OUR FUTURE IN TRAINING

HOW A PERSONAL APPROACH IS CHANGING THINGS FOR THE BETTER
A DARING HOPE
When abuse and neglect spell danger and despair, local organizations step in to change lives.

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE
Steve Lepinski retires with a rich legacy.

THE NEXT FRONTIER
Understanding the links between learning, behavior and health.

BANDING TOGETHER
How communities are tackling aging and at-home care needs.

ON THE MONEY
Financial Summary and 2016 Grants

The Medica Foundation has developed a broad and balanced grantmaking approach to address the urgent and emerging health care needs of our community.
The promise of a brighter future is something many of us take for granted. But this promise is an illusion for many. It is not real or attainable. Circumstances like poverty, homelessness, mental health challenges, lack of access to support and care, and lack of timely response to a crisis all contribute to extinguishing the promise of a brighter future. And it’s made more challenging by the fact that these conditions can exist over generations. One aspect of the American Dream is the promise that “my children’s future will be better than my own.” But how can that be when circumstances like these pass from generation to generation?

The grants we funded in 2015 were all about breaking the cycle and offering people the help they need to train for a different future. As you read this report, you’ll see themes emerge. First and foremost, we funded grants that met people where they were: in a shelter, in their home, in their place of crisis, in the community. We cannot expect people to come into the health care system when that system is often far removed from and foreign to their lives. The “system” needs to go to them.

We funded programs that addressed root causes, not just symptoms. You’ll read about efforts to help people break old habits and learn new ones. On average, it takes about 66 days to learn a new habit and the benefits can last a lifetime. It’s hard work. Thus, you’ll also read about programs that helped people gain new perspectives and fresh motivation (check out Ariel’s story in A Daring Hope).

We’ve been privileged to fund and work with great partners. They know the people they serve. They care. They are committed to giving people reason to believe in the promise of a brighter future, and to help them train for it. Enjoy the stories about the differences they are making.
When runaway or homeless youth walk through the doors of The Bridge for Youth, they often simply need a place to shower and do laundry. Other times, they find comfort in a poetry group where they can express themselves without judgment. But sometimes they need more serious protection and advocacy in the face of real danger. This was the case for a teenage girl who first came to The Bridge in 2012.

**A DANGEROUS GAP**

Xion* had no money and no one to turn to for help. She was placed in foster care while her mother was incarcerated for selling drugs. Her father was in prison. When her mom was released, Xion’s homelife turned dangerous and chaotic. Her mom and her mom’s boyfriend abused her and she was being sexually exploited. To escape, she decided to live on the street, carrying a knife for protection. Then someone told her about **The Bridge for Youth** (The Bridge). Over the next three years, Xion returned for emergency shelter 16 times.

* Name changed for privacy.

Like many runaway or homeless youth with addictions or broken family ties, Xion fell into the gaps of the child welfare system. Isolated and with no resources for help, young people in these circumstances face a higher risk of sexual exploitation than any other age group. Living on the streets can lead to trading sex for a safe place to sleep or conditions that put them at risk for personal harm. When they come to The Bridge for help, they’re offered case management, support groups and overnight emergency shelter; a place to shower, do laundry and receive counseling; as well as care packages with snacks, transportation tokens and referrals to community resources.

Young people find acceptance, encouragement and safety at The Bridge for Youth.
Life on the street takes a heavy toll on mental health and there was no good way to measure the most significant safety, health and mental health risks facing a young person. The Medica Foundation helped fill this gap with a grant to develop the Vulnerability Index™ and provide mental health services for the youth. This index measures specific needs, equips the staff to talk with young people about their needs and helps to build trust, consistency and connections.

Xion scored in the highest risk category on the Vulnerability Index and The Bridge began providing her with intensive case management. As Xion developed greater trust, she participated in counseling and began working on self-care, anger management and communication with her mom. One barrier to seeking help was Xion’s fear that child protection would cause difficulty for her mom and “mess up” her mom’s schooling. Because of Xion’s documented history of vulnerability, The Bridge was able to file child protection reports on her behalf.

