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### **Our Mission**

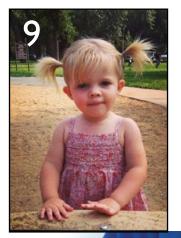
The mission of Inspired Woman is to use our community presence to celebrate, encourage, empower, educate and entertain women.

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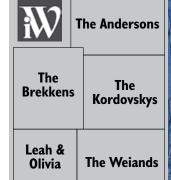








ON THE COVER





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### editors' notes

~Be Inspired ~

There are a lot of things I want to say. It was so nice to have someone else helping to put this magazine together. Thank you, Jody, for becoming co-editor.

Thank you, also, to Sixteen03 Main Events for allowing us to take some photos at your wonderful space.

I never thought I would be a parent.

Now I am blessed to be a mom and a stepmom to two beautiful girls.

Parenting is rewarding and hard. There is joy, guilt, happiness, sadness, amazement, proud moments and so much more. We are forever questioning: Did we make the right decisions with discipline and setting limits? Do I shut up or give advice? How will we ever know if we did a good job?

Becky Jones Mahlum does a wonderful job answering some of those questions and talking about her parenting style.

And Common Core. You've heard about it, maybe you wonder what it is all about. We are presenting both sides to help you become more informed.

Enjoy the Parenting Issue. We sure had fun putting it together.



I am not a morning person, but on the weekends, I love to get up early and enjoy my coffee in peace. It is often the only quiet time I get all week. I crave quiet. My house is busy, with four kids, a dog, and a husband, but as crazy as my life is, I can't imagine it any other way.



Deb Seminary and daughters

Jody Kerzman and children

I never really thought I'd be

a mom - I married young, but was very career-driven. Two babies by age 26 changed that in a hurry! I quickly realized family was more important to me than any career. Two more babies convinced me that being a mom is a pretty great job.

Yes, life is nuts, and sometimes I feel like running away, but mother-hood truly is the best job on the planet. Moms are pretty amazing. That's why I am so in love with this parenting issue we've put together. Not only do we have a great new look, but this issue is filled with stories of amazing moms who have faced some incredible challenges. Their stories will inspire you. Enjoy!





### INSPIRATION

it comes from some pretty unlikely places

\*\*\*

The Member Advocacy Program,

inspired by members like little Clint Strommen

Blindsided by a muscular dystrophy diagnosis, the Strommen family chose to see it as a blessing, not a burden.

Stories like theirs are the inspiration behind our Member Advocacy Program where we offer help in navigating the medical terrain.

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> — Aaron & Sheyna Strommen Fort Rice, North Dakota

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### **FOSTER PARENT**

### Melissa Anderson

foster parent

by Jody Kerzman



Melissa Anderson had it all: a loving husband and four beautiful children. Her life was good. But Melissa couldn't shake the feeling that something was missing.

"We thought we were done having kids after our twins, who are now II, were born," she explained. "But as time went on and years passed, we just felt like we were being called to grow our family. Our eyes and hearts were opened to foster care and we decided we could share our home and lives with children who needed love, safety, and stability. We have been licensed for foster care for almost three years now. And our family has grown in so many ways."

Foster care provides care for children who cannot live with their own families. Licensed foster homes, like the Andersons, provide the child with a family for a temporary period of time. The goal of foster care is to keep children safe, create permanency, and whenever possible, to reunite the family.

Jazmine was the first. The now three-year old came to live with the Andersons in June 2012, when she was six-months-old.

"She has had us wrapped around her finger since day one," said Melissa.

Jazmine is still with them, and last year on Valentine's Day, the Andersons officially adopted her. The family has fostered two other little girls since fostering Jazmine.

"We had another little girl for eight months in 2013, and we have stayed closely connected with her. We love her dearly and enjoy being able to spend time with her on a regular basis," said Melissa. "We brought our current foster baby home from the hospital when she was three days old. Every day with her is a gift. It's amazing to see how much our foster children grow and learn."

But it's not just the foster children who are thriving. Melissa says her entire family has grown and benefited from the experience.

"Our kids have all opened their arms to these little girls and embraced them as their own siblings," said Melissa. "Never once has any child of ours said they wished we didn't do foster care. A few of them even plan on fostering when they are older."

There is a great need for foster families in North Dakota. In December 2014, 1,318 youth were in foster care in North Dakota. Children need foster homes for a number of reasons - they may be abused, neglected, or abandoned. They may have serious mental, physical, or emotional problems. Foster parents work closely with social services and other professionals provide the support children need to thrive physically, emotionally, and socially. Most of all, foster parents provide love to children who need it the most. Foster parents step in when children's birth parents are unable, neglect, or refuse to care for them.

"The feelings I have towards our foster girls' birth parents have been the biggest surprise on this fostering journey," said Melissa. "It would be so easy to resent them, but I have found that I actually end up caring about them, too."

Being a foster parent isn't easy. In fact, Melissa says it can be frustrating at times.

"I think one of the biggest challenges of being a foster parent is the brokenness of the foster care system. Children can go for years with no permanency. Children are returned to situations that are less than ideal. Often, foster parents have little say in what happens with these children's lives," she explained. "My husband and I advocate as best we can for each child, give them our utmost love and protection, and some days we just have to have faith that the caseworkers and judges will ultimately decide what is in the child's best interests."

She says foster care is a hard, sometimes ugly, emotional roller coaster. But is quick to add, it's also been exactly what her family needed.

"Foster care is one of the most amazing journeys our family has ever been on," explained Melissa. "If you have space in your home and room in your hearts, I definitely encourage others to give foster parenting a try. Every smile, hug, and laugh from a foster child makes it worth all the heartache. Don't let the excuse of 'I'd get too attached' keep you from fostering. Of course you will get attached, and it will break your heart when children leave. Kids need to feel that attachment and love, no matter how long they are in your home."

Melissa says the heartbreak is worth it, knowing that she has helped a child feel attachment and love, even if only for a few months.

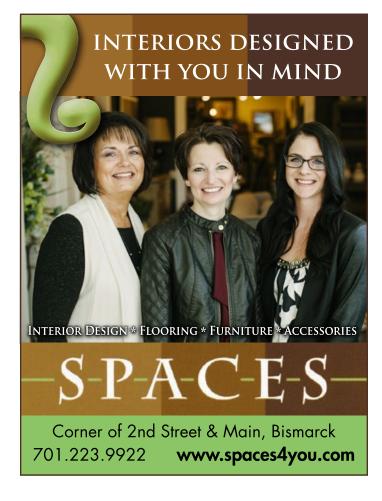
For more information on foster care contact the North Dakota Department of Human Services at 328-2316 or 1-800-245-3736.



Jody Kerzman is co-editor of Inspired Woman. Jody lives in Bismarck with her husband, Brad, and their four kids.

### BASIC QUALIFICATIONS TO BE LICENSED AS A FOSTER HOME

- ◆ Be at least 21 years of age
- ♦ Be financially stable
- ◆ Be single or married
- Own or rent a home or apartment
- ✦ Have homeowners or renters insurance
- ◆ Be with or without children of their own
- → Have adequate space for a child
- Have an income adequate for own family
- Be aware that foster care is usually temporary
- Have ability to work as a team with social workers & other service providers
- Have ability to understand and show acceptance of the child's parents
- ✦ Have a clear background check
- ◆ Can provide personal references



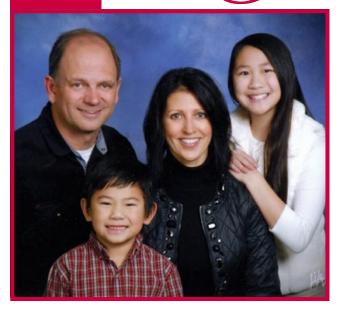


### ADOPTIVE PARENT

### Joni Brekken

adoptive parent

by Deb Seminary



When Joni Brekken and her husband, Tad, first got married, they made plans for a large family – some biological children and some children from adoption. "My husband's mother is adopted and we knew other people that had gone through the adoption process," said Brekken. "Then, we kept running into people (that were adopting or had just adopted babies from China), we honestly thought that God was putting people in our path."

The Brekkens started looking into adoption and met with a social worker in Bismarck. She laid out all the different adoption options: biracial, white-American, Russian, Chinese, etc. She also shared what to expect from each program, including how much time it might take, requirements, and restrictions.

"Driving home from that meeting my husband and I said we were both drawn to the China program," said Brekken. "We felt like we were called there, so we started our paperwork and I6 months later we got our referral, went to China and adopted our daughter, Celia."

The couple felt very strongly about their experience and felt the desire to go back and adopt another child. "After about a year we started our paperwork and at that time it was taking less time, only about 11 months to get a referral. Then the process started slowing down. It took almost three and a half years from start to finish before we brought our son home. I have heard some people are waiting five or six years now."

The Brekken family did not request a boy. They had put in their

paperwork, boy or girl. Every night when the family said bedtime prayers, Tad would pray for their baby girl in China and Celia would say, 'it might be a boy!'

"I remember the day we got our referral, the agency called and she asked if I was sitting down," said Brekken. "Then she told me we have a son and Celia started dancing around the living room."

Both children were ten and a half months old when they were adopted. Celia was able to travel with her mom and dad when they went to pick up her new brother, and the family enjoyed a few days in Bejing seeing the sights. Brekken feels it is important for their children to feel connected to their heritage. They plan to take another trip to China next year when they will travel with three other families that have also adopted children from China.

"We also try to get together with other Bismarck families who have adopted children from China. We celebrate events such as Chinese New Year. Sometimes people will ask, 'where are they from?' when we are out with our kids, which can make some people uncomfortable, but one of my

friends has a good answer – 'she's from Bismarck!' My son will blurt out, 'I'm from China, I was born in China!'. Both of my children have always been very proud of their heritage."

The adoption process involves many things, including a home study where the social worker does several visits before and after the child is adopted. The Brekkens went through background checks, had physical exams, and that was just for their local adoption agency. Then, the international agency sends their packet of requirements to be filled out. Once that dossier is ready and sent back to China the real waiting begins.

As stated before, each country has their own set of requirements and restrictions. Some countries look at mental and/or physical health issues, while others may not allow single parents to adopt.

The fees for adoption vary with the agency and country chosen, but Brekken estimates the cost of an international adoption to be between 20 and 30 thousand dollars. "Of course, the fees have probably increased over the years," she said. "There are fees to file paperwork and for the home study. There were many fees to process paperwork in China, for in-country flights, food, hotel, etc. We also donated to the orphanage that took care of our children."

Joni and Tad share their adoption story with young couples during a pre-marriage weekend through the Catholic parish. "These couples think they will be married a couple years, then have a baby," said Joni. "That is where we come in and say, 'it doesn't always work out that way.' We thought we would have biological children and adopted children and have a large family, but God had a different plan for us."

### SINGLE PARENT

# Leah Durick

single parent

by Deb Seminary



Leah Durick always wanted to be a nurse. After high school she moved to Arizona and enrolled in Scottsdale Community College. Becoming a nurse took a little longer than she had planned. "I rarely went to class, I wasn't really trying much at all," she said. "However, I worked in the orthopedic unit at a hospital in Phoenix which was great experience."

