

Shaping Lives.... Building Futures

Adolescent Addictions Residential Treatment Center Opens

On Monday March 2nd, 2020 Eckert hosted an open house to the public announcing the opening of the Adolescent Addictions Residential Treatment Center. Eckert in partnership with North Dakota Behavioral Health launched this initiative to stem the rising tide of youth with substance use disorders.

Hundreds of visitors toured the facility as they witnessed the transformation of the home that has been in existence since 1981. The new carpet, new paint, new furniture and other amenities gave the building a much-needed face-lift. The home can house a maximum of eight residents.

For the last 43 years Eckert had been licensed as a Residential Child Care facility. In 2018 the Family First Prevention Services Act was put into law by the Federal Government. In October 2019, the state of North Dakota implemented this new Federal law. This meant Eckert and every other like facility needed to pivot and offer other services to their community and state. Much research and behind the scenes work was done to solve this dilemma. It was decided that Eckert would pursue being a



Residential Treatment center for Adolescents. The work to accomplish this goal was worth it. The thought of helping the youth of North Dakota was enough to motivate the staff of Eckert.

On the day of the open-house Kerri Klein was quoted as saying "It's pretty awesome. It's been a lot of work, and it's really cool to see it all come to fruition, and I can't wait to see the kids here."

Eckert is privileged to partner with North Dakota Behavioral Health to help the youth of North Dakota. Eckert not only helps the youth of North Dakota but gives those who come through these doors an opportunity to a better life without alcohol or other drugs.

John's Letter



Last November my family and I moved from Spokane, Washington to Williston, North Dakota to work with the incredible staff at Eckert. Little did I know how much we would change in the last year. If there has been anything that has remained the same for Eckert, it has been change.

We have changed our program after 43 years, we have changed some staff members, we renovated our facility to make way for the new program, and we have changed our house parent model. The one thing that has not changed is our mission "to provide quality services which encourage the spiritual, educational, behavioral, emotional, and physical development of children and their families." Our commitment to serving the youth of North Dakota goes back to the heart of our founders Fred and Clara Eckert who were unable to have children of their own, but had a great heart for children. Fred and Clara wrote down their ideas of what could be and what should be regarding what is now Eckert. These pieces of paper were placed in a leather satchel and given to those who established the Fred and Clara Eckert Foundation for Children. Everyday we attempt to carry out the mission that was birthed in Fred and Clara's heart so many years ago.

“All of the changes that our staff has experienced were motivated by our mission. We all experienced change so that we could serve this generation of youth specifically in their area of greatest need.

Would you join me and the staff and families of Eckert as we make a difference in the youth of North Dakota?

Thank you, John L. Harper
Facility Administrator at Eckert

‘Love Does’ Campaign



New Hope Church in Williston initiated the project during their ‘Love Does’ campaign. Julie Skurdahl coordinated community members from Oasis Petroleum who weeded the flower beds at both homes at Eckert and added several pallets of mulch to the flower beds. The team arrived early in the morning on August 30th and left shortly after lunch. The team not only beautified Eckert but planted seeds of goodwill in the hearts of the staff and residents of Eckert.

Thank you New Hope Church and Oasis Petroleum!



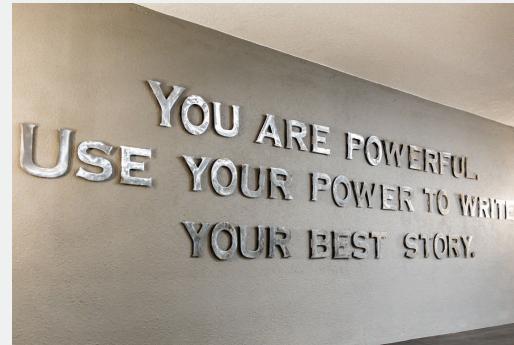
Grand Opening

Adolescent Addictions Residential Treatment Center

On February 22, 2020

Williston Lions volunteered to move furniture and paint some offices in preparation of the grand opening.

Eckert had planned the grand opening for the Adolescent Addictions Treatment Center for March 2nd 2020. The Lions had helped the staff of Eckert to get ready for the grand opening.



Lions pictured are John L. Harper, James Bervig, Joseph Irvine, Susan Aiken, Howard Miller, Terry Haugen and Waylon Hoffman. Thanks to the Williston Lions for helping Eckert open their new program.



Leah Hoffman, Clinical Director and Licensed Master Addiction counselor, graduated in May 2020 with a Doctor of Philosophy in Health Sciences from the University of South Dakota. Leah's research examined how existing substance use treatment services in northwest North Dakota meet or do not meet the needs of treatment seekers and families from the perspectives of family members. The foundation for her study rested on the idea that treatment seekers, treatment providers, and family members are cumulatively the experts on what type of care is needed but also recognized that differences in opinion may exist because of each populations' experiences. Her study specifically focused on the underrepresented voices of family members of treatment seekers. Numerous outcomes from this study have been incorporated directly into treatment strategies at Eckert.





