



Fact Sheet: Life Skills & Transition Center

October 2017

Mission/Vision

- Provide quality, efficient, and effective human services, which improve the lives of people.
- Support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be viable members of their communities by providing specialized services when their needs exceed community resources.

Who we are

- The Life Skills and Transition Center (LSTC) is a state-operated, comprehensive support agency serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- It has been accredited by the Council since 1989.
- LSTC clients may reside on the campus, in supported living arrangements in the community of Grafton, or in communities across the state.
- The campus serves as a safety-net for people whose needs exceed community resources.
- Off-campus outreach and consultation services are provided statewide to help people remain in their communities and homes and to prevent admissions.

LSTC Staffing (in FTE)	
Direct Care	186.28
Clinical/Professional	32.36
Outreach Services	32.04
Food Service	28.00
Plant Services	22.60
Nurses	19.87
Program Coordination	8.29
Administrative	8.50
Psychology	2.00
Total FTE	339.94

Services Provided

Residential Services – 24-hour comprehensive services and supports, including medical and clinical programming, are provided to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who require skilled nursing services or need behavioral health services due to co-occurring psychiatric diagnoses and challenging behaviors, youth with intellectual disabilities who have difficulty finding housing and services in the community and who are in transition to community settings, and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities who have sexual offending behaviors (secure services program).

- Services are outcome-based and guided by each person's preferences and individual needs.
- People can live alone or with a roommate, and can participate in community activities and organizations.
- Transportation is available through shuttle or vehicle scheduling.

Vocational Services

- The *Work Activity Program* serves individuals at work sites on the campus and in the community. Work and activities are focused on each resident's particular need and interests and whenever possible integrate people into community work sites.

Outreach Services

- *Independent Supported Living Arrangement Program* (ISLA) – LSTC staff support individuals in local community housing so they can live independently.
- *CARES Clinic* assures that people with disabilities living in the community in the Grafton region have local access to physical, occupational, and speech therapy services, adaptive equipment services, dental and medical services provided by the LSTC without having to travel to Grand Forks. The clinic served 220 people in 2016.

FACT: From 2000 to 2017, the number of adults residing on campus dropped from 149 to 53.

FACT: The Center also serves 11 people in the community and 16 youth in a transition program who are waiting for community placement.



Outreach Services (continued)

- *Clinical Assistance, Resources, and Evaluation Service (CARES) Program* – A team of specialists including clinical staff and direct support staff provide consultation services and in-home and on-site supports in the community to prevent admissions and readmissions and to assist in transitioning people from the LSTC. In 2016, the team served 24 people through 136 service encounters, including phone and in-person consultations with the CARES team and psychology services, and in-home crisis supports by direct care staff.
- *Intellectual Disabilities Behavioral Health Service* – This is a team of applied behavioral analysts who deliver behavioral assessment and intervention services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout North Dakota.

Transitions

- In 2005, the Department of Human Services executive director convened a task force to prepare a plan in response to the mandate in House Bill 1012, Section 16, to transfer appropriate center residents to community settings.
- The center's superintendent chairs the task force, which includes other department staff, developmental disabilities services providers, and advocates.
- A CARES team of specialists established in 2009 continues to provide consultation and services to help people remain in the community.

	June 1, 2017
Adults on campus	53
Youth on campus	16
Home and community-based services clients (waiver services)	11
TOTAL	80

Campus Facilities

- The LSTC campus buildings are used for residential living and programming, administration and support, and leased building space.
- Total square footage on campus is 1,323,511 with 801,253 square feet of pedestrian tunnels.

Other Building Space

The LSTC provides space to the following entities:

- Midway Building (Domestic Violence and Abuse Center)
- Health Services Building (Part of first floor leased for Veterans Clinic)
- Professional Services Building (N.D. Department of Transportation, Community Health Services and the N.D. Securities Department lease space. DHS Economic Assistance Division has an office.)
- Prairie View Building (DHS Northeast Human Service Center uses space. Grand Forks Public Schools for Walsh County Head Start, Jellybean Daycare, Kids Express, and Data Dynamics lease space.)
- Sunset Building (Anne Carlsen Center and Catholic Charities lease space. Protection and Advocacy of ND uses space.)
- Cottage 1 and Cottage 3 (Leased to private individuals who are supported by providers)
- Cottage 6 (Leased to ISLA consumers)

Unused and Underutilized Buildings

- The New Horizons Building and two residential living areas in Cedar Grove are vacant.
- The Prairie View building and third floor of the Professional Services Building are underutilized.

Buildings Sold

- North A and North B (Sold to Metro Plains and converted to private apartment in 1999)
- Buildings north of School Road (Sold to Grafton Park Board in 2011)

