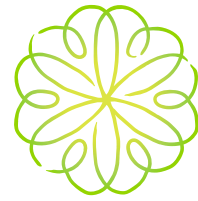


ANNUAL
REPORT
2021



Bellis

STRENGTHENED BY STORIES



A trusted adoption resource for schools, communities and individuals since 1983.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Eight years ago, at the first Bellis birth mothers retreat, we met a quiet, young birth mom who was just barely a year into her adoption journey. Terryn McClafflin's story was still raw and it showed in the way she processed and listened very intently to other birth moms who were years ahead of her in their adoption journeys. However, she also showed a special kind of maturity. The other young birth moms at the retreat flocked to her. She was fun and relatable. Open and honest. She spoke fondly of her love for Taylor Swift and admiration for Lindsay Whalen, now head coach of the University of Minnesota's women's basketball team. It was easy to feel like you'd known Terryn for a lifetime.

Terryn continues to lead, but this time it is not only from a place of quiet, relatable strength, it is with conviction and a determination to help others. She became a leader within our group of birth mothers, but also a driving force in the success of our outreach program and has spent more hours than any other volunteer speaking in classrooms. This is what made Terryn an obvious choice for the 2021 Bellis Volunteer of the Year.



Terryn (second from left) with her mom, Jennifer (left), along with Tessa and Janel Silvernagel, who drove from North Dakota to celebrate her recognition of Volunteer of the Year.



Who can stop at just a plaque or a pat on the back?

Not Bellis.

We took this one step further and reached out to Lindsay Whalen, who brought light and hope to our presentation to Terryn with a heartfelt note written specifically to her after hearing her story (and a signed jersey, too!).

HAPPY TOGETHER!

The Bellis community gathered on a sunny day in June for Tea & Talk, a fundraising event with a big heart.



Please join our next Spring gathering on May 21, 2022 in Elk River!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

By Jenny Eldredge

STORIES SHIFT THE POWER OF ADOPTION

A wise social worker once bluntly told me: “Adoption is very powerful.” I thought maybe she was a bit dramatic. I smiled politely and said, “Oh, of course.”

As years have passed since that conversation, I’ve heard a thousand or more adoption stories – and I see she was right. Adoption has the power to cause great good and great harm. A lot depends on how we treat each other along the way.

Knowing this, I’m convinced that storytelling is essential to making improvements in adoption outcomes. Happily, this is where Bellis shines.

As Jason describes on page 4, our classroom volunteers speak in schools (virtually and in-person), giving students a rare look inside the process and emotions of adoption and foster care. Teens are surprised to learn that common, insensitive terminology and myths are sometimes a century old. As a result, perhaps the next time they hear their parents reference an old stereotype, the teen will chime in with the gentle rebuke we all need now and then: “yeah, that’s not actually how it works.”

In the more personal setting of Bellis peer-support groups, storytelling shifts assumptions, including “I’m the only one.” As Cassidy writes on page 5, riding the emotional highs and lows of adoption can be exhausting in the best of circumstances. By telling her story at Bellis retreats, she learned she wasn’t – by far – the only birth mother struggling to face all the feelings. Sharing common bonds builds strength that simply makes the journey easier and healthier.

Adoption should be recognized for its power. Legally, at least, it makes and breaks families. But here’s the thing: The power of storytelling helps us all see things clearly – like that “family” is a vast word. And our family members are chosen by our hearts, not just our genetics or legal documents.

On the cover of this publication, you’ll see Kristen, Elissa, and Lindsey. All are birth mothers. They are all family, by incredible twists of fate. Like every adoption story I’ve heard, their stories cause listeners to remember that our capacity to love is WAY bigger than we might think. We aren’t alone. And the impact of our voices will make things better.

Thank you, Bellis community, for your heart-stretching stories that shift the power of adoption!

IN MEMORIAM

Early in 2021, we lost two of Bellis’ most prominent champions. Both were so dear to us and so essential to the success of this non-profit.