After two years Durick moved back to Bismarck and enrolled at BSC. "I decided to try school again," she said. "But, I still wasn't putting in the effort I needed to and my transcript reflected it. I ended up quitting school, again."

During this time Durick was in an on-again off-again relationship. It was during one of the on-again times that she found out she was pregnant. "After the initial shock wore off, it was like a switch went off inside of me," she said. "It must have been some motherly instinct - I was more motivated, thinking about how things were going to change.

"I went to the Allied Health Building, which houses the nursing school at BSC, and showed someone my transcript. She told me she didn't know if I would ever be able to get into a program in Bismarck. She said I had to retake all of

those classes and have a certain number of successful semesters."

Durick wasn't able to enroll until after she had her baby, so one of her first challenges as a mom was to retake all of the classes she had already taken. She started when Olivia was six weeks old. "My first semester I took biology and psychology, I was breast feeding, going to night school and working," said Durick. "I ended up getting 3 As and I B my first semester. That gave me the confidence I needed to keep going, it was just going to be a lot of work. And a lot of time. And a lot of money."

Each semester she got her GPA up a little higher and finally got her science GPA to a 3.75 and her cumulative to a 3.25. She was able to keep her GPA up and started to apply to nursing schools. She was accepted into the NDSU four year program and started in August of 2014.

Leah and Jordan, Olivia's father, lived together until Olivia was about 10 months old. "He is a really good dad, really involved in her life," said Durick. "His family is awesome. I don't think I could do it without them. His sister, Heidi, watches Olivia while I go to school and treats her like her own. I actually have a hard time considering myself a single mom with the amount of support I get from him and his family as well as my family."

Durick has lofty goals after graduation. She wants to get her masters in nursing education or enter into the nurse practitioner doctorate program. There are some really good programs locally and she is excited about the pos-

sibilities. "I have been working at St. Gabriel's Community, four to twenty hours a week, depending on my school schedule," she explained. "I love geriatrics. I think that is what I will do long term. I also look forward to doing the clinical rotations in the different hospital departments, especially OBGYN. I had a great nurse who taught me how to breast feed, she showed me how to give the first bath. I can see myself doing that as well."

As she juggles class and work schedules, there is, of course, the inevitable. "The number one thing I struggle with is mommy guilt," said Durick. "With my busy schedule it is really hard to find a balance between work, school and being the mom that she deserves. I with there was more time with Olivia. I know it will get better and this is just short term. I question, 'am I doing the right thing?' all the time."

She also wishes for more moms in her situation to socialize with. "It would be nice to find some other single moms to talk about things and compare notes," she said.

Durick's life has changed a lot in the past three years. The birth of Olivia has forced her to make serious decisions which have allowed her to fulfill her dream of becoming a nurse. They are blessed to have each other.



Deb Seminary is co-editor of Inspired Woman.



"A two-year-old is kind of like having a blender but you don't have a top for it." ~ Jerry Seinfeld

### MILITARY PARENT

## Carey Weiand

military parent

by Jody Kerzman



Just do it.

That's not only the famous Nike slogan, it's also Carey Weiand's motto. Carey is a busy mother of two teenagers – Alicia is 16, Katie is 13. Life revolves around their activities, and Carey somehow balances a full-time job around her girls' busy schedules. She often does it alone, because her husband is a full-time member of the North Dakota National Guard. That means he is frequently gone for days, even months, at a time.

"Monte was in the Guard when we met, in fact, I met him right after he got back from his first deployment," remembered Carey. "He was 18 years old and was just back from a five month deployment to Kuwait."

That would be the first of three overseas deployments for Monte; since then he's also spent a year in Iraq and 15 months in Bosnia. "He became full-time active member of the Guard about the same time we started having kids," said Carey. "Since then, if you add up all his deployments and schools he has attended, I think he's been gone for about four years. That doesn't include the week-long trips, or the flood duty, or the weekends."

Monte is gone right now, this time to Laredo, Texas for a border mission. Monte and his Guard unit have served this mission before, but it was only a month that time. This time the mission is six months. And this time, the mission lands right in the middle of Alicia's junior season of basketball.

"He was able to skip drill one day so he could make it to Alicia's basketball game. I'm so glad his boss was okay with that, because it might be the only game Monte will see all season," said Carey. "He misses a lot of games and activities, which is hard on him and on the girls. The last time he was deployed I recorded all of the girls' games for him and sent him the videos. We will do that again this time. He won't see them real time, but he will get to see the games."

For the Weiand family, it's just the way life goes. While having dad gone will never feel normal, Carey and her daughters manage to adjust and find a way to make the best of each deployment.

"It's probably harder on Monte than it is on us," said Carey. "I work really hard to make sure thing run smoothly for the girls. Our lives are still moving on, even though he isn't here. I got some great advice from another soldier's wife years ago; she told me to plan as if he won't be here, because then if he is here, it's a bonus. We've approached everything like that. The girls understand he can't be here for everything. Life goes on. It is sad because you just get used to it. But really, you couldn't function if you just sat around and felt sorry for yourself."

Carey has made changes to accommodate Monte's schedule. When Monte went full-time active duty, Carey started working from home. She has been doing medical coding for St. Alexius/CHI from her home for the past 15 years.

"It lets me be a stay-at-home mom, but also a working mom," said Carey. "I'm here to make breakfast in the morning and I'm here when they get home from school. My job is flexible enough that I can make it to all their games and activities. I always get up at 5:30 a.m. and do a little work before the girls wake up. I even work on Sunday mornings while everyone is asleep."

Carey is quick to say that being mom and dad is a lot easier now than when the girls were little.

"It is still hard, but it's a different kind of hard. Alicia can drive and they can both cook, so they're not so needy anymore," she explained. "But it's harder because they're more aware of what's going on around the world. When Monte is deployed overseas, we don't watch the national news. The girls don't need to hear about every helicopter that crashes and every soldier that gets killed. I do try to protect them a little that way."

Still, even if they didn't know all the details of where their dad was and why, Carey always made it a point to show the girls where Monte was. She did that with a huge world map she hung in the kitchen."

"We would put push-pins in map to mark where Monte was at the time. My brother and Monte's brother were also deployed at the same time as Monte once, so we had pins in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Bosnia," remembered Carey. "I still always keep the microwave clock to the time zone where Monte is."

Alicia and Katie have always known the reason for their dad's absence: they know he's serving his country, and they learned early on that's something to be proud of.

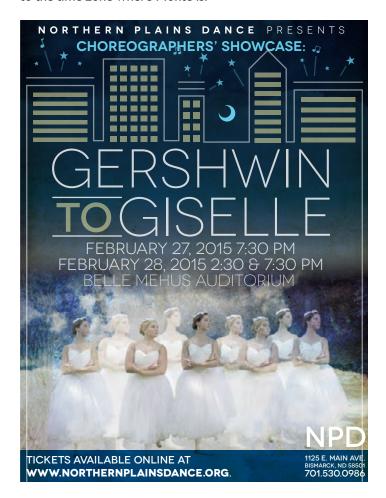
"The girls are strong. They have to be. Sometimes they ask 'why does it have to be my dad?' and I just tell them somebody's dad has to do it. Someday they'll be able to look back in history books and read about the events that their dad helped with. That's pretty cool."

As for Carey, she doesn't consider herself any stronger than the next woman. She doesn't think twice about fixing a broken dishwasher or shoveling snow. And she has a network of people she can call on if needed.

"As a military wife, you develop a network of go-to people," Carey explained. "My parents live close, and my in-laws were across the road until a year ago. I talk to my sister in law all the time, and then there are our basketball and volleyball families. They take care of us when Monte is on the other side of the world. People ask me all the time how I do it all. I don't really think about it like that. I just do what needs to be done. I don't really know any different, and that's ok," said Carey. "I think a lot of women would be surprised at what they really can handle if they need to. Of course I love it when Monte is home, but the reality is, he can't be home all the time, and that's ok. I'm proud of him for serving our country, even if it means he's not always home. We just do it."



"The quickest way for a parent to get a child's attention is to sit down and look comfortable." ~ Lane Olinghouse







SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT

# Sara Kordovsky

special needs parent

by Jody Kerzman



Sara Kordovsky always dreamed about being a mom. In 2002, her dream came true.

"Luke was a perfectly normal, beautiful baby boy," remembered Sara. "We brought him home from the hospital and were so excited about this little bundle of joy. Then, nine days later we got 'the call' that runied it all."

"The call" was from the hospital, letting Sara and her husband Adam know their son had tested positive on the screening for PKU. PKU is rare — only about one in every 15,000 babies born in the United States have PKU. When Luke was diagnosed, he was the first in North Dakota in five years.

"It took us months to really come to terms with what life would be like for our son," said Sara. "Luke's body is unable to break down one of the amino acids that make up all foods that contain protein. Intellectual disabilities and a host of other medical problems result from failure to follow a very strict diet that limits protein intake. In other

words, our son's future was totally in our hands."

That sparked Sara into action. As a Family and Consumer Science (FACS) teacher, she knows a lot about nutrition. That knowledge base made her son's restrictive diet easy to understand.

"Luke has never sat down at the table and eaten the exact same thing as everyone else, at home or at school. We do our best to make sure he has at least a part of or something comparable to what everyone else is having, but it is always different. But he has never known anything different," explained Sara. "He is a remarkable kid. Even though it is very frustrating for him, especially now that he is in middle school. But he knows it's not the end of the world. We have lived in the same town his whole life, so the kids at school grew up with him and understand that is just how Luke is."

Because both Sara and Adam carry the recessive gene that causes PKU, all of their children have a 25 percent chance of having PKU. Still, the couple decided to have another baby.

"Adam and I felt we had a good handle on the PKU and that it was important for Luke to have a sibling," she said. "We were strongly encouraged to have prenatal testing done to see if our new baby would also have PKU, but we turned down all the tests."

Three years later, Levi was born.

"It was a very stressful birth. I sensed something was wrong right away because everyone in the delivery room was very serious and things were moving very quickly. When we got back to the room, the doctor and nurses told us that our son had many of the indicators that pointed to having Down syndrome," said Sara. "We were crushed, to say the least. It was a roller coaster of emotions after that. I had a very difficult time with the diagnosis initially and Adam coped relatively well at first. Then I came to grip with it and Adam sort of fell apart. Luke, who was almost three at the time, was our rock. He just couldn't really see anything wrong with his baby brother and didn't understand why mom and dad were crying all the time. He was our wake up call to get over it and move on."

The couple realized Luke had been great training for Levi. After spending so much time researching PKU and worrying about Luke, they took a different approach to Levi.

"We just made up our mind we were going to enjoy our baby more and stress less," she said.

And they did, until January 2010, when the family once again got devastating news. Levi hadn't been feeling

well for months, and went to the doctor for a rash and a fever. Their family doctor recognized the rash was not really a rash, but rather petechiae, a cluster of spots that result from a minor hemorrhage. The signs were pointing toward leukemia. They headed to Bismarck, and the next day, Levi and Sara flew to the University of Minnesota to start treatment.