**FROM HIGH RISK TO HIGH HOPES**

- **819** youth were screened and 143 scored high-risk, three times more than anticipated
- **84%** were able to connect with a trusted peer or caring adult
- **100%** created safety plans

**THE BRIDGE FOR YOUTH**
bridgeforyouth.org

**BREAKING THE CYCLE OF NEGLECT**

Like abuse, neglect can be generational and can have a strong impact on how a child develops. Ariel* was 19 years old with a three-year-old daughter. As a child, Ariel moved from one homeless shelter to another with her mom and siblings. She remembers having a bedroom only once as a child, and it wasn’t for very long. Ariel came to the YWCA Duluth (ywcaduluth.org) because she wanted something different for her child.

Every Monday, she attended a parenting group called the “Circle of Security,” where she could think and talk about struggles she was having with her daughter’s behavior. A video clip of their interactions changed everything. “My little girl was being silly and doing cute things, like making faces and playing on a climber,” Ariel explained. “She went on like this for about two minutes of the video, always turning back and looking in the same direction – looking for something.”

* Name changed for privacy.

“Entering our doors, youth are at the lowest point in their lives. The Bridge provides them with a safe place to move from crisis to stability.”

Michelle Basham, Executive Director

“When parents change the way they respond to their child’s needs for care and confidence, a struggling child can be transformed.”

Source: Circle of Security International
After a few minutes of working to get noticed, the child lay defeated on the slide. The video revealed the girl was looking toward Ariel, who was on her cell phone, not looking up. “It was so hard for me to watch my child give all these cues that she needed a connection, and during those moments she wasn’t even on my mind. I thought that I had it together, but what the videos of our interactions showed me was that I couldn’t see what I couldn’t see,” Ariel said.

The Circle of Security program, an intervention model developed in the U.S. and used worldwide, redirected Ariel’s perspective. She learned how to interact with her daughter and gained confidence in her parenting skills.

A Medica Foundation grant provided the resources for the YWCA to offer this powerful intervention program.

**SENDING HELP**

Sometimes people need shelter from abuse or help ending a cycle of neglect. Other times, crises arise where people need to be protected from themselves. Timely mental health interventions can save lives.

In the winter of 2014, a unique crisis team was deployed to an emergency room to assess a suicidal woman. Bev* was severely depressed and had suffered in silence for 18 months grieving the death of her son. She was admitted to the Wellstone Recovery Center for six days, and then released with a safety plan and solid connections to community services. Without the support of Range Mental Health’s Mobile Crisis Response Team, Bev may have been hospitalized out of the area or medicated and sent home. She credits the crisis team with saving her life.

* Name changed for privacy.

“The Medica Foundation’s willingness to fund this new approach literally helped us save lives.”

Mary J. Carpenter MSED LP
Chief Executive Officer
Range Mental Health Center
For the 200,000 people living in the small mining towns and communities along Lake Superior’s north shore (over 7,000 square miles), when a mental health crisis hit, it was nearly impossible to dispatch a care team fast enough to avoid a calamity. This scenario changed when a Medica Foundation grant helped the Range Mental Health Center build its Mobile Crisis Response Team. This team of specially trained medical and mental health professionals travels to crisis locations, helps to stabilize the situation and gets people the care they need. This novel model for emergency mental health services proved so effective that the center has been certified to form a Children’s Mobile Crisis Response Team, as well.

CARING FOR PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

Another major gap in care exists among people who have both a mental and chronic physical illness. Psychiatric hospitalizations in Minnesota are on the rise, and people with serious mental illness typically live to age 58, compared with 82 for the general population.** Illness can spiral out of control when people fail to keep doctor appointments, leave the hospital or treatment early, or lose their job, housing, or the support of friends and family when they need it most.

** Source: Minnesota Department of Health

A Medica Foundation grant provided funding for MVNA nurses to earn the certification they need to offer combined physical and behavioral health services. **MVNA’s** Home Health program, which has served the community for 114 years, now offers these services to people wherever they live – whether it’s a homeless shelter, out in the community or wherever else they call home.

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What are the links between a child’s brain development, mental health and ability to grow into a healthy adult? Researchers are still connecting the dots, but in Minnesota, thanks to one man’s dedication to serving children and families, we have a jump start on addressing this important public health issue.

A LEGACY OF SERVICE

A champion for children’s mental health at the local, state and national levels, Steve Lepinski led the Washburn Center for Children (washburn.org) for 29 years.

Washburn is recognized as one of the nation’s most innovative and effective resources for children’s mental health. It is a top-tier research center for families dealing with mental health issues, offering access to the field’s foremost pediatric clinicians. At its core is a philosophy grounded in an unwavering belief that all children can be helped and get better.

