

# Eckert

*edition*

**Eckert**

1102 7th Ave. E  
Williston, ND 58801

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?

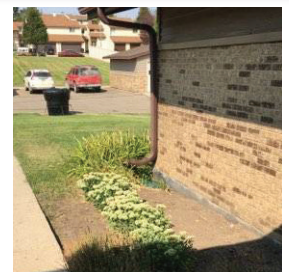
Thank you, John L. Harper  
Facility Administrator at Eckert

## '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?

**Eckert** 

**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 Zurich  
Anonymous  
Leroy and Joanna Bettenhausen  
James and Pat Sorum  
Brenda Bruins  
Karla Quale  
Brian Anderson  
Zion Women of ELCA - McGregor  
Lyjean Smith  
Larry and Joanne Adams  
Greg and Char Quarne  
Shirley Groth  
Curtis A. Hansen  
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Sarah DeLorme  
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Richard Halvorson  
Keith and Marlene Olson  
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Kent and Lois Reierson  
Ryan and Charlotte Ferrell

West Prairie WELCA - Williston  
Ed and Loretta Engebretson  
Ron and Reneé Callen  
Sharon J. Smith  
inFaith Community Foundation  
Carroll and Michon Sax  
Larry Lundeen  
Jon and Nancy Taverna  
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Mike and Claudette Neether  
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Rick and Denise Nehring  
Linda Hanson  
Cyndy Aafedt  
Tom and Denise Weyrauch  
James and Amanda Moe  
John R. Liffbrig  
Lee Stenson  
Susan Snyder  
Caroline Schwartz

## *Thank you to the following for donations of non-cash items:*

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**

### **Virgina 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 Ekness**

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 Vicky 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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[www.eckertyouth.com](http://www.eckertyouth.com)

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.

Happy  
HOLIDAYS  
FROM ECKERT