Levi responded very well to treatment, but his Down syndrome diagnosis added a few hurdles a regular child wouldn't experience. Although his leukemia cells went away very rapidly, his counts bottomed out just as fast and he acquired meningitis a couple weeks into treatment.

Levi spent 40 days in Minneapolis, then continued treatment for three and a half years in Bismarck. Levi took his last dose of chemo medication on April 10, 2012, also Luke's tenth birthday. But as one chapter of their story was ending, another was just beginning.

"Luke started walking with a very unusual limp. He had always been an active kid," said Sara. "Luke loves sports. He would run and run at recess but limp when he walked. It was very unusual."

An x-ray showed a problem with the top of Luke's femur, and he was diagnosed with Legg-Calve Perthes disease. Legg-Calve Perthes occurs when the blood supply is temporarily interrupted to the ball part of the hip joint. Without proper blood flow, the bone begins to die. For Luke, that meant surgery, followed by 16 months on crutches, then another year with limited activity, and finally, another surgery. Luke remains on limited movement.

Kordovsky is quick to point out that Perthes is rare, and there is no connection between Perthes and PKU. But Perthes has been life changing for the entire family.

"Perthes was an eye opener for Luke. PKU and the strict diet associated with it are nothing to Luke compared to losing his ability to run and play."

The lessons for the rest of the family have come in waves over the years.

"Our life has been one eye-opening experience after another. We don't feel sorry for ourselves, because we know, as bad as we think our lives are, things could always be worse," said Sara. "We are blessed to live where we do. Our state has some monetary resources that keep a lot of programs going to assist families with special needs children. Luke's PKU was diagnosed because of state-mandated testing. There is assistance to help pay for Luke's food and for Levi's care. The blessings are not just financial though. We have wonderful people in our lives, and they've made raising these two very special little boys so much easier."

Now 12 years into her role as mom to children with special needs, Sara can finally take a breath, look back at what has worked for them over the years,

and offer advice to others in similar situations.

"Kids – special needs or not – need to be loved," said Sara. "Parents need to spend meaningful time with them, read to them, feed them healthy food, encourage them to play, stay current on medical check-ups, provide assistance if they struggle, advocate for their rights. lust be there for them."

Sara has continued working full time as a teacher, despite her boys' health issues. For her, work is a good distraction. Equally important, Sara says, is time alone with Adam. She says they learned early on in their journey the importance of couple time, so they make date night a priority. Family time is key too; their best family time is spent camping. Camping is something they can all do, and they all enjoy.

"Lots of problems disappear simply by sitting in a lawn chair and watching a kid splash around in the lake," said Sara.

And while Sara's life as a mom has been anything but typical, and nothing like she dreamed, she knows this life with her two very special little boys is exactly how it should be.



Jody Kerzman is co-editor of Inspired Woman. Jody lives in Bismarck with her husband, Brad, and their four kids.



"Usually the triumph of my day is, you know, everybody making it to the potty." ~ Julia Roberts





by Becky Jones-Mahlum

"Guess what?" my daughter asked.

"What?"

"I was picked to be a U.S. Senate page!"

Sedalia's decision to get involved with politics at a young age led to her having one of the greatest opportunities a 16-year-old can have to witness government at work. She is spending six months in Washington D.C. working as a senate page with 29 other kids from across the country. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp nominated her based on the hours and hours she spent as an unpaid volunteer.

These one-small-step-for-mankind, one-giant-leap-for-our-family successes are part of the parenting dream. With each new activity, we harbor a fantasy our children will achieve something to help them stand apart in the world – and through which, we reluctantly admit, we might enjoy a vicarious thrill. Moments when they actually achieve an important goal, get us through the reality of parenting, which can be as nervewracking as it is wonderful.

With each of our three children, people have asked us – probably just politely – how we raised such good kids. Honestly, parenting for me has been an interesting nature-vs-nurture experiment, not only because we adopted one of our children but also because they are all so different.

Where my kids have succeeded, it has mostly been through their own sheer grit and hard work. I am also humbled at my inability to change in them things they do not want to change, like leaving dirty socks in the living room or incorrect grammar use that I am certain will one day render them homeless.

Parenting has never been an exact science. I could tell you a number of things I would have done differently, but some things I would not change:

I raised my kids on love. I got probably the best parenting advice one day when I asked my oldest sister what she did

to bring up her good and kind children. "I raised my kids on love." In all things, that was the standard she held herself to, "just love them." I want my children to know we love them no matter what – whether they succeed or not. My husband has reminded me when I have had to face a particular challenge, "No matter what happens today, your family will love you just the same."

All kids go through challenges and mine are no exceptions. They continue to struggle at times. Like most parents, I have wanted to have the magic bullet that would solve their struggles. We know the answer generally does not come that easily and, even if it did, their best answers come from within themselves. When I was having a problem in life, my sister would often tell me, "You're smart. You'll figure it out." I just need to be there for them and not try to solve all of their issues, as much as I would like to think I could.

After one of the school shooting incidents, I asked a person who works with at-risk kids what would have made a difference in the shooters' lives to prevent this. His answer was "a loving mother." Now, loving parents can have kids who get into trouble, but the idea stuck with me. You can never go wrong with nurturing attention.

**Talk to your kids.** A wise person told me the difference between kids who come prepared for school and those who do not is often parents who talk to their children. I think that applies to all phases of their lives. In some periods of my children's lives, they have not wanted to share much with me, and I need to accept that. However, I refuse to go away all together. I keep showing up, ready when they are.

**Read to your children.** Reading to our kids every night when they were young helped them be better readers and to develop a love for books. The nighttime ritual also gave us some good bonding time. I have loved some of the books as much as they have. I am thankful to children's authors for their



empathy for children, their gentle teaching styles and especially their senses of humor.

I also rocked and sang with them before they went to sleep. Singing is optional – one of my children did tell me, "Mommy, don't sing." Harsh.

Things are just things. My mother taught me this important lesson. When I would break a plate, I would feel so bad (I could be a little clumsy). She would tell me, "Plates are just things. It's OK to break something, just clean it up."

If you mess up, apologize. I make mistakes. If I lose my temper, I try to apologize. I hope they will learn to do the same. There is great power in a good and honest apology. It helps me not be stuck in my mistakes or in disagreements. A friend once told me, "I don't get caught up in my mistakes." Another friend uses the term "FIDO," Forget it and Drive On.

When the student is ready, make sure the teacher appears. When they have excelled at something, we have tried to make sure the opportunities were there for them. Each family has to set their own priorities, and music is particularly important to my husband and me. We have tried to make the best opportunities available to them, including being in the Central Dakota Children's Choir.

Let them decide if they want to do something. I have struggled with this one, and I know other parents see this differently, but it was what I could live with. If they are not enjoying it, why continue with gymnastics or ballet because I think they should.

**Nobody gets to hit anyone.** I do not believe in inflicting pain as a teaching tool.

It takes a village. I do regret not doing the outdoors activities my son wanted, including more camping. Thank goodness for Troop 6 at Bismarck's First Presbyterian Church. My son took matters in his own hands and joined the Boy Scouts. Those fine scout leaders taught him things I could not.

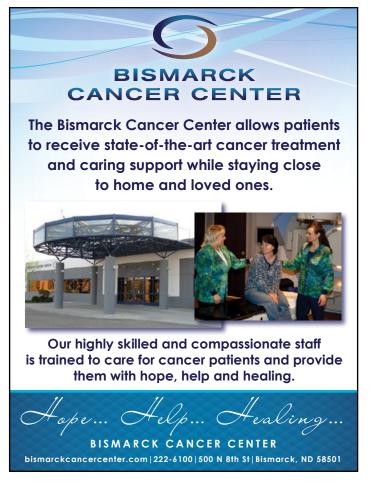
Mostly, I have been amazed at my children's ability to keep showing up for the things that are important to them when I would have quit in disgrace long before. Our son, Johan, continued to run in cross-country meets in middle school when he was roll-up-the-line last. He eventually became a valuable runner on his high school team because he hung in there. He wanted to be an exchange student and he pretty much made that happen himself, including paying for half of the trip and finishing school early so he could spend what would have been his senior year in Taiwan. Our daughter, Shiny, is a wonderful and accomplished artist. She is going to make graphic art her career. When she gets involved in a project, she completely loses herself in it and hours fly by. I marvel at her natural talent and creativity.

And now Sedalia, whom I think of as 16 going on U.S. Senator, has this chance to live in D.C. at the seat of government. She was often the youngest person at a number of political events, but she eventually became an expected volunteer. She just kept showing up.

Through it all and what's to come, oftentimes the only thing I can do is love them, keep talking with them, apologize when I continue to make mistakes and help them find the right people to connect them to places I can only imagine.



Becky Jones-Mahlum is the communications manager for Ducks Unlimited's Great Plains Region, out of the regional office in Bismarck. Becky spent most of her career as a journalist, working as a broadcast reporter, news director and producer. She and her husband, Mike, have three children.



safety tips

### Planet Internet

### The World's Most Amazing (and Dangerous) Non-Place

by Patrick Atkinson

Imagine a rocket that takes off to an entirely new world. This place is beautiful, exciting, and filled with unexplored wilderness, vast riches, and perilous dangers all at once. Would you allow your children to make that journey alone?

Welcome to the Internet. It has revolutionized our world unlike anything that came before it since the beginning of time. And it happened in our lifetime.

Created in concept at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in August of 1962, the first online message sent between two computers was transmitted linked by ordinary telephone line from Massachusetts to California in 1965. Today more than three billion people, nearly 43% of the world's population, use the internet on a regular basis.<sup>2</sup>

Children today were raised on the internet. They didn't know the world before the internet existed, and they're completely at home with its technology. Regardless, whatever the age of your children, it's important to keep them safe when browsing websites, using social networking services like Facebook and Twitter, and meeting and chatting with friends.

The threats of identity theft, online bullying, illegal downloads, and predatory introductions and hard-core pornography are real. As parents and caretakers, we need to understand enough about the internet to help keep our children safe. We can't afford to simply hope that everything will be okay.

### **Websites**

Even if you haven't personally seen much evidence of it, the web is jammed full of things you don't want your children to see. Pornography is the most



obvious; in 2012 Americans searched for sex-related internet sites nearly 276,000,000 times.<sup>3</sup> In addition, there are tens of thousands of gambling sites, and many others that promote the manufacturing and sale of drugs, including date-rape drugs, illegal weapons, and home-made explosives.

Illicit 'dark net' internet sub-structures exist as vast black markets for drug trades, child pornography and open criminal activity, hidden from what the ordinary internet user sees while browsing the web.

### **Identity Theft**

In addition, most fringe websites quickly and quietly download spyware and malware into the user's computer. Sometimes even the most innocent of web-sites, emails and in-document links are 'wolves in sheep's clothing,' trying to get you to click on them. If you do, that single click begins a software download into your computer which you can't stop because you don't know it's happening. The pirate software sits quietly

in the background of your computer and secretly records your passwords, banking and credit card accounts, social security numbers, and other identifying information.

