



**ND** *Caring*  
FOUNDATION

Strength in partnership

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# Power in progress



2024 Community Impact Report



IMPACT AREAS

\*as of October 2024

CaringforKids Grants

Support evidence-based initiatives to prevent childhood obesity and develop healthy minds and bodies at early ages.

\$152,000  
to 30 organizations

CaringforCommunities Grants

Support sustainable initiatives that encourage health and well-being in our communities.

\$257,000  
to 55 organizations

SPARK Grants

Strengthen opportunities to build collaboratives to enhance healthier lifestyles, address services gaps and promote health equity.

\$255,000  
to 9 organizations

BUILD Grants

Help rural health care providers and local partnerships encourage physical activity and well-being for all ages.

\$45,000  
to 8 rural communities

Charitable Giving

Donate to nonprofits and events that work to improve health and well-being in ND.

\$45,000  
to 50 organizations

DollarsforDoers

Offers employees and retirees who use all their BCBSND paid volunteer time an opportunity to donate \$200 to a ND nonprofit.

\$25,000  
to 44 nonprofits

Health Profession Scholarships

Provide 30 scholarships to North Dakota students pursuing nursing or a health-rated degree.

30 totaling  
\$75,000

Health Care Leader Scholarship

Provide one scholarship to a North Dakota student planning to work in a health care related field with a leadership track.

1 totaling  
\$5,000

Community Champion Awards

Advance community centered solutions and improve health disparities that address social determinants of health within underserved populations.

\$15,000  
total to 3 organizations





# SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SDOH)

Advancing health equity and investing resources to support SDOH



People’s health and well-being are essential building blocks to personal fulfillment and thriving communities. Healthy communities, in turn, affect quality of life and overall well-being. Repeated studies have found that the conditions in which we live have an enormous impact on our health, long before we see a doctor. These conditions — where we are born, live, work, play and our age — are referred to as social determinants of health (SDOH), and they affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes. SDOH measures are grouped into five domains:



Economic stability



Education



Social and community context



Physical environment



Health care access

In 2024, we did a closeup on the health of women and mothers in North Dakota – and factors contributing to their overall health and well-being, which is vital to healthy families and healthy communities. Their well-being impacts the health of future generations and can impact future public health challenges for families, communities and the health care system. Learn more about factors impacting maternal and child health and associated maternal health outcomes in North Dakota at [www.bcbsnd.com/sdoh](http://www.bcbsnd.com/sdoh).

1



## Companions for Children

Caring Foundation funded Lunch Pals, a school-based mentoring program offering 80 Minot students a trusted confidant and engaging activities that create meaningful conversations and emotional support.

2



## Community of Care

Used funds to enhance the quality of life for older adults in rural Cass County in order for them to remain in their rural homes as long as safely possible.

