If 2020 was a year of transformation at Dakota Medical Foundation, then 2021 was a year of acceleration.

As the calendar turned on Jan. 1, we left behind us the most disruptive year in recent memory and with it many of the things we thought we knew about our pre-COVID world. Almost overnight, Zoom replaced conference rooms, webinars replaced in-person trainings, and online auctions replaced community benefits. There was no part of DMF that wasn’t affected.

While many of the changes the pandemic brought were positive and long overdue, the consequences of chronic stress and social isolation – particularly on children – began to be seen throughout our community. A rash of youth suicides brought to light the silent mental health epidemic our kids continue to weather alongside COVID.

Recognizing the urgent nature of these twin crises, DMF and its partners got to work and distributed a statewide survey that was completed by nearly 500 organizations, providers, and parents. The goal was to gauge the current state of kids’ well-being across North Dakota, as well as gather potential solutions. The results were unveiled at a community event held at DMF, where dozens of local leaders discussed potential paths forward. There was consensus around a need for a return to in-person activities, better education for parents around discussing mental health, and a need for increased workforce investments.

As a return to in-person gatherings remained uncertain, we had to rethink our approach to our Child Sexual Abuse Prevention program (formerly Stand to Protect). We decided to move our curriculum to an online format, seeing it as an opportunity to reach even more caring adults. Now, anyone anywhere has an opportunity to become a better protector. Buoyed by a month-long multimedia campaign, LearnTheSigns.org saw tremendous success, with nearly 2,300 website visitors over the second half of 2021.

Giving Hearts Day continued its upward trajectory for the 14th straight year, thanks to the 42,000 generous donors and the incredible efforts of the 500 participating charities. A number of statewide media investments and the expansion of giving opportunities to include volunteerism and goods undoubtedly contributed to its growth as well.

The nation’s longest-running giving day saw more than $22 million total raised – hitting a significant milestone as it surpassed the $100 million lifetime mark. In the spirit of bold experiments, we held the first-ever GHD Sweepstakes, further incentivizing generosity and showing a few lucky donors that it pays (literally) to give back.

The North Dakota Dental Foundation was not to be deterred by COVID, helping host the statewide Mission of Mercy dental clinic for the first time since 2018. With 700-some patient visits and more than $500,000 worth of free care from nearly 450
volunteers, it was a scaled-back version of the event but a godsend nonetheless to the patients — many of whom wait years for professional dental work.

Continuing the success of its inaugural year-end giving event launched in 2020, Lend A Hand Up’s Holiday Hand Up smashed its own record en route to an $80,000 day. The event raised an additional $2,500 for each of the 17 families, making their spirits a little brighter just in time for the holiday season. Another highlight of Lend A Hand Up’s year was the launch of its online auction tool, which gives families battling medical crisis more options for hosting fundraisers remotely or hybrid-style.

We continue our mission to amplify the impact of as many charities as possible — both in our regional network and nationwide — and to that end, 2021 was a big year for the High Impact Institute. If nonprofits are to achieve their full potential, we believe it starts with their boards thinking boldly. That’s why we were so excited to officially launch our High Impact Boards curriculum.

In addition to piloting in-person trainings for more than 100 board members and CEOs, we also wrote and released our first book, “Reimagining Board Service: A Practical Blueprint for Building a High Impact Board.” In 2022, the book will be joined on the brand new Institute website by a number of other resources, including a self-assessment tool and an online course.

We were honored to partner with the Leland A. Swanson Foundation to purchase a hyperbaric chamber, which will be housed at Essentia Health in Fargo. This investment will expand access to hyperbaric oxygen treatment and support continued research for alternative uses via a partnership with the University of North Dakota School of Medicine.

As we move into the new year, we continue to take on our largest project to date at the foundation: designing and building the future home of DMF. The campus will house not just DMF and Impact staff; it will become a regional destination and indoor/outdoor gathering space for charities, businesses, and the general public. We see the new building as a gift to the community, where all people can gather to develop healthy life habits, build High Impact Organizations, and access meaningful learning opportunities.

Among other purposes, we see the building becoming the premier national destination for board development via summits, retreats, and other yearly offerings.

