

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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North Dakota State Hospital hosts holiday Celebration of Lights event on Monday, Dec. 4; Community invited to celebrate hope

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota State Hospital is continuing a long-standing holiday tradition on Monday, Dec. 4, as it hosts the Celebration of Lights event, which brings people from the community together to share holiday joy while raising awareness of people with mental illness who are in recovery.

The community is invited to enjoy a concert featuring Jamestown High School's Jazz Choir and Show Choir, the lighting of a Tree of Hope, and a visit by Santa who will provide treat bags for participants. Activities begin at 6:30 p.m., and refreshments, including cookies, hot chocolate and coffee will also be served.

All programming will be held in the hospital's LaHaug Gym, 2605 Circle Drive on the State Hospital campus in Jamestown.

"We enjoy holding this annual event because it brings people together, and it brings joy. It is hard to be in a hospital during the holidays," said Kim Kapp, Director of Inpatient Services at the hospital. "The Celebration of Lights allows people who are receiving inpatient mental health or substance addiction services to enjoy a traditional community celebration."

Kapp said the Mental Health Association in North Dakota (now Mental Health America in North Dakota) started the Celebration of Lights event about 27 years ago to help shine light on the stigma of mental illness, while honoring and supporting family members, friends and others living with mental illness.

"Like other diseases, mental illness and addiction are treatable, and people can and do recover. We all have a stake in promoting mental health and wellness for children and adults, so that our communities are healthier and happier," Kapp said.

The North Dakota State Hospital provides specialized inpatient or residential care to individuals with serious and persistent mental illnesses and substance use disorders whose needs exceed community resources. The hospital also provides other specialized services.

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