

North Dakota School For the Deaf

Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

"A School Without Walls"

BANNER



NDSD sidewalk art

*"Looking back with pride;
Looking forward with confidence".*

2020-2021

Volume 131



The North Dakota School for the Deaf is a division of
The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction,
Kirsten Baesler, State Superintendent



North Dakota School for the Deaf

Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Mission Statement

NDSD/RCDHH shall serve as a State Resource Center to provide advocacy, leadership and educational expertise for all individuals in North Dakota who are deaf or hard of hearing.

NDSD Core Values

We express our values by treating everyone **equally with respect, courtesy and dignity.**

Lead—improve lives

Advocate—empower people

Collaborate—build partnerships

Educate—inspire success



Superintendent's Update

Dr. Connie Hovendick

The 2020-2021 school year began with many unanswered questions and new guidance from the North Dakota Health Department and Department of Public Instruction. The primary question: How to provide a quality education for students during a pandemic?

A health and safety team was established to develop a safety plan for NDSD staff, students and their families. Our plan included new cleaning strategies, wearing masks, and social distancing. We visualized a bubble around the campus, staying within its borders as much as possible. Students were assigned classroom and dorm pods, having contact with the same students and staff all day. We made good use of space on our campus to allow for social distancing at meetings, meals, and trainings. All students and staff were issued computers for home and were prepared to work virtually if needed. Thankfully, we did not have to move to full virtual learning at any time during the year.

Everyone got on board with the safety plan making us one of the few schools with in-person learning. Assessments determined any loss of learning from virtual schooling during the spring of 2020 and we adjusted programming to address each student's unique needs. Assessments were repeated this spring and we are excited to see students' progress. We focused on transition planning to assist our two seniors to prepare for future independence.

Students continued to transport home on weekends and stayed in the dorm during the week. Our exceptional dorm staff found new and fun activities for the students to participate in, while remaining on campus. The year ended with a field day including games and a bouncy house.

Everyone is looking forward to the 2021-2022 school year and a return to community participation. Devils Lake Public Schools are eager to have our students back in some of their classes. The renovated swimming pool and locker rooms will reopen for the students and community groups.

The outreach staff, adult, PIP, school age and communications, were creative and found ways to continue to provide services with safety measures in place. They made home visits and virtual visits depending on the families' needs and requests.

The North Dakota state legislature approved the 2021-2023 budget that allows us to continue all the services we provide statewide. We are very thankful for the community support we receive at NDSD.

2019-2020 NDSD/RCDHH Employees

Dr. Connie Hovendick, Superintendent

Education

Wendy Palmer*
Lacey Gemlo
Linda Koth
Nicole Parker
Susan Schwab-Kjelland
Kim Shereck
David Zimmerman

Communications

Lilia Bakken*
Renaë Bitner
Jeanne Johnson
Turi Leiphon
Cindy Mays
Kayla Perez
Lindsey Solberg-Herbel
Nancy Trottier

Facilities/Custodial

Chris Eckes*
Jerry Allery
Erik Hoeltl
Cindy Lee
Brian Morken
Cindy Schneider
Timber Schwab

Admin Services

Diane Frelich*
Shelly Laverdure
Nancy Sylling

Dormitory

Sabrina Schmitz*
Patty Cote
Jeremy Johson
Suzanne Legacie
Shane Sowatzki

Health Services

Tracy Vilandre*
Niki Slater
Lezlee Thorson

Business Manager

Michael Loff

Technology

Kerry Olson-Rysavy

Outreach

Carol Lybeck*
Linda Ehlers
Denise Marback
Ashley Martin
Nicole Swartwout
Lana Zimbelman

Adult Outreach

Pam Smith*
Kathy Frelich
Dawn Sauvageau
Kristen Vetter

Food Service

Chris Eckes*
Emily Anderson
Tate Cichos
Jeff Huber
Karen Maloney

Transportation

Barney Bischoff
Arvin Carlson
Shannon Arends

Lifeguards

pool closed due to COVID
and for renovations

**Department Manager*



Welcome New Staff



Hello!

My name is Patty Cote and I am a Devils Lake native. I began my teaching career in Dunseith, ND, for 2 years then moved to Devils Lake and taught at Tate Topa for 2 years. I went on to teach at Prairie View Elementary in Devils Lake for 24 years. I also taught vocal music at Devils Lake Central Middle School and DLHS.

