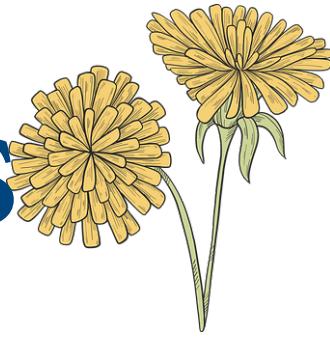




Heart Times

NEWSLETTER



Spring 2020

AASK - Adults Adopting Special Kids

www.aasknd.org



Jaydan

the country so he has lots of room to play outside.

Jaydan's team is seeking a skilled, two-parent household that is able to provide him with the consistent structure, love, and nurturing that he needs. Jaydan's team is open to a family that has pets, and indicate that he may do well as the youngest child in the home or as the child with the highest needs. Jaydan's forever family must be willing to continue supporting Jaydan with services. Jaydan's forever family should maintain contact and support the important relationships Jaydan has established in his life so far.

Do you feel your family would be a great fit for Jaydan? If so, Contact Kristen at 701-551-6390 to learn more!

Meet Jaydan!

Jaydan is a funny 10 year old that loves to make others laugh. He has a bright smile and a great sense of humor. He is also interested in magic, and enjoys showing others card tricks! He likes to be active, and enjoys spending time outdoors hiking. Jaydan also loves baseball and basketball! To relax, Jaydan likes playing video games or building things with Legos.

Jaydan would love to have siblings, and hopes to have a dog in his forever family. His dream dog is a Great Dane! Jaydan would prefer to live on a farm in



Our Mission

AASK commits to building permanency for children from foster care through adoption by stable and nurturing families.



**NORTH DAKOTA
POST ADOPT NETWORK**
A SERVICE OF THE AASK PROGRAM

PATH NORTH DAKOTA | Specialized Services for Children, Youth, and Families



AASK is a collaborative program of Catholic Charities North Dakota and PATH

Staff Contact Information

Fargo

Catholic Charities North Dakota
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Post Adopt

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Belcourt

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PO BOX 1970
Belcourt, ND 58316
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Grand Forks

Catholic Charities North Dakota
311 South 4th St. Suite 105
Grand Forks, ND 58201
P: 701.775.4196
F: 701.775.0129

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1674 15th Street W #3
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P: 701.225.3310
F: 701.225.2208

Minot

PATH ND, Inc.
1425 21st Ave NW
Minot, ND 58703
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F: 701.839.8990

Director's Corner

Happy Social Work Month!

March may be a bit of dreary time, but it is one of my favorites because it is nationally recognized as Professional Social Work month! We get to celebrate the amazing AASK adoption staff and community partners who contribute to the wonderful children and families we work with each year. I couldn't be more grateful for the constant commitment and dedication to the important work we do every day. I am truly honored to work alongside of such a compassionate, creative, and hard-working group of staff who put their heart and soul into their work every day. Thank you, all, for everything you do. I am so proud!

MAY YOU BE PROUD
OF THE WORK YOU DO
THE PERSON YOU ARE
AND THE DIFFERENCE
YOU MAKE

Kara Eastlund, MSW, LMSW
AASK Director

To learn more about
any of the Waiting Children,
please visit



www.ndheartgallery.org
or visit the AASK website at
www.aasknd.org

Irish Bannock



Original Recipe Yield 1 round loaf

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour	1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons white sugar	1 cup buttermilk
1/2 teaspoon baking powder	2 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon baking soda	1/2 cup dried currants or raisins, soaked first in hot water and drained well

Directions:

1. Combine flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Cut butter into flour mixture with pastry cutter. Add buttermilk until dough is soft (you may not need the entire cup of buttermilk, but the dough should be soft). Stir in currants.
2. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead for 5 minutes, or until smooth. Form dough into a 7 inch round. Place on a lightly oiled cake pan or cookie sheet (I like to use a 9" round cake pan lined with parchment or brown paper). Cut 1/2 inch deep cross side to side. Score with cross 1/2 inch deep on the top.
3. Bake in a preheated 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) oven for 40 minutes.