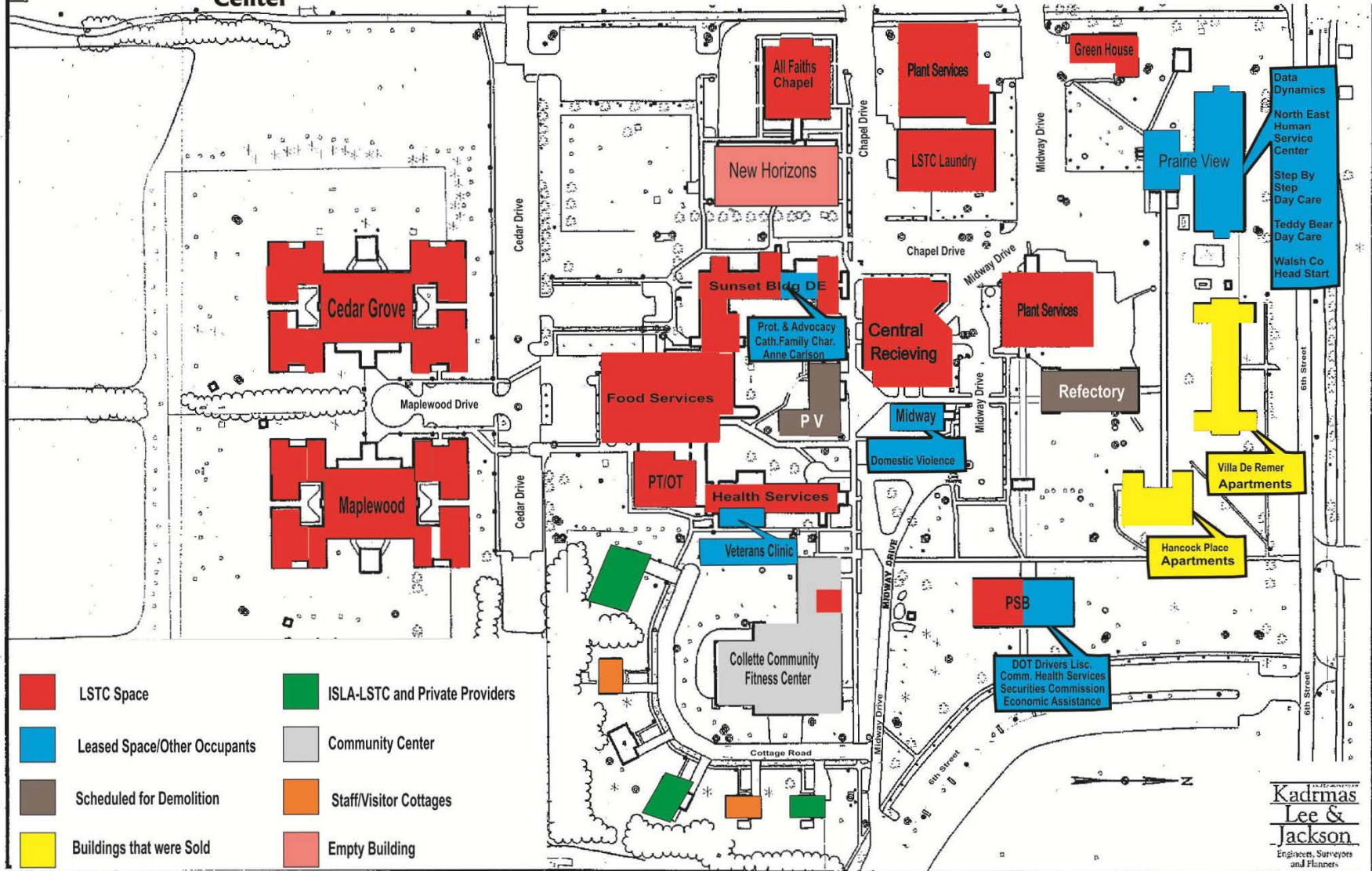
Buildings Proposed to be Demolished

- The demolition of Pleasant View and Refectory buildings has been postponed.

Contact: Susan Foerster, Superintendent, Life Skills and Transition Center
701 W. Sixth St., Grafton ND 58237-1379, Phone: 701-352-4302 or toll-free 800-252-4911



Life Skills and Transition Center Grafton, ND



- LSTC Space
- Leased Space/Other Occupants
- Scheduled for Demolition
- Buildings that were Sold
- ISLA-LSTC and Private Providers
- Community Center
- Staff/Visitor Cottages
- Empty Building

**Kadmas
Lee &
Jackson**
Engineers, Surveyors
and Planners

Diagnosing Intellectual Disability

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5th Edition

Intellectual Disability (Intellectual Developmental Disorder) is a disorder with onset during the developmental period that includes both intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits in *conceptual, social, and practical* domains. The following three criteria must be met:

Criterion A: Intellectual Functions – IQ of Less than 70

A. Deficits in intellectual functions, such as reasoning, problem-solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning and learning from experience, and practical understanding confirmed by both clinical assessment and individualized, standardized intelligence testing.

- Criterion A refers to intellectual functions ... intellectual functioning is typically measured with individually administered and psychometrically valid, comprehensive, culturally appropriate, psychometrically sound tests of intelligence.
- two standard deviations or more below the population mean, including a margin of measurement error (generally 5 points) a score of 65 – 75 (70 ± 5)

Criterion B: Adaptive Functions – ONE of the three domains is less than 70

B. Deficits in adaptive functioning that result in failure to meet developmental and sociocultural standards for personal independence and social responsibility. Without ongoing support, the adaptive deficits limit functioning in one or more activities of daily life, such as communication, social participation, and independent living, and across multiple environments, such as home, school, work, and recreation.

- Criterion B – adaptive functioning involves adaptive reasoning, in three domains: conceptual, social, and practical. ... criterion B is met when at least ONE domain of adaptive functioning, conceptual, social or practical is sufficiently impaired that ongoing support is needed....
- Adaptive functioning is assessed using both clinical evaluation and individualized, culturally appropriate, psychometrically sound measures. Standardized measures are used with knowledgeable informants (e.g., parent or other family member, teacher, counselor, care provider) and the individual to the extent possible.

Criterion C: Developmental Period

C. Onset of intellectual and adaptive deficits during the developmental period.

Levels of Intellectual Disability

The various levels of severity are defined on the basis of adaptive functioning, and not IQ scores, because it is adaptive functioning that determines the level of supports required. Moreover, IQ measures are less valid in the lower end of the IQ range.

- Mild
- Moderate
- Severe
- Profound
- Unspecified

Diagnosing Intellectual Disability

Developmental Disability - Refers to a severe chronic condition that constitutes a lifelong mental or physical impairment, which became apparent during childhood and has hampered an individual's ability to participate in mainstream society, either socially or vocationally. Refer to the Developmental Disabilities Act (Pub.L.106-402) for the legal definition – federal regulations.

North Dakota Century Code

CHAPTER 25-01.2 DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

25-01.2-01. Definitions.

In this chapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires:

3. "Developmental disability" means a severe, chronic disability of an individual which:
 1. Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments including Down syndrome;
 2. Is manifested before the individual attains age twenty-two;
 3. Is likely to continue indefinitely;
 4. Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity:
 1. (1) Self-care;
 2. (2) Receptive and expressive language;
 3. (3) Learning;
 4. (4) Mobility;
 5. (5) Self-direction;
 6. (6) Capacity for independent living; and
 7. (7) Economic sufficiency; and
 5. Reflects the individual's needs for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services which are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