I am happy to be working as a dorm counselor II at the NDSB Blackhurst dorm. While my history has very little to do with working with the deaf, I do have some experience with deaf students that were mainstreamed in the Devils Lake public schools. I enjoyed having the deaf and hard of hearing kids in my music classroom and strived to incorporate signing some of the songs that we performed at concerts. The hearing kids loved learning to sign songs, the deaf kids were happy to be signing songs, and it added a special beauty to our concerts. I was very appreciative to have the interpreters in my classroom. I taught for 31 years and 27 of those years were in Devils Lake. I retired from teaching in May of 2020 and began working at the dorm in August of 2020. While there are some challenges, as in any new job, I am loving it!

My husband Jeff and I have 4 children (2 boys and 2 girls) and 2 beautiful grandchildren (one of each). I LOVE being a grandma and am so happy that I retired! Working at the dorm has been a wonderful change from teaching and I am enjoying it very much.

I love to sing, play piano and organ, plant flowers, watch crafters and make different crafts, camp with my husband (when we get the chance), travel, and attend Mass.

Carol Lybeck Retires After 46 Years of Service

By Denise Marback

Carol Lybeck graduated from Minot State University where she earned BS degrees in Deaf Education and Elementary Education. She later received her Master's Degree from the same university. Carol also studied Early Childhood Special Education at the University of North Dakota. She stayed current in the field of Deaf Education by taking numerous classes over her 46 years of employment at North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.



Carol Lybeck

Prior to being hired at NDSD, Carol taught one year at Perkett Elementary School in Minot, North Dakota. There she taught in a self-contained classroom for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. David Zimmerman, who also retired this year from NDSD, was a student in Carol's classroom at Perkett.



M. Rutten, V. Bowe, C. Lybeck

Carol began teaching at NDSD in 1975 and served as a teacher for a variety of ages, Pre-School through 8th grade. While teaching in the classroom, Carol was nominated for Teacher of the Year from NDSD. In addition to working with students, Carol was a curriculum coordinator, substitute teacher coordinator, assistant to the Superintendent, as well as mentor to student



legislative tour

teachers from Minot State University. She also coordinated the Audiology Department. About twenty-four years ago, Carol moved from the classroom to be coordinator of the expanding PIP/Outreach Department. At that time, the Outreach served individuals, birth through adults. Carol and the team were instrumental in moving for the development of a separate adult service department.



Throughout all of her years at NDSD, Carol consistently advocated for professional development and stayed current with the most up to date information in the world of Deaf Education. As a resource center for the state in the area of deaf education, Carol felt strongly that deaf educators and parents of students with

hearing loss be provided with opportunities to learn and grow. As part of promoting that idea Carol, brought in highly sought out speakers in the field of deafness such as Betsy Moog Brooks, Paula Pittman, Dr. Amy Szarkowski, Dr. Dale Adkins, John Luckner, Sherri Cook, and Mark Marschark to work with teachers as well as parents.



Carol represented NDSD on numerous state and regional committees as well as some national committees. She served on the Midwest Gallaudet Regional Program Advisory Board as well as on the Early Hearing Detection and Identification Board. She received the Certificate of Special Recognition for Leadership and Service from the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) held in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 2009. Carol was one of just three educators to be honored from schools throughout the United States. Carol also received the “High Five Award” from Hands and Voices.



When the COVID-19 Pandemic hit the United States, Governor Burgum announced the directive for schools to provide education from a distance. Carol immediately went into action and met with the members of her team to discuss and implement plans that would

ensure continued services to children with hearing loss and their families around the state. She had her team research the impact of face masks and on-line learning on children with hearing loss. The information on its impact and possible solutions were then shared with



professionals working with deaf and hard of hearing students.



Throughout her years at the North Dakota School for the Deaf, Carol continually strived to ensure that she, as well as those whom she worked with or supervised, supported the NDSD mission statement: “To Serve as a State Resource Center to Provide Advocacy, Leadership and Educational Expertise for all Individuals in North Dakota Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.”

David Zimmerman Retires from Teaching

by Lilia Bakken

David Zimmerman has retired. After thirty-one years as a teacher at the North Dakota School for the Deaf, David decided to hang up his teaching career and move on to other ventures.

