learned coping skills, the counseling department is blessed to have such experienced and knowledgeable counselors that are able to help provide much needed services to the residents of ND. With the telehealth services we started to offer during Covid-19, CCND is able to reach even more people in rural areas that are not able to make it to one of our offices in Fargo, Langdon, Bismarck or Minot.

Counseling Services

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Counseling Services
at Catholic Charities
North Dakota

388: Clients Served
2,748: Counseling Sessions
292: New Clients

OF PEACE

Guardianship Services – Vulnerable (GSV) has begun its second year of service. We have seen the seeds of our beginnings grow and flourish. There are so many people out there needing our help and support that our staff in the program have more than doubled in the past year. We currently have staff around the state, located in Fargo, Grand Forks, Jamestown and Rugby. In July, we also added a support staff person in the Fargo office. Throughout the year our numbers have gone up and down. We currently have 43 people in the program and 9 of our individuals have passed away. We serve people in the program who are 18 years and older. The days keep us busy providing services to the very vulnerable elderly, to younger individuals with struggles in the area of mental health or traumatic brain injuries, and to those with other types of

46: Individuals served
844: Visits with individuals served
2,506: Other contacts
10,517: Miles Driven
13: Counties of residence

Planting Seeds ...

vulnerabilities. In our work we provide support and direction for the individuals who have no source of support and are having difficulty living and making decisions in their daily lives. We are here to help the person make informed, person-centered decisions through understanding of consequences and dignity of risk on the spectrum of life choices.

As a guardian this year, the most memorable experience for me was due to the loss of one of my most precious veterans. This person was on my case load for a very short 2 months which does not give you much time to get to know the person or their needs. He suddenly began to decline and after a matter of a few days, he was gone. I recall being so sad that this person had so suddenly passed and appeared to have no family connections. In preparing for the funeral and working with the funeral home, I learned of some very honorable things that can happen for our veterans. I attended the funeral anticipating that 2 staff from the VA Hospital Community Living Center and I would be in attendance. When I pulled up to the Veterans Memorial Cemetery outside of Fargo I could not believe what I was seeing. There were so many cars I truly believed I was in the wrong location. As I walked up to the area where the service was to take place, I could hardly control my emotions for this individual and how he was truly supported by his military family. There were so many people there that they had to close the service due to COVID precautions and the other 2 people from the VA that were supposed to attend were not able to be admitted. Since that time, and with the help of Lisa at the VA and JD Legal, we have been able to locate the individual's family. I look forward to the day when I can share the flag I received on that day with them. Thank you God for this experience, and God Bless the USA.

OF HOPE

When the **Guardianship Division: Intellectual Disabilities** at Catholic Charities North Dakota was



contacted in the summer of 2018 to become emergency guardian for Angela, she was only 40 years old. Angela was in the Intensive Care Unit and had been intubated for almost 2 weeks and was receiving tube feedings.



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She had severe sleep apnea, pneumonia, obesity, was dependent on oxygen, and was at a severe risk of stroke and heart attack due to her complicated health condition. In the first few months of guardianship, many health, housing and safety decisions needed to be made that impacted Angela's well-being. Not one of the decisions was easy and the guardianship worker had numerous conversations with Angela. The journey brought many changes for her and difficult transitions but ultimately great success. Fast forward a short 3 years, Angela is living in a supportive environment with Red River Human Services, has lost over 100 pounds, is no longer on oxygen, continues to increase her independence, and has found a love for cooking, eating healthy and exercising. When asking Angela what role she thinks her Catholic Charities North Dakota guardianship workers played in her growth, she recalls being in the hospital and praying to God for help. She said God listens and answers prayers, and she is right where she is supposed to be with the help of her guardian.

90: Individuals on waiting list

519: Individuals served by our guardians

2,618: Meetings on behalf of the individuals we serve

9,317: Visits with the individuals we serve

55,268: Miles driven by guardianship workers to 30 cities

Guardianship Division - Intellectual Disabilities

OF COMPASSION

The past year has been full of growth for the **Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK)** program! Catholic Charities North Dakota remains the sole contract holder of the AASK program for the State of ND through a partnership with the ND Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division. Although COVID-19 impacted many of the children and families the program served in the last year, the consistency, quality, and determination of program staff persisted through the challenging times. The program achieved a record high number of adoptions this year despite the pandemic, no small feat during a period of uncertainty and change.

The AASK program has been planting many seeds for growth in their services. The ND Post Adopt Network (a service of AASK) and the ND Department of Human Services began working with the National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship Support and Preservation (QICAG) to help identify strengths and barriers of our post adoption program. This last fiscal year, several projects have been initiated to enhance service delivery to post adoption and guardianship families. It is our hope to streamline

276: Total Children Placed for Adoption

256: Total Children Adopted

15: Children Adopted who Received Recruitment Services

38: Children Adopted who were in Tribal Custody

173: Adoption Home Assessments Completed

954: Number of kids who received AASK adoption services in 2020-2021 Fiscal Year

Planting Seeds ...

services so all families have the skills and tools to grow and maintain a healthy family unit in the years beyond an adoption.

