

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services 600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505

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Developmental Center in Grafton Changes Name, Celebrates with Open House on Sept. 17

BISMARCK, N.D. - The Life Skills and Transition Center in Grafton, N.D. (formerly the Developmental Center) will hold a community open house celebration on Tues., Sept. 17, 2013, to celebrate the agency's recent name change that reflects its transformation into a comprehensive provider of services that prepares people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to work and live independently in communities.

The celebration is from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Nutritional Services Building Conference Center. Guests can use the Dakota East Gift Shop entrance.

"This is a huge milestone for the individuals we serve, staff, and for the people of North Dakota," said Alex Schweitzer, superintendent of the Life Skills and Transition Center. "Over the past decade, North Dakota has dramatically changed how we provide services to people with disabilities to help fulfill their personal goals and life-long dreams."

The event begins with brief comments by Schweitzer at 1 p.m. Tours of the campus led by staff and individuals who live and work at the center will follow at 2 p.m. There will be various displays highlighting the services and supports offered by the dedicated staff at the Life Skills and Transition Center.

The Life Skills and Transition Center, which is part of the N.D. Department of Human Services, is nationally accredited and recognized for its person-centered community integration efforts. The center first received accreditation in 1989.

The specialized services offered at the Life Skills and Transition Center focus on a client's individual needs and goals. In 2007, the center began offering outreach services that support individuals in independent living arrangements, clinical and consultation services to support community providers and their clients, providing specialized community-based therapeutic services across the state.

Center's History

The facility was established in 1904 as a place to educate and care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 1933, its name was changed to the Grafton State School to recognize the training emphasis at the facility. It reached its peak population in the late 1960s with about 1,300 people being served per day through the San Haven (a satellite facility near Dunseith, N.D.) and Grafton locations. Admissions decreased and population levels began to fall when special education services became available in school districts.

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In 1982, a United States District Court ruling in the case of the Association for Retarded Citizens of North Dakota, et al., vs. State of North Dakota, resulted in substantial, court-ordered changes to North Dakota's service system for people with developmental disabilities.

In 1989, the N.D. Legislature approved a change in mission and changed the name to the N.D. Developmental Center. The San Haven location also closed that year. The state began to expand opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live, work, and participate in their home communities.

Today, the Life Skills and Transition Center serves 86 individuals on-site by providing specialized services and acting as a safety net for people whose needs exceed community resources. The center employs about 375 people.

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