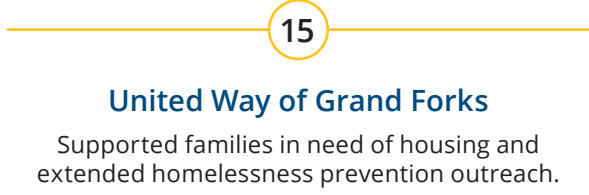
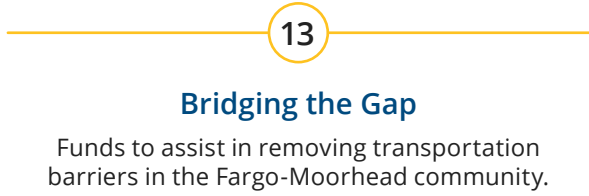
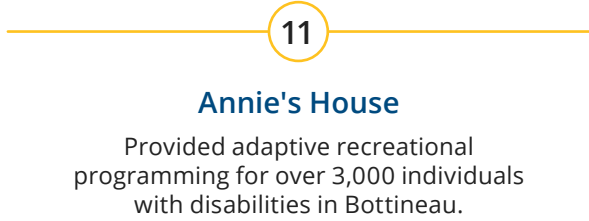
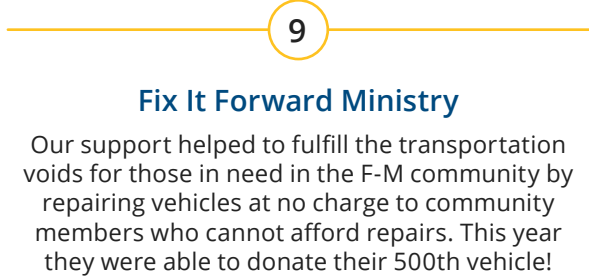
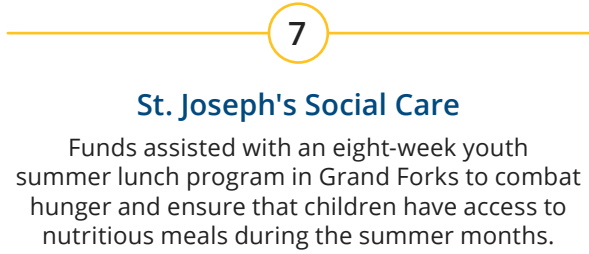
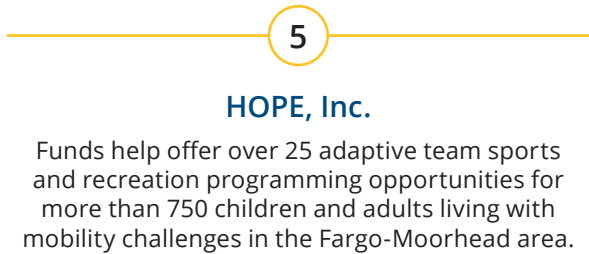
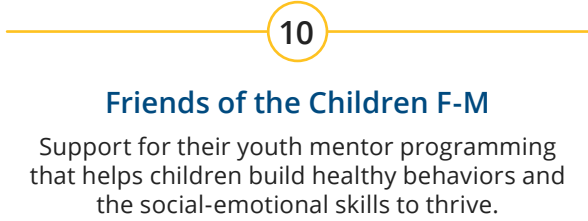
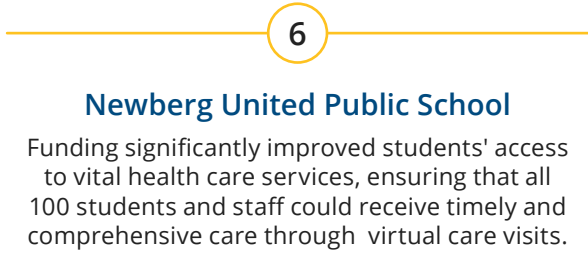
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## Easter Seals

Caring Foundation’s contributions helped them offer transportation to community members with special needs in Bismarck and Fargo.







16

Heart-N-Soul Community Cafe

Contributed to the Lunch Bunch programming to address hunger, serving 350 sack lunches bi-weekly to families, youth and seniors who are homebound or have acute food insecurity in Fargo.

18

University of Mary

Funds provided synthetic cadavers to advance training and education for students pursuing a health care career and to help address the workforce crisis.

20

Spirit of Wonder

Support for roughly 1,500 special needs individuals and their families for programming, group instruction and community education in the Dickinson region.

22

Guardian Angels Protective Services

Funding for adult protective arrangements to shelter vulnerable disabled adults from abuse, neglect or exploitation in western North Dakota.

24

United Way of Cass-Clay

Advanced their efforts in preventing homelessness in the Fargo/Moorhead area.

17

Peace Academy

Funding helped advance childhood education in Fargo by providing support for family engagement courses and offering tools to better share learning opportunities with over 350 community members, guardians and caregivers.

19

Souris Valley United Way

Helped subsidize the Wheels at Work Program, which addresses critical transportation challenges faced by families in the Minot area, helping them access services and opportunities for a better quality of life.

21

Grand Forks Downtown Development Association

Funding to help sustain their bike share community program, promoting sustainable transportation and healthier lifestyles.

23

Dakota College at Bottineau

Funds for the school's simulation and ancillary equipment to train future nurses in a safe, but realistic learning environment.

25

Central Valley Health District

Caring Foundation's support helped create an accessible mobile health clinic impacting over 23,000 people in the Jamestown region.

