

# NDVS/SB OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

*NDVS/SB provides individualized services and resources to infants, children, and adults with visual impairment to empower them in achieving their goals.*

## Memories from our Summer



Our Middle Schoolers traveled to Lake Metigoshe in June. They spent their downtime (and did lots of bonding!) at their cabin (left), explored the water and the dock nearby (center), spent a day at Annie's House, and traversed the high ropes course at the camp (right).



The High Schoolers spent a few days in beautiful Jamestown! They performed service projects, including at the Heritage Village (left), enjoyed their awesome rental home and backyard fire pit (center), and, of course, visited the World's Largest Buffalo (right)!



Finally, in August, our Elementary School group got "All Together Now" in Grand Forks. They wrote letters (left) and showed off their envelopes (center) before getting a behind-the-scenes tour at the post office. And they ended the week, as always, with a short program for their families (right). Thanks to all of our students and families for three fun, memorable experiences!

# CARING FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WITH AMY OSVOLD, MSW - PART 1



Amy Osvold, MSW, has worked at NDVS/SB for 15 years as a Vision Rehabilitation Specialist. She has worked primarily with adults but has done some work with middle and high school students, mostly focusing on Daily Living Skills. Amy recently received her Master of Social Work degree from Florida State University. With a new degree, Amy will be providing new services to adults and students. Learn more about how she can help your child and family by reading on.

## **What is your new role at NDVS/SB?**

My role at NDVS/SB has not really changed as much as it has expanded. I am very passionate about mental health and vision loss. It is an area that I do not believe has been addressed as much as it needs to be.

The Adjustment to Vision Loss services I can provide to adults, middle school, and high school students include talking through issues that arise because of vision loss, mentoring, social skills, and support groups.

As a person who has had vision loss for 41 of my 45 years, I have gone through all the stages of life visually impaired. I remember first losing my vision, being on large amounts of steroids, and not being able to control my emotions. I remember trying to “fit in” with my sighted middle school classmates. I remember being told I would never drive as a teenager and then being terrified of starting college. In all these events, I was alone. I was the only one of my immediate or extended family and classmates with vision loss. In fact, I did not meet another person with vision loss until I was 18. This is why I believe it is so important that the emotional side of vision loss be addressed and, if needed, acted on. Furthermore, I believe there is true power in knowing others with vision loss in different stages of their journey.

My goal for the upcoming year is to help connect students with vision loss on an ongoing basis. Time students spend at NDVS/SB is invaluable because they have opportunities beyond the classroom. Connections with peers who are experiencing the same difficulties is something that cannot be replicated anywhere else. I want to continue these connections through calls, Zoom, and other means throughout this next year.

## **What sorts of services do you offer students/clients and their families?**

During middle school and high school weeks, I help with social skills groups. I am located in Minot, so I conduct these groups primarily through video conferencing. However, if I am needed at the school, I do go and stay for the week.

I can provide Adjustment to Vision Loss, social skills, mentoring, advocacy, and self-esteem-building. Although these are the areas I worked on this past year, that does not mean that these are the only services I can provide. If you have a need, contact me so we can talk through solutions!

For parents and family members, I can work with you on Adjustment to Vision Loss Parent/Family/Spouse/Support Person Support. This may include helping you find resources, navigating social services, local therapy services, or grants.

I do not provide mental health diagnosis or mental health therapy. My services are strictly related to vision loss. If a student needs a diagnosis or therapy, I can connect you with local therapists and work with them to understand the unique needs of students with vision loss and their support persons.

*Contact Amy by calling 701-857-7635 or 701-340-9226 or email [abrunner@nd.gov](mailto:abrunner@nd.gov). In the next Outreach Newsletter, Amy will discuss some common mental health issues students face today and share some strategies to help students take charge of their mental health and practice self-care.*