

# NCC CONNECTION

*The Northern Cass Community Health & Wellness Center Newsletter*



## Childcare at Northern Cass Community Health & Wellness Center

*By Amber Lockhart*

The U.S. is facing a crisis in childcare with rural areas often hit hardest. The Northern Cass School District is fortunate to have two childcare facilities within the six communities it serves, yet demand continues to outpace supply. Additionally, recruiting and retaining educators is increasingly more challenging. Childcare affects everyone, it is needed for a strong workforce and economic growth which are vital to communities of all sizes.

In 2023, The Northern Cass Community Wellness Center (NCCHWC) held listening sessions to learn what the community feels will help our rural spaces thrive. One need heard loud and clear from community members and local businesses was more access to childcare and early childhood learning experiences. The childcare center quickly moved from a “wish list” item to a key part of the proposed wellness center.

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Two childcare center initiatives will be to provide hands-on working experience for high school learners interested in early childhood education and also to pair children with senior citizens for reading, art and other activities through a Grandfriends program.

Working with Little Steps Learning Center in Hunter and Child Care Aware of ND, the NCCHWC team is creating a shared vision of this facility. We talked with Kristina Kylo, Owner, Little Steps Learning Center and Erica Bullis, Start Up Coordinator, Child Care Aware of ND about their hopes for childcare at the NCCHWC and here is what they had to say -

**Tell us about your business/organization:**

**Kristina:** I live in Hunter with my husband, Kasey, and two daughters, Addie and Madelyn. I graduated from Mayville State University with a degree in Early Childhood Education. After teaching pre-k for a few years, I decided to open a childcare and preschool in Hunter. Little Steps opened in May 2013 and currently provides care for 40 children from toddlers to school age children and Baby Steps opened in June 2016, providing care for 15 infants and toddlers.

**Erica:** Child Care Aware of ND, a strategic initiative of the South East Education Cooperative (SEEC) provides information, resources, training and support to raise the quality as well as the availability of childcare, so all children have the opportunity to play and learn in a safe and healthy environment.

**What is your involvement with the proposed child care center at Northern Cass Community Health and Wellness Center (NCCHWC)?**

**Kristina:** I am thrilled to provide insight into what kind of space will be useful for childcare and the opportunity to open a remote childcare center in the Northern Cass Community Health & Wellness Center.

**Erica:** I have worked with Amber Lockhart and Dr. Cory Steiner on the beginning steps of starting a childcare center in the NCCHWC. We have discussed North Dakota state licensing requirements for centers as well as talked about square footage and how that works with ratios/capacity. We looked at the blueprints/floor plan with Kristina Kylo and my goal is to help get the floor plan set so there will be minimal changes once construction starts.

**How can access to childcare benefit a community as a whole?**

**Erica:** Without childcare, parents are unable to work, leading to businesses having staffing issues. Access to childcare affects more than just the people who have children, it keeps the community running by allowing parents to work and businesses to thrive. We as a community can't function without having people in our workforce.

**Why do you believe this child care center fills a need in our community?**

**Kristina:** Childcare is a high demand and I hope to help fill some of the void that is currently posing problems throughout our area.

**What excites you most about this childcare opportunity?**

**Kristina:** What excites me most is having the opportunity to help families in need during our current childcare shortage. I am looking forward to working with and meeting new families in the Northern Cass Community!

**Erica:** I am excited to see this project come together not only to help alleviate the shortage of childcare in the surrounding communities, but it will also allow Northern Cass to help retain staff in the school and help meet an ongoing need in the community. This project is fortunate to partner with the school, the opportunities are endless regarding what steps childcare can take to ensure quality. This will positively affect the overall care and success of the children who attend.

Again, I can't express my excitement enough for this project! This is hands down one of my favorite projects to have worked on. It brings me hope that one childcare at a time, we can increase quality and end the stigma of how society views early childhood. We can come together as a community to help our children thrive and grow in their most formative years!

## BankNorth Partners with FHLB of Des Moines to award \$1,000,000 to Northern Cass School District

Arthur, ND (April 12th, 2024)

BankNorth, in partnership with Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines (FHLB Des Moines), is proud to announce their \$1,000,000 Member Impact Fund grant to Northern Cass School District.

The Member Impact Fund contributed \$3 for every \$1 donated by BankNorth, boosting the \$250,000 donation to a \$1,000,000 contribution to support the Northern Cass School District in their journey to bring the Northern Cass Community Health and Wellness Center to life.



“BankNorth has been a partner of the Northern Cass School Community since its inception 27 years ago,” stated Chris Murch, Vice President of the Northern Cass School Board. “With this donation BankNorth has made a lasting commitment to the well-being of the communities we both serve. The Northern Cass Community Health & Wellness Center is proud to have a partner that values community and innovation.”

The proposed health and wellness center which will be located on the Northern Cass School campus will provide access to a variety of health services, including medical, dental, vision, behavioral health, occupational and physical therapy, with the help of our local health care providers. Additionally, the center will help to fill some of the key shortages in the area, including full-time child-care, an expanded food and personal care pantry, and meeting spaces for collaboration and creativity.

