It’s not easy to receive help after you’ve spent years providing it, Sheila Sturlaugson says. Still, the former social worker welcomes the chance to praise and recommend NDAD to others after help she's gotten from the charitable nonprofit since her health “turned on a dime” about 12 years ago.

NDAD’s help “enhanced my life so much. . . . It’s just been a wonderful thing for me,” the Cavalier native and longtime Grand Forks resident said.

Sheila’s health challenges include diabetes, a back injury, fibromyalgia and CREST syndrome, also known as limited scleroderma, a chronic connective tissue disease. NDAD has helped her with medical travel to and from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., in November 2016. She also is receiving help purchasing insulin for her diabetes.

As a social worker, Sheila first learned about NDAD when it sponsored a benefit for a coworker with a serious health issue. Later, NDAD loaned Sheila’s mom a scooter after she entered assisted living.

“There are so many things that you do that people aren’t aware of,” Sheila said, “and I just think that’s important to share with people.”

Read more NDAD success stories in past NDAD Insider newsletters.
NDAD CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Blakeley Herron

As mom did before her, daughter benefits from ‘awesome program’

Former Dickinson family offers praise for NDAD’s smooth process

Now that Matt and Leah Herron have moved to Omaha, Neb., after five years in Dickinson, the couple and their three children won’t need the type of medical travel assistance NDAD provided both Leah and their daughter, Blakeley, in their times of need.

The impression NDAD left on the Herrons didn’t get left behind in North Dakota.

“As far as I know,” Leah said, “not very many states have such an awesome program as NDAD that has such a smooth process of getting the help they need.”

Shortly after birth in early 2016, Blakeley had severe gastroesophageal reflux disease and related eating challenges. She had several surgeries, including a gastrostomy, to attach feeding tubes — first to her stomach, then to her small intestine. NDAD helped Blakeley keep appointments in Sioux Falls, S.D. and Fargo during these gastrointestinal issues. The aid was especially timely, coming during six months when Matt was without work and the family without income. “It was a huge relief for us,” Leah recalled. “We knew we could get her to her appointments.”

Blakeley still uses tube feeds these days, but only to assure she’s getting enough calcium, vitamins and other nutrients to gain weight. “She’s now at the point where she’ll now eat about anything,” Leah said. “She’s actually turning out to be our best eater out of our three kids.”

The marked improvement comes as Leah’s own serious swallowing issues from a chronic immune system disease remain markedly improved for nearly two years. Back then, NDAD provided Leah with help for several long trips to and from Mayo Clinic in southern Minnesota.

Read more about the Herrons and other NDAD success stories at NDAD.org.

During 2018...

NDAD provided direct financial assistance for 2,888 trips to and from out-of-town medical facilities.

Learn more about medical travel assistance and other NDAD programs. Call (800) 532-NDAD, contact your nearest NDAD office, or visit NDAD.org.
Honoring Choices N.D. promotes Healthcare Decisions Day

You've heard some variation of this line before: Nothing is certain but death and taxes. With that in mind, National Healthcare Decisions Day falls each year on April 16 — the day after federal taxes typically are due.

Yet, there's little certainty about when each of us will die, which makes advance care planning — the very personal action of making end-of-life wishes known, in case life changes unexpectedly - all the more valuable, according to its advocates. Health Decisions Day “is dedicated to the positive message and act of advance care planning for one's own sake as well as for those we love,” the group Honoring Choices North Dakota states on its website (https://honoringchoicesnd.org).

Included on that website: short- and long-form health care directive forms, a page dedicated to Healthcare Decisions Day, personal stories from North Dakota and northwest Minnesota residents, and a downloadable “Before I Die” toolkit. Contact Honoring Choices N.D., (701) 989-6228, or sally.may@honoringchoicesnd.org.

Free tax preparation assistance options remain

AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide program and the Internal Revenue Service's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) offer free tax preparation sites by trained tax volunteers at locations across North Dakota and some neighboring states' border cities.

They will prepare and file state and federal individual income tax returns for free for people with low to moderate incomes, individuals with disabilities and the elderly. AARP caters primarily to people 50 and older, but will help others with their basic returns. Days and hours of operation vary at each location; some require appointments, so call soon. More information:


IRS VITA free tax prep help: https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/ or (800) 906-9887.

What you should bring with you: https://bit.ly/2FMGa4K.

N.D. state tax web page for individuals: https://www.nd.gov/tax/user/individuals.

Our thanks to NDAD’s generous 2019 Giving Hearts

NDAD thanks more than 100 generous donors who gave to our nonprofit charity on Giving Hearts Day, Feb. 14. By doing so, you give people in need with disabilities and serious health issues throughout North Dakota and the state's Minnesota border communities a greater chance to live more mobile, independent and healthy lives.

Our thanks also to NDAD's Giving Hearts client ambassadors (Seth Kasper, Anna Magnuson, Pedro Gonzalez, Deanna Bakken and Kenadi Zappone) and our #countme4NDAD social media volunteers (Kathryn Gunderson, Leslie Stastny, Delnora Berentson, Moriah Heffron, Aida Wakefield, Josette Severson, Patricia Bohnet, Lowell Liebenow, Craig Hashbarger, Theresa Knox, Kyle Johnson, Jackie Nelson and Deb Johnson). Your generosity and public support are most appreciated.
April 26 deadline to apply for Faye Gibbens Memorial Grant

Applications for NDAD’s $5,000 Faye Gibbens Memorial Grant award for 2019 are due by 5 p.m. Friday, April 26.

The grant is awarded annually to an agency/organization to be used for a health, welfare, social service or educational purpose for at-risk populations. It’s named for NDAD’s late co-founder and program services leader.

The 2018 grant recipient was The Arc, Upper Valley, for a Wings for All airport-use rehearsal program for people with disabilities.

The applications and more information are available at NDAD.org.

Pre-register by April 22 for 25th Escape to the Lake

Advanced registration for NDAD’s 25th Escape to the Lake adaptive water recreation event at Nelson Lake Recreation Area near Center, N.D. is due Monday, April 22. The event is for adults and children with physical disabilities, their families and caregivers. More information and registration forms are available; call (800) 532-NDAD or visit NDAD.org.

Longtime participants Sporting Chance N.D., the Aberdeen (S.D.) Aqua Addicts and Revolutions Power Sports will join with NDAD and other on-site participants to offer water-skiing, pontoon rides, lunch and a performance ski show.

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It’s easy to do. Provide your email address using this link.

Or, contact mbrue@ndad.org, or call (800) 532-NDAD.

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Thank you for your interest in NDAD.

Visit us online at NDAD.org

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

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

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