Steve’s ability to build partnerships among diverse communities is legendary. In retirement, he leaves a legacy of strong, innovative alliances within the realms of education, social services, health care and philanthropy. Our community will long benefit from the connections and knowledge resources he helped build. But Steve is leaving another legacy that is just as important, one of bricks and mortar, a place devoted to leading-edge services and research.

In the years leading up to his retirement, Steve devoted countless hours to advocating for children’s mental health and leading a capital campaign that raised $24.5 million to build a new children’s mental health center. It’s located in North Minneapolis — in the heart of the city, where families can easily access the help they need to offer their children a healthier future.

“Children can be helped and get better. Parents shouldn’t be afraid to ask for help.”

Steve Lepinski
Washburn Center for Children

Over the years, we have been privileged to help support Washburn with five grants, all of which led to important developments in the assessment and treatment of children and adolescents with social, emotional and behavioral problems.

Steve Lepinski noted that two of those grants generated particularly remarkable results. “It takes a community to sustain a nonprofit, and it is helpful to have flexibility in how grants are used. The Medica Foundation’s framework of working with nonprofits to respond to a challenge and take it to the next level is a very powerful funding model,” he said.

2009

A collaborative pilot project that brought mental health clinicians into the schools was so successful in improving children’s behavior outcomes that today there are 22 Washburn clinicians in schools throughout the metro area.

2015

Expanding a day treatment program led to serving 40 percent more children using Dr. Anne Gearity’s “developmental repair model,” a nationally-recognized intervention model for very at-risk young children with aggressive behaviors.
Brain research shows that children form 700-1,000 new neural connections every second* in the first few years of life. These connections are formed through the interaction of genes and the baby’s environment, experiences and interaction with adults.

When an infant or young child babbles, gestures or cries and an adult responds appropriately with eye contact, words or a hug, neural connections that support the development of communication and social skills are built and strengthened in the child’s brain. These are the connections that build brain architecture, the foundation upon which all later learning, behavior and health depend.

What happens if a connection never develops?

Without early diagnosis and treatment, children with mental disorders can have problems that interfere with healthy development. Children can have problems at home, in school and in forming friendships. Without help, these problems can continue into adulthood.

**Medical and Financial Realities**

- **700+** new neural connections are made each second in the first few years of life
- **$247B** estimated annual cost of mental, emotional and behavioral care for children under age 18
- **1 in 5** U.S. children experience a mental disorder in any given year

*Source: Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University*
UNDERSTANDING HABITS AND WHERE THEY COME FROM

What is a habit anyway? Is it automatic or learned? Is it familial, cultural or something you consciously decide to adopt? Researchers are discovering that habits can be all of these things and more.

A study reported in the European Journal of Social Psychology* gives some insight into how new habits can be formed and how long it takes for a conscious practice to become an unconscious habit. Phillippa Lally and colleagues from University College in London asked 96 people who were interested in forming a new habit to start with something simple: eating a piece of fruit at lunch or running 15 minutes a day.

Every day, study participants were asked if it was hard to do, hard to stop or if they could do it without thinking. On average, it took 66 days for a habit to become automatic, although some people took just 18 days and others needed 254 days to hit the sweet spot.

It’s true that you can change your habits. Despite all the advertising promising to make it easy, it won’t happen overnight, but it can be done. The results can be life-changing – as these grantees have proven.

BREAKING BARRIERS TO BETTER CARE

Maintaining oral health seems simple – eat healthy food, brush your teeth and visit the dentist. All parents want their children to have healthy teeth, but sometimes economic, cultural and linguistic challenges lead to a misunderstanding of what effective dental care is. A local clinic working with families facing high risks and significant economic disadvantages found it is common for several family members to use the same toothbrush when they have limited resources or don’t realize the risk of this practice.

Delivering care in school-based and community clinics, Community Dental Care is a leader in breaking through cultural, linguistic and economic barriers to deliver care in school-based and community clinics. A grant to extend evening clinic hours increased access to dental services by 40 percent.

* Source: Lally et al. 2009

It takes weeks to develop a habit, but the effects can last for years.
OFFERING HELP TODAY

Recognizing that uninsured refugees and immigrants with low incomes often go without medical care because they can’t afford it, HealthFinders Collaborative is helping ease the financial barrier faced by some families in our community. Some are uninsured and waiting for public health care coverage; others are ineligible for it. With our grant, HealthFinders Collaborative filled that gap. They provided 1,100 dental exams, helped 92 people learn to manage diabetes and connected 2,500 people to health insurance.