KAY SHEEHAN

Kay was among the original members of the organization, which was known as Adoption Option Committee, Inc. She served as an officer, newsletter editor, and many other roles. Kay balanced a firm sense of “do things well and right” and warm-heartedness. Because of her passion for adoption over 25 years of leadership, more than a thousand birth mothers received tangible support in tough times.



ROGER TOOGOOD

In 1983, Roger – then CEO of Children’s Home Society – heard about the starting of a nonprofit to build adoption awareness and support birth mothers. Roger cheered the founders along, securing a room for their first official meeting. That’s why we can say that since day one (literally) Roger supported Bellis. Volumes have been written about Roger’s influence on adoption, with positive impacts worldwide. We knew him as a friend, quick with an encouraging smile, always pulling strings for a new donation and another commitment from his buddies.

STRONGER TOGETHER RETREAT 2021

AN EMBRACE OF COMPASSION

by Cassidy Stumm, Retreat Participant

Home. The Stronger Together retreat for birth mothers is like home to me. I feel so safe and secure when I show up at this retreat. It has become like a second home to me. That might sound a bit funny since we only have the retreat once a year, but it truly is a special place. Sacred conversations and moments are had and made there. I know I am going to be able to connect with fellow birth moms on a level that most people outside of this retreat will never be able to. It's like skipping over the first date with all of the butterflies and nervous emotions! We welcome in everyone to this circle, exactly as they are. It's quite profound.

The way we are accommodated by the staff who volunteer their time and by the social workers who guide us through our weekend makes my heart warm. All our meals are served family style and are exactly that...hearty, family meals that are so incredibly good! We can be served and taken care of. I remember feeling weird about this my first year that I went on the retreat. I thought to myself "I'm just a birth mom. Why would I need to be served?" Until I let it sink in a bit more and allowed myself to embrace the compassion. This is the one time a year a lot of us even recognize that we are birth moms, and someone is willing to take care of us. It is the sincerest gesture.

It is such a relief to have a space like this, because most of us do not have people we can talk to in our day to day lives about our situation, or the bad days, or how we might be feeling on a certain holiday, etc.

Sometimes the weekend can be incredibly raw. Opening wounds you've had bandaged all year. Tight, so no one else can see your wounds. A lot of emotions can come up at once. Anger, disbelief, sadness, hurt, happiness, fear, the list goes on. I've always felt protected in a sense with professionals there who can help us process through our emotions. Grief is tough to work with but this year it was processed and talked about in such a fun way with all of the glitter and all of the gratitude.

This retreat has been a crucial piece of my healing journey as well. I can safely say I would not be in the healthy place I am at in my life if it wasn't for the grace and compassion of Bellis and this retreat.



The weather cooperated again this year to host a mostly outdoors retreat in September, centered in the scenic beauty of a bay, with a bonfire roaring and dinner by candlelight.



This year's theme was "glitter." How are grief, gratitude and grace a lot like glitter? We unpacked lots of symbolism – and embraced the mess.

NEW! SUPPORT GROUPS FOR MOTHERS WHOSE RIGHTS HAVE BEEN TERMINATED

MOTHERS HELP EACH OTHER MAKE MEANING OF GRIEF & LOSS

Every Tuesday, women gather in conversations hosted by Bellis. They are brought together by grief related to their shared experience of having their parental rights terminated after intervention by child protection services.

Statewide, about 1,500 women every year receive a TPR order. Along with offering meetings in Minneapolis and online, Bellis is invited to provide sessions at the Minnesota Correctional Facility – Shakopee program when COVID-related restrictions lift.

Launching this first-of-its-kind program was a significant undertaking. Happily, the funding community shared our vision. The Sauer Family Foundation, the WCA Foundation, and the League of Catholic Women (held at the Catholic Community Foundation) stepped forward with financial support. Remarkable licensed social workers and similar professionals signed on as contractors, giving us an agile team of facilitators and curriculum planners. Individual professionals – primarily Libby Onchiri, MSW, LICSW – worked tirelessly on a pro bono basis to offer expertise to ensure a trauma-informed process every step of the way.