In 1970, at the age of six, David Zimmerman was enrolled in the North Dakota School for the Deaf. Two years later, in 1972, he transferred home to Minot where he was mainstreamed into Minot Public School classes with his hearing peers. David was a good student and was actively involved in sports. He especially enjoyed tennis and hockey. After graduation from Minot High School, David enrolled in the Teacher for the Deaf training program at Minot State University where he obtained his teaching degree. In 1990, David returned to NDSD to begin his teaching career. David taught Physical Education and Social Studies then, in later years, transitioned into teaching elementary and middle school students. During his years in Devils Lake, David also coached various levels of hockey including that of head coach for the Devils Lake High School Firebirds team. For many years, David has been an Assistant Head Coach for the U.S. Deaf Olympics Hockey Team. In 2007 and again in 2019, his U.S. Deaf Hockey Team competed against hockey teams from other countries at the Deaflympics and won Gold Medals.

Over the years, David has filled many roles at NDSD. His shoes will be hard to fill. The following pictures show just a few of the roles David has held while he worked and played at NDSD. His presence will be greatly missed by all those who worked with him and learned from him.



Role #1—Comrade, Team member,
Co-worker, Friend



Role #2—Classroom Teacher



Role #3 — Signing Santa



Role #4—Lifeguard and Swimming Instructor



Role #5—Mentor



Role #6—Physical Education, Gym Teacher



Role #7—Class Advisor



Role #8—Chocolatier



Role #9—Good Sport Volunteer



Role #10 --Chaperone



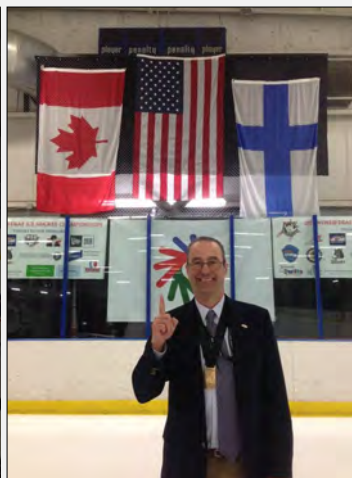
Role #11—Storyteller



Role #12—Pandemic Survivor



Role #13—Coach and Winner!



The **INFLUENCE**
of a good
TEACHER
I can never
be ERASED ♥

*David, you have served your school and yours students well.
Thank you for all you have done over the years.
Now it is time for you to step into your **new role** as a retiree.
Enjoy this next chapter in your life. You will be missed at NDSD!*

DEAF AWARENESS WEEK 2020



DAW activities remained on campus this year, but we got the word out with some **yard bling**.



Students researched and created posters of their favorite deaf heroes.



Adult Outreach Team 2020-2021

Oh, what a year it has been!



Our greatest accomplishments of the past year:

- We held presentations for all of our Peace Officer Training Classes.
- We presented to more than 200 lawyers, judges, and legal assistants across North Dakota.
- We learned about video calling devices to support our older adults in isolation.
- We kept our Resource Group members connected via monthly mailings.
- We kept our team in contact with one another via weekly Zoom meetings.
- We resumed in-person visits after carefully developing and following a safe plan of action.
- We gained knowledge and skills with continuing education via webinars and online classes .

What we most look forward to in 2021-2022:



- Resuming our seven Resource Groups across the state.
- Seeing more of our clients throughout North Dakota.
- Providing MORE presentations.
- Reopening of Senior Centers to better serve our clients.
- Getting on the road again.
- Receiving new referrals and meeting new clients.

TEAMWORK REALLY IS THE BEST WORK

Pam, Kristen, Kathy & Dawn with frequent assists from Renae, Lindsey and Tammy

For more information, contact pam.smith@k12.nd.us

BANNER FLASHBACK

Gilman T. Nordhougen

Submitted by Lilia Bakken, Communications

May, 1950: Gilman T. Nordhougen, an alumnus of the *North Dakota School for the Deaf*, **Class of 1905**, and 30 year veteran linotype operator at the **Fargo Forum**, has retired. Gilman shared a brief autobiography of himself.

I was born in Norwood, *Dakota Territory*, on October 17, 1884, in a log cabin. When I was five years old, I contracted scarlet fever and as a result, my hearing became defective. At the age of six, my parents moved to a homestead. Dad had a *blacksmith shop* and farmers from all around came to him to have their horses shoed and have their plow shares sharpened. As a youth, it was my job to *forge the bellows*. Today, the very spot where the smithy once stood, is the hub of the nice little city of Aneta.

When I was nine years old, Dad and Mom took us to Devils Lake to attend school. Two of my older sisters were also deaf. The trip was made by horse and buggy—it took two days. I was now at the *North Dakota School for the Deaf*. Anson R. Spear, the founder, and himself a deaf man, was Superintendent. I picked up the sign language quickly. It has always been my best means of conversation among the deaf people.



