ASAP

NDAD program helps fill gaps in autism service

Autism Spectrum Assistance Program (ASAP) from NDAD may help your family cope with service gaps for your adult or child who is autistic. ASAP helps with medical travel expenses and respite services when no other payment option is available through local, state or federal programs.

Qualifying individuals receive gas cards for out-of-town medical travel for appointments, including: occupational, physical, speech/language and behavioral therapies, and psychiatric appointments. NDAD also may assist with up to eight hours per week of respite care expenses.

North Dakotans and individuals living in communities directly bordering the state are encouraged to apply. They must complete an application and qualify based on NDAD guidelines. Contact your nearest NDAD office (ndad.org/contact/) or visit our website (ndad.org/services/request/) for an application and details.
NDAD helps Bailey Gianakos live with extremely rare health challenges - incurable conditions, in fact. “I’m grateful” for NDAD’s assistance, the young Fargo woman said. The assists have made her life, even amid increasing challenges, better than it had been.

Bailey has received NDAD medical travel assistance to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., several times for surgeries. It helped allow Alice Gianakos, her grandmother, housemate and caregiver, to accompany her.

Bailey also receives medical supplies from NDAD over and above N.D. Medicaid’s allotment to help avoid complications with colostomy bag usage that had caused hospital admissions for wound care resulting from leaking.

The additional but necessary supplies have given Bailey a chance to be more mobile and independent, and the reduced risk of skin irritation and infection helps bring more peace of mind for both her and Alice, who get by on fixed incomes.

“I’m used to doing everything on my own. I don’t like to ask for help.” Alice said, “but I just couldn’t do that any more....” Working with NDAD’s Fargo client services representative, Kim Zeeb, to help Bailey “has been the greatest,” Alice said.

Bailey’s colostomy was created after her colon burst and caused sepsis in 2017. Her medical care is complicated by an enterocutaneous fistula, a stomach deformity that can cause contents of her stomach and intestines to leak through her skin, and Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome type 4, diagnosed when she was 15. It’s a connective tissue disorder that weakens her arteries and large intestines.

“The way they explained it to me is it’s like taking wet toilet paper and trying to sew it together,” Bailey said. “That’s how my insides are.”

The risk of rupture for Ehlers-Danlos patients is considerable. Some of Bailey’s family members with the syndrome died in their 20s and 30s, Alice said.

Bailey also has Von Willebrand’s disease, diagnosed when she was 14. It’s a genetic prolonged bleeding disorder caused by a missing protein that helps blood clot. Besides excessive bleeding, she tires and bruises easily.

Yet, Bailey recalls, her diagnoses actually brought her a sense of relief, and even hope, as she confronted health challenges. “I was tired of people just saying, ‘It’s just in your head,’ ‘Your overreacting,’ or stuff like that,” she recalled.

Knowing people who care still encourages her.

“Now that we’ve found NDAD,” Bailey added, showing a slight smile, “we’ve gotten a little more help, and it’s been a lot better.”
IN THE NEWS

NDAD maintains most client services during pandemic

NDAD has kept its charitable nonprofit operations going during the COVID-19 public health crisis while taking multiple safety precautions to protect both clients and staff.

NDAD closed its four North Dakota offices in mid-March to the public even as most of the client services functions continued. NDAD continues to both serve clients with ongoing financial assistance and accept applications for new assistance.

Our no-cost, short-term Healthcare Equipment Loan Program (HELP), suspended in mid-March, will reopen with some changes on Mon., May 18. Both equipment loans and returns will be done by appointment only; that also applies to people who had borrowed medical equipment prior to the suspension. Durable medical equipment loans typically are made through NDAD’s offices in Grand Forks, Minot, Fargo and Williston.

NDAD’s accessible van loan program also was suspended temporarily in March and will remain so for now. It was provided through the Grand Forks and Minot offices. An NDAD-sponsored community fundraising benefit was postponed, as was a call for applications for the 2020 Faye Gibbens Memorial Grant. Follow NDAD at NDAD.org and our Facebook and Twitter pages for the latest updates about our operations during the pandemic.

NDAD receives $10,000 grant from St. Joseph’s foundation

People with chronic kidney disease or end-stage renal disease in 11 northwest and northcentral North Dakota counties are the focus of a new $10,000 grant award to NDAD from St. Joseph’s Community Health Foundation.

St. Joseph’s foundation promotes and supports projects and services that contribute to the mental, physical, spiritual and emotional well-being of residents in Bottineau, Burke, McHenry, McLean, Mountrail, Pierce, Renville, Rolette, Sheridan, Ward and Wells counties.

All funds received will be used to provide fuel assistance to individuals diagnosed with chronic kidney disease or end stage renal disease that require dialysis and have to travel out-of-town for dialysis appointments.

