

NorthLakes
COMMUNITY CLINIC

**Community
Engagement**

and

Why It Matters

Why Community Engagement Matters

Dear Friends,

NorthLakes has learned much during the past few—let’s call them *interesting*—years. One of the key learnings is that our engagement with our communities must be built on trust and relevant partnerships. We, like everyone, want to be much better prepared for whatever the next situation might be that will deeply impact our communities. Maybe it’s obvious, but somehow the last few years have made it so much clearer that the *quality of our relationships is the main driver of the quality of our responses*. If we want to improve, we need to work together in new and more meaningful ways.

Community building through the crisis was how we survived the depth of the pandemic and it will always be central to our work. Whatever else the pandemic did, it brought many new and different opportunities to work with partners to get through the worst of it. COVID clearly isn’t “over,” but we can all see that we’ve moved to a new phase. We have the opportunity to leverage the new and stronger relationships we’ve built and to strive together toward improving the quality of life in our beautiful community. Here are some examples of the pursuit of our vision of “engaged communities where everyone thrives.”

Encouraged by the wonderful results of our NorthLakes Indigenous Health Care Scholarship fundraising efforts last year, we have leaned into our community engagement by increasing our work to support our fellow nonprofits. We are investing more and more in collaborative fundraising efforts. This year, we launched a “100 Who Care” chapter for Ashland & Bayfield Counties. We have over 112 members and growing! So now we are in the initial launch of a new 100 Who Care chapter in Sawyer County as well. These Giving Circles are designed to allow the members to hear about many of our area’s fantastic nonprofits in a variety of categories, then vote for the most compelling presentation and write checks to the fortunate winners in

real-time. It’s true democracy in action and it results in a \$10,000 fundraiser for organizations whose only investment is a 5-minute pitch. Pretty great!



We’ve also enjoyed the ongoing engagement with local grocery stores as we conduct our wacky Shopping Spree fundraisers supporting NorthLakes’ Farm to Patient program in Chequamegon Bay and our Reach Out and Read program in Polk and Barron Counties. And our engagement included relaxing together as well. We gathered over meals and music with several of our communities to thank them for their ongoing support and celebrate the work we’re accomplishing together.

As we all try to build back our communities better, we’re finding the old adage, “many hands make light work” to be both true and deeply encouraging. We hope you will continue to engage with us and all of the positive and talented people in our community working to create healthy, prosperous engaged communities where everyone thrives!

With gratitude,

Reba Rice
Chief Executive Officer

100 Who Care



These are the Steering Committee and Nonprofit Nominees. From left to right in the front row: Liz Seefeldt, Ed Brunner, Ashley Moore, Reba Rice, Madelaine Rekemeyer, Christa Grande, Patti Skoraczewski, and Nancy Hanson. From left to right in the back row: Kathy Grafsgaard, Mary McPhetridge, Carol Fahrenkrog, Kerri Trubachick, Jeff Muse, and Lyle Poppe.

Ashland & Bayfield Counties

100 Who Care Ashland & Bayfield Counties currently engages over 112 members who come together four times a year. They pool their \$100 dollars and nominate three top non-profit organizations under a specific category. At the meeting, they listen to the presentations to learn more about their community needs and the resources needed to meet those needs. The members vote. The chosen nonprofit receives \$11,200.



The 100 Who Care Giving Circle is a group of people with shared values who come together to make a positive change. They pool their time and money and decide as a circle where it should go. Their efforts, discussion, and collective gift transform into community power, proactive change, and civic action.



NorthLakes is making this community investment because we believe that we all do better



when we all do better. We refer clients to other non-profits for resources and collaborate with many neighboring organizations to support our community members.

Coming in 2023: 100 Who Care Sawyer County

Again, a group of people with shared values will come together to make a change in their community. They will pool their time and money, and decide as a group where it should go. Their efforts, discussion, and collective gift transform into community power, proactive change, and civic action. We are grateful to Associated Bank for their kick-start grant in Sawyer County.

LEARN MORE

You can find more information about the 100 Who Care chapters under the Give navigation menu on our website: www.nlccwi.org.

Community Appreciation, Clinic Renovation Celebrations & Big Moves

Iron River Community Appreciation Event



Around five years ago, we held our first community appreciation event in Iron River. The annual community appreciation event provides the community with a wonderful gathering of NorthLakes staff and community members. Our COO Jason Akl, CFO Brian Ahlgren, and Facilities Director Josh Zak meet at the grill each year! They deliver some of the finest grilled meats (and Boca burgers) available! The meat is donated by a local favorite, Jim's Meat Market. We are grateful for their support. It is fun creating memories with our neighbors and regulars who attend the event!

