

Connecting



With Kinship

Summer 2014
Volume 7, Issue 1

Upcoming Events:

Amazing Chase
August 16, 1:00 pm
Heartland Park

Spaghetti Dinner
Sept 26, 5-7 pm
Century School



Nathanael Rairdon with Phil Sailer

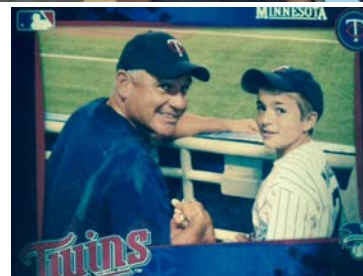
Ken
Thompson
with Zach
Kamphaus



Tom Miller,
Karina and
Bonnie Miller



Kevin Brauer
with Eddie
Neidviecky



Kinship Graduates Pursuing Education

By Jennifer Therkilsen

Congratulations to four amazing young adults who graduated from high school and Kinship this spring! Nathanael, Eddie, Karina and Zach all benefitted from the support of dedicated mentors who encouraged their social and academic development, positive decision making and goal setting.

Nathanael Rairdon was matched with **Steve Norlin** in 2008 until Steve developed health problems. In August of 2009, **Phil Sailer** became his Kinship mentor. They enjoyed the outdoors together fishing, and biking and cross country skiing with Itascatur Club members. Phil encouraged Nathanael to go out for the high school Cross Country team and was always pleased with his academic accomplishments. Nathanael was named Student of the Month in October of his senior year at Park Rapids and graduated in the top 10% of his class. He enlisted in the National Guard last year and reported to Fort Gordon, Georgia this June for his Advanced Individual Training. He expects to gradu-

ate in October and return to the Midwest. In January of 2015 Nathanael will attend UND, pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering. When asked if he felt like having a mentor made a difference in his life, Nathanael wrote, "Yes. When we were first matched I was having some struggles in life after my parent's divorce and Phil became a stable friend and helped me through."

Eddie Neidviecky was matched with **Kevin Brauer** in May of 2005 when he was nine years old. Much of their time together focused around sports and recreational activities including biking, swimming, boating, and especially baseball. Eddie served as a class officer all four years in Nevis High School, was homecoming king last fall and graduated an honor student. He will attend NDSU this fall. Does Eddie feel like Kevin made a difference in his life? "Yes. I have been able to establish a connection with him and have a close buddy for the rest of my life."

(continued on page 3)

*Kinship Connects
Adults With Kids
And
Puts Hope
In Their Hearts*

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(Graduates continued from page one)

Karina Pickar was ten years old when she was matched with **Tom & Bonnie Miller**. While the Miller's enjoyed many activities with Karina through the years, they all three treasure the memories of their traditional Saturday morning breakfasts at the Schwarzwald Restaurant. Tom and Bonnie still marvel at Karina's healthy appetite. They are proud of Karina for graduating from Nevis High School, and are pleased that she plans to attend Central Lakes College where she will study photographic imaging technology. When asked what she liked best about being in Kinship, Karina wrote, "I got the chance to have a friendship with two very amazing people whom I've grown to love." Did they make a difference in her life? "Yes" she wrote. "They became like family to me and helped me grow as a person."

Zachary Kamphaus and Ken Thompson were matched just before Zach entered 8th grade in Nevis. They enjoyed several years of playing pool at Ken's house, going to volleyball games, attending Kinship activities and volunteering at community events in Nevis. Although bright, Zach struggled in school socially and academically, yet gained self-confidence and social competence hanging out with Ken. Two years ago he moved to Swanville to live with his dad and graduated from high school there. Knowing Ken was a friend for life, Zach continued to get together with Ken when he came back to Nevis to see his family and attend scout meetings. Zach was active in Boy Scouts from a young age and this spring was honored for earning Eagle Scout, the highest honor in scouting. In the Court of Honor ceremony, the story was told of how Zach saved a fellow scout's life while swimming. He plans to attend Central Lakes College for training in heavy equipment operation. What difference did having a mentor make for Zach? Being one who doesn't enjoy paperwork, Zach hasn't yet returned his exit survey, but I observed a huge change for the positive in Zach's demeanor within a short time after his being matched with Ken. I watched them work together at Muskie Days, enjoy each other at Kinship events, and listened to his mother appreciate the positive role and important friendship that Ken offered to Zach.

With all four graduates, it was a joy for me to watch them mature into confident, competent, respectful adults who are eager to move into the next chapter of their lives, all knowing that in addition to strong family support, they have a very special friend who will be cheering them on and available to them for life. It is truly kinship.

Welcome New Mentor Matches!

Ray Niedzielski is enjoying a variety of activities with **Ryker**- from visiting Itasca State Park and running errands together, to scrubbing potatoes for Kinship's Fish Fry. They store the ongoing game of Sorry under Ray's couch for Ryker's next visit and explore more.

Barb Martin and Mary played in Kinship's mini-golf tournament with Barb's granddaughters, attended the Woodtick Theater's dress rehearsal and are busy enjoying lots of fun summer activities together.

Duane (Dude) and Carol Trosdahl are having a great time with **Nate**, planting trees, fishing, tromping through the woods, and more.

Linda Olson and Olivia are making the rounds from garage sales to the Woodtick Theater, and Evergreen Gifts & Fun Park to local eateries—all with their hearts full of smiles.

Ben Hendrickson and Dale got off to a great start playing Frisbee golf at Heartland Park and anticipate a summer of good times together.

Carolynne (CC) White and Makenzie will be making a splash together at Evergreen Fun Park and the library, as well as from their bikes and the boat.