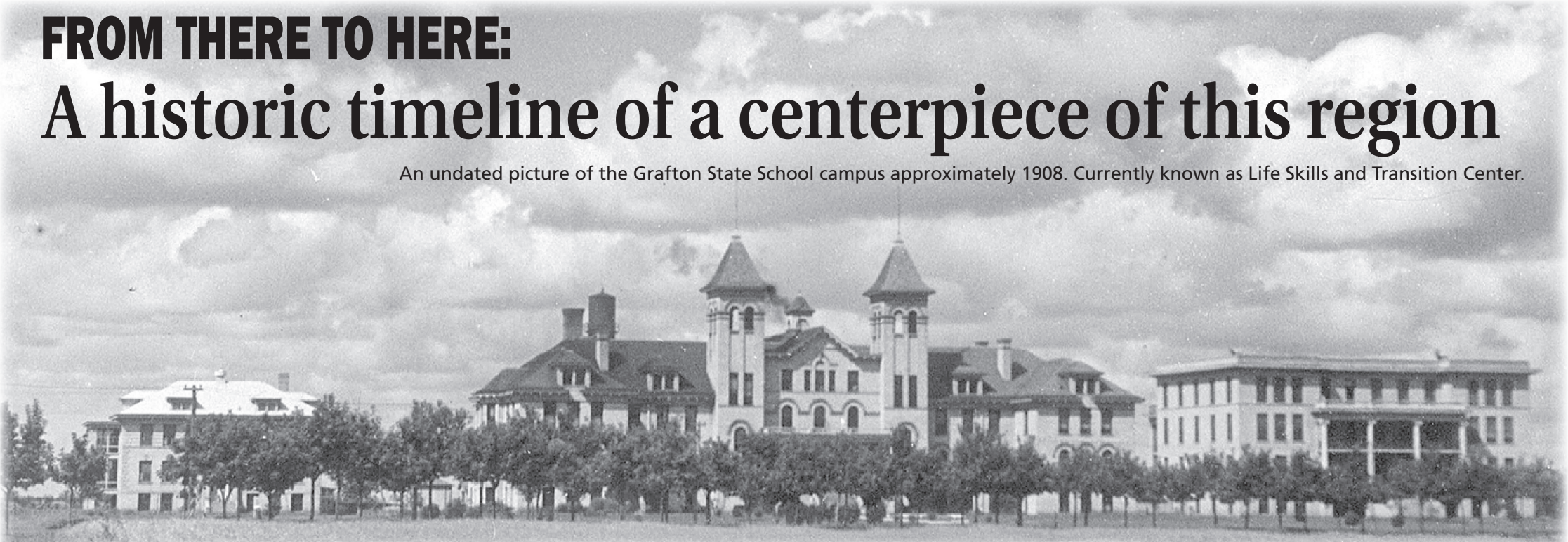
The Walsh County RECORD

\$1.00 - Tuesday, October 24, 2017 - Vol 127, Issue 27 Grafton, ND Voted "2016 Best of the Dakotas"

FROM THERE TO HERE:

A historic timeline of a centerpiece of this region

An undated picture of the Grafton State School campus approximately 1908. Currently known as Life Skills and Transition Center.



Role of LSTC evolves in 113-year history

BY CHERYL OSOWSKI

GRAFTON – Mission critical is defined as any factor of an existing system that is essential to its operation. Through its 113-year history, Grafton's current Life Skills and Transition Center (LSTC) has operated with a mission critical to the continuum of services North Dakota has provided for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The facility provided a safe haven for a variety of people with no other place to go. When society's knowledge and understanding of the needs of the people served evolved and behavioral treatment and training expanded, the Center's philosophy of care changed. However, the resources provided did not keep up.

Too few staff were charged with the care of too many people, some of whom had no diagnosis of intellectual or developmental delay. Services and alternative housing for these individuals were not available in the numbers required and family members were uninterested or unable to provide. In many cases, the Center was the recommended placement for their loved one.

Over time, leaders of the state and at the Center shifted their philosophy of care. From protectionism and medically driven care, to limited education and training, and finally to a comprehensive view of care and education that included expansion of services statewide which diminished the need for the Center's living space. The most dramatic precipitator of change was the implementation order by United States District Judge Bruce Van Sickle, issued in the 1984 lawsuit Association for Retarded Citizens of North Dakota v. Olson.

Numbers tell the story of these philosophical and mandated shifts in care over the life of the Center. Statistics taken from the comprehensive book on the history of the Center written by Brent Askvig, Ph.D., professor of special education at Minot State University, tell the story of change.

According to the Askvig book, six people were admitted on May 2, 1904. By the first of November that year, 75 people resided at what then was named the Institution for the Feeble Minded. Grafton was chosen as the location for this facility in 1901, which was suggested by Walsh County Senator J. C. Cashel.

Training programs were begun in 1904 and focused on training so the people could be happy, comfortable, and life there could be useful. Early years also were plagued by infectious diseases which caused over 78 deaths in the first six years the facility was open.

Efforts to survey and consolidate people with disabilities were initiated in 1911, resulting in a census that predicted there to be 1,800 more people who would need institutionalization. The period between 1910 and 1930 noted for a "paternalistic and protectionist approach" as Askvig notes in his book.

By 1940, the population of the institution was up to 970 people. Although World War II severely limited expansion, the refectory

was added in 1949 and the hospital building in 1950. During this decade, the population rose to 1,091 people.

During what Askvig terms the "Modernization" period of the 1950s, the population increased to 1,381 residents. During this period psychologists were added to the spectrum of professional care provided, as were educational efforts and a recreation program. The institution's name had also changed to the Grafton State School.

Spurred by greater public advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities, the decade of the 1960s represented the beginning of significant changes in the way services were viewed by the public and policymakers. It was also the decade when a second institution opened to "provide custodial care to senile, geriatric patients" – San Haven, a facility which formerly housed North Dakota's sanatorium for tuberculosis patients. The population at Grafton rose to nearly 1,500 people, while 150 people resided at San Haven.

Between 1970 and 1980, the population at Grafton decreased from 1,351 to 988. San Haven's population increased slightly from 225 to 248. The overall decline was partly due to the establishment of some community programs and a tightening of admittance procedures. Another lawsuit, a precursor to the 1980s suit, was filed by the ARC alleging denial of public education for students. Increasing public advocacy and changing state and federal law were having an impact. A 1999 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Olmstead vs. L.C.*, ruled that the unjustified segregation of people with disabilities is a form of unlawful discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), asserting more pressure to deinstitutionalize.

During the period from the 1980s to today, the change has been drastic. The facility's name changed twice – the Grafton State School became the Grafton

Developmental Center in 1989 and is now named the Life Skills and Transition Center. Residential buildings were remodeled and constructed to mimic group homes. While the number of people living at the facility dropped precipitously, staffing levels increased. In 1981, there were 674 staff positions, but that number increased to 1,072 in 1987.

Today, there are 64 people served

'There were many people who just wanted to tear them down,'

Harvey Tallackson
Formers ND State Senator

at the Center, with the number of full-time positions at 339.94. The current mission of the LSTC is to support people to be viable members of their communities by providing specialized services when their needs exceed community resources.