About the only trade taught to the boys at that time was setting type by hand. I was 12 years old when I first learned the printing trade, setting type for **The Banner**. I have been typesetting ever since. When I was 13 years old, I got a position during the summer months working for the **Cooperstown Sentinel**, a Populist weekly. I wasn't of voting age then but everybody at that time asked me how William Jennings Bryan was coming along when he was running for president of the United States. Answering this question kept me more busy than my work. I liked my work at the **Sentinel** very much chiefly because I received the magnificent sum of two dollars a week.



I graduated from NDSD with the *Class of 1905*. After graduation, I worked at several different newspapers. In 1910, Superintendent Bangs offered me the position as instructor of printing at the *North Dakota School for the Deaf*. This offer, I accepted, but I remained only one year. I loved the aroma of printer's ink and wanted to stick to the printing trade as a linotype

operator. I drifted into Canada and found a job at Fernie, British Columbia, operating a linotype for a mining weekly. While I was in Canada, I met the girl of my choice, Emma Lemke, a product of the *Winnipeg School for the Deaf*. We were married in Grand Forks in 1920. We moved to Fargo where I was employed by the **Fargo Forum**. It is here that I have been working continuously for more than 30 years.



Gilman and his son, Alvin, worked together at the **Fargo Forum**.

If I had my life to live over again, I would do exactly as I did, and start out as a printer. I have enjoyed life to the fullest.

Allison's Wonderland

Hello, my name is Allison Hoff. I am an NDSD class of 2003 graduate. Some time back, an ongoing project was started to get every single issue of the *Banner* digitalized and made available for free to the general public through the ND State Library. I do not immediately recall how I first came to hear about this project, but it tickled me pink to hear the *Banners* were going to be made available online. Who doesn't love laying in bed with their tablet, browsing a random issue of a *Banner*? I know I sure do!



Lilia and Allison on her recent visit to NDSD.



Allison Hoff 2003

A little bit of background on me. I enrolled at NDSD when I was 7 years old, at the end of 1992. It didn't take me very long to see and appreciate just how much history there is at NDSD! I think it was perhaps during that time that my love for history (in general) really took off. Someone gave me a copy of the *ND Centennial* issue of the *Banner* when I was roughly 9 years old, and I literally spent hours studying that issue. From that point on, it really opened up my eyes. There was so much more to look at and read about, and I wanted to devour it all! At some point shortly thereafter, Chuck Hawkins (the Director of Food Services back in the 1990s) gave me a giant box of old NDSD *Banners* that spanned the 1950s-1980s. So many more hours poring through these pages and pictures! I was also made aware of the *Banner* collection in the library, and as a student could usually be found in that corner of the library with an old *Banner*.

A great many years have elapsed and technology has rapidly evolved since my days as an NDSD student, but one constant has remained the same - my love and passion for reading up on NDSD's history. It's so neat to connect the dots by reading about the people, things and events that brought us to where we are at today. Chuck Hawkins has since long passed away, and I have since re-donated that box of *Banners* back to the school, so I no longer have the physical copies. Thanks to Susan Schwab-Kjelland and Lilia Bakken for numerous hours of hard work and effort with the ND State Library to get each issue of the *Banner* uploaded to the **Digital Horizons** database. I can spend many more hours "going down that rabbit hole" from the comfort of my recliner. I am also something of a genealogy nerd, so having access to such a database scratches that itch.

If you haven't already, you should do yourself a favor when you have time to spare and check out the online *Banner* database. You will not be disappointed! I have already heard of other alumni and their family members who have been able to do research perusing the database. I found out several years ago that a cousin's wife is the granddaughter of Mabel (Quam) Hanson, NDSD '42, and she did not know a lot about her grandmother's childhood. This database has opened up a whole new world for her. So wonderful!



***See page 36** for information on how to access NDSD's historical collection online.



Autumn holds a wonder all its own.

-Laura Jaworski



Festivities

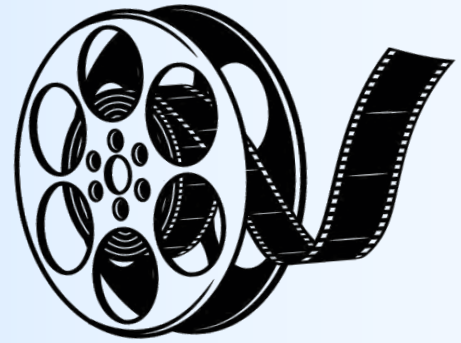


NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY

Students and staff enjoyed a presentation by Lilia Bakken of true stories about three very special Native American Deaf boys who attended NDSD, followed by Native American signed words BINGO.



