



NDAD

helping others to help themselves

Fall 2020

Insider

NDAD'S MISSION:

Enhance the quality of lives
of individuals facing health challenges.

Getting you there

*NDAD's medical travel help
can make a difference*

Out-of-town medical travel presents a major obstacle in many people's quest for more mobility, great independence and better health for themselves or their children, especially when their financial constraints are acute.

NDAD understands that. Each year, several of our charitable programs help numerous individuals and families overcome that travel hurdle each year, including young Braydon Kauzlarich of Elgin, N.D. (pictured). His mom gets him to highly valued therapy appointments in Bismarck each week with an assist from gas cards provided by NDAD.

Qualified individuals may be able to get to vital medical appointments from one end of North Dakota to the next, or even to key specialized healthcare assistance at medical destinations in the Twin Cities, Rochester, Minn., and Sioux Falls, S.D.

Contact your nearest NDAD office (ndad.org/contact) or visit NDAD.org to obtain an application for assistance. Find out today how NDAD may be able to help you.



Braydon Kauzlarich

NDAD's travel assist helps Elgin boy develop life skills

Amanda Jaklich's voice illuminates when she talks about watching her 10-year-old son Braydon play youth baseball this summer.

"My heart was so full," the Elgin, N.D., mom recalled in a phone interview. "I don't know if I can put it into words how happy he was being with his peers. Being accepted in a group, actually enjoying himself. I didn't think he would be...." She paused. "...be able to enjoy it in that way."

Braydon Kauzlarich is autistic. At a time when the young team took social distancing steps to help protect players during a pandemic, Amanda witnessed her bright son lessening a communications distance between himself and teammates.

Weekly two-hour 40-minute round trips to Bismarck and back for Red Door Pediatric Therapy clinic sessions – all made possible with medical travel assistance from NDAD - is helping Braydon learn life skills paths to more rewarding interactions with other children and adults, not the least his family, including 4-year-old twin brothers Landon and Zane, and Amanda's fiancé, Gary Eisenbarth.

Braydon is one of the first children to benefit from NDAD's newest service, the Autism Spectrum Assistance Program (ASAP). It was created in late 2019 to help families cope with service gaps for their child or adult with an autism spectrum disorder. When help is unavailable through local, state and federal programs, ASAP may help qualifying individuals by providing gas cards for their out-of-town medical travel expenses to keep appointments for occupational, physical, speech and language, and behavioral therapies, and for psychiatric appointments, too. ASAP also may assist with up to eight hours a week of respite services.

NDAD "has been great," Amanda said. "It's really helped tremendously for our family, and every little bit helps." Marsha Dupré, client services representative for central and western North



Article photos: Laura Zimmerman
Braydon, with mom Amanda, her fiancé Gary, brothers Landon (left) and Zane, and the family dog, Apollo, at their home in Elgin.

Dakota, is "helpful above and beyond what she's had to do."

Meanwhile, Braydon continues to make strides "as far as emotional responses toward things," she said. While he still likes to be alone and can be uncomfortable with touch, he has gradually shown more ease being in the company

of peers and others, she said. He's also learning how to adjust his competitive behavior to avoid what mom calls occasional "meltdowns." Among other things, Braydon is learning to understand body language better, which helps him recognize the subtle cues provided by people he's speaking to – say, when another child shows great interest verses little or none. For Braydon, who can tend to share his interests in acute verbal detail, those lessons are becoming stepping stones to more sustained and fruitful peer relationships.

NDAD's help has made a difference, she says. "Emotionally, he still is a little distant," Amanda said about Braydon. "But I have been getting some hugs back lately."

She chuckled, and her tone of voice revealed a grateful mom's bliss. ■

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Logan Schonert

Organ transplant fund helps firefighter donate kidney to another

Logan Schonert hopes more people consider becoming a living organ donor, and the Grand Forks Fire Department captain makes a convincing personal argument for it. He donated one of his healthy kidneys to a former colleague, retired Battalion Chief Rick Aamot, on June 5 at Minnesota's Mayo Clinic complex.

The transplant process was made smoother still thanks to assistance with medical travel provided by NDAD, which administers the North Dakota Organ Transplant Fund. Schonert received gas and lodging assistance for the Rochester, Minn., transplant trip.

Established in 1991 by the N.D. Legislature, the state Organ Transplant Fund provides funds to help individuals alleviate demonstrated financial needs related to costs associated with transplant operations not normally covered by insurance. Dollars for the fund are generated from state income tax refunds of less than \$5.

NDAD's application for assistance "was surprisingly smooth and quick," recalled Logan, an avid outdoorsman and married father of a son and daughter. "I guess I kind of thought that would be difficult, but it was easy."

Logan answered a call for a kidney donation put out to firefighters across the state to help the ailing Aamot, whose kidneys were damaged by a rare illness. After learning someone had volunteered, Aamot was surprised, pleased and grateful to find out that donor was Schonert. "I was pretty excited," said Aamot, a nearly 31-year GFFD veteran with two sons still working there. "Logan's about 20 years younger than me, so I was getting a young kidney. It's so unreal what he did. It's just out of the blue, and he decided he was going to be an organ donor."

Schonert agreed to discuss his donation "to make other people aware that the process can be really smooth," he said. "Having doctors who know what they're doing kind of calms you, and the impact on your life is a lot smaller than people may think." ■



Schonert



Aamot

North Dakota food bank rises to 2020's challenges

This year has tested Great Plains Food Bank's charitable operations unlike any since its 1983 debut, yet North Dakota's largest hunger relief organization and only food bank entered fall with valuable experience dealing with the pandemic and anticipation of a new Bismarck distribution center opening by year's end.

With its headquarters and main warehouse in Fargo, Great Plains serves all of the state plus Clay County, Minn., and annually collects, warehouses and distributes more than 15 million pounds of food that otherwise would have gone to waste, providing more than 12.5 million meals. The nonprofit provides food to more than 300 pantries, soup kitchens and shelters; delivers food to areas without partner agencies via its Mobile Food Pantry program; and provides outreach coordinators throughout North Dakota to help with individual applications for assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

During the pandemic, Great Plains saw increases as high as 79% in the numbers of people seeking food help. A partnership with USDA's Farmers to Family Food Box Program that continued into October has helped to meet increased need with about a million pounds of fresh, pre-boxed produce monthly during the summer.

The food bank's western N.D. office workers are in the new Bismarck distribution center as preparations such as refrigeration and food rack installations continue, said Jared Slinde, Great Plains' communications manager. "It is going to make life easier, and (western N.D.) clients are going to get fresher and high-quality stuff when that thing's in place," he said.

For food relief or to volunteer, contact greatplainsfoodbank.org; (701) 232-6219 (Fargo); (701) 751-6188 (Bismarck); or info@greatplainsfoodbank.org. ■





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NDAD is a nonprofit, charitable organization founded by concerned citizens to assist mentally and physically disadvantaged people in North Dakota, many of whom are not eligible for services from other agencies.

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.

***It's **AMAZING** what people can do
when there's **help**.***