



Volume 37 ★ No. 1 ★ Winter 2018

## Outside Winter Fun & Activities

With winter slowly coming to an end and the temperatures ranging from minus 40 to plus 40 in the last month, we've experienced a wide range of recreational opportunities for our children indoors and outdoors. Adding to the activities is our staff who are great role models with smiles on their faces, skills to keep everyone warm and happy, and new activities to play and experience. Play is inseparable from a child's life and is crucial in terms of social competence, creativity, sensory motor fitness, release of tension, and emotional stability. We like to play a lot and give our kids many fun recreational opportunities as you can see in the photos below.



*"Future Curling Gold Medal Olympian!"*



*Happy Snowman!*



*Prize winnings from Adventure Zone!*



*Happy with his books from our holiday book fair.*



*Boot hockey at the Merritt Community Club.*



*Nothing like a s'more in the snow!*

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



The children we serve certainly are much more than numbers, but it is helpful to review an annual summary of information regarding the scope, breadth and depth of services Northwood provides.

For yet another year, more children and youth were served in 2017 than any before - 824 in our residential and day treatment programs, and another 214 children and families received services through the Northwood outpatient programs. The focus of our care continues to be northeastern Minnesota. 82% of the kids we served were from St. Louis, Carlton or Itasca counties. We serve about an equal number of students in the day treatment and residential programs, and continue to serve more boys than girls at about a 70-30 ratio. The average age of all the children we serve is 11 years. The length of stay in the residential and day treatment programs is remarkably consistent at 10 months.

We serve a wide diversity of children and youth in our programs. Half identify as Caucasian. The largest minority group we serve continues to be Native American, followed by African American students and those identifying themselves as coming from a mixed race background. All of the students served by Northwood programs have a mental health diagnosis, and the most frequently occurring diagnoses are Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Disruptive Behavior Disorder and Dysthymic Disorder (depression).

Again, parents, guardians and referring workers were very satisfied with services provided, with a rating of a little over 5 on a 6-point scale on quarterly satisfaction surveys. They are most pleased with the level of support, recreational opportunities, the staff's focus on their child's needs, strengths and education, our approach to understanding and meeting their child's mental health needs, our respect for the child's rights and our facilitation of family visits and contact. The kids were a bit more critical, to the tune of about a half a rating point. They rated the food (amazing), therapy and the sense of safety provided to them as the most positive aspects of care.

It was another busy and productive year. Northwood offers the most complete continuum of care of intensive mental health treatment programs in the state, allowing us to provide exactly the right service at the right time. Utilization of our programs remained strong, resulting in positive financial performance. We are almost ready to launch our newest level of service on the continuum - the

Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Facility. Our West campus will be devoted to this new, more intensive level of care. In preparation, we have been working closely with the State of Minnesota to revise our operating procedures to align with the stringent standards of care. We have hired over a dozen new staff members, including seven nurses. Last minute details are being worked out, and we anticipate admitting our first student any day now.

Lots of other highlights - the loan repayment program (a staff retention tool) was a smash hit. Thirty staff receive a monthly stipend paid toward their student loans. We received the prestigious "Provider of the Year Award" from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The award recognizes an organization that provides mental health services that demonstrate excellence, respect and best practices. When introducing the award, Sue Abderholden, NAMI's Executive Director, commented, "Northwood has done incredible work around children's mental health. The organization offers a variety of programs with a focus on resiliency, but also respect and compassion. Every time I have visited I have been impressed with how caring the staff is and the variety of ways they work to engage the children and youth. Northwood is about changing lives."

Of course, the most important work goes on every day with every child we serve. Last September, Charlie Appelstein, a renowned author and sought-after national presenter, conducted a workshop for Northwood staff. Charlie has a unique and compelling way to deliver his message about compassion for the kids. He reminded us of the shattering experiences many of our students have endured, and how none of us could watch even five minutes of a video depicting the trauma in their lives. It would be unbearable.

It's not easy, this complicated process of building brighter futures for children, youth and their families. It is an awesome responsibility. Good thing we have so many dedicated and skilled people on the job! I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for their service and the staff for their committed efforts each day. A special thank you to our generous donors for their support, as well. There is no more important work in this world to be done, and what we do is transformational.

Thank you.

Richard Wolleat  
President & CEO

## Diversity Through Experience

Whether it's to prepare for life as an adult or simply to help meet new friends on the playground; it's clear that understanding diversity is an important lesson for a child to learn.