Lakewood Community Appreciation Event



We appreciate all of our clients in the Langlade County area. This year, the outside event with beautiful weather was both fun and informative. We enjoyed delicious pulled pork sandwiches from Jungle Jim's. We introduced the community to new staff members. We also had great entertainment. Our colleague, Ellen Gruna, and her spouse, Al of Northwoods Happy Tunes, provided karaoke. There were karaoke fans and singers who did an excellent job. We hope to see you next year!

Park Falls Clinic Renovation Celebration



In June, we celebrated the relocation of our Park Falls Clinic into a larger 14,000 sq. ft. building located in the heart of downtown, allowing us more space to meet the needs of this community. We celebrated this milestone with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, clinic tours, fun activities, and lunch from Lola's food truck. We are grateful to have the support of our elected officials to ensure continued funding to strengthen the future of community health centers.

Hurley Clinic Renovation Celebration



In July, we celebrated some major milestones at our clinic in Hurley. We completed a 3,100 sq. ft. renovation, which provides more space for additional behavioral health, dental and medical services. We celebrated the retirement of Dr. Paul Hagemann, who devoted decades to the Hurley area with his private dental practice and later with us at NorthLakes. Our event also included a ribbon-cutting ceremony, lunch from Taco Dan, and clinic tours. We were also grateful to have the support of our elected officials to ensure continued funding to strengthen the future of community health centers.

Turtle Lake Clinic Renovation Celebration



This summer, Turtle Lake Clinic completed a 4,600 sq. ft. expansion, which almost doubled its space and made it possible to provide more care to this wonderful community. Our ceremony included a ribbon-cutting ceremony, clinic tours, and lunch from My Momma's food truck. We were also grateful to have the support of our elected officials to ensure continued funding to strengthen the future of community health centers.

Chippewa Falls to The Heart of Eau Claire



In September, our pediatric dental staff moved from our former Chippewa Falls location to Eau Claire, allowing our clinic to be more visible and accessible to current and new patients. The new space is located only 15 minutes from the previous space and the clinic plans to maintain most of its existing patients while making room to grow and increase efficiency.

Community Engagement Events & How It Made A Difference

Chequamegon Food Co-op Shopping Spree



JoJo Weisher, left, volunteer ticket seller, and Sarah Beadle, right, Co-op Marketing and Membership Services Director.



Shown here are Joanne Meierhofer and her grandson.

One of the many ways that we engaged the community is through our fundraisers. This year, we held a Farm to Patient (F2P) Shopping Spree at the Chequamegon Food Co-op. The F2P program and fundraiser brings together our patients, local farms, NorthLakes Community Health Workers, ticket seller volunteers, the Chequamegon Food Co-op, and its shoppers.

We sold tickets inside the Food Co-op on a weekly basis. It gave us the opportunity to talk with our neighbors about the program and ask them for their support. The Ashland Chamber office also sold tickets as people came by their office. We held a ticket drawing and selected two winners. The winners had ninety seconds for 1st place and sixty seconds for 2nd place to run through the store. They won the opportunity to grab up to \$1,000 of groceries for 1st place and \$500 for second place.



The Ashland Chamber of Commerce sold the winning ticket. They also helped promote this fundraiser on their weekly radio show. We are grateful to our community partners!

Our Farm to Patient program is a non-billable service to patients through the distribution of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food share and nutrition education. We connect those in need with healthy, locally grown produce, and to Community Health Workers, whose job focuses on helping area residents identify and enroll in opportunities available throughout the community in order to address barriers to healthcare, food, transportation, housing, and more.

Turtle Lake Shopping Spree & Reach Out & Read

We held a Shopping Spree fundraiser at Austad's Super Valu for our Reach Out and Read program. Our good friend and Silver Creek Spring Herbals business owner, Lisa Kofakis, helped us sell tickets at the store.

The event was a success. We received matching funds from the Rice Lake Community Health Foundation, and Turtle Lake Lions and the groceries were all donated by the Austad Family! All organizations and individuals share our values of building a better community.

In 2021, 65% of our 23,000 patients who visited our clinics had incomes at or below 200% of the



federal poverty level. That is 15,000 of our neighbors living in the effects of poverty.

While NorthLakes alone cannot fix the poverty situation, here is one step towards remedying the next generation by addressing a component of poverty, which is illiteracy. NorthLakes sponsors a literacy program called Reach Out and Read.

We ask for our neighbors' support in buying books for our shelves and setting up little free libraries. We use

the funds to buy books appropriate for parents to read to their babies and books enjoyed by all ages up to young adults.

On behalf of all the children who are growing up with books and a love of reading, all the parents who are sharing the closeness of reading with their children, and everyone who is supporting the literacy and education for children in Polk, Barron, and St. Croix Counties, we are most grateful for your support.

Chequamegon Food Co-op Chip Up



Shown here is Lisa Wydra, Farm to Patient Manager at NorthLakes. She visited the Co-op and had the opportunity to talk with shoppers about the program.