In addition to supervising people living in community homes located adjacent to the original footprint of the institution, staff of the LSTC supervise a program of staff located statewide known as the Clinical Assistance, Resources and Evaluation Service (CARES). CARES is a team of specialists including clinical and direct support staff who provide a wide range of consultation services, including in-home and on-site supports meant to prevent admission or readmission to the LSTC and to assist in transitioning people from the LSTC.

CARES logs between 150 and 225 service events per year. A CARES Clinic assures that people have access to physical, occupational and speech therapy services as well as consults, in addition to

providing adaptive equipment, dental and medical services to people under the care of other providers. Behavioral health services are also provided by LSTC staff on a fee-for-service basis statewide.

Since 1989, the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) – a national organization dedicated to defining, measuring and improving the personal and community quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities – has accredited LSTC. Its current accreditation extends to 2020. The LSTC is the only former institution in the U.S. to achieve this accreditation under the new standards.

Yet, while no longer in the business of providing institutionalized care, the Center is now facing the headwinds of a movement to discard any remnants of the prior institution in favor of services provided by a network of providers in other locations across the state. A resolution advocating a study of the closure of the LSTC failed in the ND Senate in 2017. However, an interim committee study of behavioral services in the state was approved. The study includes a provision that requires "an evaluation of the funding, mission, and caseload at the Life Skills and Transition Center, including the center's transition plan and number of clients eligible for community placement."

In addition to these legislative actions, North Dakota Department of Human Services (NDDHS) has moved a position from the Center to Bismarck. The position was retitled to Transition and Diversion Coordinator, with the responsibility to monitor vacancies across the provider network in North Dakota and the readiness of people living at the Center to move into those vacancies.

The author of the definitive history of the Center at Grafton, Dr. Brent Askvig, continues to give 3-4 lectures per year to students at Minot State University on the contents of the book. He states that

his students gasp in horror when hearing how people were treated through the years at the institution. He is glad to say that we are doing pretty good right now.

"I hope we continue to move forward," Askvig said. "To say that we have solved all the problems at any given time would be inappropriate."

He is amazed at what is happening with technology and what it can offer in the future. "I get excited when I think about that," he said.

When asked about the nomenclature of the services discipline and the term institution, Askvig says he would refer to any large facility as an institution, including those larger private providers in the state that supervise large congregated housing and training facilities.

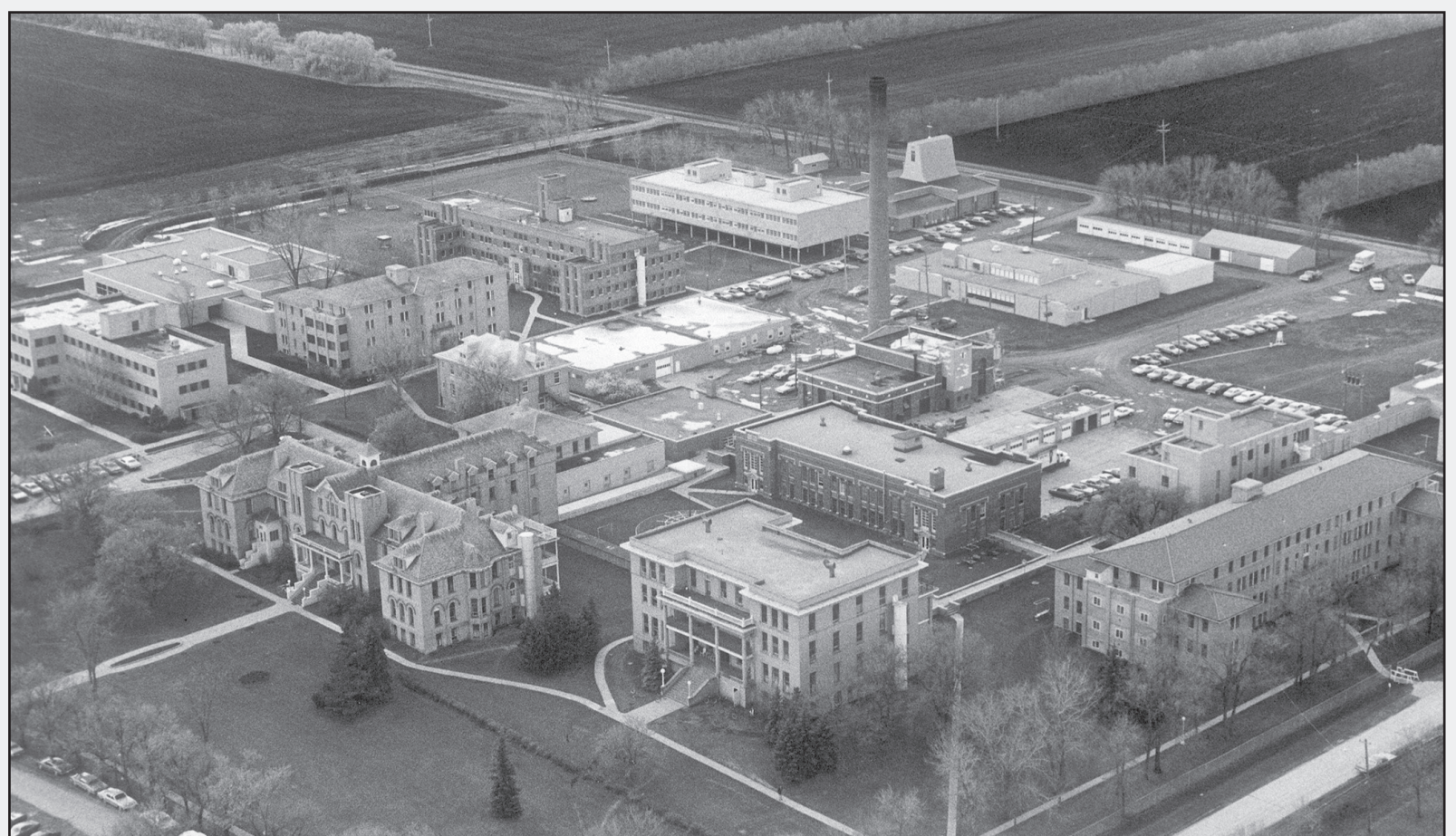
"The term is applicable to more than just the Grafton facility," he said.

In written testimony provided to the interim committee at their first meeting August 1, 2017, Sue Foerster, Superintendent at the LSTC, indicated that ongoing work is needed to transform the LSTC. A transition task force established in 2005 will continue to study the reasons people are admitted to, remain at, and transition home from the LSTC.