Mrs. Koth's
second
GRADERS...



...better
TOGETHER

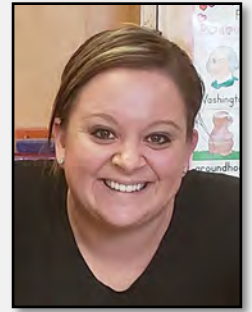
Health Services

By Tracy Vilandre, Director of Health Services

Greetings to all,

As we know, the 2020-2021 school year will be one to remember.

With that said, it was also a year of learning.



Health Services conducted on-site Rapid Covid-19 testing, focused on the mental/behavioral health of our students, and assisted in transitioning students to independent living.



Shelly & Tracy

The Health and Wellness committee got creative with hosting onsite events. Despite social distancing, we were able to spread some Christmas cheer



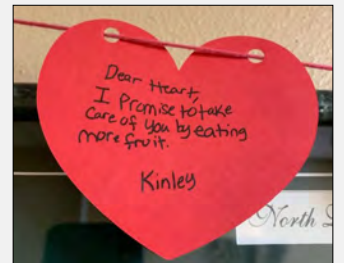
and share how we plan to take care of our hearts during Heart Healthy Month.

Although we began the school year with many unknowns, it was truly a success.

Much of that success can be credited to

our students for their ability to adapt to change.

We have learned a lot this past year. For that we can be grateful.



Clara's Classroom

Named in honor of Clara M. Halvorson, first teacher at the North Dakota School for the Deaf.



Education Staff in the newest addition to **Heritage Hall**.

Clara Halvorson, sister of Julia Spear (wife of Superintendent Spear) was well loved by her pupils for her close application gentleness and patience. She planned for all of the social events at the school. Clara brought the first peacocks to the school — they were her pets. She was the person who came up with the name for the **Banner**. When Scarlet Fever spread throughout the school, Clara tended to the sick pupils, frequently sitting up all night and then took her place in the schoolroom the next day. Clara was paid \$50 a month for her duties.



Mrs. Shereck's Classroom

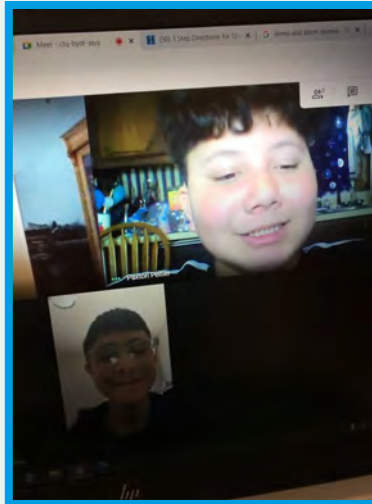


From the beginning, we sensed our year

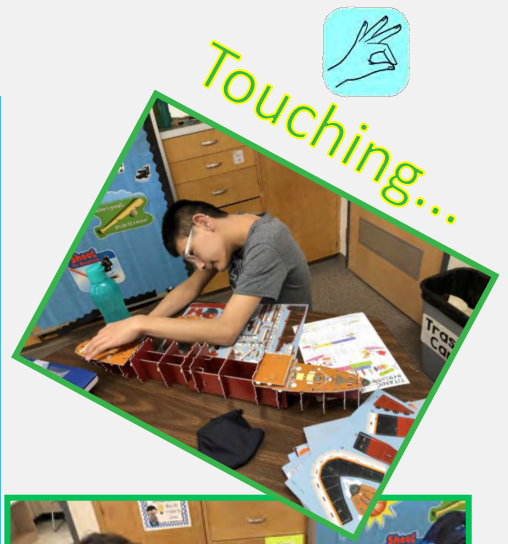
would by!



Smelling...



Ms. Parker's
Class



Touching...



Tasting...



Seeing...



Hearing...





2020



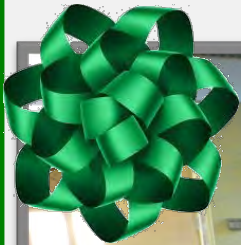
Merry



Christmas had a very different feel this year, but COVID-19 did not dampen our spirits. Students crafted homemade ornaments to deck the halls and made sweet treats to share. Christmas dinner was served for students and teachers only, but Santa still managed to make an appearance. We were just happy to be together.