This year the Bear team has decided to take that lesson to heart. Through a number of creative and fun activities for the children, the Bear team has put an emphasis on teaching our students about diversity. From hosting

events that educate other students about Black History Month, to doing art projects revolving around the Native American color wheel, the students have had ample opportunity to grasp and learn about different cultures and beliefs.

To quote the great Martin Luther King Jr., "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now." This year the Bear team has made their boat just a little bit bigger.



## Adventure Zone Blast!

For the past 29 years, Grandma's Restaurant Company has invited Northwood students for a fun-filled day at the Adventure Zone. Children got to play games in the arcade area, miniature golf, and laser tag. Other games included air hockey and batting cages. There was a trolley-styled café where students were served pizza and pop. Many of the students had been there before, but only few had experienced it like they did that day because it was closed to the public. The laughter and smiles were contagious that day. Students were able to enjoy endless rounds of fun and went home with a special gift from the folks at Grandma's Restaurant. Thank you Grandma's Restaurant Company!

## Curling!



A group of Merritt students had the opportunity to learn and participate in the exhilarating sport of curling. Once a week, a group of students went to the Duluth Curling Club where they were taught the basics of the game by club members.

The students enjoyed getting on the ice and practicing how to slide the stones with precision and accuracy. After a few hours of practice, many questions, and time observing curling club members, the students were able to give curling a try. The students had a fantastic time and have been eagerly anticipating their weekly return to the ice to showcase their skills!



## The Spirit of Giving

Over the holiday season, the Cheyenne team really got into the holiday season by giving to others. The students spent two days a week after school making presents that they could share with loved ones. They gleefully made jars of cookie mix, ornaments, and decorative snowmen. They continually had smiles on their faces knowing that their hard work would be enjoyed by others. Some of the students gave the gifts to their parents, social workers, and a few Northwood staff were lucky enough to receive a gift as well!

With such endearing holiday spirit coming from the kids, the staff got into the giving spirit too! Spending a day as a team shopping for the kids is one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences that you could ever hope for. It is safe to say that everyone on the Cheyenne team got and gave exactly what they wanted this holiday season.



## “Orchids & Onions”



The Diagnostic & Assessment Center celebrated its first evening living at the Quince house with a pizza party. Ayden started the festivities off with one of his amazing, original meal prayers, “God is good, God is great, thank God it’s time to eat!”

After dinner everyone shared what they appreciated about our new home. Victoria said she loved being able to cook in the big kitchen. Jasmine exclaimed she was head over heels for the open space and cushy chairs from which to read her books. Melody talked about how much she loved stretching out in front of the fireplace and just relaxing.

It didn’t take much time for everyone to settle in and the atmosphere and openness seems to have a calming effect on both staff and students. As the meal came to a close it was time to do “Orchids and Onions,” an activity in which kids share what was the best and worst part of their day. Even after all the moving and extra help the kids put in there were only a few “onions.” The “orchid” was the new Diagnostic & Assessment Center’s home!

## Wolverine Team a.k.a. “Rink Rats”

This winter the Wolverine team had the unique opportunity to give back to the community at helping maintain the Merritt Park skating rink. It is a perfect place for the community to come together and have fun. With the guidance of our recreational coordinator, Laura, the boys learned how to flood the ice rink, properly maintain it, and how to clear snow off of the ice. The team went twice a week and made sure it was ready for the community to use. Once the hard work was done the boys were able to skate and enjoy the rink. For many this was their first time, but they grew into “rink rats” and skating became one of their favorite programming activities. They also had the opportunity to skate indoors at the Heritage Center in Duluth. With the Wolverine team’s hard work and dedication they have allowed the Merritt Park skating rink to be enjoyed by the community. Another successful and unique Northwood programming activity that they were proud to be a part of!



## *Bienvenue to the Little Learner's Restaurant!*



Little Learner's staff and students have been talking a lot about healthy eating and choices. Staff Nicholas Dahlen treated the kids to a very special dining experience by transforming our classroom into a five-star restaurant! The scene was set with picturesque lighting and elegant table settings as Nicholas and his sous chef (our wonderful intern, Scout) prepared an array of delicacies. In addition to providing our students with an opportunity to practice their table manners and social skills, they were able to try a variety of healthy fruits and vegetables that they had not experienced before. Avocados, olives, brussel sprouts, blackberries, and kale were just a few of many items on the menu. Though there was some slight hesitation with some of the unfamiliar fare, all of the youngsters put on a brave face and gave it a try. The whole team participated and gave this eatery a rave review!