We’re so excited to see what the new year brings and wish you good health and many blessings in 2022.

J. Patrick Traynor, JD           Amanda Thomas
Executive Director                 Board Chair
Dr. Dave Akkerman, MD
Board Member

Dr. Barbra Brookshire, OD
Board Member

Julene Brown, RN
Board Member

John Deutsch, PharmD
Board Member

Chris Kennelly, JD
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Dr. Susan Mathison, MD
Board Member

Nola McNeally, JD
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Kim Meyer
Board Member

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Seth Novak
Immediate Past Chair

Amanda Thomas
Chair

J. Patrick Traynor, JD
Executive Director, Ex-Officio

Dr. Hope Yongsmith, MD
Board Member
WORKING WITH AND THROUGH OTHERS

We know how much more we can accomplish when we mobilize the community for the greater good. Here are some of the ways we did that in 2021:

Estimated Economic Impact 2021

- **Building “in-kind” usage**: $264K
- **Member/employee match grants**: $133K
- **Giving Hearts Day**: $22M
- **Outside grants secured**: $225K
- **Lend A Hand Up**: $1.8M
- **DMF’s charitable funds distributed to health-related charities**: $1.6M
- **Grants to charities**: $559K
- **Investment income and other revenue**: $15.7M

**Total Impact**: $42,281,000

Impact Foundation was formed in 2004 through the unique partnership of the innovative boards of Dakota Medical Foundation and the Alex Stern Family Foundation. Both boards saw a pressing need for charities to substantially grow their capabilities to impact health and quality of life.
Dakota Medical Foundation is diligent in its choice of investment firms and closely monitors the structure of its portfolio for risk, long-term stability, and performance, as carefully outlined in our investment policies. DMF’s chosen firms predominantly use a “manager of managers” approach, rigorously selecting and overseeing proven individual asset managers. DMF assets are conservatively invested and broadly diversified. DMF has the income stream to operate initiatives, provide grants, and meet operating expenses without liquidating long-term investments during market lows.
STATEWIDE SURVEY

Over the summer, DMF distributed a survey across North Dakota to parents, providers, and youth-serving organizations. More than 500 parents, providers, and youth organizations took the survey, which measured all facets of the status of children’s health and how each area was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1/3 of youth organizations say physical and sexual abuse increased during the pandemic.

69% of parents reported an increase in unhealthy youth electronic use.

48% of youth organizations saw an increase in youth substance abuse.

To help interpret survey results and brainstorm solutions, DMF hosted a panel discussion, which featured:

- Emmet Kenney, MD; Psychiatrist, Saint Sophie’s Psychiatric Center
- Christy Wilkie, LCSW; Therapist, Dakota Family Services
- Todd Medd; Founder, 4-6-3 Foundation*
- Mary Beth Traynor; Director of Admissions and Student Services, St. John Paul II Catholic Schools; Founder, Matto Foundation**

The full survey results and recorded panel discussion are available at DMF’s TalkToYourTeen.org.

KIDS MENTAL HEALTH

BREAKING THE SILENCE

DMF’s Kids Mental Health initiative aims to address the interconnected issues of youth addiction, suicide, and mental health. While the complicated truth remains that there is no single cause or solution to any of these challenges, we do know that there are a host of factors that set kids up for the best chance possible to succeed. Kids Mental Health aims to maximize those factors for as many kids as possible in our region.

“BREAK THE SILENCE”

In response to a recent increase in teen suicide numbers across our region, the Fargo Police Department’s Badges of Unity Fund at DMF funded the creation of a short film, “Break the Silence.” Mental health and suicide can be difficult topics to discuss, but the film demonstrates why breaking the silence can save lives.

The first half captures testimonials from local families whose lives have been touched by suicide, and the second half features a conversation between local healthcare professionals and students, demonstrating and offering guidelines about what a conversation about mental health might look like.

The documentary does a terrific job of showing the ripple effects suicide causes throughout a family and community.