Christmas



Students pose with their new
NDSD Bulldog blankets.

And Happy New Year!





Library Lines

Susan



Weather bugs, Aiyon and Blake made their own tornadoes in bottles.

"Curiosity is the very basis of education."
-Arnold Edinborough



Drayton has a flair for engineering.



We read about Christmas in different countries and completed cooking and holiday activities of these cultures.



Guest speaker Cindy Mays talked about Indian culture.



Many of the older students took on Reading Challenges this year. Part of Ally's goal was to read books to Grace. Reading buddies are the best!



The Novel Group celebrated the completion of "Because of Winn Dixie" by Kate DiCamillo with a replication of the final picnic scene.



All students and staff were invited to the library to relax, read a book and enjoy some special Seuss Snacks.



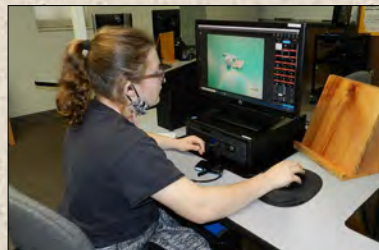
SCIENCE



Biology units included research projects and formal presentations.



Physics experiments with Chris, Director of Bldgs & Grounds



Photography and photo editing.



Constructing a raft with twigs and twine. It floats!



Carefully planting beans so that we may observe the root system.



Bird feeders

The science students spent many hours studying renewable resources and recycling as well as the causes and effects of global warming.



Preparing the Pollinator Garden

It was a “Virtual Year” for Outreach

By Linda Ehlers

The North Dakota School for the Deaf Parent-Infant Program and Outreach Department held three virtual art contests. The first one was the pumpkin decorating contest, then the Christmas ornament making contest and the I Love You to Pieces Valentine’s Day Card contest. Prizes were awarded each time in the 0-5 age range, 6-12 years and 13 years to graduation. All participants received a thank you token for joining in on the fun.



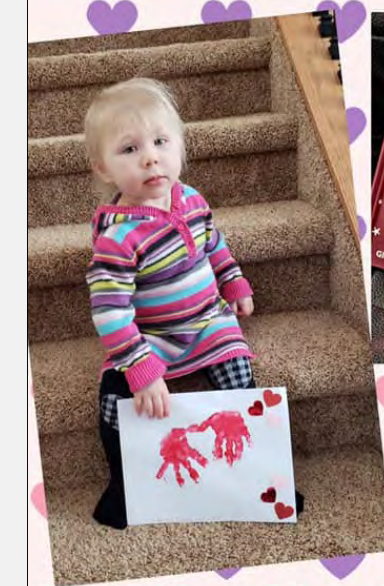
**Congratulations
Holden on your
winning
ornament,
“Frosty the
Snowman with
BAHA’s” in the
13+ age category.
Enjoy this great
read!**



Clipart library



**Winner 0-5 year old
Raegan's Little
Loving Hands**



**North Dakota School for the Deaf
Resource Center for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing**



Virtual Deaf Santa 2020

**North Dakota School for the Deaf
Resource Center for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing**



Virtual Deaf Santa 2020

Due to COVID, many events were held online, including Virtual Deaf Santa, held before the winter break. Fourteen families from across North Dakota were able to have one-one-one conversations with Santa no matter their communication mode.



The Parent-Infant Program and School Age Outreach Department participated in several zoom trainings. This included becoming certified in SKI*HI from Paula Pittman, director of the SKI-HI and Deaf Mentor Outreach and Training Programs at the SKI-HI Institute at Utah State University as well as training

to participate with several other states once again with Dr. Allison Sedey and colleagues at the University of Colorado, Boulder, on the new Outcomes and Developmental Data Assistance Center for EHDI programs (ODDACE).

Dorm

Our community involvement was very limited this year, due to COVID-19, but that didn't stop us. We just had to be more creative.

Thank you to the Devils Lake first responders for including us in their activities and to Lafleur & Sons for donating pool sticks and darts to our dorm.



At Christmas time, students made 120 cards for nursing home residents and included some sweet treats.