What motivated us to stretch our organizational capacity to serve women in the farthest margins? Because it's an honor. Program participants are resilient, strong, inspirational, and deeply grieving moms. We can offer something as simple as a (highly trained) listening ear, acceptance, warmth of hospitality, resources, clarity around their legal options, and friendships with others who understand. And it causes transformations, little by little, each week. We can see their self-worth lift.

The Bellis community posed some questions about the organization's new work to offer grief support to women who have lost parental rights. Perhaps you have questions, too? We've provided answers below.

WHY IS BELLIS TAKING ON THIS NEW INITIATIVE?

First, after years of research, Bellis leaders knew the initiative fit the criteria of "it's the right thing to do." Second, Bellis is uniquely equipped to build trust with women who

Participating Women Say They Feel...

- ... **Less Lonely.**
- ... **Less Shame.**
- ... **Much More able to make meaning of their ongoing grief.**
- ... **Much More Supported.**

have experienced the trauma of going through the child welfare system. Bellis has no political or religious agendas and no affiliations with agencies involved in child welfare, child protection services, the courts, etc. Third, Bellis understands the unique grief of mothers whose children are parented by others. Our "Stronger Together Peer-Support Model," built over eight years, provided the framework for offering grief support to mothers who have lost custody.

DOES THIS INITIATIVE TAKE AWAY RESOURCES FROM SOME OF THE GREAT PROGRAMS I LOVE, SUCH AS THE RETREATS FOR BIRTH MOTHERS AND THE SCHOOL OUTREACH PROGRAM?

No. Financially, the new initiative drew new funders or past funders for new reasons. As far as volunteerism, school outreach has always attracted great volunteers. The retreats and new grief-support program do not utilize more than five volunteers.

SHOULDN'T ADOPTEES & THEIR ISSUES BE THE MAIN FOCUS?

As children, adoptees are hopefully the main focus of everyone involved. But we also acknowledge that, as they grow into adults, they may find it challenging to find resources specific to their experience. At Bellis, we are inclusive of adoptees in several of our program areas, including our School Outreach Program and Evening of Adoption Connection. Some wish we had a designated group – and hopefully, someday,

we will. However, at this time, we have found a greater need for support for mothers whose parental rights have been terminated within our community. If you search for emotional support for mothers whose parental rights have been terminated, there were none – until Bellis started one in 2021.

DOESN'T THE COUNTY PROVIDE SUPPORT?

No. (We asked that question, too!) The county provides support to a woman who is parenting. After parental rights are terminated, the support ends. There is no grief and loss support. The mothers are left alone in their trauma.

HOW DO WOMEN HEAR ABOUT THE MEETINGS?

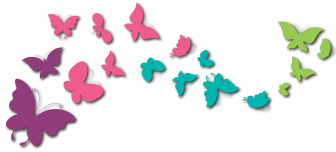
Referrals come primarily from professionals in the addiction, mental health, and legal sectors. Some participants come directly from recovery centers or sober houses. Many heard about it in the media, such as KARE 11 and MinnPost.



Program participant Nicole Peter (left) has been instrumental in inviting other women to join meetings, including via an interview with Jennifer Austin (right) on KARE 11 TV.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THIS NEW INITIATIVE?

We piloted the program with 10 women participating from April into August 2021. They graciously allowed our program evaluator, Tessa Lasswell, MPH, RD, LD, to observe meetings, conduct interviews, and collect surveys. Now, we are in standard operating mode, which means learning, adjusting, and growing, while offering consistent programming in a nurturing environment (in-person and virtually). Our in-person meetings focus on the seven-county metro area. Our virtual meetings also welcome and include participants from outstate and out-of-state.



WHAT SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES DO YOU EXPECT FROM THIS NEW INITIATIVE?