ENVISIONING A BETTER FUTURE

People who are financially strapped are unlikely to seek help for basic needs like emergency dental care or eyeglasses. Thankfully, medical volunteers in Greater Grand Forks provide care for these most basic health needs at a clinic where primary and dental care, prescription assistance and limited vision care are offered at no cost. Our grant provided resources for Third Street Clinic to cover the cost of new eyeglasses for people who couldn’t see well enough to drive or read a job application. This help gave them the opportunity to get to a doctor or dentist for care and health education – and today their futures look brighter.

REPRESENTATION

Source: HealthFinders Collaborative
healthfindersmn.org

REAL RESULTS

135 people received vision exams and new glasses
152 had emergency dental surgery
1,963 prescriptions were filled

THIRD STREET CLINIC
thirdstreetclinic.org

Seeing clearly opens a world of possibilities, no matter your age.
COMMUNITIES UNITE TO SUPPORT BETTER CARE AT HOME

BANDING TOGETHER

The realities of coping with a child’s disability or aging parents can be overwhelmingly stressful. Yet, caring for those we love at home yields emotional, financial and physical health benefits – both for the person who needs help and for their family members. No one can do this alone: it takes a village.

BEFORE AND BEYOND BIRTH

Prenatal exposure to alcohol can result in an almost limitless combination of physical and functional birth defects. The full range of disabilities for affected individuals may become evident at different times through childhood, adolescence and even into adulthood.

Conditions associated with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) carry lifelong implications.* Here are just a few of them:

- **Infants:** low birth weight; irritability; sensitivity to light, noise and touch; poor sucking; slow development; poor sleep-wake cycles; increased ear infections

- **Toddlers:** poor memory capability, hyperactivity, lack of fear, no sense of boundaries and a need for excessive physical contact

- **Grade-school years:** short attention span, poor coordination and difficulty with both fine and gross motor skills

- **Teenagers:** poor impulse control, difficulty distinguishing between public and private behaviors, a need to be reminded of concepts daily

* Source: mofas.org

OPENING THE DOOR TO UNDERSTANDING

Families and caregivers whose children have intellectual, developmental or behavioral disabilities face unique challenges at home, in school and in public. **Arc Northland** is a lifeline that offers professional services, parenting resources and advocacy to families in northeastern Minnesota. Our grant funded developing a new curriculum and training manual for professionals helping families whose children have intellectual, developmental and behavioral disabilities. Sections of the new guide also were shared with area schools, opening the door to understanding how to care for these children at home and in the communities where they live.

REGAINING STRENGTH AND BALANCE AT HOME

Granite Falls, Minnesota is a powerful example of how creative thinking can help a community
THE WORLD IS AGING:
PROJECTIONS SHOW MAJOR CHANGES BY 2050

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE AGE 65 OR OLDER

2015
8.5%
617 MILLION

2050
17%
1.6 BILLION

In 2015, a quarter of the town’s population was 65 or older and 50 percent of those people had limited incomes. Proud and resilient, this town’s elders wanted to do whatever it took to remain strong, independent and live at home for as long as possible. So, when the Granite Falls Living at Home/Block Nurse Program (lahgranitefalls.org) developed a new class to improve balance and reduce the risk of falling, it was a welcome health improvement program.

A small professional staff and more than 100 volunteers provided classes, transportation, friendly visits, in-home assessments and social activities to help people live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

IMMEASURABLE RESULTS

Strong community resources empower people. They help children develop to their fullest potential and enable elders to remain independent in their homes. A commitment to care for people at home not only lets people control their own destiny, it also increases their confidence, enhances their quality of life and engenders something priceless – greater personal happiness. We feel privileged to offer grants to support communities that are breaking new ground in home-based services.

SUPPORTIVE CONNECTIONS

Arc Northland (arcnorthland.org)

22 parenting groups received resources, education, health care and parenting tips

15 crisis calls a month connected health care providers, government services, advocates and families to resolve escalating issues


WORLDWIDE, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AGE 80 AND OLDER IS EXPECTED TO TRIPLE

PEOPLE AGE 80 AND OLDER IN ASIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES MAY QUADRUPLE

Populations aging affects many aspects of public life:

- Pensions
- Retirement
- Housing
- Transportation
- Acute health care
- Long-term health care
- Work

Source: An Aging World: 2015, a report from the National Institute on Aging (nia.org)
During 2015, the Medica Foundation awarded grants totaling almost $1.5 million to 104 different initiatives and projects.