### **Social Networks**

Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Match and eHarmony, and hundreds of other social networks are great places for meeting others, sharing photos, updating friends, and chatting. They are also large public rooms filled with prowlers looking for opportunities of crime. Predators look for children, the recently widowed, individuals with alcohol and chemical addictions, and other vulnerable people.

The innocent-sounding message coming from that innocent-sounding name on an otherwise-innocent chat room may in fact be a pedophile looking to 'groom' your child. Once trust is established, or a sympathetic ear given to an understanding of your child's life, loneliness, or isolation from his/her family, the trap has been set and real-

world meetings occur where anything can happen.

### **Bullying**

If it's fair to say that the internet is the world's largest playground, it only stands to reason that the greatest amount of bullying, character assassination, and social isolation is also going to happen there.

When I was a small child and frequently attacked by two older boys who found sport in waiting for me to walk home from school, I learned I could thwart their plans by choosing different routes each day.

Today, however, it is a different world for our children since the simplest of internet searches goes across all paths and into all social networks, sites, organization lists, and school activities to find the targeted child's name. It is ridiculously easy for today's bullies, whether they live next door or on the other side of the world, acting in name or anonymously, to bully someone else through social networks, instant and all-group messages, and general posts.

Unflattering photos and videos taken in a bathroom, locker room, social setting or while two people are dating, or otherwise ordinary photos that have been digitally altered, can be posted online for the world to view. This may lead to taunts, fear, shame, isolation, and, tragically, suicide.

Because there's nothing physical for the parent to see, online bullying can easily go unnoticed by parents if their children don't say what is happening. Even at that point, it may be difficult to identify, apprehend and stop the bullying.

### What Can You Do?

The online threats are very real but so is the good news that you can prevent most of them from happening without too much time, effort, or money. Good communication, common sense, basic supervision, and prevention software go a long way towards keeping safe the innocent and unsuspecting.

### **Good Communication**

When you help someone who is vulnerable (i.e. a child) to go online, talk to

them in an age-appropriate way about all the good and bad things the internet might bring to them. Talk with them about how most online porn is basically rape; the filmed exploitation of vulnerable, chemically-addicted, underage, or date-drugged women and teens.

Encourage them to tell you whenever they see something that upsets them or makes them feel uncomfortable... and they will find it through even innocent browsing. Follow-up and occasionally ask them about this; don't just wait for them to come to you.

Encourage them to tell you immediately if they receive a threatening, uncomfortable, or unwanted stranger communication. If you feel someone has contacted your child or teen for exploitative purposes, call the police immediately. No predator targets just one child; by calling the police, you may give them an investigative insight that will save dozens or hundreds of innocent children.

### **Common Sense**

For years I've suggested that parents not put computers in their children's bedroom. You wouldn't invite a total stranger into your child's bedroom unaccompanied, would you? Then don't do it digitally.

Place your online computer in a family room with a screen that faces into the room. Your teen may object, but that's okay. As parents we are tasked with keeping our children safe.

### **Basic Supervision**

Make it clear what is acceptable and not acceptable in our children's online activity. Your child needs to know that it's never a good idea to post their address, phone number or other personal details online in an open forum, or why letting everyone know when they are traveling or no one is at home is a really bad idea. Nothing posted online is ever really deleted; it can be recovered.

Give each child their own user account so you can customize the rules of their online activity to each child. You might tell your child they're not allowed to download files without your permission. You can also set rules about what chatrooms, social sites and free email



When your mother asks, "Do you want a piece of advice?" it's a mere formality. It doesn't matter if you answer yes or no. You're going to get it anyway."

~ Erma Bombeck

programs they can belong to, and when they can be online.

### **Prevention Software**

Almost all up-to-date browsers (i.e. Windows, IE9, YouTube, ITunes) have parental controls and safety modes that can be turned on and password-only accessed. Use these.

In addition, there are dozens of high-quality and inexpensive parental control software packages out there, including NetNanny, WebWatcher, and SafeEyes. These should be used with all children, and set with expanding ageand responsibility-appropriate limits that grow as your child ages and shows increasing online responsibility.

Remember that your child or otherwise vulnerable person also has access to the internet through their smartphone and friends. All the technology in the world will never improve upon good, positively-focused age-appropriate communication with your child that is ongoing.

Parents worldwide may, at different times, scream and say they can't control or monitor what their children do online. While that's partly true, we can control a great deal of what they do, or at least make every effort to try.

This is why we are parents.

- http://www.internetsociety.org/internet/ what-internet/history-internet/brief-history-internet
- <sup>2</sup> http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm
- ³ http://www.businessinsider.com/top-google-searcheswhat-do-people-search-for-2011-12



Patrick Atkinson is the Founder and Executive Director of the God's Child Project in Bismarck. www.GodsChild.org www.ITEMP.org



# When should I take my child to the DOCTOR?

by Dr. Joan Connell

**Editor's Note:** It is hard, especially as a first time parent, to know when to take your kids to the doctor. As parents become more experienced and their children get older, it gets easier, but not in every case.

Dr. Joan Connell was nice enough to lay out some guidelines and parameters for different medical conditions. Hopefully they will help the next time you face the dilemma: do we call for an appointment, head to the walk in or emergency room, or wait it out?

### **FEVER**

This answer varies with age, health history, immunization status, and parent experience.

There is no absolute temperature in which children over two months old need to see a doctor. If a child is under two months of age, and their temperature is over 100.4, they need to be evaluated. Previously healthy children over two or three months old who have not been immunized and have a fever should also be seen by a physician.

In otherwise healthy kids who have been immunized and are over two or three months, I tell parents the reasons to bring children to a physician include: fever with a red rash that does not pale when you press on it (may be a rash suggestive of a serious bacterial infection), if they are struggling to breathe, or have a first time seizure. When children first get sick with that fever, they often appear lethargic or inconsolable. At that point, try giving them some Tylenol or Motrin and something to drink. Reassess them in 45 - 60 minutes. If they are still looking sicker than a regular viral illness, they should see a doctor. This is where parent experience really comes into play. If this is the first child, it can be hard to determine, so we do expect more office visits from first time parents. Sometimes, when parents have four or five children, they rarely need to come to the clinic because they are so comfortable managing their children's mild illnesses. I have to remind them to come in for their wellness visits!

In general, with most viral illnesses, the fever resolves within five to seven days. We typically like to hear from patients if their fevers are lasting longer than that, as there is an increased risk that the illness causing the fever may be more than a simple virus. Having said that, there are some viruses (for example influenza, enterovirus, and the virus that causes mononucleosis) that result in fevers that can last up to two weeks.

### **COUGHS AND RUNNY NOSES**

If your child has what seems to be what many call "the common cold," the runny/stuffy nose typically lasts 7-10 days and the cough up to two to three weeks, peaking in the first week and then hanging on for another couple weeks. Families worry about their young children developing sinus infections. This actually doesn't happen very often in young children because children have relatively few sinus cavities. There is some variability regarding how to diagnose sinus infections. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends clinical criteria to make the diagnosis, including symptoms of runny nose/ congestion that worsens after seven days, or persists beyond 10 - 14 days. Frequent or persistent cough also can indicate asthma and/or allergies. For example, frequent, persistent nighttime coughs for no apparent reason can be a major clue for asthma. If that is occurring, particularly if there is personal or family history of asthma, allergies, or eczema, the child should be seen.

### **INFLUENZA**

The symptoms for Influenza A this season seem to include more gastrointestinal concerns- a lot of nausea, some vomiting, and diarrhea. We are also noting more irritability. These symptoms are occurring in conjunction with the classic fever, cough, runny nose, headache, and sore throat symptoms.

The test for influenza is a simple rapid nasal swab test and results are available within a half hour. However, none of the tests are 100% accurate, so when there is a lot of influenza in the community, it can be reasonable to diagnose and treat based on patient's symptoms. As for the influenza vaccine, even in years when it does not do a great job covering a particular strain, it is certainly worthwhile to vaccinate, as the vaccine covers numerous strains of influenza.

### **RASHES**

As mentioned in the fever section, a red rash that does not pale when pressed that occurs with a fever is a reason see your doctor immediately. Rashes that make children feel uncomfortable (painful or itchy and not responsive to over the counter treatments) may require a visit to the clinic, particularly if the rash seems to be getting worse or is associated with other symptoms throughout the body.

### **STOMACH FLU**

The stomach flu does not generally require a trip to the doctor, but if there is blood in the vomit or stool, signs of dehydration (less than three potties/wet diapers in a 24 hour period, dry eyes, mouth), or you feel like things are getting worse instead of better with time, take your child to the doctor.

### **BUG BITES / STINGS**

There are degrees of allergic reactions that range from local to systemic (whole body) regarding the extent of the affected area. It is not unusual for kids to get mosquito bites, with each subsequent bite getting more swollen as the season progresses. It is nothing to seek care for, just be aware that it can happen and to prevent bites by using mosquito spray that contains DEET. If a bite does occur, use hydrocortisone cream +/- diphenhydramine to relieve symptoms.

If a bug bite/sting causes problems swallowing or breathing, swelling in the face that may compromise vision, swallowing, or breathing, seek care immediately. If you have managed the bite/sting at home but are concerned that the reaction was more than just local swelling, it is a good idea to visit your doctor to discuss this, as your child may require an epinephrine pen for use with subsequent bites that may result in worse reactions. Bites/stings that seem to worsen instead of improve after 2-3 days may actually be complicated by a bacterial infection. These may require medical treatment.

### **SUN EXPOSURE**

A red, non-blistering sunburn can often be managed at home. If blistering occurs, especially over a large part of the body, and/or if there is a fever over 100, a child should be seen. Remember, it is possible to get heat stroke without getting sunburned. Of course, prevention is best. That means sunscreen, staying out of the sun during peak hours, and getting plenty of fluids.

### **HEAD INJURY**

Seek care if things seem to be getting worse instead of better. For instance, if a child falls and initially seems okay, but then begins vomiting, and then seems to be excessively sleepy, a visit to a care provider is required. Parent experience can also be helpful here. The parent who has seen the three older siblings do okay after similar falls and reactions that experience to determine whether this fall and the subsequent effects is out of the "normal" range. Children who fall and appear to have fractured their skull, new onset of unequal pupils, or who seem confused should also be seen immediately by a care provider.

### MENTAL HEALTH

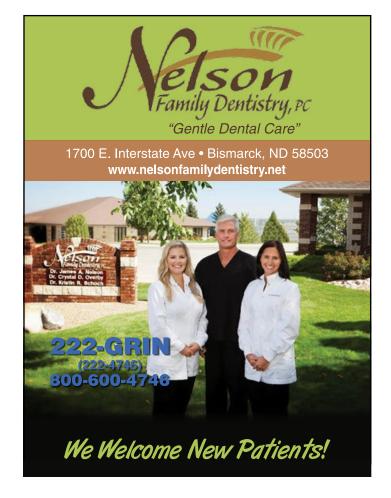
This is an area where it is especially nice to have a medical 'home' - a primary care provider who is well known by the patient. This home is often a great place to start when parents are concerned about mental health issues in their children, including anxiety, depression, ADHD, substance use, and significant parent-child conflict. Usually, by the time families come to see me, parents have read a lot online, tried five or six different things with their child that have not been successful, and they feel like they are out of options. Remember, life is complicated for kids today. Many children, and their parents, may benefit from counseling at some point. When counseling alone is not sufficient, medication may be useful in certain circumstances.