She also wants to fully define the safety net role of the LSTC in a way that all stakeholders, NDDHS and community partners agree upon. She also testified that the work of the LSTC Professional Services Institute on Developmental Disabilities to support private provider capacity to support people with developmental disabilities and behavioral health challenges should be continued.

Vacated buildings on campus create a separate and challenging dilemma to the future of the Center. The emptying of the oldest dormitory style buildings on the campus grounds drove a concerted effort by local developers and leg-

See PART ONE on page 2



An undated aerial view of the Grafton State School shows the extensive size of the campus prior to the addition of Cedar Grove and Maplewood complexes.

STILL FIGHTING THE STIGMA OF THE OLD INSTITUTION

Efforts to reimagine the function, buildings, space ongoing



Photo by Cheryl Osowski

The New Horizons building is available for redevelopment. It was one of the buildings used for residential services prior to deinstitutionalization.

Community meeting to be held Oct. 24

This is the last part of the Life Skills and Transition Center series.

BY CHERYL OSOWSKI

GRAFTON - Merriam-Webster defines stigma as a mark of shame or discredit. For those making judgements about the quality of care provided at a Life Skills and Transition Center (LSTC), the stigma of the institutional phase of North Dakota's care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) may still have great influence.

Testimony provided on the floor of the 2017 North Dakota Senate made it clear that the location of LSTC on the grounds of the former institution and in the northeast corner of North Dakota is still a problem in the minds of some legislators, some of whom may have never visited or were a part of the litigation of the 1980s.

Delore Zimmerman, CEO of Praxis Strategy Group, leads the primary contractor hired to manage the LSTC project. The City of Grafton and Walsh County Job Development Authority (WCJDA) both contributed \$30,000 to the project. "We started the project with two prongs to our work," Zimmerman said. "One prong is to sustain the LSTC as a statewide service provider for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We have learned that is an unpre-

'It's not an institution, it's their home. The community accepts those who live at LSTC as part of the community. I don't think that would happen in any of the major cities in North Dakota.'

Gary Paur

District 19 Representative

dictable process and we need to stay involved."

At the beginning of his contract, a pending legislative resolution to close Life Skills and Transition Center was the immediate threat. While success was achieved in defeating the closure resolution, a new threat arose in a last-minute addition to the human services appropriations bill.

Closure advocates were successful in getting language added to an interim study of developmental disabilities and behavioral health that required an evaluation of the funding, mission, and caseload at LSTC, including LSTC's transition plan and the number of clients eligible for placement.

The Health Services interim committee is scheduled to meet at LSTC on Tuesday, Oct. 24. This meeting will include a tour of the facility and an opportunity for comments from the public.

"The meeting on Oct. 24 is pretty important and one that we should welcome," Zimmerman said. "It gives us a real opportunity to show legislative members who have not been there what's going on."

Senator Judy Lee, chairperson of the interim committee agrees.

"I strongly encourage the entire committee to be in attendance," Lee said. "People don't know what it is. We need this facility as a safety net."

A legislator who represents the northeast corner of North Dakota in the House of Representatives, Rep. Gary Paur of Gilby, testified in defense of the services provided in Grafton during the legislative session. He feels strongly that what the people served at LSTC have in Grafton would be extremely difficult to replicate in a larger city. "They wouldn't have the same freedoms and acceptance," Paur said.

Paur witnesses first-hand the level of involvement of the people who are served by LSTC in Grafton's community life. While testifying during the March 2017 Senate Human Services Committee meeting, Paur told the committee that he witnessed that integration while attending athletic events at Grafton Public School.

"It's not an institution, it's their home," he said. "The community accepts those who live at LSTC as part of the community. I don't think that would happen in any of the major cities in North Dakota."

While the work to explain and support the mission of LSTC is of an immediate nature, work on the redevelopment side of the task force effort is longer-term.

"What we know about that process is that it is cumbersome," Zimmerman said. "We are hoping to find a single, state-operated use, because that is the highest, best use involving the least complications related to the property's ownership. We are actively pushing for that on several fronts but if that doesn't work, then a multi-tenant use would be the next best option."

That has already happened with some of the buildings on the campus and has been a strategy met with much success.

The 49 housing units at Hancock Place and Villa DeRemer show that the grounds of the former institution make for comfortable and desirable living spaces. While some management functions of LSTC remain in the Professional Services Building, other state services like the North Dakota's Drivers License Division are also located there.

In another former residential building, offices of Northeast North Dakota Human Service Center are located, along with two day care centers and a Head Start program. A small business is also located there. While the Veteran's Administration Clinic is building in a new location,

they are still serving clients in the Health Services Center on LSTC grounds.

Collette Auditorium has become a community fitness center, with members from the community including people served by LSTC staff.

"The building most readily available for redevelopment, New Horizons, is a nearly turn-key facility," Zimmerman said.

The design of the New Horizons building makes it easier to develop as a short-term residential training or treatment center, according to Zimmerman.

"Incentives will be critical to its redevelopment, particularly for one or more private-sector tenants," he said.

A flyer profiling the building has been developed and a website promoting the building is now available at www.newhorizonsgrafton.com.

Redevelopment efforts of available buildings and spaces on

the grounds of LSTC have been underway consistently since the deinstitutionalization process began. In addition to the multi-use and housing projects already mentioned, a potential use for one of the older buildings on site was researched by Red River Regional Council (RRRC) and a private developer back in 2014.

RRRC client, Dave Holand, Fargo, was interested in locating a commercial greenhouse operation in the Refectory Building on LSTC campus, and extending to the city's industrial park west of School Road. The project required a feasibility study be completed on the capacity of LSTC's power plant to provide adequate steam.

The feasibility study was ultimately completed and the news was not good for the project. The study determined that, without major upgrades to the power plant, enough steam could not be generated to support the planned greenhouse.

From start to finish, this project idea involved more than two years of work and waiting, only to end without a greenhouse on the site. In the world of economic development, it is not unusual for years to be spent in developing an idea, according to Zimmerman.

"Aligning ideas, interests and resources of the business, facility and supporting infrastructure, and locality to make for a project that is both workable and a moneymaker can be a real challenge," Zimmerman said. "And in some cases, the timing can just be wrong with the project being too early for the market or too late. It's all got to come together, which can take time and financial resources that involve varying levels of risk."

City officials are hopeful some redevelopment assistance will come from Governor Burgum's Main Street Initiative.

"This campus is a great place

for the governor's initiative," Chris West, mayor of Grafton, said at a recent meeting of the task force working on the LSTC project. "The state should practice redevelopment of their own facilities as well as helping the public sector do the same."

