

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | November 15, 2021

Grafton native Heather Jenkins named superintendent of the Life Skills and Transition Center

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services Executive Director Chris Jones has named Heather Jenkins the 15th superintendent of the Life Skills and Transition Center (LSTC) in Grafton, effective Dec. 1. The center plays a critical role in the state’s continuum of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Jenkins was appointed interim superintendent in July 2021 following the retirement of long-time LSTC employee and superintendent Sue Foerster. She has served as the center’s assistant superintendent since 2018. Jenkins has over 15 years of experience in providing direct care and support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in various public and private sector roles.

“Heather brings a strong passion for helping people with disabilities live as independently as possible,” Jones said. “She has played a critical role in helping transition people back to community settings where they can access services closer to their homes, which aligns with one of the department’s key priorities.”

Prior to joining the LSTC, Jenkins was a lead qualified developmental disability professional with CHI Friendship in Grafton where she coordinated residential and vocational services for more than 10 years and supervised a 12-person team that provided direct support to people with disabilities.

Her professional experience also includes working directly with people with disabilities as a program specialist at The Mentor Network in Grafton and as a direct support professional at the Open Door Center in Valley City.

She has a master’s degree in leadership from Jamestown University and bachelor’s degrees in psychology and human resources from Valley City State University.

The LSTC currently serves 47 adults and 20 youth on site and nine individuals who live in the Grafton area. Staff members provide specialized crisis and stabilization services and residential services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities whose needs may exceed community resources. The center employs about 300 people.

Since 1989, the LSTC has been nationally accredited by The Council on Quality and Leadership for its person-centered community integration efforts and specialized services that focus on each person’s needs and goals.

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