Our rigorous evaluation shows short-term outcomes include participants feeling less lonely, more able to make meaning of their ongoing grief, less shameful, and more supported. Visually, this can be described as a woman who participates in her first meeting, sitting hunched and speaking only in a muttered whisper. After a few months of weekly sessions, she's sitting tall and talking with confidence. She's helping others in the group and gaining a supportive network in areas of addiction, mental health, etc. Bellis social workers help her with referrals to new supports, as well.

It's reasonable to expect long-term outcomes that also benefit the mother's parents, her siblings, her child, and her child's adoptive or foster parents. One tangible example could include that future communication with her child, when possible, would be healthier.

WHY IS BELLIS MOVING AWAY FROM ADOPTION, FIRST BY ADDING STORIES OF FOSTER CARE TO OUR CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS AND NOW BY OFFERING SUPPORT TO WOMEN WHO HAVE LOST CUSTODY?

We see it as moving into adoption more authentically, not moving away. "Adoption" is a big umbrella word, covering many variations and experiences. Adoption from foster care is, by far, the fastest-growing segment of adoption in the United States. In Minnesota, 10,000 kids are in foster care, with 900 of them waiting to be adopted. Those kids need supportive school environments – and they have mothers that have been systematically overlooked. Bellis started in 1983 to support birth mothers... this is a natural progression of that mission.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST UNEXPECTED OUTCOME SO FAR?

So many elements are unexpected! One that stands out is that our initial research shows group participants have significantly more experiences of severe childhood trauma compared to other large groups of women. While Bellis peer-support participants typically blame themselves harshly for losing custody, they faced challenges many would find insurmountable.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE A TYPICAL GATHERING?

Women walk into the new Bellis space in the Uptown neighborhood. They smell cookies baking and coffee brewing. They are greeted by two licensed social workers, who facilitate the group meetings. The meeting starts with a check-in or silly "would you rather" question to shake off any nervousness. Then, typically around a theme, each participant brings up a challenge or celebration – a looming court date for a past charge or a milestone sobriety anniversary. The meeting closes with ideas for self-care and additional resources.

IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU FINDING SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES IN THE SUPPORT NEEDED BY THIS GROUP COMPARED TO THE SUPPORT BELLIS HAS TRADITIONALLY PROVIDED FOR BIRTH MOMS?

Similar supports are needed around grief, emotional isolation, and shame. Addiction is a common challenge. However, different supports are required in processing feelings related to involvement by child protection services and the courts.

HOW ARE YOU WITNESSING THESE WOMEN SUPPORTING AND CARING FOR EACH OTHER IN THE GROUP?

Group participants show each other unblinking compassion and acceptance. This is powerful to witness, as many have been rejected by their family and friends. They also gently hold each other accountable and offer tangible solutions for managing particularly difficult days.

HOW CAN I HELP?

- 1. Raise awareness.** You'll be surprised how many people know a mother who has lost custody. Let community helpers know about Bellis as a trustworthy resource.
- 2. Invest.** The bulk of funding goes toward contracting with licensed facilitators (two for each meeting) and creating a trauma-informed space. Go to mybellis.org to invest in this work.
- 3. Monthly TLC baskets.** Women who have lost everything can feel like they are worth nothing. Do little, nurturing touches matter? YES! Get a group together to create a basket of beverages, snacks, pretty plates, napkins, and frozen cookie dough (store bought). Enough for 40 will last a month. Sign up and learn more by dropping us a note at info@mybellis.org.

MEET OUR TEAM

LEAD FACILITATORS



Paola Schnabel
MPH, MSW,
LGSW, CPH



Libby Onchiri
MSW, LICSW



Kelly Tronstad
M.ED

PROGRAM EVALUATOR



Tessa Lasswell
MPH, RD, LD

BELLIS HOSTS SUPPORT MEETINGS EXCLUSIVELY FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS BY THE COURTS.

This is an opportunity to process grief and loss together. Gatherings are free and confidential.