## *The Christmas Caper*

The Myers-Wilkins Intensive Day Treatment Program participated in holiday festivities and showed off their team spirit and creativity in the 1<sup>st</sup> annual door decorating contest. They cleverly recreated a scene from "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" and put a little Northwood spin on it. The team spent hours meticulously designing and creating the scene on their classroom door to show school spirit and pride in the program. After a painstaking effort to make the grand plan come to life, the students added their own artistic touch. Instead of the Grinch, it was Northwood who "stole Christmas." The door was the topic of conversation throughout the halls of Myers-Wilkins making the students and staff extremely proud of their efforts. The team spirit and passion put into the creation was not lost on the judging panel, who rewarded the effort and cooperation with a first place finish!



## *Scouts Stay Active During Winter*



The Scouts have been pretty "chill" on these chilly days. We've been trying to stay creative on ways to be active during these cold winter days the sub-zero temperatures - time in the gym playing basketball, six pin, dodge ball, and much more. On days we are fortunate enough to get warm weather, we do hikes, skiing, and zooming down slides at the park. We have also been working exceptionally hard on our art sled and really hope for another victorious year! Spring time means one big thing to the Scouts and that is the Student Awards Banquet. Next comes our most favorite event, the one we wish we could fast-forward to.....CAMP! We love that time in the woods with swimming, campfires, the horses, and being wild boys. It was so fun last year and we can't wait to be back there again. Thank you for all for these amazing memories and we look forward to an exciting 2018!

## Cold is Just a State of Mind



This winter season the kids at Northwood are refusing to stay inside and sit still. The students on the Eagle team are keeping very busy. One day a week, each team has been offered the opportunity to step into some skis or a snowboard and learn how to ride them down the hill at Spirit Mountain. The kids are able to learn a new skill that they might be able to use the rest of their life as well as the lesson of getting up and trying again when you fall down! The students also learned about the importance of wearing helmets and other ways to be safe on the hill.

Another opportunity the kids were very excited about was the chance to be a part of the Duluth Curling Club. They learned the different aspects of the sport and how to balance on the ice while moving the rocks to the other end. "I didn't know that the curling rocks would be so heavy," said an Eagle student.

The boys were so excited that the Duluth-based team won the gold medal for America in the recent Winter Olympics for the first time defeating Sweden 10-7 in South Korea. Congratulations!

## Evergreens Travel in Style

In addition to being excited for her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday, Ciara was giddy for her present - a free ride around town on a fun bus with all her friends! "It was really fun because I got to dance around with my friends and be there with my primary counselor. It was also really exciting because I got to bring my giant stuffed unicorn on the bus! I want to thank Courtney for all the fun he lets us have. He also teaches us how to be proper ladies."

This unique present comes courtesy of Ciara's primary counselor, Senior Counselor Courtney Griffin, and his personal business, Road Trip Limo. Courtney has repeatedly gone the extra mile to help send an important message to our girls: They are worth celebrating. Courtney said, "I enjoy giving the



girls something special to look forward to and a special incentive to work towards." The Evergreen team arrived to the banquet last May in style riding in two limos, complete with free soda and snacks! Courtney's philanthropy is not limited to his team only as the Cheyennes, Bears and Eagle teams all enjoy an occasional ride. When he is not driving one of his vehicles, Courtney can often be found behind the wheel of the "Pickle", Northwood's distinctive green school bus, taking students from the Main campus to book fairs, sporting events and more. The organization is grateful for staff like Griffin who take time to build relationships with our girls and build the culture that is the ever-loving, ever-learning Evergreen team.

Once again, Northwood Children's Services was the recipient of the 2017 Barnes & Noble holiday book drive. Thousands of books were purchased and donated during this event. In January, we held a book fair so all our children and youth could come in and choose up to five books to keep for their very own. Thank you Barnes & Noble and to the generous community who helped put books into our kids hands.



## Hawk Ridge Exploration

On a warm winter day, a group of explorers set off on an adventure. Husky counselor Illya lead a group of Husky and Scout students on a day trip to Hawk Ridge. Combining the oldest gentlemen with the rowdy youngsters was an excellent match: the Huskies were proud to be role models for the Scouts and the younger ones followed in line. “The hike went wonderful. It was a great experience seeing the natural curiosity of staff and students. Most of them have not been to Hawk Ridge, which I believe made the experience better. Along the hike up to the observation post, I explained the importance of Hawk Ridge and the effect it has on the flight of migrating as well as predatory birds. After we reached the teaching area I gave a lesson on how to use flint and thread to make a fire. With the help of the students we warmed up water to enjoy a nice cup of tea at sunset on Hawk Ridge,” said Illya.

