



NDAD

helping others to help themselves

Summer 2021

Insider

NDAD'S MISSION:

Enhance the quality of lives
of individuals facing health challenges.

'Me? Qualify?'

*NDAD's charity reaches beyond
disability, low-income needs*

The mission of NDAD is to enhance the quality of lives of individuals facing health challenges. We do so charitably for people in a variety of circumstances.

Sometimes people in need may assume that they do not qualify for NDAD's help. Our guidelines for qualification, though, are more generous than they or you may assume.

For instance, NDAD doesn't attempt to define "disability" to determine need.

We also know medical expenses can threaten to topple otherwise healthy incomes.

You may be surprised to learn certain NDAD programs don't even require you to fill out an application.

Grafton's Amanda Galarza knows this well. Two NDAD programs have helped their young family deal with her multiple health issues, but only one program requires her to qualify for assistance.

More helpful information is ahead in this edition of NDAD Insider.



INSIDE: Remembering Ron Gibbens

NDAD co-founder, board president, retired CEO dies at 80



Helping others to help themselves: Do you qualify?

NDAD knows a financial burden created by medical-related expenses can strain or even devastate healthy budgets.

Through our service programs, NDAD strives to ensure our charitable efforts remain accessible to as many people in need as possible. Our efforts may allow you to get the help you thought you weren't qualified to receive.

"NDAD" is short for North Dakota Association for the Disabled. Yet, unlike government agencies, NDAD does not attempt to define the term "disabled." Each person has unique needs, and various impairments or other

Income and assets are just two in a range of considerations used to determine who qualifies for NDAD direct financial assistance.

obstacles to good health may be short-term or permanent.

NDAD's help can come in lots of ways, such as paying for a prescribed medication you cannot afford, or helping to finance a home improvement that ensures access you've recently lost,

or giving you a gas card to offset some travel expenses for your vital out-of-town health appointment.

If you meet NDAD guidelines, we may be able to provide the direct financial assistance you need when it's unavailable through a federal, state or local government program or another agency.

Your income isn't even a consideration for participation in some NDAD programs, including the Healthcare Equipment Loan Program (HELP), our most popular charitable service. We provide durable medical equipment

free for up to 90 days to people of all incomes and ages. And there's a lot of need: nearly 7,400 pieces of durable medical equipment loaned by almost 4,200 people through HELP in the years 2019 and 2020 combined - an estimated savings of about \$788,000 for the borrowers.

For example, Amanda Galarza of Grafton used HELP to obtain several pieces of NDAD equipment after the most recent of her multiple hip surgeries. (Her story is on Page 3.)

NDAD also understands the value of physical activity and community inclusion in the lives of people often limited in access to such endeavors.

One way we've tried to help: For about a quarter century, youth and adults with various physical impairments from throughout North Dakota have been invited – free of charge, regardless of

economic status - to NDAD's annual summer day of adaptive water-skiing at Nelson Lake near the western North Dakota town of Center. Pontoon rides, picnic lunch and performance ski show have been part of the Escape to the Lake fun.

NDAD has provided more than \$60 million in various charitable assistance to people in need across North Dakota and in directly adjacent border communities since our inception. Many of those people were surprised to learn we could help.

NDAD assistance may be within your reach. Contact us to find out (ndad.org/contact). It's time well spent. ■

NDAD's seven types of direct financial assistance are for prescription medication, accessibility, local accessible transportation, out-of-town medical travel, personal attendant care, recreational activities and medical equipment and supplies.

Amanda Galarza

NDAD's 'amazing' help provides equipment loans, travel assistance

Multiple health issues have plagued Amanda Galarza for close to half of her 31 years, since she was a teen growing up in Minto in northeast North Dakota.

"I have had multiple surgeries, and I have made many trips to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn...." said Amanda, now a Grafton married mom of four. For much of that time, Amanda also has relied repeatedly on help from charitable nonprofit NDAD. She isn't sure where she and her family would be without that help. For certain, she said, "I wouldn't have been able to get the medical care I needed.

"I am so grateful for NDAD and all the services they provide," she added. "I have received a lot of help from them over the years."

After her most recent of three hip surgeries, she said,

"NDAD is an amazing resource and so beneficial to our community! It's been really helpful, and I encourage people to reach out if they need the help."

Amanda

Amanda was able to borrow a shower chair and wheelchair at no cost through NDAD's Healthcare Equipment

Loan Program (HELP).

For multiple appointments at Mayo Clinic, NDAD provided medical travel assistance. "They were able to provide help by covering the cost of the hotel rooms as well as providing gas cards.... NDAD is an amazing organization," she said.