LEARN MORE AT MYBELLIS.ORG/FIND-SUPPORT

FINANCIALS

STRONG – AND ADAPTING TO CHALLENGES

While Bellis' financial health is strong, we face challenges that are the natural outcomes of a year of state stay-at-home orders, distance learning for students, and an era of social unrest in the Twin Cities. In nearly 40 years of operations, with the support of our community, Bellis has proven to be skilled at adjusting to circumstances while keeping our eye on where we can best serve the adoption community.

Let's break the challenges down:

Volunteer Engagement: Considering COVID-19 stay-at-home orders were in place during the past fiscal year, we are proud that 80 volunteers chose to continue to share their time, expertise, and talents with us. In comparison, however, Bellis had 140 volunteers before the pandemic, mostly involved in classroom presentations. With schools opening and closing, curriculums shifting, etc., we had fewer opportunities to present to classrooms. That, coupled with distance learning stresses at homes, resulted in volunteers stepping back.

Financial Support Traditional Programming: As we had fewer volunteers in the past year, we had a 13% decrease in individual donors. During the same time, Bellis saw a 25% decrease in foundation support for long-time programs, primarily school outreach. Some private foundations and corporate giving programs shifted their priorities to pandemic relief and equity issues after the murder of George Floyd.

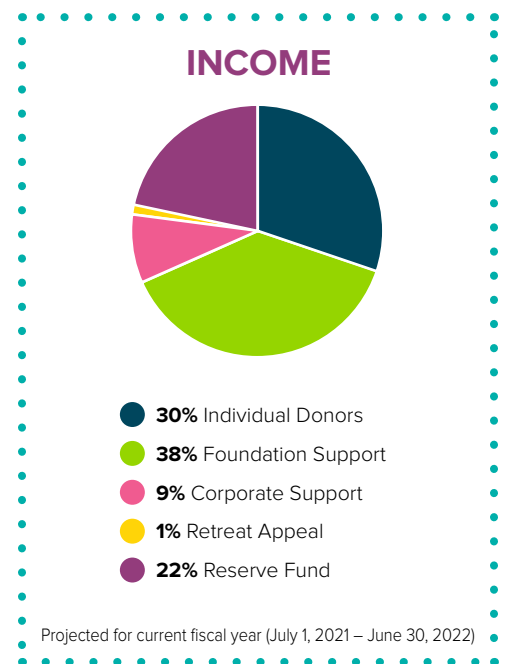
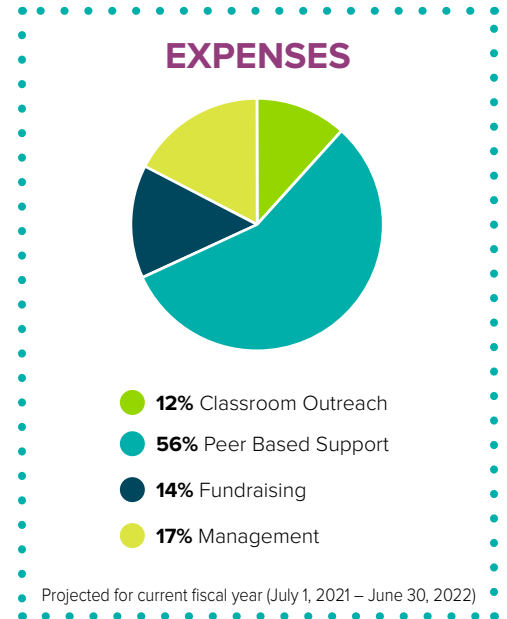
Best Use of our Capacity: As we move into 2022, we remain committed to making the best use of our resources. Before COVID-19 entered all our vocabularies, we were determined to add a peer group specific to birth mothers whose parental rights had been terminated. Even during the pandemic, we raised more than \$50,000 to finance this new program, and we supplemented that with a great deal of pro bono expertise.

