Nikki Chine knew there’d be challenges ahead when she assumed the task of helping to organize a fall 2012 community fundraising effort for Sandy Puttbrese, her friend and children’s daycare provider in Grand Forks.

Experience gave Chine some fundraising perspective -- but not as an organizer. A breast cancer survivor, the Leonard, N.D., native had been the beneficiary of a hometown community fundraiser in 2007.

FUNDRAISERS: Continued on Page 2
FUNDRAISERS: Help offered via NDAD program

Continued from Page 1

That heartwarming, life-affirming support the young mother received then bolstered her spirits and helped her physically, emotionally and financially battle through a major health challenge.

Now, hoping to help someone else, Chine wondered how a worthwhile endeavor could be made even better.

“I talked to one of my friends, and his first comment to me was, ‘You need to start with NDAD. Go there first, and then you can proceed,’ ” Chine recalled.

Chine soon had her first conversation with NDAD’s client services department — initially, director Leslie Stastny.

“As soon as she started telling me just the first overview (of NDAD’s Community Fundraising Program), it totally highlighted for me why I should go there first. The resources there are invaluable.”

NDAD has sponsored community fundraisers for people with disabilities and serious health challenges for years. The support it provides was expanded in latter 2012 with the addition of a NDAD communications director and new emphasis on use of social media and storytelling for publicity purposes.

Autumn provided six NDAD-sponsored fundraisers in addition to the effort for Puttbrese, which featured two events: one at a Grand Forks Pizza Ranch, the second at the Oslo, Minn., community center.

Fundraisers were held in September for breast cancer patient Helen Garcia of East Grand Forks, Minn., motorcycle crash victim Dennis Ahoe of Williston and liver transplant recipient Teagan Leehan, a baby from East Grand Forks. A NDAD fund also was established for Tanner Davidson, a Grand Forks boy whose ruptured appendix and subsequent infection put him in a Twin Cities hospital.

Mason Hutton, who suffered severe trauma at birth, and his mother, Kelly Hutton, diagnosed with a large, cancerous sarcoma within weeks of Mason’s birth, were the focus of a large November benefit.

Continued on Page 3
FUNDRAISERS  Continued from Page 2

NDAD’s first community fundraiser of 2013, on Feb. 9, was for Jen Anderson Sullivan, 34, a married Grand Forks woman with two children who is battling advanced breast cancer.

As NDAD efforts to promote its community fundraising program continue, there is hope at NDAD that, across the state of North Dakota, more people who are considering fund drives will take advantage of NDAD’s program and its benefits.

Those benefits include NDAD’s federal 501(c)3 nonprofit status, which allows people who itemize deductions on their taxes to do so with their donations — a benefit that’s absent when a fundraiser’s bank account lacks 501(c)3 status.

With use of a credit card, NDAD’s website — www.NDAD.org — provides for online donations to each of its community fundraisers.

The client receives the total of all donated funds. NDAD charges no fee for its services.

Using NDAD as custodian for a community fundraiser should protect the beneficiary’s eligibility for public programs, such as Medicaid and Social Security.

NDAD’s program also provides some safeguards against any misuse of donations.

A general list of allowable uses for all money raised must be identified at the start of each NDAD-sponsored fund drive. NDAD handles the account, tracks the funds raised and, with the fundraiser chairperson’s OK, pays each client bill for approved purchases and services.

Continued on Page 4

“There were so many little things that took up a huge amount of time, so (NDAD’s publicity support) was a huge weight off my shoulders.”

— Nikki Chine (above, with one of her sons, Jaden), chairwoman for a recent NDAD-sponsored fund drive for Sandy Puttbrese (below).
It was 1994 when Mike Blake, a University of North Dakota music professor and jazz musician raised in Valley City, received a heart transplant. He also became the focus of a massive community fundraising effort which, he has said for years, greatly benefitted from NDAD's participation. Blake again touted the benefits of using NDAD for fundraising in a January 2013 Grand Forks Herald article. Among other things, Blake told the Herald, NDAD’s involvement as fund custodian extended its life to about 10 years. That was quite helpful, since more than $100,000 had been raised on his behalf.

“They had so many different ideas,” he said of NDAD.

“I get a lot of calls from people who need a transplant . . . and I always talk to them and say, make sure you talk to NDAD, because they are going to help you in so many aspects.”

Mike Blake, NDAD client and heart transplant recipient
Easing the ride to help Blaine walk

Financial support lessens burden of Twin Cities surgery trips for Minot family

Blaine Flemming likes Legos, SpongeBob SquarePants, reading, playing with friends and math -- not necessarily in that order.

The 8-year-old Minot boy likes his older sibling, too, even though the two sometimes “fight like brothers,” says Amanda Fowler, their mother.

When the boys attended the same school, Auston, who turns 12 on Feb. 11, would stick up for Blaine when others picked on the younger boy. But Blaine, who has a disability, is pretty good at fending for himself, Amanda is quick to note. He doesn’t let it “get in the way of anything.”