NDAD's client services representative in Grand Forks, Lora Machart, "has been kind, caring and compassionate," Amanda said.

"She has been amazing. And applying for help



Amanda and Bert Galarza

from NDAD "wasn't difficult at all. It was very easy," Amanda said.

Galarza has Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, a group of inherited disorders affecting a body's complicated mix of proteins and other substances which provide elasticity and strength to connective tissues, according to MayoClinic.org. She's experienced an intertwined mix of orthopedic issues, including dislocated joints,

degenerative disc disease and the hip surgeries; plus nerve issues, fibromyalgia, random fainting, "migraines and neurological stuff."

Amanda is a part-time registered nurse who also has provided some respite foster care in emergency situations. Health issues kept her away from work from Altru Health System for most of the spring and early summer.

She and husband Bert marked their 14th wedding anniversary in June. "My kids are what keep me going, and my friends and family have been a really supportive system for us," Amanda said.

She appreciates NDAD's support, too. ■



The Galarzas

Brandon Becker

'Awesome' NDAD assists New Salem burn victim rehab trips

Angela Becker of New Salem has taken her husband Brandon to multiple 2021 medical and rehabilitation appointments in Bismarck and St. Paul this year with welcomed medical travel assistance from NDAD.

The charitable nonprofit supplies gas cards for Brandon to attend physical therapy sessions in Bismarck twice weekly and also gas cards and lodging assistance for once-a-month trips to a burn center at St. Paul (Minn.) Regions Hospital.

Those NDAD-assisted trips have lacked the high drama and urgency of the Beckers' late December 2020 Bismarck trip that started it all.

A midnight-hour explosion started by an electrical malfunction in their home's attached workshop injured Brandon early Dec. 28. A self-employed construction contractor, Brandon had "come in the house, yelling to get the kids out," Angela recalled. With Brandon aboard, she drove their vehicle from their burning house to her parents' nearby home, left the children in their care, then the couple rushed to Bismarck.

In the vehicle, Angela, a registered nurse at Elmcrest Manor in New Salem, began to comprehend the seriousness of her husband's injuries. Brandon's left leg, part of his right leg and hands had extensive burns.

After more than two hours at Bismarck's CHI St. Alexis, Brandon was transferred by air

ambulance to St. Paul Regions Hospital burn unit. With burns covering about a quarter of his body, Brandon spent 20 days in the hospital, but his wife couldn't visit because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"We only got to talk on the phone," she



Photography: Angela Nicole Creative

The Becker family includes triplet daughters Aspen, Aurora and Athena, who turn 8 in October, and 4-year-old son Brody.

recalled. "It was awful."

Still, Angela recalled, "the kids were sure proud to tell their classmates what kind of hero their dad was."

Angela learned about NDAD through Ruth Winckler, a

co-worker of 16 years. "She said, 'Call my daughter. She helps people with medical assistance

and stuff like that.'" Turns out Ruth's daughter is Marsha Dupré, NDAD's Minot-based client services representative for western North Dakota. Angela said Dupré is easy to work with and regularly follows up to ensure they are getting the NDAD assistance they need.

Angela said NDAD assistance wasn't hard at all to apply for. "It was awesome," she added.

The Beckers expect to be in a new modular house this fall, with Brandon - still in physical therapy - contributing his skills where he can to get it ready, Angela said. ■

"NDAD is a great program. I hope other people are able to utilize and see the usefulness of it."

Angela Becker
Brandon's wife



NDAD 2021 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Three projects get awards to help people at risk

Title to become 'Gibbens Memorial Grant' to also honor late NDAD leader Ron Gibbens

NDAD's 2021 Faye Gibbens Memorial Grants of \$5,000 each have been awarded to three North Dakota organizations this year.

Multiple grants were made possible this year thanks to an increase in NDAD's charitable gaming proceeds during 2020.

NDAD typically awards at least one \$5,000 Gibbens Memorial Grant annually to an agency/organization to be used for a health, welfare, social service or educational purpose for at-risk populations.

The recipients:

- The Arc Creations Program in Dickinson will use its Gibbens grant money for installation of a painting booth and outside ventilation in its sanding room to allow training and work on projects by individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Website: arcdickinson.org.

- Connect Medical Clinic, Dickinson, is using its grant money for a cargo trailer to include wrapping with contact and other information, and remodeling and repairs to help provide for patient intake. The trailer will be used for storage of program supplies and as a mobile unit to help provide outreach and education supporting evidence-based, accessible sexual health education for at-risk individuals.