NorthLakes' Farm to Patient program (F2P) was chosen as a recipient of the Chequamegon Food Co-op Round Up For Partners program. This program gives Co-op shoppers an opportunity to round up to the next whole dollar when checking out and the proceeds are donated to NorthLakes. We received a check close to \$1,400 for our program.

NorthLakes and the Chequamegon Food Co-op have a shared value in creating greater access to fresh, more nutritious produce for our neighbors with food insecurities. The Co-op has a Produce Double Dollar program and we have our Farm to Patient program.



Turtle Lake Shopping Spree winners and the Austad Family.



Learn more about our F2P program at nlccwi.org

Breaking Down Barriers with Advocacy

Your Donation & Why It Matters



NorthLakes Community Clinic's Advocacy Committee has built and maintained a great working relationship with our elected officials throughout Northern Wisconsin. We strive to advance the delivery of health care to underserved populations and to achieve health equity for patients and our communities.

Our advocacy team is committed to working collaboratively with our public servants to advance well-defined and forward-thinking health policies to drive change in the healthcare system. Many times, NorthLakes' advocates are the point of contact in helping our lawmakers understand the potential impact of proposed legislation (and current law) on the community. They educate them about the work of the health center and advise them about the true needs of the community.

Our Advocacy Committee is comprised of various staff members, each with a particular understanding of health care. Our Executive Staff, a Peer Support Specialist, a Community

Health Worker, a Marketing Specialist, Business Development, Clinic Leadership, and a Dentist, meet monthly to coordinate their advocacy efforts and keep each other informed on current issues and what actions may be needed.

The Wisconsin Primary Healthcare Association (WPHCA), coordinates monthly statewide virtual meetings with other Wisconsin health centers, which keeps the committee informed about federal and state issues and legislation that could affect our patients, communities, and clinics. WPHCA is based in Madison and works diligently to know what is happening in and around the capitol around the issues of healthcare. They share this information with NorthLakes when it is helpful to contact lawmakers about bills that are coming up for a vote.

Healthcare is not a partisan issue. Lawmakers of all political parties have visited our clinics and are always welcomed. We value our relationships and our conversations so we can continue to provide access to healthcare to our communities.

NorthLakes Community Clinic provides care for all patients, regardless of their ability to pay. We offer a sliding fee scale and payment plan options. In addition, we support communities with programs that address the root causes of disadvantage. We advance values such as equitable living for all, both now and in the future. You read about many of the programs such as Farm to Patient, Reach Out and Read, and the work of our Community Health Workers. We ask for your donation to continue this critical work. Thank you.

For further inquiries, contact Madelaine Rekemeyer, Director of Development:
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Scan this QR code or visit nlccwi.org/donate to make your donation today.



Learn more about our Advocacy at nlccwi.org

Join Our Team & Make An Impact



We believe in inclusive collaboration to improve the health of our communities. All throughout the year, we have engaged staff members who are actively involved in wellness programs and community-building activities, and events throughout our service area. These activities and events show appreciation for our communities, provide a public service, and fund programs and services, with the goal of making a difference in the lives of our community members. These programs go beyond our clinic walls, allowing our patients to stay informed, and gain access to services.

In order to improve community health, we also need to seek and identify and address problems with empathy and accountability. We understand that the healthcare field, like many other industries, is facing constant challenges to retain and hire highly-qualified professionals. In some of the communities that we serve, we understand that there are not enough providers to meet our patients' needs. We believe that this is a shared and mutual responsibility and we are taking steps so that everyone has equal access to resources that promote a meaningful life. At NorthLakes Community Clinic, our Human Resources department is working diligently to hire top talent to join our team with a focus on diverse skills and experience. We've also recognized how disparities in educational opportunities are uniquely affecting Native communities. Therefore, we've established the NorthLakes Indigenous Health Care Scholarship. In addition, we've created two

new educational programs this year related to hiring. The Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program, as well as our internal Certified Dental Assisting program, both with a focus on recruitment and retention, include professional development and new career opportunities within the medical assisting and dental assisting fields. We're also partnering with Hayward High School to develop work experience opportunities for students to introduce them to healthcare careers and potential career opportunities within our community.

We believe our focus on quality care, community involvement, and professional development make for a rewarding career here. We're always searching for talented, caring, and passionate individuals who share our beliefs and can help us deliver high-quality care to the communities that are in the most need of it. We invite you to take a look at our available job opportunities at www.nlccwi.org/careers/current-opportunities and we're excited to hear how you can make an impact for NorthLakes and our communities.

Scan this QR code to see a listing of our Current Openings.



Thank you for your generous support this year!

NorthLakes COMMUNITY CLINIC

ADMINISTRATION

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