The mayor also addressed the perception that opponents of services being provided at LSTC are looking at relocating these services to the four largest cities in the state.

"Remember, the state constitution was crafted to spread our state government throughout the whole state, not just the larger cities or Bismarck," he said.

The Health Services interim committee convenes at 9 a.m. on Oct. 24 in the West Conference Center in the Nutrition Services Building on LSTC campus. LSTC staff will provide comments and a tour at the beginning of the meeting. Per the agenda, public comments will be allowed at 11:45 a.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.

In memory of all people

Life Skills and Transition Center erects memorial sign

GRAFTON - Life Skills and Transition Center employees, current and former, have collaborated on a memorial sign that was dedicated last Thursday to people that have passed away and have been buried at LSTC State Cemetery located at the east end of Grafton City Cemetery.

Former LSTC employee Albert Trenda, who worked for the facility from July 1989 to June 2012, and many others that wish to remain anonymous, pooled together resources for a sign dedicated to the people they not only took care of but considered to be their family and friends.

The cemetery itself was first started in 1904 and has 400 graves that are marked with footstones and another 115 that have been left unmarked.

"After 1930 the state facility started marking the graves," said Cheryl Schrank, LSTC administrative assistant/records clerk. "Prior to that, records show the names of individuals that passed, but a cemetery plot map does not show specific locations."

LSTC maintains the cemetery, and has been doing so since the early 1980s.

"Every Memorial Day each resting place is adorned with a white cross," said Schrank. "Every person that is admitted to LSTC has a burial account which helps pay for funeral and burial expenses. Even if they are transitioned to residential care, if the family chooses, they can still utilize the cemetery."

"Everyone buried here was a person," said Trenda. "They



Photo by Todd M. Kjelland

Albert Trenda, former employee of Life Skills and Transition Center, stands next to a sign that was erected in Grafton City Cemetery in honor of all those known and unknown that are buried there.

deserve to be recognized and treated like family, because to us that have worked beside them, we see them as family."

"The last person that was buried in the cemetery was in April of this year," confirmed Schrank. "Family that inquire

into the past and would like to know more information on a family member are welcome to call and submit a request of information."

Schrank and LSTC Superintendent Sue Foerster are grateful for donations of

money and time it took to erect the memorial sign and install landscaping.

"We take it to heart," said Schrank. "We are a family here and the sign says it best, 'In memory of those known and unknown buried here.'"

PART ONE: *Continued from page 1*

islaters to redevelop some buildings on the campus for housing. Dawn Keeley, executive director of the Red River Regional Council (RRRC), was part of the effort in the 1990s to convert two of the oldest buildings on the grounds, North A and North B, into rental housing units. Keeley noted that in 1993 a regional steering committee was formed to find alternative uses for the campus. With a \$100,000 grant from North Dakota Department of Economic Development and Finance to Walsh County Job Development Authority, work began.

Several steps were taken to free up the process of transferring ownership of state building assets to new owners. Finance packages were worked out, market research was completed, and developers were sought. Construction was underway on the renovations of North A and North B in 1998 and 1999. Other buildings such as the newer administration building and hospital building were utilized by other service providers, including the North Dakota Motor Vehicle branch, Veterans Administration, Northeast Human Services and day care providers. The auditorium utilized for recreational program-

ing for clients was opened to the entire Grafton community as a community fitness center. Homes built for medical staff and the superintendent on the grounds were converted into independent supervised living arrangements for people still served by the staff at the Center.

Today a collaborative effort including the City of Grafton, Walsh County Job Development Authority, Praxis Strategy Group of Grand Forks and RRRC is underway, working on redevelopment efforts for remaining vacated spaces. The agencies are also supporting an ongoing role for LSTC in North Dakota's core safety net and professional resource for people who need the quality of care provided.

"The development challenge is two-fold today—retention and redevelopment," said Keeley. "This threat of closure brings added political challenges that we did not have in the 1990s."

In the 1990s, redevelopment efforts had bipartisan support at the highest levels with Sen. Harvey Tallackson as chair of the redevelopment committee while at the same time serving as Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Lt. Governor Rosemarie Myrdal also serving on the redevel-

opment committee. United States Senator Byron Dorgan worked to develop an outreach clinic for the Veterans Administration Hospital in Fargo as well as retirement and skilled nursing beds.

Sen. Tallackson recalls the work it took to find leaders who believed in redevelopment efforts.

"There were many people who just wanted to tear them down," Tallackson said.

His best advice for the current redevelopment task force is to never give up.

"They should use all the pressure they can muster to get support for the foundational work of feasibility studies from leaders at the Bank of North Dakota and the Department of Commerce," said Tallackson. "It's not an easy pull to get a lot of this stuff done."

Keeley's recollection of the efforts match Tallackson's.

"I recall arranging countless tours, meetings and trips to Bismarck while exploring many options for redevelopment including a veterans nursing home, housing, veterans clinic and others over a more than five-year period," Keeley said. "A project of this magnitude requires steadfast staffing over



North B, built in 1923, was originally the boys dormitory.

a long term to develop the networking and partnerships necessary to result in a high-quality project."

According to Keeley, RRRC provided approximately five years of staff time into the

project, resulting in 49 units of rental housing in what is known today as Villa DeRemer and Hancock Place.

Next up in the LSTC series will be a review of the concerns of legislators involved

in the interim study, advocacy groups and community providers. Current best practices in other states will be noted. The issue of cost of care will be reviewed. Redevelopment ideas will be outlined.

A facility at a crossroad

Role in continuum of care in question

BY CHERYL OSOWSKI

This is the second part of a four part series concerning Life Skills and Transition Center

The final phase of the role for the Life Skills and Transition Center (LSTC) is in the sights of those opposed to care being provided at the site of the former Grafton State School.

Now only 64 people remain living in Grafton, homes in the community at large, in homes on the grounds of the facility, and residential buildings on the campus. They work, go to school, and receive training, health care, and specialized services. Concerted efforts are undertaken to find homes for those who remain that are closer to family members in other parts of the state.

North Dakota Department of Human Services (NDDHS) currently has one staff position entirely devoted to monitoring transition of people from LSTC and the diversion of those living in the community who may need more intense care than is now available in community settings.

Part of the job for the Transition and Diversion Coordinator is to complete a monthly survey of openings of living spaces operated by private providers across the state. A survey of the people living at LSTC who may be ready to leave, the types of beds, and age ranges of the clients is also completed monthly.