### RESEARCHING ONLINE

Most patient families seeking care are very tech savvy, and I encourage them to go online to get more information. In general, it is nice when patients and their parents are more informed and know when to seek care. I would simply encourage families to remember that when their online research has led them to the doctor's office, this is an opportunity for that physician to add their experience, training, and acquired expertise to optimize the ability to provide excellent care for that child.



Dr. Joan Connell is a Pediatrician at the UND Center for Family Medicine and the Asthma Clinic. She is President of NDAAP and the Associate Clerkship Director for UND School of Medicine.



for & against



### IN NORTH DAKOTA

by Mindy Backsen

If you've ever lost your child for that brief moment, a fraction of a second or two that seems like an eternity, only to find them playing "hide-n-seek" in the clothes rack right behind you, you'll know the feeling that I have experienced. It's when your heart drops into your stomach and you suddenly feel helpless. That is how I felt after I left a public meeting I attended in Bismarck about something called Common Core. That was a year ago in October.

As with every controversial topic, you have two sides that are very passionate about their position. I, however, have learned that before a person ever forms an opinion on a topic and shares that opinion with the public, she had better have researched both sides to avoid being made a fool. Suffice it to say, some of the proponents of Common Core have done just that. I choose to base my position on fact.

After I left that meeting in October 2013, I was determined to find the truth. My mind was racing, thinking there is no way the leaders in our state would ever allow this kind of federal intrusion. What is data mining anyway? Bill Gates, what is his involvement with all of this? My instinctive nature to protect my children kicked in. I was not going to sit by idle while the government was allowed to collect all sorts of data on my kids. I was a mom on a mission.

I got home that night and like any good researcher, I went straight to Google and found documents like the "Application Part I of the Fiscal

Stabilization Fund" and the "Smarter Balance Assessment Consortia (SBAC) Memorandum of Understanding," both documents signed by Governor Hoeven and Superintendent Sanstead and archived on the ND Department of Public Instruction's website. As I read through all of this information, I started creating a timeline; I needed to put the pieces of this ever-so-intricate puzzle together.

Having spent several months researching everything I possibly could, I came to the unsettling conclusion that not only were the ladies at the meeting correct in what they were saying, but that it was much bigger than what they proclaimed.

The truth is this: our Governor and Superintendent agreed to adopt the Common Core standards before the final versions of the standards were complete. It was only then - after we agreed to adopt the standards in June 2010 - that the DPI put out a public survey requesting feedback on the standards from administrators, higher education, principals, school board members, teachers and parents. Fewer than 200 people completed the survey and many of them included comments with concerns about this new set of standards, such as this one. "You are going to rearrange the whole mathematic structure that has occurred for the past decades and throw it out the window. I want to know why we are following the footsteps of states that have HORRIBLE math scores. Our scores rank as some of the top in the nation."

In short, here are my concerns with the Common Core: loss of local control, change in instruction and curriculum without supportive evidence that these standards are better than what we had, data sharing with the federal government and lack of legislative or committee oversight to insure transparency and that overhauling our existing education system with the Common Core would not be the best decision for our teachers and the children of our state.

North Dakota has lost local control by adopting copyrighted standards. North Dakota teachers didn't write the Common Core standards, nor do we have control over them (unless the definition of copyrighted has changed). We are at the mercy of the copyright owners. In addition, we no longer have local control over testing as long as ND is a part of the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortia (SBAC). We gave up our control when the Memorandum was signed, as we "agreed to support the decisions of the consortia." SBAC controls the test to which the standards are aligned.

The inconsistencies and half-truths coming from our "educational leaders" in this state are plenty. Let's start with the DPI saying the state hasn't received any federal dollars to support Common Core. Here's a fact: On June 4, 2009 Governor Hoeven and Superintendent Wayne Sanstead signed an application for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, assuring our state would comply with the following; achieving equity in teacher

distribution, improving collection and use of data, improving standards and supporting struggling schools. Eighteen days later (June 22nd 2009), North Dakota received more than \$70 million dollars to "lay a foundation for a generation of education form" according the U.S. Department of Education. Although the application doesn't used the words "Common Core" (likely because it wasn't given a name yet), it most certainly falls in line with what Common Core encompasses. Common sense would tell me "yes" we most certainly did receive money for Common Core.

Not long ago, our state legislators received an email encouraging them to "follow the money." So I did, and found there were BILLIONS OF DOLLARS "granted" to various entities such as the National Governor's Association and Council of Chief State School Officers (both of which are owners of the Common Core Standards), The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the PTA, various testing companies, and nearly every supporter of Common Core. Who is bankrolling all of this? The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. None of this says "local control" and "state led" to me.

We are told by the proponents that Common Core is not curriculum, yet the textbooks and worksheets in our schools are being replaced with Common Core-aligned material, and the way we used to do math has changed radically. There is even a North Dakota Curriculum Initiative specifically for Common Corerelated curriculum and a link on DPI's website to a document entitled "Standards likely to impact curriculum and instruction." That document is 61 pages. The proponents continue to regurgitate that "Common Core is just a set of standards, North Dakota has had standards for a long time," yet considering all of the caveats that our then- Governor and Superintendent signed us up for, Common Core is far from just standards. But to understand this you must broaden your scope of thought. In doing so you will find Common Core includes data collection, new ways of teaching, and computeradaptive assessments.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit www.stopcommoncorend.com or find us on Facebook & Twitter
- North Dakota Curriculum Initiative: http://ndcurriculuminitiative.org/common\_core/
- State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Application Part 1: https://www.dpi.state.nd.us/stimulus/stabilization/application.pdf
- Smarter Balance Memorandum of Understanding: http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/ESEA/Attachment5.pdf
- Standards likely to impact curriculum and instruction: http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/standard/problematic\_standards.pdf
- Math standards concerns: http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/lowering-the-bar-how-common-core-math-fails-to-prepare-high-school-students-for-stem/
- No data collection requirement: http://www.legis.nd.gov/files/committees/63-2013nma/appendices/ 15 5055 03000appendixl.pdf?20150115204641

The ND DPI has stated "there are no data collection requirements of states adopting Common Core." Let me try and put this in simple terms. When we took the federal money, then joined SBAC, we agreed to collect data on our students (which is a purpose of the new assessment being computerized). SBAC has an agreement with the US Department of Education to share this data. Here's a snippet from the Cooperative Agreement between the US Department of Education and the SBAC. "The Grantee (SBAC) must provide timely and complete access to any and all data collected at the State level to ED or its designated program monitors, technical assistance providers, or researcher partners."

Lastly, we are told to "trust the experts." I prefer to trust my intuition first and require more than lip-service and talking points to gain my trust. Unless you live under a rock, you know that several states throughout our Nation are pulling out of Common Core and introducing bills to halt the testing. Louisiana has gone as far to sue the federal government, pointing out that "The Tenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reserves to the States all 'powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution.' The Constitution makes

no provision for federal power over education policy."

Moms all over North Dakota, and dads, too, for that matter are finding the same valuable information on Common Core that my research led me to. Parents and concerned citizens are starting to find out the truth, and they aren't liking what they see. They are feeling unsettled and hopeless as well. The last thought that any parent should have when she sends her child on the bus to school is what data will be collected on them today, what behavioral survey they may be given, and what struggles they may go through when they are expected to achieve a standard that their yet developing brain isn't ready for.

I appreciate the many parents, community members and legislators across the state who have come together and worked to repeal Common Core. Our kids' education is worth fighting for and protecting. A very famous man once said, "He alone who owns the youth, has the future." Google it.



Mindy Backsen is a mother of three children, ages 14, 9 and 6. She and her husband reside in Bismarck, ND. Currently, she is a licensed insurance

agent and an executive assistant at a local financial firm.



# The Facts About Common Core

by Aimee Copas

I write this from a number of perspectives with great hope that it will provide understanding and a sense of calm in what have become tumultuous waters. I write this letter first and foremost as a wife and mother who desires an assurance as to what the truth is and what does this mean for MY child. I then write it as an educator who has answered my calling to help children achieve, coupled with a desire regarding how educators are treated, trusted, and understood. I've been an English teacher, coach, administrator, a college dean, worked at the ND University System, and now represent all educational leaders in North Dakota in my current role.

During my time as an educator, I've been fortunate and have been provided many opportunities for leadership at a local, state, and national level. My knowledge of the ND State Standards and our assessment system is pretty indepth. While our state was vetting the standards and choosing an assessment, I served for the ND University System as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academics. During that time I was the higher education lead to investigate the standards, the assessment choices, and help provide feedback for choice for our state. Please trust me when I deliver the remainder of this information as it is 100% fact driven and is clear and concise. I'd never give you any different information - after all, I have a child in school. My husband is a teacher as well. We live and breathe our calling and our passion, which is doing what is best for kids. We stay up at night stressing about whether the decisions we've made to try to help kids have made a difference. We've mourned with parents during death, feeling like it was our child too. We've questioned our very fiber as individuals when we think for one second

that maybe we should've done it differently. It isn't just a job to educators. It is our passion.

Now for the facts.

The creation of the common core state standards at a large level was a grass roots effort from the National Governor's Association and the CCSSO as a response to a cry from the business community and from higher education that students leaving high school are not adequately prepared for the next level of education or for the workforce. What we've been hearing from all arenas is that the kids aren't well enough prepared. They need to know more – their skills must be more refined. Standards need a higher level of rigor to get us there.

Let's be clear about what we are talking about:

Standards are grade level expectations. They are the "what students should know" by the time they have completed a grade level.

Standards are NOT curriculum. They do NOT stipulate instructional methods, assessments, resources, or scope and sequence of how the information is taught. If you don't understand why your child is being taught math in the method that they are – go talk to their teacher and principal so they can help you. That is a curriculum decision. NOT a standards decision.

HOWEVER – teachers use the standards as the guidepost in developing curriculum to achieve student success. Standards are critical to student success. Principals support innovated and quality instruction that is based on the standards. Educators support the standards. We should, no, we must support the professionals in the field to do their job. We wouldn't trust our

mechanic to do heart surgery. We trust the professionals who have been trained in their field.

ND Department of Public Instruction reviews content standards of ALL curricular areas every 5-7 years. They actually just finished physical education review. They go through a process by which educators are nominated to be a part of the review committee for those standards. For the most recent Math and English standards adopted, 60 of our educators from North Dakota, five who are from Bismarck Public Schools. vetted the standards and recommended their adoption. The public is asked to comment on the draft standards. The committee reviews and adjusts as they see fit. The names of the educators in the review is on each standard document. This is followed with all standards in all subject areas.