Additionally, the program took a critical look at the process of adoption and identified ways to increase efficiency and to serve families more effectively. The program continues to actively seek out ways to ensure children are achieving permanency in a timely manner.

Community partnerships have flourished this last fiscal year as well! After the child welfare system was restructured into Human Service Zones, AASK has been meeting with each zone on a quarterly basis to enhance communication and to discuss shared cases in order to identify any barriers that may hinder a child from moving towards adoption. It has been extremely valuable to build relationships and create connections so we can all work towards a common goal for each child served.

In the upcoming year, training enhancements, recruitment of adoptive families, and community outreach are at the forefront of program growth. If you or a family you know has a desire to learn more about adopting from the foster care system, please reach out! There are still many children who do not have an adoptive home and are in need of a stable, permanent placement. As these "seeds" continue to grow, we look forward to providing the best possible services to all of the children and families we serve!



www.aasknd.org



www.NDPostAdopt.org

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

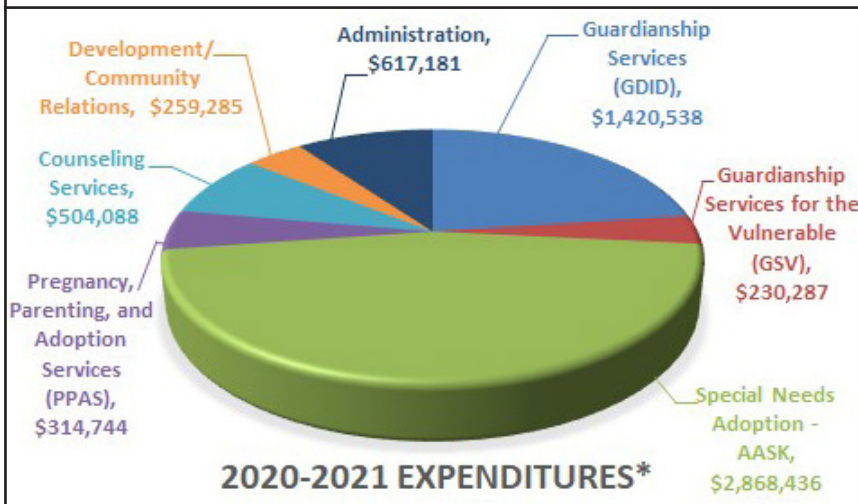
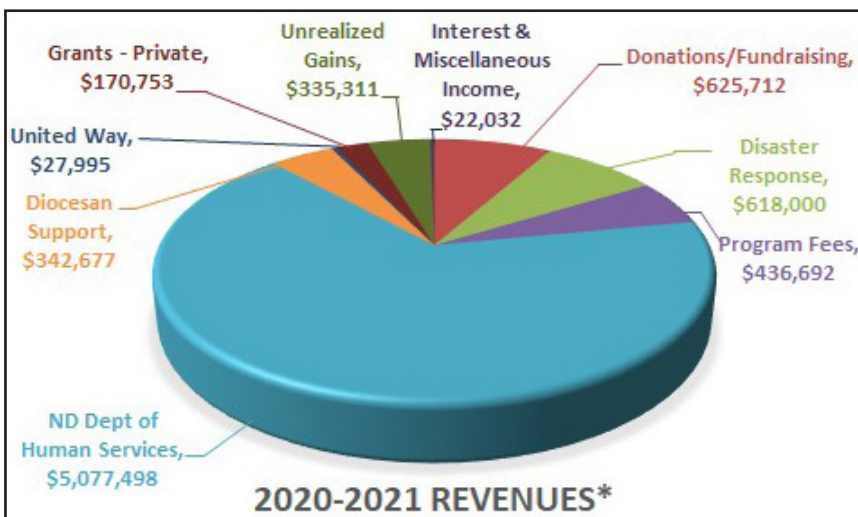


Adults Adopting
Special Kids- AASK

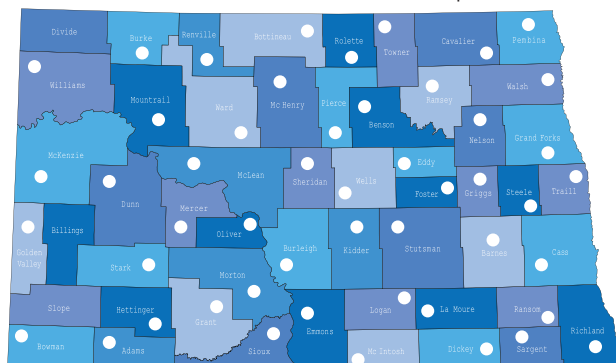


ND Post Adopt
Network

OF LOVE



*Please note that these charts include pre-audited numbers.



More than 3,000 clients served and countless more reached.

Dots signify the 50 of 53 counties in North Dakota where people received direct services from us in 2020-2021.

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Guided by our values, Catholic Charities North Dakota
serves people in need and advocates
for the common good of all.

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