ROBBIE’S HOPE

Another important partnership this year for Kids Mental Health was with Robbie’s Hope, a Colorado-based nonprofit working to cut the national teen suicide rate in half by 2028. Robbie’s Hope produces a guide for parents — written by teens — on how to have more effective conversations about suicide and mental health. As part of this partnership, DMF now offers this guidebook free of charge at TalkToYourTeen.org as either an e-book or physical copy.

2022 GOALS

1. Build the capacity of local kids mental health charities via the High Impact Institute’s High Impact Organizations curricula.
2. Host inaugural kids health summit, at which the most pressing issues and solutions are identified.

*4-6-3 Foundation is a DMF fund established in 2021 in honor of Todd’s son, Liam. Its mission is to end teen suicide by reducing stigma and building hope.

**Matto Foundation is a fiscal sponsor project established at DMF in 2016.
A SILENT EPIDEMIC

Prompted by restrictions on in-person gatherings to start the year, the DMF team moved its Child Sexual Abuse Prevention curriculum to an online format. Formerly known as Stand to Protect, the CSAP curriculum has now been condensed into a 40-minute video, accompanied by a downloadable handbook. Both are available free of charge at DMF’s LearnTheSigns.org website.

As adults, we have a responsibility to protect children and be on the alert for signs of abuse. Child victims don’t often disclose their abuse to adults, so it’s up to us to learn to spot the signs and become better protectors. We all benefit when adults are able to stop abuse before it happens.

THE CURRICULUM

At LearnTheSigns.org, adults are given all the information they need to protect kids. With the material readily available to them at no cost, there is no reason that every adult in our region shouldn’t be able to join this crusade. In fact, it opens up the potential to impact the lives of kids beyond just those in our region.

SIGN THE PLEDGE

We ask all adults to visit LearnTheSigns.org and take the Pledge to Protect Kids. Signing the pledge is an acknowledgement that you have the responsibility to protect all youth in your community from sexual abuse.

A common misconception about abusers is that they’re strangers or unknown to the child. In fact, 90% of abusers are known to the child and typically the parents as well. This is an important part of the CSAP curriculum, as it helps people remove their blinders and recognize some of the common techniques and patterns exhibited by abusers. It’s essential that we reach as many caring adults as we can with this material so that no child has to ever endure the pain and shame of abuse.

Child sexual abuse is a silent epidemic. One in 10 kids will be sexually abused by the time they turn 18, with one in five girls being affected.

2022 GOALS

1. Distribute CSAP curriculum to all North Dakota state employees, all 500 Giving Hearts Day businesses, and all 500 Giving Hearts Day charities.

2. 1,200 adults take the Pledge to Protect Kids.
This past fall, we had the pleasure of celebrating the retirement and accomplishments of a small-town hero, Tom Bresnahan. In 2010, Tom – who hails from Casselton, North Dakota – led the creation of the Sinner Bresnahan Healthy Kids Initiative, a DMF donor-advised fund. The mission of Sinner Bresnahan is to support health-related programs, with a special emphasis on access to healthcare, dentistry, and educating children about the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise. The fund has supported a number of backpack drives (filled with healthy snacks, of course) and even provided a child with his first bed and pillow.

After noticing an increase in youth alcohol and drug use in the Casselton community a few years ago, the Sinner Bresnahan group asked themselves, “How can we do more?” The answer to this question was a new program called 5th Quarter, which is a collaborative effort among multiple community partners that provides safe and fun activities for Casselton youth.

During Tom’s recognition dinner at DMF, we heard from Casselton superintendent Morgan Forness and 5th Quarter coordinator Lori Faleide about the positive influence this program has had on the kids in Casselton and surrounding communities. They credited much of the program’s success to Tom and the Healthy Kids board.

Alongside Tom’s family, coworkers, and friends, DMF Executive Director Pat Traynor presented him with a Giving Hearts Award for his tremendous work throughout the years and his commitment to living a life of servant leadership. Individuals like Tom fill our work at the foundations with meaning and purpose. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

SOUL SOLUTIONS RECOVERY CENTER

For those organizations that need a bit of runway before taking off and becoming a full-fledged nonprofit, fiscal sponsorship can be a great option. Soul Solutions Recovery Center is one of a number of charities that have “graduated” from DMF’s fiscal sponsor project (FSP) program. FSPs receive administrative and tax-related assistance – and can take advantage of DMF’s network and resources – which means they can focus the majority of their time on their mission.