Our ND Standards do not demand a statewide assessment. Our ND law. however, does (NDCC: 15.1-21.08). Research shows that standards based education, coupled with a series of formative and summative assessments, promotes student learning and increases the effectiveness of our educational system. To provide a way for North Dakota to compare results with other states, we plan to assess with a consortia provided assessment as we have done for many years with the NWEA test. That way we can compare with other states in our region and track the progress of our students. The consortia model saves our state a lot of money as well. It is a bit like getting together with a bunch of people to purchase something in bulk so the costs are lower. Many of us enjoy a similar opportunity in our homes with things like Bountiful Baskets or wholesale shopping.

There are many outside interest groups who wish to dictate to North Dakota how we should be educating our children. They've come into our state and instilled much fear and many falsehoods about North Dakota Education into our great citizens. They've made some parents fear - they've made some legislators fear. We are working hard as educators to try to calmly continue to state the facts. Literally for decades, North Dakota has operated under a standards-based educational system that is constantly being improved. There is nothing inherently evil in the standards. To hard working educators. this sometimes feels like an attack on education when they strive daily to do what is best for our children.

The ND Business Community, the GND Chamber, the ND School Board Association, the ND United (teachers). the ND Council of Educational Leaders, and NDSANS (private schools), support our adopted ND State standards, and more specifically, they support the ability of local school boards to make decisions based on what works in their respective communities. I really don't think our communities wish for a legislatively run school. In my heart I think that people want to have a say locally. As educators, we are proud of the education we offer the youth of North Dakota. That being said, we know that through professional development and collaboration, we can continue to improve.

The path we are currently on, a path that supports a rigorous, standards based education for all students, combined with excellent professional development opportunities for staff members has served as an effective mechanism for improving our schools. As a state, our test scores and graduation rates continue to increase. We will continue to fine-tune our process. We need to let our school boards continue to oversee the educational process in our districts; we need to let school administrators lead; and, we need to let our teachers teach.



Dr. Aimee Copas is the Executive Director for the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders. She is married to her husband

Shannon and they have a 5 year old daughter, Aliya.





he said, she said

# Being a parent means missing some



by Annette Martel and Kelly Hagen



Why is that we always want what we can't have?

Sleep – that's what I want, more than just about anything in the world right now. My kids, on the other hand, want to stay awake all night, more than anything the world. There's a four-year-old and four-month-old who live to keep me awake.

It's possible that my husband might be waking up, too. It's too dark when this is all happening for me to notice. Plus, my brain function diminishes to the point where I can't tell the difference between when I'm dreaming and awake.

Let me walk you through a wake-up scenario. It's 2 a.m. Wait. Why do I feel like I'm falling? "Neh." And I'm up. Well, there was the first peep from my son, Ticklebutton Neversleeps (not his real name). Let me check my baby-tracking app here. Ooh, impressive. He slept for a whole hour and twenty minutes this time. I should just let him try to self-soothe for a little bit here.

Wow. I didn't remember I could fly. What is that horrible screaming sound? My eyes pop open. Okay. Well, the self-soothing session appears to be over. Where did I put my phone? I need to stop the sleep timer. Oh, wait, maybe it's that iPhone-shaped lump under my back. Oh, neat, he self-soothed for five minutes.

I manage to walk over to my son's room in the dark without head-butting any doorframes. "Well, hello there, little cutie." I don't actually say this to him, but I think it. You see, the baby books say not to talk to them when they're waking up in the middle of the night, lest they begin to think that you are on their side in this wake-up-every-half-hour-a-thon.

"Shhhhhhh," I tell my baby, as if he's going to listen to anything I say. I help him find his pacifier. He grabs it out of his mouth with great disdain and whips it across the room, as if he's trying out for the Minnesota Twins. I even more insistently continue to shush him and pat his chest. And he immediately falls back to sleep – is what I wish I could say happens, but



Here is the child in question, being incredibly cute while not sleeping.

really, most of it is a blur. When he finally does fall asleep again, I meander back to my room, push the start button on the sleep timer app, and pull the covers up to my neck.

"Ahhhh. This is it. Sweet, sweet sleep," I tell myself. Hey, wait a minute. Why is there a pig in my living room? And when did we paint the whole house pink? And what is that terrible screeching sound?

And I'm up.



I want to start out by saying that sleeping is amazing. This needs to be established early. We really like sleep.

For those unfamiliar, sleeping is that thing that happens after a number of hours of consciousness, where your body just kind of stops moving around so much, and your brain shuts down into a sort of "sleep mode" (Hey, do you think that's why they call it that?) where it is technically working, but it's producing garbled visions of nonsense where I'm back in high school but I can't remember my locker combination and, oh god, I have no clothes on and I think I'm the rat from "Ratatouille." So ... low-level output is coming out of the ol' noodle; that's what I'm trying to say.

Sleep happens to the best of us, the worst of us, and everyone in between. You have to sleep. If you don't: bad things.

Try telling that to our youngest child.

That wasn't rhetorical. I need someone to tell this child. He's not listening to me. Preferably an authority figure he might respect. What's Wilford Brimley up to these days?

So, like my wife so ably wrote already, we have a four-month-old son not really named Ticklebutton, and it's not that he doesn't sleep; he just doesn't like to do it for longer than an hour and a half at a time.

To answer my wife's suspicions, yes, I am awake some of those times that she's awake, doing all those things she wrote about. I'm the guy standing in the dark outside the room, trying to avoid being head-butted by the wife, staring in, wondering what I can do to help. But I'm too confused to generate any good ideas, so I usually end up loading the dishwasher.

Sometimes I even beat my wife to the crib to try to calm the wild-eyed, angered infant down enough to go back to sleep. I honestly do try to be the one to get to the crib first to try to

help, because I'm very competitive. But I'm also a very deep sleeper, apparently, and so I'm living up to every stereotype about how fathers aren't supposed to lose sleep.

I've been told that, anyway. "How are you, Kelly Hagen?" they ask, and I say, "Super tired, thanks." "Why?" they ask, and I say, "Well, because we have a baby and the baby doesn't sleep and I don't sleep because of the baby." Finally, they say something about how "fathers don't stay up with the babies, silly. Babies need to be nursed and you can't do that."

And that's true, sure. But, still, I'm a big believer in solidarity. I can pat a child's stomach and make a prolonged "shhhhhhhhhhhh" noise with the best of them, and if that's not working, Annette can feed him, and I can show solidarity by staying up as long as she is. Run the garbage outside, mail out some Christmas cards that are dreadfully late, wash the dog, etc. We don't even have a dog. I have no idea whose dog I've been washing, but you're welcome.

We're going to go and try to get some sleep now. Good night. Thanks for reading. And ... never mind, the kid's up again.



Columnists Annette Martel and Kelly Hagen are married, have two kids and never sleep. Never. They can be reached at shesaidhesaidcolumn@gmail.com.



western north dakota woman

# "What is it Like to Grow Up in a Hotel?"

by Jessie Veeder

"People always ask us what it was like to grow up in a hotel. I don't know how to answer," says Lindsey Ybarra, shrugging her shoulders and looking across the table at her younger sister.

"It's all we ever knew," agrees Bethany Devlin, a 27-year-old mother of three, who will likely find her own children faced with the same questions as they grow up.

Because six years ago, in 2008, Lindsey, now a 30 year-old mother of two, had finished up her degree in business administration at North Central University in Minneapolis and was making plans to start her own business.

Back home, her parents, Marty and Crystal Mulder, owners of the Roosevelt Inn and Suites, the hotel Lindsey and Bethany grew up in, were watching their town of Watford City change and grow a little bit more every day.

Phones were ringing. Hotel rooms were filling. The town and the people in it were making plans.

So Marty started making his own.

He picked up the phone and called his daughter, Lindsey. He asked her if she wanted to come home to manage the family's hotel.

It wasn't the first time that Lindsey had heard the idea, but it was the first time she seriously considered it.

Because Marty had also been speaking with her sister Bethany, who was finishing up her degree in Entrepreneurial Management at the University of Minnesota and she was making plans to come home too.

When Lindsey's husband Nick was offered a job as a youth pastor at her hometown church, the couple made their move.



Lindsey Ybarra (L) and Bethany Devlin

"I wasn't sure how it was going to work, mixing our personalities and working as a family, but I just had to trust my dad," said Lindsey, who would have never dreamed of having a career opportunity in Watford City, having been raised there during a time of economic downturn.

"I don't think people really knew what was coming either. When I moved home, local businesses were calling offering me jobs and I was like 'No, I have a job. I'm going to work at the hotel," laughs Lindsey. "At one point dad just said 'I think it's all going to work out.'"

And so the sisters came home, together, each with new husbands and each with an education, ideas and a history of a childhood spent working the front desk, cleaning rooms and helping to run the family business in Watford City.

### Working as a family

Lindsey and Bethany are sisters to three other siblings, Zach, Amy and

Nick and through the years the Mulders have proved that a successful business comes with family support.

Lindsey was only four years old when the Mulder family bought their first hotel, the McKenzie Inn in 1987, before Bethany was born. And she recalls standing next to her mom when the family made the decision to buy the old Super 8 hotel down the street, the hotel that would become the Roosevelt Inn, with its red shag carpet and muchneeded repairs.

"I remember mom wondering out-loud what they got themselves into," laughs Lindsey who recalls the long hours the family put into the renovations.

The family owned both hotels for a few years, before selling the McKenzie Inn and focusing their efforts on the Roosevelt Inn, one of only three small hotels in Watford City at the time.

And as Watford City changed and evolved, the Mulder family pushed to expand their business and amenities, adding an indoor swimming pool in 2000 and an addition in 2013, their busiest months being the summer tourism and fall hunting seasons, where they would welcome regular and returning guests.

Business continued as usual as the five children grew up and moved on to higher education and careers away from Watford City, but when Marty and Crystal welcomed their daughters' families home, it was becoming clear that the town was changing, business was picking up, and that there was going to be enough work for the both General Managers, despite their apprehension.

"There was a time between 2008 and 2010 that we were booking rooms

up to six weeks, sometimes even two months ahead," recalls Bethany of the sudden surge in population and work in her hometown.

"We would turn away 50 or so rooms a day," remembers Lindsey, who recalls the landmen and seismograph crews that filled their hotel in those years.

To help fill the need for rooms quickly, the Roosevelt added 46 cabin units to the lot next to the hotel building, doubling the business's room capacity.

In 2012 the Roosevelt Inn cut the ribbon on a hotel addition that included over 100 rooms, a breakfast room, a workout facility, conference rooms, Jacuzzi and unique, private penthouse suites.

After the dust settled on the construction, the hotel became a 24-hour facility with a staff that grew from five to 25 employees, with Lindsey and Bethany at the helm.

### Relying on one another

While the sisters admit that getting into the grove of taking over the family business together was overwhelming and challenging at first, they have now settled into a routine and a set of roles that works for both sisters and their families.