21



Grand Forks Downtown Development Association

17



Peace Academy

23



Dakota College at Bottineau

19



Souris Valley United Way

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Heart-N-Soul Community Cafe

20



Spirit of Wonder



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Expanding behavioral and mental health access and workforce

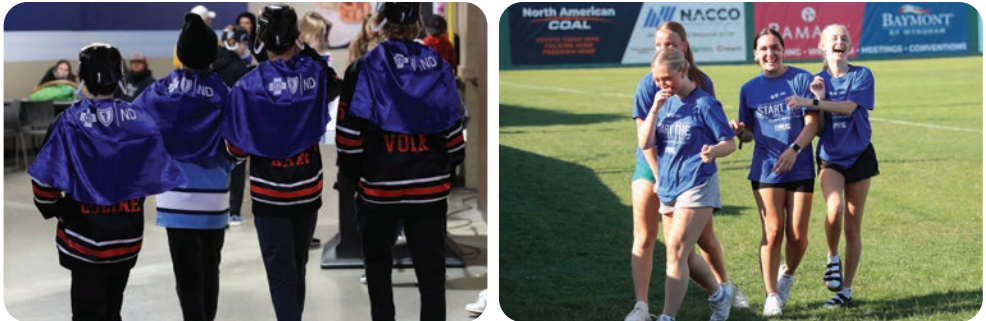


## BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF AMERICA PARTNERSHIP

BCBSND Caring Foundation has partnered with the Boys & Girls Clubs across North Dakota, including Fargo, Minot and Grand Forks military bases and tribal areas to help combat the youth mental health crisis through trauma-informed approaches to behavioral health care. The funding will provide training for their staff to better support the emotional and mental well-being of the youth they serve.

## STRIKE OUT THE STIGMA AND SHUT OUT THE STIGMA

We're committed to improving mental health in North Dakota. To reduce stigma and increase awareness, we partnered with local sports teams for the 'Strike Out/Shut Out the Stigma' campaign. For every strike or save, we donated to mental health charities like The Village Family Services and Nexus-PATH. We also supported Sources of Strength, a youth mental health program, in rural schools like Carrington, Manvel, Emerado, and Thompson.



### Bismarck Global Neighbors

Contributed to mental health wellness programming to alleviate negative health outcomes due to loneliness and isolation for 45 new Americans.

### Westhope Public School

Directed funds towards impactful suicide prevention and awareness initiatives.

### Seeds of Eden

Support for life coaching for individuals with addiction or homelessness through programming and resources in the Minot area.



**Northern Lights Council**

Contributed vital support for the phase two rollout of statewide suicide prevention initiatives, aimed at expanding access to essential resources and services to better address mental health needs.



**Red River Children's Advocacy Center**

Provided support for mental health assessments and programming, ensuring individuals have access to essential evaluations and therapeutic resources.



**Dakota Children's Advocacy Center**

Funding for their Bismarck Multi-Disciplinary Team training.



**American Foundation of Suicide Prevention**

Support for numerous Out of the Darkness Walks across North Dakota centered on suicide prevention and awareness.



**BIO Girls**

Support for statewide programming proven to increase self-esteem in adolescent girls through empowerment of self and service to others.



**Soul 57**

Funds contributed to a mental health and grief support program for 30 youth in the Bismarck area.



# HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Proactively addressing health risks and encouraging healthy behaviors



1

## Richland-Wilkin Food Pantry

Financial support allowed the purchasing of AEDs and the conducting of CPR first aid training.

2

## Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota

Support for wellness fairs in Bismarck and Fargo that promoted health through education and activities, empowering the community to take charge of their well-being.

3

## North Dakota Dental Foundation

Funding for a two-day free dental clinic in Bismarck impacting over 2,600 people.

4

## Standing Rock Community Development Corporation

Assistance for programming on integrating ancestral teachings for improved health and wellness by implementing food gardens and food systems.

5

## Dare to Create

Funds enabled youth from low-income backgrounds to participate in enriching movement activities and programs in Valley City.



6

**Ted Med**

Dedicated resources for 300 Grand Forks kindergarten programs that focus on health and wellness education, aiming to build a positive foundation for young children and alleviate any fears they may have about visiting health care providers.

8

**Immigrant Development Center**

Funding for their Multilingual Women's Health Outreach Program, addressing the need for accessible financial literacy programs in diverse communities to 200 individuals in Fargo.

10

**Altru Health Foundation**

Funds helped the revitalization of Skidmore Park in Grand Forks with community gardens and healthy eating educational opportunities.

12

**Jefferson Elementary**

Contributed to the development of a new playground to encourage safer active play and physical movement for the students in Dickinson.

14

**Valley City Parks and Recreation**

Funds assisted low-income families with wellness center memberships and recreational programs.

7

**Define the Fight**

Funds went to new programming for hands-on learning opportunities at a greenhouse for 2,500+ youth within a 60-mile radius of Fargo. Programming will help educate youth on how to forage and grow nutrient dense food in any environment.