Opening Residential Addiction Treatment Amid COVID-19: Bad Timing, or the Best?

Written by: Dr. Leah Hoffman, PhD, LMAC – Clinical Director at Eckert

The challenges of COVID-19 fueled the increase in substance use disorders that previously existed in our region. An August report from the CDC found that 13% of individuals had either started or increased their substance use throughout 2020. COVID-19 creates intense situations for many who were already contending with a substance use disorder. Loss of income, cancellation of meetings, disruption of routines, and the loss of meaningful face to face contact are all risk factors that play a major role in substance use and relapse for youth and adults alike. Our mission at Eckert is *“to provide quality services which encourage the spiritual, educational, behavioral, emotional, and physical development of children and their families.”* In 2020, the mission of Eckert has never been more important.

In March we began providing residential substance use treatment to North Dakota youth ages 14-17. Upon opening in March, we were quickly forced to measure the challenges of COVID-19 against the threat of untreated addiction to our youths' well-being. The program we had spent nearly a year developing was subject to adjustments. In-home activities replaced our planned off-site activities, visitations were restricted to computer screens, and house guidelines were re-written for social distancing. We were reminded that change is uncomfortable. The feelings we experienced as an agency paralleled the feelings of our youth and their families as they seek treatment - change can feel scary; change can be challenging; change may threaten our sense of safety. Nevertheless, the youth continued to be referred and treatment continued to be provided.

This year, Eckert hired several professionals to accommodate the new program. New positions added include licensed addiction counselors, a registered nurse, clinical social workers, a medical biller, a case manager, and numerous direct care staff whose credentials include CNAs and social workers. We also established ourselves as a training site for addiction counselor trainees and social work internships. Every staff member at Eckert is considered a frontline employee during this pandemic. They are swiftly completing their duties to support others while also needing to engage in self-care in incredibly intentional ways.

We have an 8-bed capacity for our residential addiction treatment. At the time of writing this article (November 2020) 33 youth have been admitted to residential treatment. Length of stay is based on individualized treatment needs and typically ranges anywhere from 3 – 8 weeks. The youth spend approximately 20 hours per week in a combination of group, individual, and family therapy. The youth maintain their academics while at Eckert during scheduled school time with our on-site tutor. The remaining hours in the day are filled with activities focused on life skills, feelings management, worthiness of life, and interconnection. Youth are encouraged to try a variety of activities to discover where their talents and predilections lie, with the goal of continuing them after discharge. As we look into the future, several opportunities exist for growth. Potential options include increasing our bed capacity and providing outpatient services to the Williston and surrounding communities.

Shape a Life.... Build a Future

You can make a difference in the lives of the youth at Eckert.



You may never meet the youth or know their names, but you can make a difference. They are young people who are brilliant and have so much potential, but they have been sidelined by Substance Use Disorder. The staff at Eckert view their time with the youth as planting seeds. We never know what seeds will grow, or if we are given the opportunity to water what has already been planted. The average stay of youth in the Adolescent Addictions program can range from 3-8 weeks. It is a more intense program with youth that are dealing with multiple difficulties that come with substance use disorders.

There are moments however when we see what a difference we are making in

the lives of the youth who come through the program. Read what one youth wrote to the Eckert staff on her last day in the program.

“ Thank you to everyone at Eckert who helped me to my journey of recovery. I am very grateful I had the opportunity to meet all of you. Even though my past has put me here, none of you judged me for that, but instead saw me as a person who needed help.”

Would you take a moment and consider a partnership with Eckert?

Your faithful giving makes it possible to plant seeds in the hearts of these young people. Thank you in advance for your partnership with Eckert as we make a difference in the young people of North Dakota. Fred and Clara Eckert saw the need and responded, will you?



I want to
help a child
in need!



Your tax-deductable gift will help provide care, counseling and shelter to adolescents struggling with addiction.

This Gift is made: In Memory of In Celebration of Other

Name: _____

Please send an acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email : _____

Amount of gift: \$ _____ (*please make checks payable to Eckert Youth Homes*)

Donor's (Your) Name: _____

Address: _____

*Mail this form and payment to Eckert, PO Box 2291, Williston, ND 58802

Friends of Eckert

April 2019 - March 2020

Thank you to the following for cash donations:

Zion WELCA - Noonan
Martin Vettleson Estate
Iron Brotherhood Motorcycle Club - Badlands Chapter
Women of LIFE-Our Redeemer's Church
Our Saviors WELCA - Williston
Loring and Marlene Johnson
Writing Rock Church - Alkabo
United LCW - Alamo
Marty and Arlis Haug
Bruce and Amanda Johnson
Lundin and Schettler families
Plains Ag, LLC
Mike and Marlys Anderson
First Lutheran WELCA - Watford City
First Lutheran WELCA - Tioga
Jim and Cheryl Lingenfelter
Floyd and Donna Peterson
Bethlehem Women of ELCA - Noonan
Lowell and Carol Jean Sandvik
Bainville Faith Fellowship
George and Laurie Pederson
Great Plains Women's Health Center