"Our family has always had a fun time with St. Patrick's Day, even though we're not Irish! When our kids were little, mischievous Leprechauns visited our home during the night, leaving their green (construction paper) footprints, turning furniture upside down, playing with the kid's toys, leaving candy trails and green milk in their wake! We always enjoyed an Irish dinner of corned beef and cabbage with Irish Soda Bread or a more recent favorite, Irish Bannock and a green dessert of some kind. The leftovers of this bread are great toasted with butter and jam, served with English breakfast tea."

Submitted by Julie Hoffman



Congratulations to these families who recently celebrated the legal finalization of their adoption from November through January



Arielle, Weston, & Serenity with Dan and Julie
Kobe & Justice with Bryan and Karri
Phoenix with Jerry and Cesily
Mya with Kevin and Amanda
Kenzley with Tyler and Sara
Elijah with Justin and Melissa
Samarah & Sergia with Sarah
Timothy with James and Kristen
Kamauri & Xavier with Debra
Jeremy with Paul Kasey
Jesse with Shaun and Erin
Kallin & Julian with Evan and Mallari
Alexa with Tyler and Jordan
Maria with Todd and Susan
Aunika, Jeremiah, and Luxe with Daniel and Sandra
Leigha with Jessica
Clark & Ember with Joshua and Hope
Aurora with Arion and Rachel
Alex with Nancy
Elih with Dustin and Revel
JayClyn with Dustin and Mary
Bradley, Katheana, Mystic, Zane, & Orion
with Edward and Bonnie



Khloey & Caedyn with Joe and Jill
Tyshaun with Phillip and Laura
Nathan with Jay and Linda
Kaiden & Scott with Joseph and Elise
Jamaica with George and Kelly
Aaliyah & Emma with Kurt and Jessica
Eleanor with William and Sara
Holden & Tyten with David and Amanda
Ariyanna & Max with Travis and Jennifer
Stacy with Derek and Carrie
Jax with Cory and Dalonna
Alyx with Jason and Jodi
Isaac with Andy and Amy
Romeo with Timothy and Veronica
Alexa with Karen
Timothy with Michael and Kris
Emmett with Marc and Stephanie
Kinnleigh with Keith and Jennifer
Benjamin with Amber
Keira with Stacie
Cohen with Jerry and Amanda
Caliann, Christopher, Coda, & Courtney
with Roger and Deb.



Waiting Kids



Meet Sweet LeAnna!

LeeAnna is 13 years old and can't wait to meet her forever family! She is a friendly and sincere young lady who always shows kindness and gentleness towards others. LeeAnna is a hard worker and has many qualities that make her very special and unique.

LeAnna

To learn more about LeAnna visit www.aasknd.org or call Maria at 701-551-6397.



Meet 13 year old Wyatt! Wyatt is a kind, inquisitive and fun seventh grader. He enjoys spending time with his friends, listening to music, skateboarding, scootering, swimming, watching TV, and playing outside. He also enjoys going for drives and going out to eat.

To learn more about Wyatt, visit www.aasknd.org or call Marisa at 701-775-4196.

Wyatt



Meet Mr. Jerry!

Jerry is a sweet, compassionate 10 year old. He is a hard worker, and loves to build small projects with his tools. Jerry has a keen eye for any sparkly gemstone or rock when he is out exploring. He also collects compasses, and loves to show them to his friends!

Jerry

To learn more about Jerry, visit www.aasknd.org or call Kristen at 701-551-6390.



Danikah is a bright 6 year old who is learning so much in Kindergarten this year. Danikah is outgoing and her personality is unforgettable. Danikah's favorite colors are yellow and red and she loves singing, coloring, and swimming. Her favorite season is summer and has taken a new interest in fishing!

To learn more about Danika, visit www.aasknd.org or call Ambree at 701-255-1793.

Danika



Meet 15 year old Lashanti!

She is a kind soul with a creative side who likes to express through various arts and crafts. She loves Lisa Frank! Lashanti is imaginative, sweet, and funny. She has an open, accepting heart and has a love for all people. Lashanti loves to make others laugh!

Lashanti

To learn more about Lashanti, visit www.aasknd.org or call Kristen at 701-551-6390.