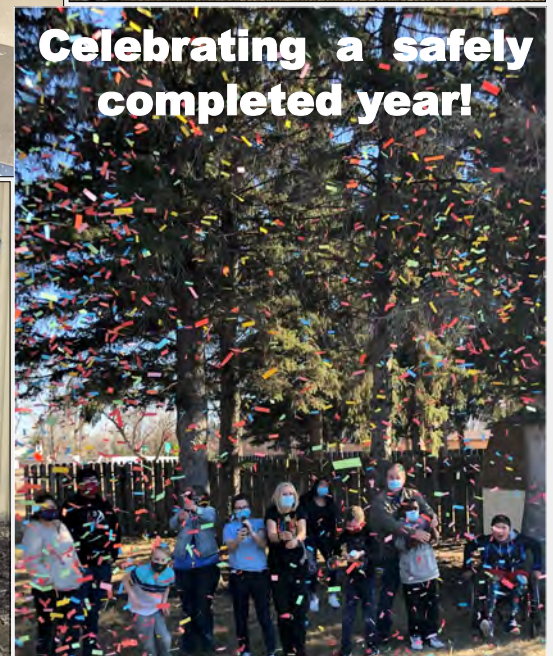
Life

Our favorite language projects always include food! The SuperBowl is a great opportunity for vocabulary, sampling, games and cheering.

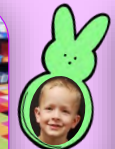
Living in the dorm lends to endless lessons in life skills from cooking to trade skills. Dorm counselors are happy to break out the tools and share their experience and knowledge.



Celebrating a safely completed year!



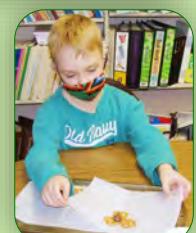
WELCOME



Easter PEEPS houses



Shamrock Shakes
and
Twisted Pretzel
Shamrocks



Ms. Parker is rather famous for her language rich edible art projects.
Today: Earth Day Cupcakes



Spring

Science students prepare the
NDSD Pollinator Garden
and observe its inhabitants.



Retiring teacher,
David Zimmerman,
gets a wet and wild
send-off.



What a great sport!



Mrs. Koth's
second graders
studied and raised
ten Painted Lady
butterflies.

On May 7th, they
released the
butterflies near
the NDSD campus
Pollinator Garden.



NDSD SWIMMING POOL FACILITY GETS A MAJOR FACELIFT

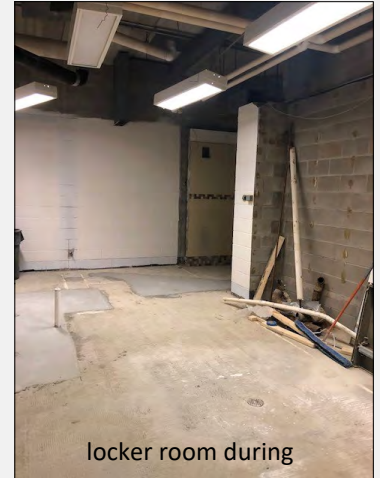
By Chris Eckes

An often over-looked side effect of operating during a pandemic such as

COVID-19, swimming pools were heavily restricted by state and local health agencies across the nation and the world. The requirements and safety regulations that were put into place the summer of 2020, made it difficult for NDSD to operate a safe and efficient swimming pool not only for our students and staff but also for the public.



locker room before



locker room during

NDSD took this opportunity to remodel the pool lobby, locker rooms and pool deck to increase safety and accessibility.

The project included new ceilings and lighting, new flooring, fresh paint, and updated locker rooms with new wall tile, private and accessible showers and restrooms, plus new lockers and fixtures throughout.

locker room nearing completion





Employee Recognition



Carol Lybeck

Retiree

46 Years



David Zimmerman

Retiree

31 Years

30 Years



Kim Shereck

25 Years



Nancy Sylling

20 Years



Brian Morken

10 Years



Jeremy Johnson



Kayla Perez



Susan Schwab-Kjelland

5 Years



Jerry Allery



Tate Cichos



Dr. Connie Hovendick

3 Years



Cindy Mays

STUDENT PROMOTIONS

Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.

-Chinese Proverb



Congratulations!