That’s an accomplishment in itself, because familial spinal spastic paralysis can pose more than few hurdles in a young boy’s life.

Known also as hereditary spastic paraplegia, the degenerative genetic disorder involves the spinal cord and, typically, progressive leg and hip weakness and stiffness.

HSP, a rare condition, is primarily characterized by varied degrees of stiffness and weakness of an individual’s leg muscles and hip muscles. It often causes difficulties with the person’s gait and walking that can result in a lack of normal coordination.

Blaine doesn’t talk much about the condition, but if someone asks, “he would say that he was born like that,” his mom says.

Both Blaine’s grandfather and father “carried the gene” and have some level familial spinal spastic paralysis, Amanda said.

She said HSP only affects Blaine’s walking. “It’s all in the hip area on down,” she said. He frequently uses a special pull walker, made for smaller people, which he grips with both hands.

That doesn’t prevent him from walking on his own sometimes – for example, to the school bus many mornings, Amanda said.

“She’s so independent,” she said. “He wants to do things by himself.”

BLAINE: Continued on Page 6
BLAINE: Minot boy’s mom says NDAD ‘will help you’

Continued from Page 5
Blaine had surgery at Shriner’s Hospital for Children in Minneapolis more than a year ago; surgery involved breaking the femur in his right leg and adding a plate to help straighten his foot. The plate was removed this fall, and his ability to walk has improved, Amanda said. Partly for that reason, she said, similar surgery on his left leg is being considered.

NDAD assisted with gas mileage and lodging expenses while Blaine was at Shriner’s Hospital, about an eight-hour drive from Minot. “It helped me a lot,” Amanda said. “We had saved up some, but we didn’t save up enough to get us down there and back.”

Amanda had heard about NDAD from a relative and called the Minot office, talking with client representative Stephanie Tornatore. “I like Stephanie very much,” she said. “She’s very friendly. I can ask her anything and she would try to help me as much as she can. She’s very prompt on things.”

Fowler since has recommended NDAD to at least one friend who has a young daughter with a disability. “I told her, ‘Go to NDAD. They will help you.’ ”

In addition to medical-related travel expenses, funds generated by NDAD can be used for personal attendant care, medical equipment and supplies, accessibility, medication and more.

For more information about NDAD’s Financial Assistance Program:
- Stephanie Tornatore, Minot, (888) 999-NDAD or by email at stornatore@ndad.org
- Jeri Hietala, Grand Forks, at (800) 532-NDAD or by email at jhieta@ndad.org
- www.NDAD.org

Have a disability or health challenge? It’s AMAZING what you can do when there’s help.

1 (800) 532-NDAD | www.NDAD.org

An AFFORDABLE way to obtain assistive devices & services offers GREATER INDEPENDENCE & QUALITY OF LIFE.

Modified vehicles * Home modifications
Hearing aids * Mobility equipment
Computers & adaptive hardware / software
Environmental control devices
Augmentative communication devices
Recreational & leisure items * And more ....
Ride ‘em, cowkids

A

tumn once again provided Minot-area children with special needs a unique opportunity to get a taste of rodeo life.

NDAD is one of the sponsors of the Wild West Rodeo For Special Kids. Working with volunteers, cowgirls and cowboys from the Minot Y’s Men’s PRCA Indoor Rodeo spend about an hour before their October opening night event as partners for each of roughly three dozen children.

With a rodeo arena announcer describing the action, the kids -- most of them 3 to 13, all with special needs -- take part in modified, simulated rodeo events. There’s always a safety emphasis, organizers say.

Each child gets a T-shirt, cowboy hat, lariat rope and official contestant number, plus an award at the event’s conclusion. Then they spend time with their families watching that night’s rodeo.

“To see the kids smile, to see them enjoy something that they would not normally have an opportunity to do – there’s nothing but good that comes out of it,” said Stephanie Fitzgerald, who coordinates the special rodeo event.

* * *


NDAD welcomes your donations

Donations to charitable nonprofit NDAD for its programs and services may be deducted if you itemize when doing your taxes. Mail your donation to: NDAD, 2660 S. Columbia Road, Grand Forks, ND 58201.

Or, please go to our website — www.NDAD.org — and click on the “Donate Now” button. Thank you.
Helping others to help themselves
NDAD is a nonprofit, charitable organization founded by concerned citizens to assist mentally and physically disadvantaged people in North Dakota, many of whom are ineligible for some desperately needed services from other agencies.

Disabling conditions often are very costly. NDAD was founded on the belief that people with disabilities, when given the opportunity, can live more satisfying, productive lives — and NDAD has helped thousands do just that since its start in 1975. This often requires the purchase of specialized equipment, medical treatment, or other services.

NDAD provides financial assistance through funds generated by both the organization and community projects. NDAD also provides information and referral services to help people receive assistance through other agencies, when possible.