2020 Escape canceled

Most North Dakotans with physical and developmental disabilities don’t know the thrill of gliding atop water on skis. David Saeman (above) knows otherwise, thanks to NDAD’s Escape to the Lake. The Williston man has joined other adults and children multiple times at NDAD’s annual June adaptive water recreation event at Nelson Lake, northwest of Bismarck near Center. Read more about David on page 4.

This year is different. The 2020 Escape was canceled because of circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans call for Escape to return in 2021.

Escape is free for people with disabilities, their families and caregivers. The event typically attracts between 30 and 50 adults and child participants to Nelson Lake Recreation Area. Adaptive waterskiing, pontoon rides, a lakeside lunch and performance ski show, all free, are highlights.

More information at NDAD.org, call (800) 532-NDAD or email lstastny@ndad.org.
When spring starts peaking through northwest North Dakota's wintery landscape, Williston's David Saeman starts dreaming of his next waterskiing ride on Nelson Lake, roughly three hours away.

He knows Escape to the Lake draws near. “He kind of looks forward to it when he sees the snow starting to melt,” said Brad Peterson, who took David to the annual NDAD event in 2018. Peterson is longtime program coordinator for Opportunity Foundation, the Williston organization that provides residential support for David and others with developmental and intellectual disabilities. “He knows that the skiing is going to be coming up. That’s just a big highlight for him in summer.”

David, who turns 39 in May, is resolute. “I want to again this year,” he said. “because I like it. I like it. I like it a lot.” But that was before David learned that, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be no Escape to the Lake this year.

Still, David enjoys his memories from at least eight years of attendance, Brad said. David said he’s glad he can sit down while skiing because “it’s much better for me.” Without the adaptive ski chair and the side skiers who provide additional safety support, Brad said, “it wouldn’t be a possibility for him to go. He wouldn’t have the mobility and the strength to get up and then stand up.”

Other clients in the Opportunity Foundation program may join David at Escape the next time it’s held. That’s fine with David. “I just want to go. Nothing else,” he said. “I just want to go.”

“It’s awesome.... I had to let everyone know that it’s a fantastic event and that they really need to get down there to see it. Just to see the expressions on people’s faces that they have when they’re getting ready and coming out of the water - it’s really cool to see.”

Brad Peterson
Opportunity Foundation

David Saeman (left) with Brad Peterson

A scene from David’s 2019 Escape to the Lake trip around Nelson Lake.

David rides the waves at the 2015 Escape.

NDAD CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

David Saeman
Veteran Williston adaptive skier keen on Escape to the Lake
NDAD 2019: By the numbers

Our nonprofit programs helped

2,857

people with health challenges and disabilities throughout North Dakota and direct border communities.

*Here’s how:*

4,366

Pieces of durable medical equipment loaned through NDAD’s free Healthcare Equipment Loan Program (HELP)

2,371

People borrowed equipment through HELP

$533,846

Total savings to individuals who used HELP

165 wheelchair-accessible van loans to 86 individuals with disabilities

2,801

Trips to out-of-town medical facilities funded

1,639

Prescription medications purchased

7,048

Hours of personal attendant care received for people to remain in their homes

36

Individuals assisted with adaptive recreation

3,502

Accessible rides for employment, shopping, community events and medical appointments
CLOSING THOUGHTS

In June, NDAD will mark its 45th year as a charitable organization.

Forty-five years of helping others to help themselves - assisting children and adults with disabilities and health challenges to live more mobile, independent and healthy lives.

Now, our nonprofit organization is facing a challenge like none before.

The COVID-19 pandemic has unmoored countless lives in our region, nation and around the globe. It has cast us - individually and collectively - into uncharted territory with impacts singular and shared. None of us has been spared.

Many of you with health concerns and disabilities feel especially vulnerable, and your needs may never be greater than they are now.

NDAD understands. That’s why we’re all the more determined to continue providing our services.

Our nonprofit has remained focused on our mission throughout these recent weeks, helping our clients as best we know how while acting to keep both the public and our valued employees safe and our organization intact. Our efforts have not been without inconveniences, difficulties and sacrifice; the temporary suspension of our popular Healthcare Equipment Loan Program (HELP), for example, will be lifted May 18, but loans and returns now will be by appointment only. We know more uncertainties lie ahead.

Still, NDAD intends to not merely survive the hurdles presented by this unprecedented public health and economic threat. We hope to emerge from this period as both a better organization and even more valued contributor to our communities and the well-being of current and future clients. As we embark to confront coming challenges, our resolve to succeed is high.

Your understanding, encouragement and support are truly appreciated and valued. Thank you.

- Ron Gibbens, NDAD board president and co-founder

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It’s easy to do. Provide your email address at NDAD.org. Or, contact mbruec@ndad.org, or call (800) 532-NDAD if you cannot access our electronic version.

Thank you for your interest in NDAD.

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(888) 999-NDAD
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Minot, ND 58701

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

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

It’s AMAZING what people can do when there’s help.