Led by founder Patti Senn and Executive Director Brenda Podetz, Soul Solutions is working to put an end to the revolving door that those in addiction recovery often find themselves in. A licensed outpatient facility that aims to bridge the gap between treatment and recovery, Soul Solutions offers long-term solutions for patients to practice healthy habits in all aspects of wellness. They began accepting patients this fall at their brand new South Fargo location.

RECOVERY REINVENTED STATS

1. In 2020 alone, North Dakota recorded a nearly 50% increase in drug overdose deaths year over year.
2. Only one in 10 people who need treatment actually seek it and receive it.
3. 75% of North Dakotans believe addiction is a disease (a 9% increase from 2018)
Expanded digital options have become a necessity, and Lend A Hand Up was no exception in 2021. Online fundraising resources continue to be enhanced to ensure a smoother experience for both fundraisers and donors. With the creation of hybrid fundraisers and a more streamlined application process, caring community members are now able to help their neighbors in more convenient ways.

Along with growth in the digital world, Lend A Hand Up has seen a rise in support and awareness from area businesses, including a number in the Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, area. The program hosted two big events this year to build awareness and raise support: Team Rally Month in July and Holiday Hand Up in December.

TEAM RALLY MONTH

Through the month of July, Lend A Hand Up Team (ambassador) recruitment was promoted through an online shirt shop. Supporters could simply purchase LAHU Team merchandise, or they could go a step further and sign up to become an ambassador. Ambassadors commit to actively attending fundraisers and promoting the program within their networks.

Team Rally Month served to not only raise additional dollars for active family fundraisers but also to engage the communities of Fargo-Moorhead and Detroit Lakes. Growing the program’s roster of ambassadors helped us to increase awareness and add more program champions to the Lend A Hand Up Team.

HOLIDAY HAND UP

The year closed with the Holiday Hand Up campaign for active family fundraisers. From December 1–15, donations could be made to the Holiday Hand Up campaign, with the potential to be boosted up to $5,000. By making a donation to the program, an individual’s name was entered into a drawing. Six names were then chosen to recommend a family to receive an additional boost ranging from $1,000 - $5,000. Donations and match grants (provided by FM Raise Your Spirits and Gateway Chevrolet) totaled about $81,000.

Lend A Hand Up is leading a domino effect of generosity that is reaching individuals, families, and businesses alike throughout the region. The adaptation to online formats and the growing availability of opportunities to get involved are paving the way for the program to become a household name.
GIVING HEARTS DAY

NEW ROADS TO GENEROSITY

Giving Hearts Day continued its climb to new heights, with more donors and dollars than ever before – a true testament to the post-pandemic resilience of communities throughout the region. Innovations continue to be made to create a world-class user experience for both charities and donors and to streamline behind-the-scenes administrative systems.

MOST GENEROUS REGION IN THE COUNTRY

Giving Hearts Day announced a bold goal this year: to become the most generous region in the country by 2025. This declaration includes an intention to become the No. 1 giving day in the nation in terms of participation per capita. With a multitude of ways to give back – including giving dollars, pledging to volunteer, and donating goods – donors can give in a way that works best for them.

INAUGURAL SWEEPSTAKES

For the first time ever, Giving Hearts Day donors were automatically entered into a GHD Sweepstakes by: making a financial contribution, pledging to donate goods, or pledging to volunteer. They could also submit a form on the GHD website.

Generous Giving Hearts businesses sponsored an array of prizes, with the grand prize being donated by Gate City Bank: a 2021 Chevrolet Silverado pick-up truck. Other sponsors included: Catalyst Medical Center, VISIONBank, PRx Performance, and SCHEELS. The exciting addition of the sweepstakes brought in a whole new pool of donors who got to experience the joy and generosity of GHD for the first time.