This is proof that the broader community remains supportive of our mission of filling the gaps in adoption, foster care, and child welfare services.

We are hopeful the popular school presentation program will rebound to its previous strength as pandemic recovery settles across the education landscape in the years ahead. However, the health and wellbeing of our volunteers will remain our priority.

Although in 2022 we still need to navigate the best approach to future fundraising events (sunny garden parties, big fancy galas, or more intimate donor dinners?), we have great faith in the generosity and belief of our core donors and supporters. And, as we grow during trying times, Bellis pulls from operating reserves carefully tended for many years. The wisdom of our founding mothers never fails.

Bellis utilizes an outside bookkeeping firm to maintain internal control procedures. While the budget doesn't meet the threshold required for an annual audit, Wipfli's nonprofit group prepares our tax returns and ensures all state and federal reporting requirements are met.



We benefit from programs at several corporations that match employees' donations and volunteer hours. Please contact your human resources representative at your place of employment to see if your donations or volunteer hours can be matched.

MEET THE BELLIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



From left:
Libby Onchiri
Kristine Moser
(vice president)
Lis Moriarty
(treasurer)
Monique Lindquist
Kate Olson
Jenny Eldredge
(executive director)
Tracy Murphy
(president)
Kristi Lalan

*Thank you for being brave with us.
The Bellis community always says “yes” to our bold plans.*

You showed up for our COVID-safe outdoor fundraiser – in triple-digit temps! – and had so much fun talking with new friends that you didn’t complain about the blistering weather. This fall, when we decided to rent our very own space instead of borrowing from others, you stepped forward with about \$3,000 for Bellis to buy furniture – in a week’s time!

This year has been trying on many levels. But it’s impossible to feel discouraged at Bellis because you folks share your enthusiasm and hearts so freely.

We look forward to supporting the Bellis community in weaving stories to create a stronger, more caring world for adoption!

Tracy Murphy, President

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Bellis is to be an empowering voice for adoption that connects, inspires and transforms.

CORE VALUES

Community is at the core of all Bellis seeks to accomplish and how it aspires to operate. Within this context, Bellis most highly values:

- Honor in all interactions, seeking to earn and nurture trust and respect.
- Vulnerability in relationships, acknowledging that growth comes through openness.
- An inviting approach in gatherings, believing that an accepting and nonjudgmental space is necessary to discuss adoption experiences.

VISION STATEMENT

A world where everyone with an adoption story belongs and has a voice.

THANK YOU, DONORS!

\$30,000

Foundation

The WCA Foundation

\$13,000

Foundation

The Sauer Family Foundation

\$2,500 to \$9,999

Foundation

Agape Foundation

Frehls Family Foundation

League of Catholic Women,
held at the Catholic Community
Foundation of Minnesota

The Richard M. Schulze
Family Foundation

John Sluck & Anita Sluck
Foundation

Leonette M. & Fred T. Lanners
Foundation

Company

Old National Bank

Individual

Jeff & Justine Fritz

Shirley Fritz

Laureen & Willie Harbert

Kristi Lalan

Thomas & Tracy Murphy

The Estate of Catherine
Kaiser Sheehan

\$1,000 to \$2,499

Foundation

Catholic Community
Foundation

The Patricia Grace Founders
Fund

Colleen Rooney Powers -
In Memory of John & Kathy
Rooney

Company

Eaton

Great River Energy

KimbleCo (Julie Kimble)

My Adoption Advisor

Virtual Bookkeeping USA

Individual

Marion Eldredge

Jenny Eldredge & Cam Potts

Eric & Pam Hulstrand

Vicky & Michael Iacarella

Mat & Monique Lindquist

Ryan & Kristine Moser

John & Patty Overson

Shane & Jessica Slominski

\$250 to \$999

Foundation

Anonymous Family Fund
of the Catholic Community
Foundation

Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic
Church

Team SPS Gives Back

Charitable Fund of The

Minneapolis Foundation

Company

Blue Cross Blue Shield

Children's Home Society and
Lutheran Social Service
of Minnesota

Eaton

Elton Eyecare Inc.