"It's funny, we didn't really sit down and talk about it, but we found out that I'm more like mom and Bethany is like dad," explains Lindsey.

So Bethany focuses on the numbers, handling the bookkeeping and the

taxes. Lindsey is in charge of human resources, décor and making orders. They both fill in every gap in between, managing housekeeping staff and manning the front desk.

Both Nick and Bethany's husband Kody work at the hotel as well, Nick as groundskeeper and outdoor maintenance and Kody, a carpenter and Jack of all trades.

With both families living in apartments inside the hotel, they help take care of one another.

"Our lives intertwine a lot," says Bethany. "We rely on each other for so many things."

"We do everything together," reiterates Lindsey. "I wouldn't be doing this without her. We have such a similar and organized work style, it's like there's two of me."

### Looking to the Future

Since Lindsey and Bethany took the reigns five years ago, Watford City has added five hotels with more development in the works. But the sisters aren't concerned about the competition; both believing that it helps them strive to be their best.

And while the Roosevelt Inn is seeing less seismographers and more construction crews and corporate employees, their long-running status in the community allows them to continue to serve their regular guests who return to town year after year for festivals, family reunions or hunting trips.

Bethany says it's fun to see how these regular guests respond to all of the changes in the community, and she admits that this growth has made her hometown a more exciting place to live.

"There are more opportunities for my kids here than there were when I was growing up," said Bethany.

And while neither sister would have ever guessed they would be raising their young families back home in North Dakota, both agree that the leap of faith they took six years ago was the right leap for both of them.

Soon their youngest sister Amy, who has been busy running one of the family's hotels in Minnesota, will pack her bags and move back to Watford City. The entrepreneurial spirit in these women keeps their eyes open to more business prospects in their booming community.

"We've had the opportunity to leave, but I don't know where else we could live this life," said Lindsey, who admits that 2014 has been their best year yet, with 2015 looking to exceed expectations. "This hotel, this place, keeps us together as a family."

It's a sentiment that her own children will come to understand, when they're asked, "What is it like to grow up in a hotel?"



Jessie Veeder is a singer, writer and photographer who lives and works on her family's cattle ranch in Western ND with her husband, Chad.





wellness



When the snow and cold settles in for the North Dakota winter, it's easy for the activity level of the whole family to dwindle. But both the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District and the Mandan Parks and Recreation District are working to change this trend with a variety of funfilled activities to get all members of the family out and moving this winter.

### Play Dates and Much More in Bismarck

In early January, the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) started a program called Play Dates to provide another opportunity and place for children and parents to play. "Play Dates started as a response to parent's inquiries and requests for additional play time and program opportunities for their pre-school aged children," says Paula Redmann, community relations manager. "BPRD provides the toys and the space, and parents of infants through age five children get to 'come to our house' to play. It's open, have at it, play time."

She says Play Dates is not a drop-off program, but one where parents stay, provide the supervision, and play along with their children and others. "We have an assortment of toys for infant through five-year-olds. Some of the toys are similar to what folks may find in their own child's toy box."

Play Dates is offered at the Bismarck State College (BSC) Aquatic & Wellness Center, 1601 Canary Ave., near the BSC campus, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to noon; and at the World War Memorial Building, 215 N 6th St., in downtown Bismarck, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

Redmann says each location offers a unique setting for play. "Play Dates at the BSC Aquatic & Wellness Center takes place in the Turtle Beach Playground at the facility, so there are playground pieces for the kids as well as the other toys. Play Dates at the World War Memorial Building includes use of the Imagination Playground, which is basically large, foam pieces kids use to stack, roll, build and create."

"Play Dates provides a place and space, and some toys," she continues. "The rest is up to the attendees."

The month of February is also BPRD's annual Flurry Fest winter celebration, which encourages individuals of all ages to celebrate winter outside, inside, on the ice, on a court and in the water with a schedule full of fun activities for the whole family.

Flurry Fest includes outdoor activities like sledding, snowman building, ice skating, cross-country skiing, and disc golf; as well as indoor events including free group fitness classes, tennis and wallyball tournaments, golf clinics, art workshop, dance class and "Dive-in" movie at the Aquatic Center's pool. For a full listing of Flurry Fest events visit www.bisparks.org.

"It's really all a part of what BPRD provides in the community, no matter the season," says Redmann of the importance of getting families out and moving. "Unstructured, free programs and opportunities for play, like sledding, playgrounds, parks and trails, makes for a healthier community and a healthier family."

### Get Out and Get Moving in Mandan

"North Dakota winters can be cold and snowy, but fresh snow brings fresh opportunities to play outside," says Naomi Erdahl, recreation supervisor, with the Mandan Parks and Recreation District (MPRD). "Less daylight and low temperatures cause people to stay indoors, be less active and see fewer rays of sunshine. Getting outside and getting moving in the winter will help you feel better and have more energy. Dress warmly, layer up and get outside!"

Erdahl says MPRD wants to encourage families to play outside at its four outdoor ice rinks located throughout the community. Cross-country ski trails are also located at the Mandan Municipal Golf Course and the Missouri River Nature Trail, which are open dawn to 11 p.m., depending on snow accumulation.

"Pets are part of our families, too," notes Erdahl, also encouraging families to bring their furry family members to DogTown Dog Park, located at 810 8th Ave SE and open daily from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. "Or, play inside in the Brave Center or Aquatic Center. Choose a place, choose an activity, grab your family and get going!"

The Mandan Aquatic Center has Family Swim Sundays, "MONSTER in the pool!" events, Friday Fun Days, and swim hours during non-school days on its schedule this winter. Open gym events are also scheduled for Feb. 7, 15, and 22, and March 1, 8, and 15 at the Mandan Brave Center.

"Families that play together have more fun together," says Erdahl. "The Mandan Parks and Recreation District recognizes the importance of providing families places to play, swim, ski, skate, run, and, most importantly, just be together."

For additional information on the activities and facilities available through MPRD, visit mandanparks.com.



*Kylie Blanchard is a local writer.* 



Charities and donors are watching the clock for Giving Hearts Day, a 24-hour online event to take place February 12, 2015.

Giving Hearts Day was started in 2008 by Dakota Medical Foundation and Impact Foundation as the first one-day "virtual" charity fundraising event of its kind in the region. Donors can easily give on Giving Hearts Day in just a few minutes without regard to weather or need to attend an event. The 24-hour window creates urgency that spurs people to action.

In 2014, gifts totaling \$5.7 million through 24,407 individual donations were received on Giving Hearts Day, shattering the previous year's total by 49 percent.

Generous community donors have pledged to match donations of \$10 or more up to at least \$4000 for each participating nonprofit in the Bismarck area.

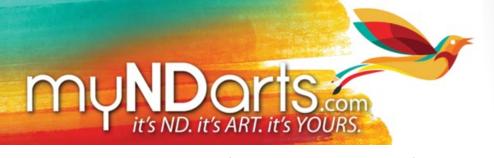
On February 12, contributions can be made at impactgiveback.org, an online comprehensive guide to nonprofit organizations, developed by Dakota Medical Foundation and Impact Foundation so that donors can easily learn about charities, make donations, find volunteer opportunities and register events online. The site profiles more than 500 charities and has been used to raise more than \$14.2 million since 2008.

2015 is the fourth year that Bismarck charities have been invited to participate in the annual event. The 24 area charities that participate in Giving Hearts Day provide services to over 42,879 people in the Bismarck-Mandan community each year, providing everything from a safe place to stay to medical treatment, to unforgettable experiences through learning and the arts.

Bismarck area nonprofits that will be participating in Giving Hearts Day include Abused Adult Resource Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bismarck-Mandan, Bismarck Cancer Center, Bismarck Public Schools Foundation, Central Dakota Children's Choir, Charles Hall Youth Services, Cystic Fibrosis Association of North Dakota, Elks Camp Grassick, Gateway to Science Center, Inc., Heartview Foundation, Kidder County Community Health Center, ND FFA Foundation, North Dakota Safety Council, North Dakota Teen Challenge, North Dakota Women's Network, Northern Plains Dance, Prairie Learning Center, Robert E. Asker Scottish Rite Speech Therapy Center for Children, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Bismarck, Ruth Meiers Hospitality House, Service Dogs for America, Sleepy Hollow Theatre & Arts Park, The God's Child Project, and Welcome House. Each of these nonprofits has its own profile site at impactgiveback.org, where donors can learn more about the missions and programs that the charities offer.



Representatives from participating Bismarck nonprofits



Please go to myNDarts.com for more details on these and other events. myNDarts.com is a free website for those listing events and for those looking for something to do. It's North Dakota's guide to Arts and Culture. If you have questions, please contact Eileen at dwac4arts@hotmail.com.

### February 2015

### February-March 15

"Imagining the Expedition: Lewis and Clark in Art" Exhibit | Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center | Washburn, ND | info@ fortmandan.org

"Tatanka: Icon of the Great Plains" Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center | Washburn | info@fortmandan.org

### February I-13

CHS Art Show at BSC

### February 2

After school Art Classes at Elementary Schools | Theo Art School | highprairiecomplex.com/theo | theo art school@hotmail.com

After school Art Classes at the Studio Theo Art School | highprairiecomplex. com/theo | theo art school@hotmail.com

Preschool Arts Lab | Theo Art School | highprairiecomplex.com/theo | theo art school@hotmail.com

SMS/LHS Orchestras "Midwinter Concert" | SMS Auditorium | 7:30pm

Mommy and Me Art & Canvas | highprairiecomplex.com/theo | theo art school@hotmail.com

### February 3

BHS/WMS Orchestras "Midwinter Orchestra Concert" | BHS Knaak Center | 7:30 pm

Jazz Combo & Steel Drum Concert | 7:30 pm | St. Mary's Central High School

Rush Hour Concert featuring Trio Apollo | Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra | 5:45 pm | Trinity Lutheran Church

### February 3-28

February Exhibit | Bismarck Art & Galleries Association | Lavonne Foresberg-Minnesota | Member Artist, Michelle Lindblom | Reception, Feb. 6, 5-7 pm

### February 4-March 21

"Sketch to Skin" | Bismarck Downtown Artist Coop (BDAC) | Art inspired by tattoos and the art for tattoos | Opening Feb 6, 5:30-8:30 pm

### February 4

Adult Art Classes at the Studios | Theo Art School | highprairiecomplex.com/theo | theo art school@hotmail.com

### February 5

CHS/HMS Orchestra "Midwinter Concert" | CHS Olsen Gym | 7:30 pm

Art And Wine Open Session | Theo Art School | Ages: 21 and older | 6:30 pm-8:30 pm | highprairiecomplex.com/theo | theo art school@hotmail.com

### February 6-7

NDACDA Honor Choirs | Bismarck/ Mandan | All Day

### February 7

Saturday Afternoons Art Workshop at the Studios | Theo Art School | highprairiecomplex.com/theo | theo\_art\_ school@hotmail.com

Bach, Rach and Peter | Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra | Nariaki Sugiura, piano | Jared Piepenburg, Narrator, Peter and the Wolf | 7:30 pm | Belle Mehus