HEARTCAST

Another first on Giving Hearts Day 2021 was the introduction of our first-ever self-produced show: Heartcast. From the hosting to the streaming, the day-long broadcast was executed by GHD staff and interns and was seen by viewers across the entire region. The program featured interviews with charities, along with boost announcements and hourly updates on the progress of the day.

2022 GOALS

1. 75,000 donors – includes financial donations, volunteerism pledges, and goods pledges
2. 500+ regional businesses engaged before and on day-of
3. World-class user experience for donors – world-class Net Promoter Score of 70+

GIVING HEARTS DAY 2021

$22 MILLION raised
$112 MILLION raised since event’s founding in 2008

42,272 donors
89,162 donations

790 volunteer pledges
235 goods pledges

Representatives from HERO, a charity that provides affordable healthcare equipment and supplies through the collection and distribution of donated materials.
On May 11, a fire razed a South Fargo strip mall where GiGi’s Playhouse Fargo was located. In just a matter of minutes, what stood as a second home to individuals with Down syndrome and their families was reduced to ashes.

GiGi’s Playhouse is a Down syndrome achievement center offering therapeutic, social, and educational resources for individuals with Down syndrome at any stage of life. Families can begin involvement with the Playhouse as early as the 20th week of pregnancy. The South Fargo location was the sole location in all of North Dakota.

At the time of the fire, the facility was in the process of gradually returning to in-person services following the COVID-19 pandemic. What staff and families hoped was a big step forward turned into several steps back. That’s when the teams at DMF and Impact Foundation stepped up to help.

The devastation happened quickly, but so did the plan to rebuild. GiGi’s Playhouse Fargo, with support from the foundations’ communications and fundraising teams, planned a campaign to “Rebuild the Playhouse.” A signature TV ad was created featuring Playhouse leadership, and a three-week social media blitz was launched. The aim was to educate community members about Down syndrome and the importance of this facility to the many individuals it serves across the region. Meanwhile, the facility was able to partially resume services in a temporary location.

With the assistance of DMF and its partners, the Alex Stern Family Foundation and FM Raise Your Spirits, the campaign raised more than $30,000 to help GiGi’s rebuild. While the charity already had long-term goals in place before the fire, they set their sights on enhancing and growing their services to even greater numbers of people.

We continue to be incredibly proud and grateful for the extraordinary work the GiGi’s Playhouse team is doing, despite such a major setback.

“Thank you to the amazing team at Dakota Medical Foundation and Impact Foundation for launching a 21-day campaign to accelerate acceptance and Rebuild the Playhouse! Thank you for helping GiGi’s rise together to rebuild!”

Heather Lorenzen
Executive Director, GiGi’s Playhouse
At the High Impact Institute, it was a year of innovation and bold experiments, revamping our High Impact Fundraising™ and High Impact Boards™ curricula as we continue to expand our reach to a broader audience.

**THE ROI OF INVESTING IN PEOPLE**

The Institute’s year kicked off with another big Giving Hearts Day. Two interesting data points came out of the GHD totals, as we discovered that:

- Charities that received Institute coaching raised about 40% more than charities that didn’t.
- Charities that participated in a virtual fundraising cohort during fall 2020 raised about 50% more on Giving Hearts Day 2021 than charities that opted not to.

**COHORT-BASED LEARNING**

One of the Institute’s COVID adaptations was the hosting of two fundraising cohorts this past fall. Cohorts, which are essentially a remote version of an in-person training, provide an interactive experience for all attendees to actively learn alongside a peer group. It offers an alternative, more engaging experience than typical online courses that are often watched passively. Not only do cohorts give participants valuable information, but they also provide a community of support.

The Institute continues to explore how cohorts can be best used to accelerate the impact of organizations, along with other helpful resources such as books, courses, and self-assessments.

**A GAME-CHANGING TOOL**

As part of our continued commercialization efforts, we undertook a major overhaul of the Institute’s website. In addition to greatly expanded e-commerce and content capabilities, we developed a self-assessment tool that could be a game-changer for our users. Charities now have the ability to survey and track, over time, areas of their organization that need improvement and can easily find useful products and resources that the Institute offers to that end.