9

**Hope Blooms**

Provided funds to support their transportation efforts to carry out their mission of 300 deliveries in Fargo to spark joy and reduce isolation for senior citizens.

11

**Great Plains Food Bank**

Funds were used towards cultural food pop-up events in Bismarck, helping to address food insecurity and its underlying causes for over 200 households.

13

**Folkways**

Helped promote preventive health and further support for SNAP match and local food education at the Red River Market.

15

**Tobacco Free ND**

Funds to further assist in creating the next generation of a tobacco-free North Dakota.

7



Define the Fight

14



Valley City Parks and Recreation

10



Altru Health Foundation

9



Hope Blooms

12



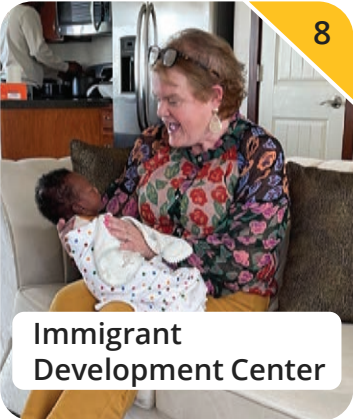
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Folkways

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Great Plains Food Bank

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Tobacco Free ND



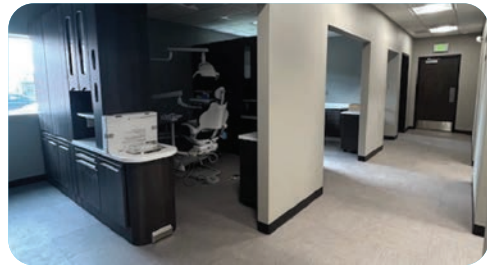
## SPARK GRANTS

Strengthening opportunities to build collaboratives to enhance healthy lifestyles, address service gaps & promote health equities



### TNT Fitness Kids Fitness & Gymnastics

Funds allowed TNT to implement ABE in School programming into more schools across North Dakota. ABE in School curriculum provides educators and school districts resources to create physical education spaces for all abilities. ABE in School also encourages teachers to adapt physical education by using a peer-to-peer model to build strong bonds among unlikely student groups that go beyond the gym.



### Northland Health Centers

Our grant helped cover the investment of supplies needed to start a new Urgent Dental Care Clinic site at Northland Health Center in Ray, North Dakota, a Federally Qualified Health Center. The clinic seeks to provide new oral health care access to low-income, uninsured and Medicaid patients who require urgent dental care in northwestern North Dakota.



### F5 Project

Funds helped promote recovery by providing culturally-rooted programs within the James River Correctional Center to reduce recidivism among North Dakota's Indigenous population. The new Akisni Warrior Lodge Curriculum is centered around building and healing relationships through training intensives and learning circles.



### Native, Inc.

This partnership supported the Wellness and Healing Through Community-Based Services for Native Americans Project addressing racial equity in behavioral health prevention and recovery services through spiritual and cultural programming in Fargo, Bismarck and Grand Forks. This allows Indigenous people served by this project to access spiritual ceremonies and engage in a variety of cultural experiences.



### GiGi's Playhouse

Funding is helping expand GiGi's on the Go which aims to further address the lack of support systems and educational resources for individuals with Down syndrome in rural North Dakota through free, accessible programs.



### Strengthen ND

Our support enabled the expansion of the SNAP Double Up Dakota Bucks program to promote healthy eating and food accessibility throughout North Dakota. The Dakota Bucks program allows SNAP-eligible individuals and families to "double" their SNAP dollars when they purchase locally grown and produced products. The initiative supports healthy eating in addition to small farmers, farmers' markets, local grocery stores and schools.



### Women Empowering Women

Grant helped remove barriers to accessing and navigating preventive health and health care resources for new American women in Dickinson and southwestern North Dakota, including resources like prenatal and postpartum sessions for new mothers through a series of educational efforts.



### Prairie Harvest Mental Health

Funding supported the redesign of their services to provide more preventive and holistic behavioral health services. Prairie Harvest Mental Health is offering necessary mental health services and breaking down barriers by recognizing the complex interplay of biological, psychological and social factors that comprise mental health.



### SENDCAA (Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Agency)

Financially aided in helping expand the reach of their Self-Sufficiency team, which helps low-income families access and maintain essential mainstream benefits like Medicaid, SNAP, TANF and childcare assistance to promote health equity and enhance the overall well-being of families in poverty.



## COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARDS

These awards reflect BCBSND Caring Foundation’s ongoing commitment to advancing community-centered solutions to eliminate barriers and improve the health and well-being of North Dakotans. The goal of these awards is to give recognition to high-impact community partners who are working to improve health equity, fill gaps in health care and ensure access in their communities. Three organizations were awarded \$5,000.



**Rolette County Public Health District**  
is leading the way in preventive care in rural North Dakota. They are working diligently to decrease health inequities of children in Rolette County by bringing prevention resources to children at school and other community locations.



**Spectra Health**  
is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Grand Forks that is dedicated to serving all patients, regardless of their situation. Alongside their physical health support Spectra Health is integrating a Social Services team that helps patients navigate housing, health care, nutrition and social services in order to address social determinants of health.



**USpire ND**  
has an initiative called Healthy Families North Dakota (HFND) which is a program in Dickinson that focuses on maximizing the potential that lies within everyone. Through HFND, USpire ND is conducting home visits to support families becoming economically self-sufficient and reducing family violence.

## HEALTH CARE LEADER SCHOLARSHIP

The Caring Foundation awarded this year’s Health Care Leader scholarship in the amount of \$5,000 to Amanda Akers, a graduate student attending North Dakota State University in Fargo. Amanda is pursuing her Doctor of Nursing Practice and currently works as an on-call nurse at Sanford Health.

Core to the Health Care Leader scholarship is development of an innovative and impactful project in health care, which incorporates a leadership plan designed to support a successful project outcome, as well as academic and personal growth.

Aker’s project plan will focus on if the use of dermoscopy, a non-invasive skin imaging technique, in a clinical setting will assist providers in better diagnosing cancerous lesions as opposed to naked eye assessment in rural health care settings. Amanda states, “This is important for improving the health and well-being of North Dakotans because in a community that has many farmers and other outdoor professions that may only have access to critical access hospitals, it is important to have providers who are trained in using dermoscopy and being able to properly identify cancerous lesions to treat and improve patient outcomes.”

*Amanda Akers*  
North Dakota State University

“Receiving this scholarship is an incredible honor that fuels my passion for making a meaningful impact in the health care field and means so much to me and my family. It validates the hard work and dedication I’ve put into my education and career and is a powerful motivator to continue striving for excellence.”





# HEALTH PROFESSION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

BCBSND Caring Foundation is helping address the critical health profession workforce shortage by providing scholarships to students who are residents of North Dakota and attending a North Dakota public university, college or technical college.

The following outstanding students have each received a \$2,500 Health Profession Scholarship for the 2024-2025 school year:

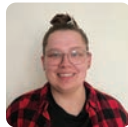
## Nursing



**Megan Larson**  
University of Jamestown



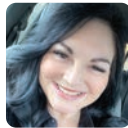
**Shae Sherrod**  
Williston State College



**McKenzie Fuglestad**  
Lake Region State College



**Skye Witmer**  
Dakota College at Bottineau



**Marilee Byington**  
University of Mary



**Victoria Weinand**  
University of Mary



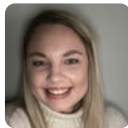
**Cassie Kindsfater**  
Bismarck State College



**Arwyn Berke**  
University of North Dakota



**Ali Schumacher**  
North Dakota State University



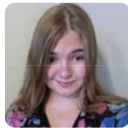
**Taylor Pfeiffer**  
North Dakota State University



**Hannah Ulsager**  
North Dakota State University



**Garrett Bloms**  
North Dakota State University



**Kassidy Reiser**  
North Dakota State University



**Gracie Doe**  
North Dakota State University



**Tayler Mau**  
North Dakota State University

## Health Sciences



**Morgan Freije**  
Valley City State University

## Public Health



**Edwin Akomaning**  
North Dakota State University

## Physical Therapy



**Mabel Larson**  
University of Mary

## Biology



**Ethan Bergeman**  
University of North Dakota

## Pharmacy

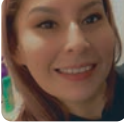


**Hailey Wanner**  
University of North Dakota

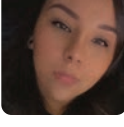


**Brock Klimek**  
North Dakota State University

## Social Work



**Chastity Lightning**  
University of North Dakota



**Shelby Ducheneaux**  
Cankdeska Cikana Community College

## Occupational Therapy



**Joslyn Nordmark**  
University of North Dakota



**Amanda Linne**  
North Dakota State University



**Dana Zarn**  
University of North Dakota



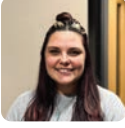
**Preston Kroeber**  
University of Jamestown



**Madison Shreffler**  
North Dakota State University



**Victoria Reed**  
North Dakota State University



**Mikayla Bell**  
Minot State University



# BUILD GRANTS

With these grants, rural health care providers and their communities collaborate to address the social determinants of health affecting their North Dakota communities so we can build a better future of equity and full potential for all.