During the 2017 North Dakota legislative session, Senate Concurrent Resolution #4013 was sponsored by Senators Nicole Poolman, Kelly Armstrong, Jonathan Casper, Jessica Unruh and Representative Roscoe Streyle. The resolution sought to have Legislative Management consider studying the process necessary to replace Life Skills and Transition Center in Grafton with statewide services for individuals with disabilities. It further directed Legislative Management to report its findings and recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement them, to the 66th Legislative Assembly.

While that resolution was defeated on the senate floor, an amendment was added to the final NDDHS appropriations bill at the last minute. This language included a study of the funding, mission and caseload of the LSTC.

Senator Tom Campbell of Grafton says it was extremely disappointing to see it come back in the form of a legislative management study in the end.

"I don't think the sponsors truly understand the need for services provided at LSTC and the caring home we provide for individuals that live in Grafton," Campbell said.

Senator Judy Lee of West Fargo agrees.

"People don't know what the LSTC is," Lee said.

She noted that while the goal is to have as many people living in home settings as is possible,

the Grafton facility performs an important role.

"We need this facility as a safety net," she said.

She knows what she is talking about, as she has served in the North Dakota legislature since 1994 and has been chair of the Human Services Committee in the North Dakota Senate since 2001. The breadth of her institutional memory, experience and advocacy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is likely unmatched, according to Senator Campbell.

In terms of the success of deinstitutionalization, Lee says that the state can be proud of what it has done.

"We should also recognize that there is a benefit for these people who live in small communities because they are so engaged," she said.

She cited the experiences she has witnessed in Grafton and in Lisbon, home to the North Dakota Veterans Home. She is proud to say that the people served in these small towns are part of the community and interactions between community members and people living at these facilities is commonplace.

Andrew Moe, owner of Grafton Floral agrees wholeheartedly. As a member of Kiwanis, he has shared his volunteer experience with Greg, also a member and resident of Grafton who lives at one of the cottages on the campus previously reserved for the institution's superintendent.

"Greg is always there to help with whatever the club needs," Moe said.

"Whether it is at the concession stand during high school football games, or a pancake breakfast, or a parade, he is

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Andrew Moe Grafton Floral

always there," he said. "He is very kind to everyone and is a good guy."

While Sen. Lee feels strongly about the quality of care provided at LSTC, she believes a revised reimbursement formula will help private providers care for more of those at the center who currently need a lot of services and a high ratio of care providers.

"There are providers that are willing to take people if the reimbursement works out," Lee said.

According to Mike Remboldt, CEO of HIT, Inc., a private provider with headquarters in Mandan, his organization works



Hugo's in Grafton is one of the local employers of people who live and receive services at the Life Skills and Transition Center. Greg works in Grafton and resides in one of the cottages on the campus of LSTC.

closely with the staff of LSTC to plan and prepare to serve the people when they are ready to leave the LSTC.

"We've taken more than 30 people from LSTC in the last 10 years," Remboldt said. That said, Remboldt supports services provided at LSTC.

"It truly is a transition center, like its name indicates," Remboldt said. "They are a safety net for all of us providers."

Remboldt mentions LSTC CARES program staff, one of whom is located in Bismarck, as one of the assets LSTC provides to his organization. He also notes their program helpfulness, medication stabilization, and support they provide for referrals in and placements out of the center. Another benefit of the Grafton facility is a greater sense of freedom clients experience in a smaller community.

While the per day per person cost at LSTC may be higher than that of HIT's cost, Remboldt notes that LSTC cares for people his organization can't serve today. With around the clock medical, behavioral, and psychological staff they provide, he understands why LSTC's costs may be higher.

He noted the programming needs of people who exhibit no impulse control, severe behavioral issues, and inappropriate actions toward strangers are what stands in the way of success in community placements. The highest staff to client ratio HIT, Inc. is 1 to 1. The LSTC may exceed that ratio in some circumstances.

High staff ratios are required when dealing with people with those types of behavioral issues.

"HIT was cited by OSHA because it was shown that we couldn't properly protect our staff," Remboldt said. "HIT also had a client that sabotaged



This is one of 10 ICF/IDD group homes - eight of the 10 are in Mandan and two are in Bismarck. Three of the homes are for children and seven are for adults. They also have four homes with up to six beds. HIT, Inc. cares for approximately 115 people and employs 650 people. Pictured is one of HIT, Inc.'s four-bed homes.

everything in order to get placed back at Grafton."

Remboldt's citing of medication stabilization as one of the benefits of LSTC's safety net role is an interesting perspective given that overuse of medication is a common misconception assigned to treatment provided there.

Dr. Paul Kolstoe, psychologist at LSTC since 1983, completed his Ph.D. with a dissertation that, among other things, examined prescribing of psychotropic medications over a period from 1980 through 1995, the year the ARC lawsuit was considered settled. The study included those who moved from Grafton and those who stayed, returned, or were ultimately admitted there for the first time.

His comprehensive study determined that levels of medication decreased during the first phase of the study, through 1989. However, rates of medication returned to baseline levels for all populations served by 1995, despite where the people lived. What did decrease was the category of typical antipsychotics. The use of these powerful medications decreased at all locations.

"I found that overuse of medication was not really a problem with North Dakota services when examined over time," Kolstoe says.

While the preponderance of the conversation seems to support the need for the kind of transitional care provided at the center, the discussion of

closure of the facility still looms over the future.

According to video available on the legislative branch website, Sen. Nicole Poolman of Bismarck spoke in favor of the study resolution during this year's session.

"We know there will always be a need for transitional care," Poolman said. "We always need secure care for those with severe behavioral issues. Taking a look at expanding our statewide services so that more people don't end up on that campus is what we are doing."

The next part of this four-part series will discuss needs and concerns of those receiving services.

INTEGRATION INTO GRAFTON COMMUNITY IS UNIQUE AND BENEFICIAL

Greg very active in various areas

BY CHERYL OSOWSKI

This is the third of a four part series concerning Life Skills and Transition Center

GRAFTON - The law of the land in terms of care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is the United States Supreme Court's *Olmstead vs. L.C.* decision of 1989. The decision determined that it would find failure to locate community placements for institutionalized individuals a form of discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) when three factors of care were met.

The factors outlined by the court are: 1) professionals have determined that community placement is appropriate; 2) the individual does not oppose the transfer to a community placement; and 3) the placement can be reasonably accommodated, taking into account resources available to the state and needs of others with mental disabilities.