Mister Maison... the most creative, imaginative, and constructive 13 year old boy you'll meet! Maison is currently in the 7th grade and does well. He especially loves his STEM class because he can be creative and build things. He has participated in different clubs/hobbies like bowling league, drama club and Lego club.

To learn more about Maison, visit www.aasknd.org or call Maria at 701-551-6397.

Maison

Waiting Kids



17 year old Rainann enjoys helping with grocery shopping, cooking, and especially LOVES baking! She participates in many sports, both individual and team! When she's not participating in a sport, you can find her singing her heart out in not one, but two different choirs!

To learn more about Rainann, visit www.aasknd.org or call Kristen at 701-551-6390.

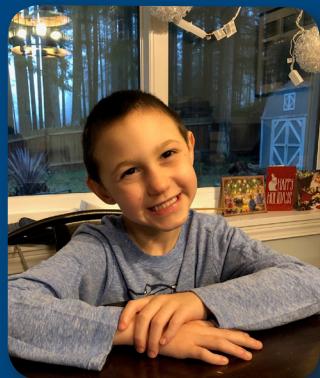
Rainann



Meet 9 year old Avan! Lover of animals, steak, reading, sports, but most of all, FOOTBALL! Avan thinks basketball is pretty cool, too. Avan prefers to stay busy and loves to play outside and is especially happy if he has a dog to play with!

To learn more about Avan, visit www.aasknd.org or call Kristen at 701-551-6390.

Avan



Meet Aaron!

He is an energetic, fun, busy, and loving 6 year old, soon to be 7! Aaron loves to talk your ear off and tell stories, he also doesn't forget much! He continues to work his way through his 1st grade year! Aaron has been starting to draw, and is working hard on staying in the lines while coloring.

To learn more about Aaron, visit www.aasknd.org or call Megan at 701-775-4196.



Meet Madison!

Madison is 14 and likes to start her day with a cup of coffee, especially from Starbucks. She is a social gal and her friends are extremely important to her. She is known to be very kind and sweet, and would describe herself as funny, family oriented, smart, and resilient. Madison's favorite colors are yellow and light blue and loves the quote "no rain makes no flowers."

To learn more about Madison, visit www.aasknd.org or call Ambree at 701-255-1793.

Madison



Meet 15 year old twins Hayden and Hanna!

Hayden is sweet and caring. Hayden loves to spend time playing video games like Minecraft, and also likes to build things with Legos. He has a creative imagination and this shines through! Hayden has a happy, energetic personality. To relax, Hayden enjoys reading comics and watching superhero movies.

Hanna loves to make new friends and meet new people. She loves to express herself through music and writing. Hanna is a talkative, delightful girl. She is kind, thoughtful and cares deeply for others. She is excited to be a part of a forever family!

Both Hanna and Hayden identify that the most important thing to have is each other in their forever family! Their love for one another is evident. They both look forward to spending time with their forever family playing board games.

To learn more about Hanna and Hayden visit www.aasknd.org or call Kristen at 701-551-6390.

Hanna & Hayden

From the Professional

Resiliency in Children—How to Build It

The children that we work with in the AASK program have unfortunately experienced tough situations and trauma in their short lives. Childhood trauma is strongly linked to mental and physical health problems throughout their lifetimes. It negatively impacts brain development, cognitive development, physical health, learning, social-emotional development, and the ability to develop secure attachments to others.

When an individual is going through stress or adversity, the body goes through several changes to make them more alert, stronger, faster, and causes our body to go into overdrive to function. Our blood pressure and heartrate increases, and stress hormones spread throughout the body. The stress response is initiated by part of the brain that is responsible for our instinctive and impulsive responses. The brain sends messages to release certain chemicals to help the body handle the stress. When the stress is ongoing, these physiological changes can stay turned on. Over an extended period of time, they can weaken the immune system, the body and the brain. Stress can also tell part of the brain to temporarily shut down, which can affect problem solving, attention, impulse control and regulating emotions or functions otherwise known as 'executive functions'.

We can't change what has happened to our children or what will happen to them in the future, but we can help by giving them coping skills so that they can face the challenges that they go through throughout their lives, and help them build resilience. Resilience is being able to bounce back from stress, challenge, tragedy, trauma or adversity. Resilience is not a personal trait that individuals are born with or without, but rather an outcome of interacting factors including biological, psychological, social, and cultural components that determine how a child responds to traumatic events. When children are resilient, they are more adaptable, braver, and more curious.