Website: connectmedicalclinic.com.

- UND Northern Prairie Community Clinic is using its grant award for its Performance And Recovery In Stroke (PA.R.I.S.) conversation/

literary support groups for a classroom dual FM and Wi-Fi assistive listening system, books, yearly Audible subscription and semester fees for clients with an aphasia diagnosis, age-related hearing complications,

or both.

Website: und.edu/npcc.

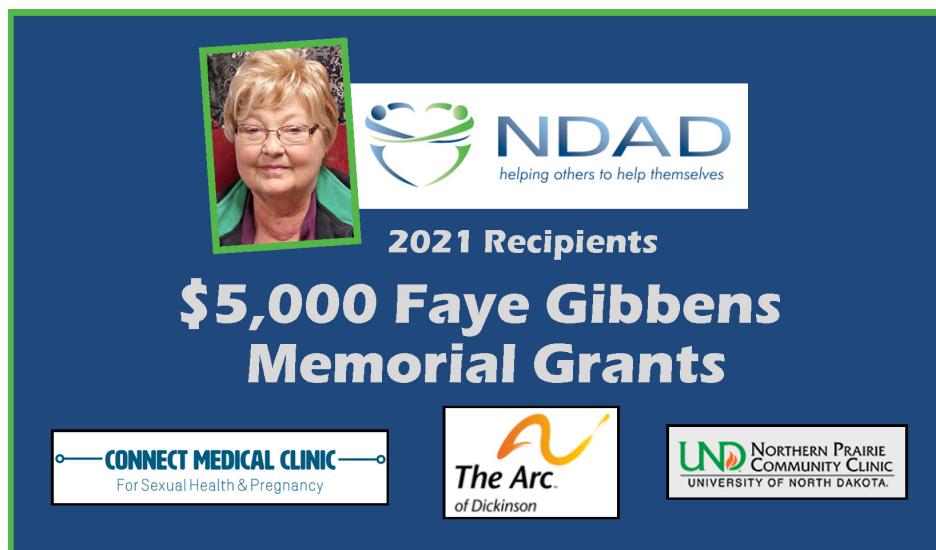
Name change

The name of the award from now on will be known simply as the Gibbens Memorial Grant to recognize late NDAD leader Ron Gibbens in addition to his wife. Both were NDAD co-founders.

Faye, who died in early 2014 at age 70, served until her 2013 retirement as its first client services program leader. Ron, the organization's

first and only board president and its retired CEO, died this year on May 2 at age 80. (More information: Page 7).

Watch for more about these grant recipients this fall at NDAD.org. ■



A second 2021 call for applications for the \$5,000 Gibbens Memorial Grant is occurring in September. Applications must be received by NDAD no later than 5 p.m. Thurs., Sept. 30. Visit NDAD.org for details.

NDAD 2021 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Four adaptive recreation projects receive funds

Grant money goes to programs based in Minot, Bismarck, Grand Forks and Glen Ullin

Four organizations in North Dakota have been awarded 2021 grants for adaptive recreation projects of up to \$5,000 each from NDAD.

The grants were made possible thanks to an increase in NDAD's charitable gaming proceeds during 2020.

The grant recipients were chosen from a group of organizations and agencies that had answered NDAD's call for grant applications in June.

Grant recipients will provide a service to support adaptive

recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

Here's how the grant money will be used:

- Grand Forks Growth and Support Center is using the money to purchase an adaptive side-by-side bicycle for day habilitation physical recreation at one of its programs for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. More about the organization:

Website: gfgrowthandsupport.com.

- TR 4 Heart and Soul's project is improvements to a wheelchair ramp to allow participants to safely mount their horses, plus additional riding helmets for multiple adaptive horse riders and volunteers with physical and emotional disabilities and other health

challenges to help improve mobility function and independence during TR 4's therapeutic riding programs. More about the Bismarck-based organization:

Website: therapeuticriding4has.org.

- Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports will purchase more sports wheelchairs to increase opportunities to Minot area youth and adults with physical and mental disabilities. They'll be used for a wheelchair sports program

started at Minot Family YMCA and also to be able to host more camps, tournaments and other adaptive sports events throughout the year.

More information about the organization:

Website: prairiegritsports.com.

- Glen Ullin Park District plans to add adaptive and accessible playground equipment at its Sunshine Park for children with disabilities to provide greater inclusiveness for all. More information about the park district:

Website: glenullinparkdistrict.yolasite.com.