Advocates of a resolution to study closure of Life Skills and Transition Center (LSTC) often cite the *Olmstead* decision as the pervasive legal determinant driving their efforts. Yet, the United States House Appropriations Committee, in their 2018 funding bill

'He didn't like Fargo. He was afraid of the bus. He tried his bike but crashed and broke some fingers'

Carol Greg's mom



Photo by Cheryl Osowski

Greg stands in front of the cottage he lives in adjacent to the LSTC campus. The cottage used to be home for the various superintendents that served the facility.

covering Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, noted that the *Olmstead* decision did not condone nor require removing individuals from congregate facilities when they are unable to handle or benefit from a community-based setting.

Greg, who lives in a cottage on the grounds of LSTC, doesn't want to live elsewhere. His mother Carol agrees.

"We are so thankful," she said.

She noted that he loves his jobs, both at Hugo's and the Second Time Around store. She lists all the community organizations he belongs to and proudly shows off a picture of Greg at the Alerus Center, where he got to see presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama speak.

"He likes politics," she said.

In fact, Greg has visited the North Dakota legislature as part of the self-advocacy group he is involved with and is on a first name basis with some of his representatives from Grafton, as well as those who represent the Mayville area, where he grew up.

Carol outlined the many places Greg has lived since high school. He has resided in Fargo, Jamestown, and Wahpeton before moving to Grafton. At that point, Carol said there was no other option but Grafton.

"He didn't like Fargo," Carol said. "He was afraid of the bus. He tried his bike, but crashed and broke some fingers."

"Grafton is a wonderful place for him," she said. "If it closes, it would be very disturbing to him."

Greg loves it in Grafton. When asked if he would like to live elsewhere, he says he wants to stay in Grafton. He has two roommates in the cottage where he has lived for the last eight years. He says he likes to work and be busy. He said that while he lived in Fargo there were no jobs and no work for him.

"Fargo had nothing," said Greg.

Dan Kohler, the Day Program Director at LSTC, is the person responsible for making the connection between employers and those who live at the center. In addition to Greg's places of employment, people who live at the LSTC also help at the Lutheran Sunset Home.

Greg helps the staff of Lutheran Sunset Home take people to church. He visits with them over coffee after the services.

"Small town connections make it easier to find jobs," Kohler said.

Jack Maus, retired Grafton Public School superintendent, agrees.

"The students who came to Grafton's school got the opportunity to be very successful in a very tolerant school," he said.

"Grafton is as tolerant as any I have been in," he said. "Our students accepted the students who lived at LSTC in the classroom, at activities, and throughout the school building. These students should get the same opportunity to be successful in a tolerant school."

Maus also indicated he did not see the students who lived at LSTC as presenting any larger safety issues than other students at school. He said the biggest challenge was that they needed a one-to-one staff ratio, which LSTC



Photo by Cheryl Osowski

Carol shows off family photos as she speaks proudly of the life her son, Greg, has carved out for himself in Grafton.

staff provided during the school day. He also noted that the Grafton district was able to accommodate students who would not be served at other districts.

Maus also interacts with people served at LSTC in his work with the Save Our Strand committee, a Grafton based volunteer organization working to restore and update the local theatre.

"They help us with the work of our committee," he said.

"I just saw a few of our former students at the fall supper at my church," Maus said. "They seem very well-adjusted."

While Greg and Carol are happy with the status quo, another parent, Michelle, is hoping for a more permanent community-based home for her son Keith.

Keith, a teenager, has been served by a variety of providers since he was about nine years old, according to Michelle. Without access to sufficient in-home services, Keith was served by health care and community providers in various parts of the state, including the Anne Carlson Center, which currently serves a residential population of 56 people, according to its website.

According to Michelle, Keith couldn't stay at the Anne Carlson Center due to his behavior. He was, however, recently placed from LSTC into a HIT, Inc. home in Mandan, in preparation for the start of the school season.

While Michelle indicated that Grafton was fine, it was difficult for her to visit him there. She liked the fact that Mandan was a little closer to her home in Jamestown. However, before she was able to visit him in Mandan, Keith had returned to LSTC. Michelle thought a medication change may have caused a problem.

A unique role of the staff of LSTC has been to extend their professional expertise and experience to people and agencies across North Dakota. In 1994, the Clinical Assistance, Resources, and Evaluation Service (CARES) program was established. The purpose of the program is to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the state without them needing to be admitted to LSTC.

Help might come in the form of revised behavioral strategies, adaptive equipment or other transitional support.

Dr. Paul Kolstoe, clinical director at LSTC, directs the program, which provides a complete set of services across all disciplines, to assist private providers, families, schools, and other agencies with problem solving strategies for people struggling with challenging behavior and to provide other highly specialized services. In addition to direct support professionals, the CARES program provides behavioral health experts, outpatient physical, occupational, speech, medical, dental,

nutrition, and adaptive equipment services to people across the state.

This program also supervises individualized supported living arrangement (ISLA) services for 11 to 13 people living in their own homes in the Grafton area. Five of the staff of the CARES program are located in the field, spread out to Bismarck, Minot, and Fargo. They operate out of the home office in Grafton and travel around the state serving more than 20 agencies as well as over 300 people in a year.

While the *Olmstead* decision provides a basis for policymakers in North Dakota, the experiences of other states also provides important information for future planning.

Data on deinstitutionalization can be found at the Residential Information Systems Project (RISP), a data source held by the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration. According to this data, about 75 percent of states operate agencies like LSTC. Of that group, 60 percent were providing outreach services to people living across the state.

RISP data also indicates that states which closed their state-operated large residential settings have waiting lists for people needing services. North Dakota does not have a waiting list. It also reveals many states that say they have closed their institutions simply created other smaller units that still

provide services to 16 or more people in one setting, which is considered to be an "institutional" setting.

Since the 1990s, the goal of providing services to people in their home community has been a desired outcome. Yet, most people don't live in their home community because required specialized services are not adequately available or unavailable. Most live in one of the six larger communities in North Dakota. For instance, HIT, Inc. in Mandan serves people who come from all over the state.

Dr. Kolstoe notes that private providers use discharge plans developed at LSTC for each person served to compare the Grafton-based lifestyle with what they can furnish. If the provider sees a good fit, an offer is made to the individual to move to a new home closer to where they want to be.

In the last 10 years, people admitted to LSTC averaged a stay of 1.5 years with 85 percent returned to live in a private provider setting, where the CARES program works with local providers to ensure success. The program also provides services to people who never resided in Grafton - working to ensure their success at their current residence.

Next in the series will be a review of the next steps of the interim committee and what may be in store for the Grafton facility, those it serves, its staff and community.