Sjon and Lisa Zunich
Anonymous
Leroy and Joanna Bettenhausen
James and Pat Sorum
Brenda Bruins
Karla Quale
Brian Anderson
Zion Women of ELCA - McGregor
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West Prairie WELCA - Williston
Ed and Loretta Engebretson
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Tom and Denise Weyrauch
James and Amanda Moe
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Susan Snyder
Caroline Schwartz

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Gideon's Auxiliary
Cyrena Weeks
Williston Energy Festival
Ed and Loretta Engebretson
Pat Williams
Andrene Braaten

Beth Oyloe
Cheryl Olson
Anonymous
Anonymous

Thank you!

We also wish to acknowledge those individuals and businesses who contributed to Eckert in previous years.

In Memory of:

June V. Nelson

Edwin and Loretta Engebretson

Harold Tvedt

Timothy Evenson

Joel Evenson

Arlene Tvedt

Todd Gaudreau

Mary Ann Gaudreau

Toby Helgeson

Timothy Evenson and family

Ethel Oyen

Dorothy Peterson

Cory Preul**Larry Thompson**

The Travis Enget Family

George and Irene Panasuk**Bland and Bernice Carter**

Dana and Brenna Panasuk

Ron Shimek

Delores Shimek

Olga Weiss

Edwin and Loretta Engebretson

Connie Jean Wold

Orrin and Joyce Moe

LP and Cecile Vachal**Marvin and Kathy Fandrich**

Richard and Nancy Wisness

Bill and Cari Liebel

Bill and Melanie Stillwell and family

Leroy and Joanna Bettenhausen

Rudy and Julia Barstad

Stew and Carol Vachal

Shirley Korenchen

Lois J. Redka

Janet Knox**Virginia Bauste**

Wes and Janet Johnson

John Fosland

Sherill Fosland

Tim Beard

Nancy Beard & Dr. Ashley Beard

Joe and Adeline Yockim

Marvene Larvick

Malcolm Roffler

Gwen Roffler

Marlys Ekniss

Robert and Kimberly Rust

Bill Nero**Vicki Finders**

Aaron and Andrea Finders

Friends

Peggy Arnt

Konrad Norstog**Dale Swensrud****Dan Baker****Karen Anderson****Darlene Wisness****Shirley Knox**

Richard and Nancy Wisness

Marie Alon

Timothy and Karin Christianson

Everett Hurley

Yvonne Hurley

Sylvia Leiseth

John and Janet Johnston

Brett and Amanda Wisness

Marlin Braaten

John and Tracey Kasmer

Curtis O. Hanson

Fay Hanson

Noel Hanson

Jim and Phyllis Stokke

George Dickinson

Timothy Evenson

In Celebration of:

My sister, Carleen Shilling

John and Janet Johnston

Eckert Foundation staff (past and present):**Dean Winkjer, Mary Willis, Brenda Buerkle**

LeRoy and Joanna Bettenhausen

Past and present houseparents who have loved the residents as their own

Les and Karen Luther

Our five grandkids

Doug and Carolyn Nenow

Our seven healthy grandchildren

Larry and Myrna Nelson

Our four grandchildren

Gary and Martha Sorenson

Our four healthy granddaughters

Rick Webster and Barb Daniels

Webster

Collaborating with WILMAC and helping children

Tracy Hanson

Our children and grandchildren

Rollin and Joyce Wolter

13 grandchildren and 1 great grandson

Larry and Vicki Schaff

Our granddaughters

Rick and Sue Johnson

Our family

John and Janet Johnston

Karen Ellingson

American State Bank & Trust Co.

Our seven grandsons and one granddaughter

John and Kay O'Connor



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Please direct all inquiries to Diane
Thompson at (701) 572-7262.

Eckert Welcomes New Program Director

We welcome our new Program Director Carrie Burris who joined our staff in October of 2020.



Preferred name: Carrie

Current job title: Program Director

Current job responsibilities: Primarily I handle the day to day planning, organization and implementation of our rules and guidelines, help organize and smooth out processes, ensure our program is in compliance

with state and federal rules and guidelines.

Basically, if it happens outside of treatment and in this facility, I am likely involved on some level.

Previous employer(s) and job title(s): Summit Counseling, Clinician and Northwest Human Service Center, Advanced Clinical Specialist.

Previous job responsibilities and achievements:

Diagnostic Assessments, recommendations, individual and marital therapy, never ending paperwork.

Alma mater: Boise State University, MSW and Lewis Clark State College, BSW

Certifications and industry honors: I received

recognition for doing outreach in Fairview, MT with the flooding in 2019. I went and put up a booth on a Saturday and spent the day talking to survivors and let them know about services within the area.

Personal fun facts: I am from New Mexico originally, I love Mexican food, I have two cats (one actually plays fetch) and I generally bloom where I am planted.