**Alzheimer’s Disease** ............................................................... $150,000
**Behavioral Health: Filling the Gaps** ........................................ $400,000
**Early Childhood Health** ......................................................... $300,000
**General Health Improvement** ................................................ $244,500
**Organization Core Mission Support** ........................................ $200,000
**Strategic Grants** ................................................................. $200,000

**Total** .............................................................................. $1,494,500
**2015 AWARDED GRANTS**

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
- 180 Degrees, Inc.
- Fraser Ltd.
- HealthEast Foundation
- Intermediate School District 287
- Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)
- Touchstone Mental Health
- Vail Place
- YouthLink

### EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH
- A Chance to Grow
- Children’s Dental Services
- Churches United in Ministry
- CornerHouse Interagency
- Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center
- ISD 47 Sauk Rapids/Rice
- Lakes and Pines Community Action Council, Inc.
- PACT for Families Collaborative
- Simpson Housing Services Inc.
- St. David’s Center for Child & Family Development
- The Family Partnership
- Washburn Center for Children

### GENERAL HEALTH
- African Immigrants Community Services
- Alzheimer’s Association Minnesota-North Dakota
- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- American Red Cross Twin Cities Area Chapter
- Ascension Place
- Better Futures Minnesota
- Bolder Options
- Can Do Canines
- Charities Review Council
- Community Emergency Services, Inc.
- Community Health Charities Minnesota
- Courage Kenny Foundation
- East Side Neighborhood Services, Inc.
- Face to Face Health and Counseling Service, Inc.
- Fraser
- Greater Twin Cities United Way
- Guild Incorporated
- Hmong American Partnership
- March of Dimes
- Minnesota Dental Foundation
- Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging
- Minnesota Public Health Association
- National Alliance on Mental Illness - Minnesota
- Nonprofits Assistance Fund
- Parents in Community Action, Inc., (PICA)
- Partnership Resources, Inc.
- Prevention Health Care Agency
- Ramsey County
- Senior Citizens Services Inc.
- Senior Community Services
- Somali Community Resettlement Services Inc.
- Southside Community Health Services
- Teenwise Minnesota
- The Arc Greater Twin Cities
- West Broadway Business and Area Coalition
- YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities

### CORE MISSION
- Access North Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota
- Arc Kandiyohi County
- Arc Midstate
- Assumption Community Services, Inc.
- Boys & Girls Club of Rochester
- Bridges of Hope
- C.A.R.E. Clinic
- CentraCare Health Foundation
- Central MN Task Force on Battered Women
- Children’s Dental Health Services
- Ely Community Resources, Inc.
- Family HealthCare Center
- Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley, Inc.
- Generations Health Care Initiatives
- Granite Falls Living at Home/Block Nurse Program
- Hands of Hope Resource Center, Inc.
- Helping Hands Outreach
- HERO, Healthcare Equipment Recycling Organization
- Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association
- Interfaith Caregivers - Faith in Action in Faribault County
- Knute Nelson Foundation
- Leisure Education for Exceptional People, Inc.
- Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota – Duluth
- Luthern Social Service of Minnesota – St. Cloud
- Monticello Christian Social Services, Inc.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness Southeast Minnesota
- NorthShore Southeast Minnesota
- Northland Foundation
- Our Savior’s Lutheran Church
- Pearl Battered Women’s Resource Center
- Project Care Free Clinic
- Project Lulu
- Range Respite Project, Inc.
- South Central Adult Services Council, Inc.
- Third Street Clinic
- VINE Faith in Action
- Wellspring Faith in Action
- West Central Industries, Inc.
- West Central Initiative
- Women’s Health Center of Duluth, PA
- YWCA of Mankato

### STRATEGIC GRANTS
- ACT on Alzheimer’s – Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging
- Center for Alcohol & Drug Treatment
- Neighborhood Health Care Network

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*Note: The list includes a variety of organizations and initiatives supported by grants, highlighting the diverse range of health-related support available across the communities.*
“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”

– Margaret Wheatley, American author (b. 1941)