1

## Pembina County Memorial Hospital

Provided an outdoor biking activity for the residents, staff and community volunteers at Wedgewood Manor, a skilled nursing facility. This decreased participants feelings of isolation while improving mental health, immunity, attention span and memory function.

2

## Northland Health Center - Turtle Lake

Implemented "A Care Closet" in three rural/frontier schools providing a free resource for students and their families who are experiencing hardships, like food insecurity, or lack of weather-appropriate clothing, basic hygiene supplies and school supplies.

3

## Langdon Prairie Health

Educated and provided resources that are used in mental health services via virtual care in a private, confidential and secure setting. Resources focused on two specific population groups, North Dakota youth and farmers, to assist in treatment of depression, anxiety and traumatic events.

4

## Eckert Youth Homes - Williston

As the only residential addiction treatment program for adolescents in North Dakota, and in an effort to prevent teen pregnancy, they purchased the RealCare Baby 3 Simulator and curriculum, incorporating it into existing programming.

5

## Cooperstown Medical Center Foundation

Created a handicap accessible garden that is safe for their care residents and community to connect to nature, helping to improve physical and mental health. The local school is actively engaged with their students as well to take part with the seniors offering an opportunity for meaningful connections, engagement and impact.

6

## House of Everyday Learning - Fargo

Helped alleviate the burdens that families experience driving to Fargo for pediatric screenings or therapy services on a weekly or bi-weekly frequency. Their Mobile Therapy Unit (MTU) Program brought these services directly to the rural communities and decreased barriers such as transportation, cost and time away from work and school for the families that it serves, while also increasing availability and access to health care.

7

## Sanford Health - Hillsboro

Provided adaptive devices to allow patients with mobility issues the ability to travel to medical appointments.

8

## Sanford Health - Valley City

Promoted breastfeeding in rural populations by certifying lactation consultants, allowing for additional nurses to travel to rural clinics where lactation services and support do not currently exist.



House of Everyday Learning



Cooperstown Medical Center Foundation



Eckert Youth Homes



Pembina County Memorial Hospital



Sanford Health - Hillsboro



Sanford Health - Valley City





# BLUE&YOU EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

Through our Blue&You volunteer program, employees are given up to 16 hours of company-paid volunteer time per year to assist various organizations across the state. Our team has logged thousands of volunteer hours since its inception in 2016.

55%  
of BCBSND employees  
volunteered in the community

4,500  
hours of service

100+  
nonprofits impacted

\$25,000  
donated to 44 nonprofits through  
the DollarsforDoers program

COUNTLESS ACTS  
OF KINDNESS



## GROUP VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR



### Meals on Wheels

Many elderly in our community depend on their Meals on Wheels service. For some, this might be their only hot meal of the day. It may also be their only human contact for the day. BCBSND is responsible for four Fargo and West Fargo routes every second Tuesday of each month throughout the year. This is a large responsibility to make sure these four routes are covered. We are grateful to our employee volunteers as it takes a village to fulfill this commitment.

## INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



### Tonya Gieser

Tonya has been active in Make-A-Wish for six years and goes above and beyond to ensure many children's wishes become a reality. During COVID-19, she even continued to work hard to find alternatives for wish kids when air travel wasn't possible. Tonya's volunteer work is a testament to her empathy and kind heart for helping others.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND AWARDS



### Missouri Slope United Way

Top 20 Investor for providing shelter to more than 100 men, women and families each day; helping them get back on their feet.



### United Way of Cass-Clay

Heart of the Community Award, #2 most generous and #1 most engaged.



### Great Plains Food Bank

Packathon Top Team – Members of our IT department set a record packing 3,584 lbs of beans which equated to 896 individual bags, 112 boxes and almost two full pallets.



### Battle of the North

BCBSND claimed victory raising more money than Noridian during our annual United Way of Cass-Clay internal employee fundraiser.



### SSG Andrew P. Nelson Award

Cody Anderson, Associate Network Admin at BCBSND, was recognized through the Northern Lights Council for his servant leadership, military service and daily work to make the community a better place.