This is the first time NDAD has awarded grants for adaptive recreation projects.

Look for more about these grant recipients in upcoming weeks at NDAD.org. ■



NDAD founding father was proud 'Dad' first

During his impassioned drive to provide inclusive lifestyle for his son, Ron Gibbens embraced many others with disabilities, health concerns

NDAD'S 46th anniversary arrived less than a month after co-founder Ron Gibbens, its first and only board president, died at age 80 while in home hospice at the Grand Forks residence of his only child, Mike.

What happened during all of those NDAD years, the rural Cando, N.D., native often said, proved to be beyond his wildest dreams. A few years ago, he even said as much in the title of his self-published biography. The fact his book's front cover prominently features an image of Mike water skiing at NDAD's annual Escape to the Lake adaptive event said volumes about a proud father's dreams.

It was Mike's cerebral palsy and Ron's desire to provide him with the most inclusive life possible that propelled both he and his wife, Faye, to lead the formation of the North Dakota Association of the Disabled and then guide the charitable nonprofit's growth and expansion into the 21st century.

About a year after Faye's 2014 death, which followed nearly 50 years of marriage, Gibbens passed his chief executive officer duties to Don Santer and then several years later retired. Even then, Ron retained the board presidency, regularly sharing thoughts and ideas, from grand to minute, about an organization that melded with his own life story.

Gibbens died May 2. Services for him were held May 10 at Sharon Lutheran Church in Grand Forks. He was interred the following day next to Faye in a rural Harlow, N.D., cemetery.

In addition to their son, Ron Gibbens' survivors include his second wife, Pamela. ■



Ron Gibbens and his son, Mike

FINAL ESSAY / Ron Gibbens

'Mini-steps' and 'giant leaps': Perspectives on a lifetime of advancements, transitions

Ron Gibben, who wrote many columns and essays for NDAD's employee newsletter over the years, finished writing this piece several weeks before he became ill, was hospitalized and later entered home hospice.

...

I think those of us born prior to the middle of the 20th century have experienced more advancements in our lifetimes than any generation in modern history.

As the father of a son who lives with cerebral palsy, I have been particularly impressed with the improvements that have been made in efforts to include all people in our society.

When Mike was diagnosed in 1968, his mom, Faye, and I cringed at the thought of the world he would be facing with his disability. In those times, it was very rare to see people with handicapping conditions included in community events. They were often "hidden away" at home or shipped off to be warehoused at some faraway facility. For the few who desired to venture out in the community, there were barriers nearly everywhere we went. Curbs blocked wheelchair access and nearly every business had steps at the entrance.

When we think of advances that have been made since the 1960s, we often tend to center around conveniences such as the availability of electricity to nearly every home in our country. Other examples include the resulting advent of “running water” in our homes and the ability to cool and freeze food for long-term storage at home. To be sure, amazing improvements have been made in these areas. I vividly remember that day I came home from school and, for the first time, flipped a switch to see my home light up. It was like magic! Water from indoor faucets and an indoor bathroom would soon follow and my life was changed forever as



Faye and Ron Gibbens with their baby son, Mike, in the late 1960s.

were the lives of millions of others. It is truly miraculous to think of our computerized world today compared with the world of my youth.

But for me, those advances pale in comparison to the improvements we have made in the lives of people with disabilities. Those people who were excluded from most activities when Mike was born are now taking part in nearly all community activities. They are included, just like you and me.

These changes didn't come about overnight or without intense effort advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. Faye and I were among those taking up that challenge. I couldn't begin to count the number of times a medical doctor or some other person in a professional capacity strongly advised us to send Mike to a boarding school for “crippled children” or some other facility where his unique needs would be better met. These people weren't mean-spirited; they simply were giving compassionate advice from their point of

view. Still, Faye and I had strong opinions very much different from theirs. It was a very lonely feeling, as if we were fighting against the rest of the world to keep our wonderful son at home where we were convinced he belonged.

We began to meet informally with other parents and concerned people to discuss common issues we were facing. The problem of money to pay for the additional medical costs we faced was a common topic.

We also discussed how our children were isolated from the other neighborhood kids by going to school at the local rehabilitation center; only a few years earlier, we had been relieved that a classroom for handicapped children had been opened there. But now, we saw the reality; Mike was perfectly capable of taking part in activities with other kids in our neighborhood. He did it all the time - outside of school.