CLASS OF
2021
Graduation



HAILIEY



SHANE





Summer Camp 2021

June 14-18, 2021

By Linda Ehlers



After a year hiatus due to COVID-19, eighteen campers signed up for the North Dakota School for the Deaf summer camp held at the Triangle YMCA camp near Garrison. Many new faces and a few returning campers came for a busy week of activities that included arts and crafts, horseback riding,

archery, water sports, a dance on Wednesday, climbing up on a 50 foot tower and of course, s'mores. The group also made a trip to Fort Stevenson, about 20 minutes away, to try their hands at geocaching, which is using a smart phone to go on a treasure hunt. They also checked out the recreation of Fort Stevenson and explored a prairie dog town and arboretum.



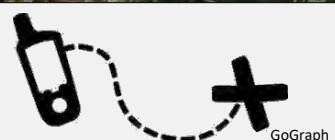
Clipart Library



VectorStock



Transparent PNG
Images for Free



WHERE are

By Susan Schwab-Kjelland



Gary Sagstuen



Gary Sagstuen came to NDSD from Grand Forks at the age of 6 years. It was a comfortable transition for him, as his sister, who was also born deaf, was already a student here.

"I am SO thankful for my parents sending me to NDSD", says Gary. "It was the perfect fit for me". He also credits his parents and siblings for their unyielding support. He recalls that, back in the days when some families were embarrassed to have deaf children, his father proudly took Gary different places just to show off how his son could speak with sign language.

When asked about favorite teachers, Gary says that all of his teachers at NDSD were very good and that he received a good education here. Of course, some of his more cherished memories are that of his high school sports career which earned him a place in the NDSD Athletic Hall of Fame. Interestingly, Gary and Coach Henry Brenner remain great friends and talk several times a week.



While in middle school Gary fell for the love of his life, Lynette Tesky, also an NDSD graduate. They have been married for 43 years with two children, who also graduated from NDSD, as well as a son they adopted later in life. They have been blessed with six grandchildren.

After high school graduation, Gary passed the Gallaudet test and wanted to go to college, but a too-good-to-pass-up job opportunity came his way. He would go on to work as a Procurement Clerk for the USDA for 37 years. Gary also taught ASL classes at the University of North Dakota for many years until the program ended with budget cuts. He truly loved teaching ASL and takes great pride in the fact that some of his students became interpreters. He hopes that UND will eventually add ASL classes back so that he can return to the classroom.

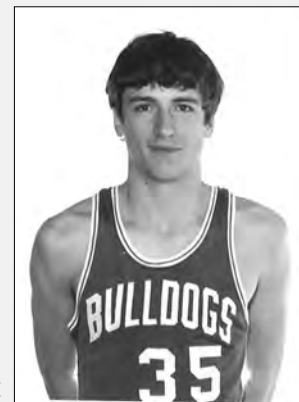
Gary spends much of his retirement at his summer home in Devils Lake, fishing and entertaining his family and friends.



they NOW?



Steve Blehm



Steven A. Blehm came to NDSD in 1966, at the age of 13. Just a few short years later, he was a legendary North Dakota sports celebrity, setting basketball records that remain intact to this day.

Steve became deaf in childhood after taking a (now banned) prescription medicine for an ear infection. His family moved around a lot before settling in Bismarck and it was then that Steve came to NDSD. One of his first impressions here was of surprise to be “surrounded by other deaf people”. Prior schools Steve had attended were oral, so he had to learn sign language, which he says he picked up quickly.

At NDSD, Steve excelled in track under Coach Dwight Rafferty and in football and basketball under Coach Henry Brenner. Perhaps his fondest memory is that of the Regional Basketball Finals in 1972.



Steve speaks very highly of all his teachers at NDSD and how he left here feeling prepared for the future. After graduation, Steve attended Minot State University for a brief period before transferring to Gallaudet University in Washington D.C., where he continued to play basketball and collect many more awards. It was also at Gallaudet that he met and married his wife Linda, who passed away four years ago.



Steve graduated from Gallaudet in 1978 with a degree in Biology. At that time, the Virginia School for the Deaf would not hire both husband and wife as teachers, so while Linda taught, Steve worked as Dorm Recreation Coordinator for eight years. He then landed a job at the US Postal Service as a mail carrier, which Steve says he loved because he got to spend his time outdoors. Linda and Steve had three daughters and four grandchildren. His father is deceased, but his mother and sister still reside in Colorado.

Now retired, Steve continues to live in Staunton, VA, where he is an avid hunter and angler. To Steve, North Dakota is still “home”. A humble man, he describes himself as “ $\frac{3}{4}$ North Dakotan and $\frac{1}{4}$ Virginian”. After a wildly successful fishing trip to Devils Lake in June, we might just see Steve come home more often.



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Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing



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