“The Northern Cass Community Health and Wellness Center is a generation changing project,” said Northern Cass Superintendent, Dr. Cory J. Steiner. “From the start, BankNorth has been committed to supporting this project. They have shared the vision of helping communities thrive and not merely survive. BankNorth understands true success is achieved only through purposeful partnerships which transcend individual organizations. This donation will fundamentally change the trajectory of the district and the communities, families, and learners it serves.”

“As a member of the Northern Cass community, this project is extremely exciting,” said Shane Husar, CFO of BankNorth and board member of the Northern Cass Community Health and Wellness Center. “The school is truly a gathering point for our community, and it makes total sense to leverage its unique location to offer these additional services. It will make it easier for our aging community members to stay in their homes, as well as attract new families to the area.”

The Northern Cass School District was one of three local organizations BankNorth nominated to receive a Member Impact Fund grant. Growing Small Towns headquartered in Oakes, ND and the LaMoure City Park District were also selected to receive funding to empower them to make their communities vibrant places to live and work. BankNorth CEO James Williams III states, “Enriching the communities we serve has always been a focus at BankNorth. These three organizations provide necessary services our communities need to thrive, and we are proud to support these towns we call home.”

BankNorth has been helping our customers achieve their financial goals, while supporting and improving our great rural communities for more than 115 years. The bank offers values-based banking products and services through its branches in Arthur, Buffalo, Casselton, Enderlin, Harwood, LaMoure, Lisbon, Marion, and Oakes in North Dakota and Aberdeen and Warner in South Dakota. For more information, visit [www.ibanknorth.com](http://www.ibanknorth.com).

## NCCHWC Celebrates Nonprofit Status

*by Kelly Yanke Deltener*

In a significant milestone for the Northern Cass community, the Northern Cass Community Health & Wellness Center has officially been granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status by the federal government. This designation not only marks a pivotal moment in the center's journey but also heralds a new era of expanded services and community support.

The NCCHWC was established to address the unique challenges faced by area residents. With a mission to improve the health and wellbeing of community members across all ages.

Achieving 501(c)(3) status means the center can now receive tax-deductible contributions, which is expected to boost its fundraising efforts significantly. This is crucial for the center's sustainability and will enhance its ability to launch new programs, expand services, and reach more community members.

Learn how your donation can impact your community, visit our website today!

# Dakota Heritage Bank Funds Pantry at NCCHWC



Hunter, ND – February 13, 2024 – The Northern Cass Community Health & Wellness Center

(NCCHWC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is delighted to announce a commitment from Dakota Heritage Bank, marking a pivotal moment in the development of this innovative community resource. In collaboration with Essentia Health, the NCCHWC aims to address the holistic health and wellness needs of individuals and families within the region it will serve. This project intends to be privately funded.

Dakota Heritage Bank's generous support will be commemorated through the naming of the Grocery Pantry & Personal Care space within the Wellness Pantry, reflecting their dedication to ensuring access to essential resources for all community members. With Dakota Heritage Bank's commitment, the Grocery Pantry & Personal Care space will serve as a vital resource hub, providing necessary items to support individuals and families in times of need.

The NCCHWC project, currently in its capital campaign phase, plans to construct a facility on-site at Northern Cass Public School's campus which will include a clinic, wellness center, daycare, community space, as well as the grocery and personal care pantry.

"We are immensely grateful for Dakota Heritage Bank's commitment to our cause," said Susie Carlson, president of the NCCHWC Board of Directors. "Their dedication to the community aligns perfectly with our vision of fostering holistic well-being for all. Together, we are creating a space where individuals can access not only medical care but also essential resources that contribute to overall health and happiness in our rural communities."

"Dakota Heritage Bank is honored to be part of this innovative project," Jason Hauff, president at Dakota Heritage Bank said. "This new facility will help fulfill and expand on the services that are needed in our communities and school district. Many rural areas face the same challenges we do but thank you to the NCCHWC Board as they have come up with a solution to address those needs."

Northern Cass Community Health & Wellness Center is actively seeking support for its capital campaign and looks forward to continuing its discussions on collaborations with local businesses, organizations, and families dedicated to enhancing community well-being.

## Meet the Board of Directors



- Susie Carlson, President
- Chris Murch, Vice President
- Kelly Yanke Deltener, Treasurer & Secretary
- Brad Bjerke
- Kasi Eisenzimmer
- Shane Husar
- Amber Lockhart
- Ben Olson
- Parker Vander Wal
- Dr. Cory Steiner, non-voting member
- Paige Carlson, non-voting member

**VISIT [NCHEALTHWELLNESS.ORG](http://NCHEALTHWELLNESS.ORG) FOR THE LATEST PROJECT NEWS**

# Thank You to Our Community Donors!

The NCCHWC is a capital campaign seeking donations from our community to realize this collective dream. Through the combined efforts of compassionate donors, dedicated partners, and engaged community members, we are on a journey to bring this vision to life.

A heartfelt Thank You to the families and community organizations who have donated to the project this quarter!

**Nathan & Paige Carlson  
Kelly & Justin Deltener  
Johnny & Taylor Jorgensen  
Tim & Julie Keckler  
Don, Pat and Kelley Lockhart  
Amber & Ross Lockhart  
Ben & Ashley Olson  
Toby & Sue McPherson**



**The Grandin Civics Club**

If you would like to donate to the Northern Cass Community Health & Wellness Center, please contact 701-874-2322 or submit a pledge form - <https://www.ncchealthwellness.org/make-a-pledge>