Abby, Kayley, Sam, Mary and Dee were among the 18 Kinship mentees and mentors to attend the June 11th dress rehearsal at the Woodtick Theater in Akeley. The unanimous conclusion from kids and adults alike was, "It's a great show! Thanks, Woodtick Theater!"

Endowment to Fund Science for Kids

The Board recently approved requesting monies from the Kinship Endowment projects fund to take Kinship kids to the Headwaters Science Center in Bemidji to spark their interest in science. They will enjoy a museum tour, group demonstration, a hands-on activity and lunch with their mentors. This activity exceeds Kinship's budget capability yet fits the purpose of the projects fund perfectly.

Forward looking board members established an endowment fund for Kinship in 2005 for the purpose of providing financial support for the program, projects and activities associated with Kinship's mission. When endowed, monies are permanently retained and invested; annual earnings are transferred into a spendable or projects fund and can be used for purposes that align with the mission of the fund. Many thanks to previous donors whose gifts generate continuous earnings, year after year.

Current Board members want to rekindle interest in the Kinship Endowment Fund, both in growing it and using its proceeds. Early this year the Board deposited \$6500 into the endowment projects fund. The Kinship Endowment Fund now stands at more than \$65,000.

Kinship's Endowment Fund committee, comprised of Dave Keller, Carter Hedeem, Judy Miller and Bill Simpson, has set a goal of growing the fund by \$50,000 in five years. When you would like your gift to generate perpetual income for Kinship, designate it to Kinship's Endowment Fund.

From Kinship's first President, Ruth Foster



What an uplift to read through "Connecting with Kinship"! The theme of the media seems to be "downers," yet all around us, ordinary, caring people keep doing what they always do – caring. Such are the people who support Kinship in so many ways, great and small.

*Looking through the list of donors, I was so happy to see "***sustaining donor" next to the names of four supporters. This is such a great way to assure ongoing financial support for Kinship. Sending monthly or quarterly gifts easily becomes part of the donor's budget.*

Maybe you'll want to try this way of financially supporting Kinship for a year. Our year-long trial ended some time ago and we are enjoying it so much we are still sending monthly gifts. Whatever amount, donations sent in regularly help Kinship stay on budget. You, like us, may find this method of giving helps you feel more connected.

*A sustaining supporter,
Ruth Foster*

Ruth served as president of Kinship from 1992 to 1994. She and her husband, Bob, now live in St. Paul. They joined in the celebration for Kinship's 20th anniversary in 2012, found themselves impressed with the impact Kinship is making, and became sustaining donors.

Grandmothers Share Insights

Six grandmothers and two great-grandmothers are currently caring for fourteen Kinship kids. These remarkable women deal with challenges that sometimes must feel absolutely overwhelming. We asked these unsung heroines of our community to share a few words about the importance of Kinship to them and their grandchildren.

"It gives the kids a chance to do things with someone else. The boys have no male figures in the house and that is important for them. It gives me a break and they get to do things as a group they wouldn't get to do otherwise."

"it's been nice to have a second adult's perspective because they don't always think I know what I'm talking about. And for them to hear the same thing from another adult with a little different slant on things is really helpful."

"When my great-grandson came to live with me, one of my greatest concerns was how can I take him places or find a way to see that he could learn to fish and enjoy all

the things that a child in a normal home could do. I called Kinship and you found the perfect couple. He loves them and they love him. They have done more for him than I can dream of doing... We thank them every time we see them."

"Thank you for the opportunity to let you know how much Kinship has meant to my grandson and me. Kinship gave him a wonderful, sweet grandparent couple that showed him how to fish, golf, cross-country ski... they treated him like family. They loved him with their hearts and welcomed him into their home as one of theirs, not as a guest. They were warm, gentle and caring and looked forward to doing Kinship things together. Kinship also gave him an opportunity to be with other children, a place to be himself, meet other children in a social setting as he has no friends to call his own. He enjoyed each and every Kinship event. I hope Kinship remains strong because there are many boys in the area who need Kinship in their lives."



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 Thank you!

Mini-Golf Tournament has new champions

Team Taylor was named the 2014 champion team of Kinship's Mini-Golf Tournament June 18th at Evergreen Gifts & Fun Park. Marcia Cole eeked out a win with her



son-in-law John Taylor and grandsons, Jared and Austin Taylor over the Akeley United Methodist (AUMC) Men by one wacky stroke. Both teams scored 93 and had 8 holes-in-one. The tie breaker for the highly coveted traveling trophy was that Team Taylor had 2 wacky holes-in-one while the AUMC Team had only one. For the second year, the previous year's champion team was edged out of first place by one lucky stroke.

Twenty-four teams entered the tournament hosted by Evergreen Gifts & Fun Park. Skill was matched with pure luck on wacky holes as golfers were blind-folded, found themselves hitting a square ball or putting with a potato on the end of a birch stick. All the fun was to raise awareness of the need for Kinship mentors and to financially support the program. Many thanks to Evergreen Gifts & Fun Park and all golfers!



Mentors Brian & Zach Behrens, Bob Schissel & mentee Marcus, won at 6pm with a score of 99.

Kinship of the Park Rapids Area
 3rd Annual
Amazing Chase

Support Kinship Youth Mentoring and Create Fun Memories with 4-6 of Your Family and Friends

Saturday, August 16, 2014

Compete in fun challenges around Park Rapids & an all out final challenge in Heartland Park

Get your registration forms online at www.kinshipparkrapids.org

Your team can win up to \$1,000!