We also made great strides this year in the content marketing space, as we established a larger presence on YouTube, hosting a regular live show and producing regular how-to videos and series. The hope is that this will help us build a larger following nationally and grow our potential customer base.

The High Impact Institute has been laying the groundwork for years to become a national leader in helping people dream bigger, deliver better, and serve others much more effectively.

**2022 GOALS**

1. Training and strategic coaching is provided to GHD charities with a goal to raise $25 million from 50,000 donors.
2. A national digital cohort is launched for both High Impact Fundraising™ and High Impact Boards™.
3. The new High Impact Workplaces curriculum is launched, with a book released by year-end.
ABOUT THE FOUNDATIONS
Dakota Medical Foundation manages the assets of the North Dakota Dental Foundation and Optometric Foundation of North Dakota, providing accounting and administrative services and shared office space. Both foundations are led by Executive Director Mike Little and are governed by their own separate board of directors.

NORTH DAKOTA DENTAL FOUNDATION

BRINGING SMILES TO ALL

1 MILLION BRUSHES
This program strives to provide children with the necessary materials to start healthy oral habits. More than 70,000 brushes have been donated since the program’s start in 2017.

DENTAL RENTAL
The Dental Rental program provides portable dental equipment for charitable dental care programs. In the 2019-2020 school year*, dental screenings were provided to 3,578 students, nearly 2,000 more students than the year prior.

MISSION OF MERCY
After its postponement in May 2020 because of COVID-19, the return of the Mission of Mercy was a welcome sight. On October 1-2, 2021, the Bismarck Event Center transformed into a two-day dental clinic for all services, ranging from regular cleanings to extractions. The Mission of Mercy saw more than 700 patient visits at the Bismarck Event Center. With the help of 400+ volunteers, the value of patient care provided exceeded $500,000.

*2021 numbers pending an updated report from the state

2022 GOALS

1. Pilot a program to incentivize good oral health habits for elementary school students similar to Pizza Hut’s “Book It” program, which encourages reading.
2. Ensure healthy kids by decreasing tooth decay among elementary school children by 2%.
3. Ensure a vibrant workforce by increasing the number of licensed dental assistants in North Dakota.

OPTOMETRIC FOUNDATION OF ND

GETTING A GOOD START

The Optometric Foundation of North Dakota exists to improve lives by improving sight. Over the past year, significant efforts have been made to gain traction for the Vision Start program. Vision Start provides free eye exams to children in need ages 4-7.

With an increased marketing budget, the Foundation was able to reach more parents, schools, and providers — among them the Directors of Nursing for Country Social Services and North Dakota Head Start program directors. As a result, every major North Dakota city is now home to a Vision Start provider.

2022 GOALS
To provide at least 100 kids ages 4-7 (expanded age range) with a free comprehensive eye exam through the Vision Start program. This will be done by strengthening referral partnerships through schools, clinics, daycares, and Lions Clubs.
OUR APPROACH

**Bold dreams**  
Brilliant delivery  
X  Burning desire to serve  
**Extraordinary impact**

This simple formula that we developed in 2021 guides everything we do at Dakota Medical Foundation, from content creation to our own workplace culture. In a world of endless distraction and demands on our time and energy, the DMF Approach anchors and illuminates what’s truly important.

**Bold Dreams**

The overarching pursuit of any organization should be to dream big dreams, the kind of dreams that create excitement, illuminate possibilities, and ignite the promise of a better tomorrow.

**Brilliant Delivery**

Once those dreams have been captured in a plan, the desire of the organization should be to then make good on those bold dreams and ideas to deliver brilliantly.

**Burning Desire to Serve**

If bold dreams are the destination and brilliant delivery is the engine, a burning desire to serve is the fuel that ignites and propels an organization to exponentially grow its impact over time. A High Impact Organization is always asking: “What more can we do for others?”

**Extraordinary Impact**

Most organizations aren’t even aware they have the power to be exceptional. By not making a choice, you have defaulted to being average at best, which is a tragedy of opportunity lost. The stakes in this case couldn’t be higher - lives saved, animals rescued, suffering reduced.
Partners leading and supporting initiatives to improve health and quality of life in North Dakota and northwest Minnesota