Mixing learning with participation allowed the students to work together and have a wonderful outdoor winter experience.



## Animal Allies



For the last three months, the Timberwolve team along with team supervisor Rick and his daughter Kate had the opportunity to volunteer 4-6 times per month at Animal Allies in Duluth. Volunteering included socializing with animals, reading to the animals, or playing with the puppies and kittens to teach them not to play so rough. These activities are exercises that help each animal find a home.

Additionally, volunteering with the animals has promoted humility, empathy, and responsibility in every participant. “Animals are such agreeable friends—they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms (George Eliot).” Many children enter Northwood with the perceptions that they are judged by their past. The first time that we went the girls’ eyes filled with tears as their hearts broke for the animals in front of them begging to be loved and cared for; a feeling many of our children empathize

with. However, the story does not end there; the girls are a part of these animals’ journeys, serving as a guiding force toward them finding their forever home. Each time the girls volunteer it serves as a reminder that though the past may be filled with pain there is still hope for a brighter future.



## Memorial Giving

You can help sustain our program and the services we provide to troubled children with a memorial gift. Honor the memory of a special person by investing in the future of one of our children. The family of those whose memories you have honored are notified of the contribution by an appropriate card. No dollar amount will be indicated on the notice sent to them. Your name, and those whom you honor, will be listed in the Northwood Newsletter.

Thank you for your support!

## Memorials

### Given By:

James L. Anderson  
Milton & Deanna Anderson  
Beth Brown  
Charles & Janice Gerchman  
Irene Skoglund  
Caroline & Lee Sorensen  
Benjamin & Barry K. Wolfe

### In Memory Of:

Kristine  
Margaret Anderson  
Dr. Edward Ryan  
Eric Gerchman  
Ralph Skoglund  
Patty Beardsley  
Bob & Slemma  
Goldish

## Tributes/Honor Gifts

### Given By:

Ann C. Anderson  
Carol Best  
Margaret Fracassi  
Theodore & Ruth Johnson  
Gary & Brenda Robinson  
Ruth Tiffany

### In Honor of:

G. Everett/Alvina  
Carlson  
Priscilla &  
Robert Knighton  
Lauren Borndal  
Beth Brown  
Mary Robinson  
Fred Tiffany

## Wish List

Lego's  
Yarn, knitting and crochet needles  
Garden gloves  
Bikes  
Board games  
Toys  
Puzzles  
Sports Equipment  
Camping Equipment  
Stuffed Animals

## Request Memorial Gifts

Instruct the funeral director to insert the following in the obituary notice: The family suggests contributions be sent to Northwood Children's Services 714 W. College Street, Duluth, MN 55811

## Our Newsletter

If you no longer want to receive our newsletter, please contact Kathleen at 218-728-7196, or [kwolleat@northwoodchildren.org](mailto:kwolleat@northwoodchildren.org) to be taken off our mailing list. If you would prefer a digital copy instead of print, please provide your email address. We do not share email addresses to outside parties. We will use your email address to send you the newsletter and you can unsubscribe at any time.

## Leave a Lasting Legacy

By naming Northwood Foundation in your Will, you can guarantee that our legacy of caring for troubled and abused children will continue for generations to come. Here are some specific language options for how you may desire to specify your gift:

**FIXED AMOUNT:** (I give, devise, and bequeath the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Northwood Foundation.)

**SPECIFIC PROPERTY:** (My \_\_\_\_\_, I give and devise to the Northwood Foundation.)

**PERCENTAGE OF RESIDUE:** (\_\_\_\_\_% of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, I devise and bequeath to the Northwood Foundation.)

**CONTINGENCY:** (In the event \_\_\_\_\_ does not survive me, I give to the Northwood Foundation.)

These samples are suggestions only. Legal documents should always be prepared by your attorney. The Northwood Foundation's legal address is 714 W. College St., Duluth, MN 55811-4910

Northwood Children's Services is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit charitable organization. Gifts are tax deductible under the full extent of the law.

**MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS**  
*Your remembrance will help restore the life of a needy child*

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**In Memory/Honor** (circle one) of \_\_\_\_\_  
(NAME)

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**Please send me Memorial Forms**  **Book of 6**  **Pad of 25**  
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