There are several different things and strategies parents and caregivers can do for children to build resilience. Here's a list of some ways a parent can do that.

- Provide positive supports and act as role models for children. Having positive supports present such as family members, teachers, coaches, and other positive individuals helps promote self-esteem and confidence.
- Let them know that it is okay to ask for help. Children often think that being brave is about dealing with things by themselves. Reassure them that being brave and strong means knowing when to ask for help.
- Build their executive functioning. Some ways to build their executive functioning are establishing routines, creating and maintaining supportive reliable relationships, modeling healthy social behavior, providing opportunities for peer social interactions, creative play, memory games, exercise, and giving them opportunities to make their own decisions.
- Promote optimism. If your child tends to look at the glass being half empty rather than half full, encourage them to see a different view. This doesn't mean invalidating how they feel, but acknowledge their view, and introduce them to a different one.
- Teach them how to reframe. When experiencing challenges or adversity, reframing is a valuable skill to have. Reframing will help them focus on what they have rather than what they have lost. To increase this skill, acknowledge their disappointment, then encourage them to steer away from looking at what the problem has costed them and to look towards the opportunities it may have brought them.
- Model resiliency. Let them see how you deal with disappointment or challenges. Showing a child how you as their parent or caregiver bounce back from adversity, trauma or challenges, children can develop more confidence that they can overcome the tough things they are going through, or have experienced.
- Encourage them to take safe risks. Let them know that the fact that they are showing courage and bravery to face something that is challenging is more important than the outcome. Giving a child appropriate freedom lets them learn and think about their decisions, and teaches them that they can cope with things if they go wrong.
- Meet them where they are. Resilience isn't about never failing, it's about getting back up again, and some adversities or challenges will take longer to bounce back from—and that's perfectly okay. Grief or sadness can make us want to withdraw for a little while. It is important to let them know that it is okay to feel the emotions that they are feeling and that you are on their side to help them overcome the challenge.
- Provide them with unconditional love. This is the most important and effective thing you can do to build resilience in children. Let them know that there is nothing they can do or say that will make you stop loving them and remind them often with "I love you's", hugs, snuggles, and spending quality time with them!

References:

Building Resilience in Children- 20 Powerful, Practical Strategies (Backed By Science), Karen Young
<https://www.heysigmund.com/building-resilience-children/>

How to Implement Trauma-Informed Care to Build Resilience to Childhood Trauma, Jessica Dym Bartlett and Kate Steber
<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/how-to-implement-trauma-informed-care-to-build-resilience-to-childhood-trauma>



Hello from ND Post Adopt Network!

2019 was an amazing year of growth for ND Post Adopt Network! Your Post Adopt team was busy meeting with professionals, training families, helping families in crisis, facilitating support groups, and having fun at our camps! To help put things into perspective, I thought I would provide some fun facts for you.

In 2019, Post Adopt:

- Received over 200 phone calls from families and professionals asking for assistance, help, and/or guidance.
- Attended 141 meetings to support families.
- Helped facilitate 102 interactions between adoptive/guardianship families and birth families.
- Completed 37 trainings and educational sessions with professionals and families.
- Facilitated 71 support groups across the state.
- Sent out 215 welcome packets to adoptive and guardianship families.
- Traveled 24,801 miles!
- Received 67,853 views on our facebook page!
- Hosted 3 events (Winter Retreat, Camp Connect, Empowered to Connect)

We are proud of what we were able to accomplish in 2019 and we are excited for continued growth in 2020.

Here is the contact information for each Post Adopt Coordinator:

Brittney Engelhard, LBSW | Post Adopt Coordinator
600 S 2nd St Ste 220, Bismarck ND 58504 | 701-715-0003
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Sherie Madewell-Buesgens, LBSW | Post Adopt Coordinator
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Darcy Solem, LBSW | Post Adopt Coordinator
311 S 4th Street, Suite 105, Grand Forks, ND 58291 | 701-402-5557 | 701-850-6581
dsolem@pathinc.org

Morgan Nerat, LBSW, MSW | Supervisor
1202 Westrac Drive, Fargo, ND 58103 | 701-551-6328
mnerat@pathinc.org

Camp Connect will be June 5-7, 2020 in Medina, ND!