### February 8

Conversations at BSC with Dr. Larry Skogen and Clay Jenkinson | 3 pm

### February 9

Centennial 2nd Grade Music Program | Gym | 6:00 pm

Centennial 4th Grade Music Program | Gym | 7:00 pm

### February 10

Lincoln 1st Grade Music Program | Cafetorium | 6:00 pm & 7:00 pm

### February 10-11

HMS Orchestra | 6th Grade Elementary Tour | All Day

### February I I

West State "A" Woodwind Contest | U of Mary | All Day

Weaving: Tradition, Culture and Storytelling Class | Art Gallerie on Main | 6:30- 8:30 pm | Adults and children 9-12 | Sign up at the gallery

State "A" Woodwind Festival | All Day University of Mary, Bismarck

### February 12

Art And Wine Open Session | Theo Art School | Ages: 21 and older | 6:30 pm-8:30 pm | highprairiecomplex.com/theo theo\_art\_school@hotmail.com

Saxvik 3rd & 4th Grade Music Program w/4th & 5th Grade Orchestra | Gym

### February 13-14

NDSU High School Invitational Jazz Festival | NDSU | Fargo

### February 14

HeARTS! Valentine Family Event | Theo Art School | highprairiecomplex.com/theo theo\_art\_school@hotmail.com

### February 16-17

"Art Power" Art Camp | Theo Art School highprairiecomplex.com/theo theo art school@hotmail.com

### February 17

"Mamma Mia" Broadway Production 7:00 pm | Bismarck Event Center

### February 19

Art And Wine Open Session | Theo Art School | Ages: 21 and older | 6:30 pm-8:30 pm | highprairiecomplex.com/theo theo art school@hotmail.com

North Dakota Music Awards | 7:00 pm | Belle Mehus

### February 19-22

CHS Mid-Winter Play | TBA

### February 20

Women's Choral Festival | NDSU | Fargo

### February 20-2 I

Middle Level Honors Orchestra | TBA

Weaving: Tradition, Culture and Storytelling

Class | Art Gallerie on Main, 2:30-4:30 pm | Adults and children 9-12

MidWinter Warmth: Coffee, Cocoa & Choir | Central Dakota Children's Choir | 10:00 am | Frances Leach High Prairie Arts & Science Complex | www.aboutcdcc.org

### February 22

MIDWINTER CONCERT | 2:30 pm St. Mary's Central High School

### February 24

LHS/Simle "Midwinter Band Concert"Freshman Band & Simle 7th Grade Band | Simle Gym | 7:30 pm

Centennial 1st Grade Music Program | Gym | 7:00 pm

Liberty 4th and 5th Grade Music Programs | Cafetorium | 5:30 & 7:00 pm

Moses 3rd Grade music Program | Gym

Roosevelt 4th & 5th Grade Music Program | Gym | 5:30 & 7:30 pm

### February 25

Weaving: Tradition, Culture and Storytelling Class | Art Gallerie on Main | 6:30-8:30 pm Adults and children 9-12

### February 26

Miller 4th Grade Music Program | Gym | 7:00pm

### February 25-28

National ACDA Honor Choirs | Salt Lake City, UT | All Day

### February 26

Art And Wine Open Session | Theo Art School | Ages: 21 and older | 6:30 pm-8:30 pm | highprairiecomplex.com/theo theo\_art\_school@hotmail.com

### February 27

The Dixieland Concert | Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra | 7:30 pm | Sixteen 03 **Event Center** 

### February 27-28

Choreographers' Showcase: Gershwin to Giselle | Belle Mehus Auditorium | www.northernplainsdance.org

### February 28

Weaving: Tradition, Culture and Storytelling Class | Art Gallerie on Main | 2:30-4:30 pm Adults and children 9-12

### **March 2015**

### March I-March I5

"Imagining the Expedition: Lewis and Clark in Art"Exhibit | Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center | Washburn | info@fortmandan.org

"Tatanka: Icon of the Great Plains" | Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center | Washburn | info@fortmandan.org

### March 2

Solheim 1st Grade Music Program | Gym | 6:00 pm

### March 3

CHS Prep & Concert Bands "Midwinter Band Concert" | HS Auditorium | 6:00 pm

Wachter 6th Grade Band Concert | WMS Cafetorium | 6:30 pm

CHS Freshman Band & Wind Ensemble "MidWinter Band Concert" | CHS Auditorium | 7:45 pm

### March 3-28

Fractured: North Dakota's Oil Boom, ND Museum of Art | Bismarck Art & Galleries Association | Member Artist, K.L. Stromstad | Reception, March 13, 5-7 pm

### March 5

LHS/Simle Band Concert -Simle 6th & 8th Gr. Bands with Legacy 10th Grade | Simle Gym | 7:30 pm

Wachter 7th & 8th Grade Band Concerts | WMS Cafetorium | 6:30 & 7:30pm | Gym 6:30pm

Art And Wine Open Session | Theo Art School | Ages: 21 and older | 6:30 pm-8:30 pm | highprairiecomplex.com/theo theo art school@hotmail.com

### March 6-7

Limited Concert Series | Central Dakota Children's Choir | 3:00 & 7:30 pm | House of Prayer Lutheran Church | www. aboutcdcc.org

### March 9

BHS Choirs "Midwinter Choral Concert" | Knaak | 6:00 & 7:30 pm

LHS/Simle "Midwinter Choir Concert" | Simle 6th Gr. Choir & LHS Men's Choir | Simle Aud. | 6:00 pm

LHS/Simle "Midwinter Choir Concert" | Simle 7th Gr. Choir & LHS Women's Choir | Simle Aud. | 7:30 pm

Grimsrud 5th Grade Music Program

### March 10

Big Muddy Band Festival | Mandan

Rush Hour Concert | Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra | featuring Dr. Lisa Bost-Sandberg on flute | 5:45 pm | Trinity Lutheran Church

CHS Choir "Midwinter Choir Concert" | CHS Auditorium | 6:00 & 7:15 pm

LHS/Simle "Midwinter Choir Concert" | Simle 8th Grade & LHS 9th Grade Choir | Simle Auditorium | 6:30 pm

Lincoln 3rd Grade Music Program | With 4th & 5th Grade Orchestra | Cafetorium 6:00 pm

### March | |-|5

Spring Musical "Spring Awakening" Bismarck State College, Sidney | Lee Auditorium | 2:30 & 7:30 pm

### March 12

Art And Wine Open Session | Theo Art School | Ages: 21 and older | 6:30 pm-8:30 pm | highprairiecomplex.com/theo theo\_art\_school@hotmail.com

Miller 5th Grade Music Program | Gym 17:00 pm

Murphy 3rd Grade Music Program | Gym

Northridge 5th Grade Music Program | Gym | 7:00 pm

### Go to myNDarts.com for more events

### Welcome House, Inc.



The Baby Room at Welcome House

### IW: What services do you offer?

WH: Welcome House provides shortterm shelter (up to 90 days) to homeless families, helping them to obtain permanent housing. Shelter residents receive case management and supportive in-house services such as: assistance with writing a resume and job search techniques, help with budgeting, assistance in setting goals and networking with other service agencies to secure supplemental services. Our new facility, located in west Mandan, was re-opened October 20, 2014 and can house up to nine families at one time. We provide meals, hygiene and toiletry necessities to make their stay comfortable. Besides the nine family bedrooms, our shelter has community living areas including a spacious kitchen and dining room, a living room and a children's playroom, and a laundry room for guests to wash clothes. We moved from our former location in Mandan that could house up to three families to this much larger facility because of the need to serve more people in the Bismarck-Mandan

In addition to the emergency shelter for families, Welcome House currently administers some homeless prevention funds to provide rent or utility deposits and rental assistance to homeless individuals and families.

### IW: A little history...

**WH:** Established in 2004, it was our late founder Lowell Bontje's dream to shel-

ter homeless families after local shelters lost their funding for female and family emergency and transitional housing. In June 2004, Welcome House became incorporated under the laws of North Dakota as a non-profit organization and in June of 2005, received IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

Welcome House is a faith-based organization that was created to serve the needs of homeless families and to provide assistance to prevent people in our community from becoming homeless. We are blessed to have amazing community support to fund our operations—the United Way, state and federal shelter operations grants, grants from other community minded foundations, neighboring churches, annual fundraisers, as well as the generosity of individuals and businesses in our community.

### IW: Who do you help?

**WH:** Welcome House fills a gap in the community by serving homeless families that would not otherwise receive shelter or who would have to be separated in order to receive shelter, including two-parent families, families headed by single fathers, and families with teenage males.

Welcome House also promotes policies and practices necessary to change the conditions that create homelessness and is actively involved with the local and state homeless coalitions and the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in the Bismarck-Mandan area.

### IW: How are you different from other agencies?

**WH:** Our emphasis is on providing extensive case management and supportive services for up to three years to help clients attain and retain permanent housing.

### IW: How can people contact you for help?

WH: Welcome House has a very small staff so we see people by appointment only. For assistance, people can call us at 701-751-1218. Intakes for our shelter depend on room availability and the paperwork process and background check can take 24-48 hours.

### IW: How can people donate to your organization?

**WH:** Donations can be delivered or mailed to us –

Welcome House 1406 2nd St. NW Suite 200 Mandan, ND 58554

People can also visit our website www.welcome-house.net to give by credit card. Our Facebook page is updated regularly to reflect any new needs we may have for the shelter and the families we serve.

### IW: What are your needs right now if someone would like to donate?

**WH:** Our strongest need is of course financial contributions which can be used towards our facility costs, case management and general operations. Other items that we need regularly are:

- Paper towels and toilet paper
- Floor & bathroom cleaners
- Sanitizer wipes and disinfectant spray
- Feminine hygiene products
- Diapers and baby wipes
- Canned fruit and chicken
- Coffee and juice
- Mayo, BBQ sauce and pasta sauce
- Gift cards to purchase milk and fresh vegetables

### Please join us for Bismarck-Mandan's premier fundraising event!



Saturday, February 14, 2015 at 5:30pm Baymont Inn & Suites (formerly The Seven Seas) 2611 Old Red Trail NW, Mandan

### An elegant dinner.

Performances by "Let's Dance" studio's national award winning senior company.

Dancing to "The Joe Friday Band."

Our legendary stick horse race.

Live auction including an instant wine cellar. Black tie optional.

\$50 per ticket or \$350 for a table of 8.

Tickets available at www.GCPStore.com, at The GOD'S CHILD Project, 721 Memorial Highway, Bismarck, and by phone at 701-255-7956





Proceeds benefit The GOD'S CHILD Project (www.GodsChild.org), your North-Dakota founded and headquartered international health and education charity founded by Bismarck-native Patrick Atkinson in 1991. The GOD'S CHILD Project cares for and educates 5,000 orphaned and povertystricken children and 8,700 widowed and abandoned women and their dependents in North Dakota and in the USA, Guatemala, El Salvador, Africa, and India. The Project's award-winning international anti-human trafficking program (www.ITEMP.org), founded in 2001, has saved thousands of lives across the state, country, and around the world.