Nonprofit's birth

After our group of concerned people had been getting together for several years, we decided to formally organize. We applied for and received our nonprofit status from North Dakota in 1975, with the name “North Dakota Association for the Disabled” (NDAD). The following year, NDAD received federal recognition from the IRS as a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

One of the first formal activities of the newly recognized NDAD was to request a

meeting with public school officials to discuss educating our children in the regular school setting. I must admit: far from 100% of the parents in our group agreed with this attempt; several felt it would place their children in

“It is truly miraculous to think of our computerized world today compared with the world of my youth. But for me, those advances pale in comparison to the improvements we have made in the lives of people with disabilities.”

Ron Gibbens

harm's way. It wasn't surprising that the school officials were reluctant to agree with NDAD's request. We were told that no other school system in North Dakota was doing this and they didn't want to be the first.

Our discussions with school officials centered around recent federal laws that required children to be educated in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their needs. The decision as to what was "appropriate" in individual circumstances then was in the process of being defined through court cases across the United States. Courts were consistently ordering schools to educate children

in more integrated settings.

After several discussions with school officials, the decision was made to

integrate children with disabilities in the regular school setting. With some minor exceptions, Mike's move to a regular school setting was almost seamless. His experiences playing with the neighborhood kids transitioned to the school setting almost immediately, since those neighborhood friends were now his classmates – just as it should be.

The world Mike lives in today is like a different planet from the world he was born into. He is more active than most people in spite of using a wheelchair. Mike is active with city league softball teams, takes part with friends in fantasy football contests and sports pools, and attends all UND hockey, basketball and football home games, as well as several on the road. I am convinced that if Mike had not experienced the integrated school setting, he would not be the energetic and optimistic person he is today. I am just as convinced that

his long-ago classmates also are better people as a result of that experience.

Important decision

At the time Mike made the move to a regular school setting, NDAD had \$83.72 remaining in a checking account from memorials to Faye's Uncle Vic. It helped pay the cost of envelopes and postage, but wouldn't put a dent in our effort to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. Many more school systems needed to be encouraged to make the transition to regular school settings for kids with disabilities. Hundreds of families desperately needed help with the extra costs associated the special equipment and medication their children needed.

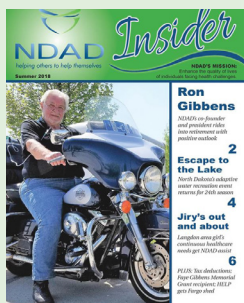
We discussed the possibility of providing some of that help through NDAD raising funds sponsoring charitable gaming, and finally made the decision to take that leap. That turned out to be one of the most important decisions we could have ever made. Since opening our first charitable gaming facility in 1982, NDAD has provided more than \$60 million in services for people with disabilities. Donations, grants and charitable gaming are all important sources of funding for these services.

While I certainly enjoy the advantages of electricity, running water, computers and other modern conveniences, I feel my life is even more enhanced by experiencing our modern society of inclusion. The transition in my lifetime from kerosene lamps to electric lights was a mini-step. The giant leap has been the inclusion of people with disabilities in our everyday lives.



Today, people with disabilities are included wherever we go in our communities. The physical barriers have nearly all been removed from public facilities. We know people with disabilities who were isolated from us back in the days of kerosene lamps and outhouses. The world we live in is a better place because we have become more understanding and compassionate as a result. ■

More on Ron Gibbens at NDAD.org:

- [Life summary](#)
- [2018 article on retiring](#)



NDAD NEWS IN BRIEF

- Some pandemic-related safety precautions have remained at individual offices for the safety of our staff and clients since NDAD reopened to the public on May 1. Client services' Healthcare Equipment Loan Program (HELP) remains active by appointment only. Call or email your nearest NDAD office (ndad.org/contact/) to make an appointment to borrow, return or donate durable medical equipment. NDAD continues to monitor evolving pandemic conditions and will adjust operating procedures if warranted.
- NDAD released its annual report summary this spring: ndad.org/news/2020annualreport/.
- Altru Alliance awarded a \$1,250 grant to NDAD to purchase wheelchairs and crutches for its Healthcare Equipment Loan Program (HELP) provided through its Grand Forks office. 
- NDAD marked its 46th anniversary on June 6. That's the date incorporation papers were signed and issued in 1975.
- MDU Resources Foundation awarded NDAD a \$3,400 grant for the annual Escape to the Lake adaptive water recreation event at Nelson Lake near Center, N.D. Because the 2021 event was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, NDAD received permission to use the money instead for its 2022 event. 
- NDAD was awarded \$1,736.59 through Target Circle, thanks to guests at Target stores who cast ballots for NDAD and its mission during the first quarter of 2021.

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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.

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