Applications to attend Camp Connect will be released in March!

Featured Family

Greetings from the Nelson Family!



We are the Nelson's: Justin, Amber, Aletta (12), and Brett, (6). We have been a family since 2001. We have been doing foster care for the past six years caring for children ages 0-16. As a family, we like to travel, take in local activities, enjoy the outdoors, enjoy sports, and spend time with family. Justin (my husband) is a physical education teacher for the past 13 years and has coached a variety of sports. He also likes to referee sports in his free time. Justin will be finishing up his master's degree in Educational Leadership in the next few months. I am Amber, a registered nurse and have been the Director of Nursing for our local hospital and long term care for the past 8.5 years. I joined the local ambulance and do ambulance transfers in my free time. I recently was accepted into the Family Nurse Practitioner program at the University of North Dakota for the upcoming fall semester. We also own a local lawn spraying business. Aletta enjoys dance, basketball, volleyball, swimming, and babysitting. Brett enjoys school and likes to play with his toys, enjoying time outside. Recently our family went on a cruise to three ports out of Mexico over Christmas. We also have one dog and two cats that keep us busy.

Five years ago, we adopted our son Brett through the AASK program. We have grown to understand the foster care system over the years with a variety of children and circumstances. We have learned to appreciate the different dynamics that each child brings to our family. There are a number of resources available to us in our small community that benefit the children in our home helped our foster children and our own child. We understand the importance of structure and spending time together as a family. Foster care has been a great opportunity for us to give back to our community. We have had a great experience working with AASK and our social workers. We continue to do foster care in hopes of adopting again to complete our family.

Spotlight On Staff

Hello! My name is Michaela Robertsdahl and I am an AASK Adoption Specialist in Grand Forks. I started working for AASK/PATH in February of 2019. I was born in Fargo and moved around North Dakota and Minnesota before moving to Grand Forks to attend college. I earned my Bachelors of Science Degree in Social Work from the University of North Dakota in 2017 and I will be pursuing my Masters of Social Work Degree at the University of South Dakota beginning in May of 2020.

I have two fur babies, Sox and Captain. My fiancé and I rescued our cat Sox from the humane society in 2018. Captain is a black lab and he is the goofiest animal I have ever met. My fiancé and I spend most of our time cooking, watching Netflix, planning our wedding, and spending time with our loved ones. In my free time, I enjoy crafts, knitting, and reading books.

Some fun facts about me: I listen to a blend of music including country, pop, rap, and punk music. My favorite food is spaghetti. My favorite vacation was visiting my best friend in Houston, TX. I graduated with my undergraduate degree in three years. I love school supplies and organization tools. I love learning about the brain, trauma, and space. I am an alumnae of Pi Beta Phi sorority. My favorite color is pink. Target is my happy place.

I feel very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to be a member of the AASK family, and I am looking forward to continuing to work with our children and families.



Michaela Robertsdahl



CATHOLIC CHARITIES ND
5201 BISHOPS BLVD - STE B
FARGO ND 58104

“I love working with Bailey....she was well versed in her role and able to articulate answers to questions. Fabulous team member!”

-Community Partner

MAILING LIST UPDATE: If you have an address change or do not wish to receive this newsletter, please email Angie Martinez at amartinez@catholiccharitiesnd.org Thank you!

Did you know individuals can also support the program? Online donations can be made on our website at www.aasknd.org. Donations can also be mailed to CCND/AASK at 5201 Bishops Boulevard - Suite B - Fargo, ND 58104.

Donations can be made in memory of a loved one who has passed or to honor a special occasion such as a birthday, graduation, wedding or birth of a child. What a great way to give tribute to someone who has impacted your life while making a difference for a child in the AASK program.

Thank you for your support! It helps the program provide that “special touch” for the children and families we serve!



www.aasknd.org



North Dakota Post Adopt Network
1202 Westrac Drive, Fargo, ND 58103
www.ndpostadopt.org
701-280-9545 or Toll free: 844-454-1139

PATH X NORTH DAKOTA | Specialized Services for Children, Youth, and Families