General Mills

Maguire Agency

Tin Whiskers Brewing Company

Individual

John & Julie Adams

Elaine Anderson

Joline & Chad Anderson

Michelle Asell

Beth Bjork

Stephen & Sheila Brzica

Mary Eldredge-Sandbo

Jennifer Friedman - Edina Realty

Deb Geis

Tim & Lisa Haag

Kirsten Hedin & John Nerge

Fr. Paul Jaroszeski

Keith & Janet McCarty

Annie & Gregory Meehan

Jeff & Lis Moriarty

Vanessa Mullenix

Bruce Nowlin & Maggie

Jones

Arlis & Margaret Olson

Kelly Roehl

Amy Rooney

Don & Jenine Rumreich

Cindy Schramm

Steve & Sheila Schumacher

Christi Thompson

Allison & Larrie Thorne

Up to \$249

Foundation

AmazonSmile Foundation

Cerkvenik's Awesome Fund
of The Minneapolis Foundation

Company

Ameriprise Financial

Allina Health

Blue Cross Blue Shield

Cargill

Larkin Hoffman

Minnetronix

UnitedHealth Group

Individual

Ann M.

Kristen Asleson

Miranda Barker

Roger Battreall

Christine Bauer

Scott & MJ Berglund

Paul & Margaret Berrisford

Wenda Burandt

Edward Caldwell

Cheryl Carlson

David Colwell

Shannon Cosgrove-Rucker

Andrew Courneya

Rachel Cushing

Dianne Delaney

Lori Demester

Steve & Gina Ehni Brian

Engelking

Jeffrey Erager

Brittany Esau

Julie Gordon

David & Tracy Guest

Jenifer Hanson

John Hedrick

Laura Henriksen

Eric & Diana Hunter

Rachel Lantow

Louise Larsen

Barb LeCuyer

Elizabeth Luzum

Terryn McClaflin

Geraldine Mooers

Tom & Terri Moriarty

Kat Moses

Kathryn Maillette

Meg Payne Nelson

Patrick & Kate Olson

Brian Overson

Scott Overson

Reno & Deb Overson

Paul & Susan Plunkett

Lindsey Polin

Jim & Kathy Reed

LeAnn Ring

Elissa Robinson

Jennifer Sawyer

Leah Schmidt

Jennifer Sheridan

Janel Silvernagel

Anne Smith

Joseph & Sharon Soderlund

Lindsay Strand

Lory Sutton

Sharon Toogood Froehle

Betsy Trondson

Colleen Tronson

Sara Warner

Jean & Jon Weber

Richard Weigel

Andrea Wenker

Joe & Danielle Wenker

Claire Zehrer

HONORING & REMEMBERING SPECIAL PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES



In Honor of Matthew

Anonymous

In Honor of BriBri

Leah Wheeler

In Honor Daniel Reimann

Joe & Carolyn Baldus

In Honor of Maddie

Rebecca Asch-Kendrick

In Honor of Jenny Eldredge

Fr. Paul Jaroszeski

In Honor of Tracy Murphy

Stephanie Kohl

In Honor of Kate Olson

Judi Funk

In Honor of Betsy Trondson

Kristi Lalan

In Honor of Lauren Harbert

Melvin C. Tews

In Honor of My Adoptive Mom, Louise Larsen

In Honor of My Adoptive Dad, Don Larsen

In Honor of My Birth Mom, Bev Anderson

Deb Geis

In Honor of my ever-expanding, wonderful family

Mary Harms

In Honor of Allison, Mary & Erin

Chad & Andrea Smith

In Memory of my babies

Paula Trulen

In Memory of Irene Berg

Elwin Berg

In Memory of Robert Hamel

Robert Bennett

In Memory of Mary Kennedy Hamel

Mark & Beth Hamel

In Memory of Thomas J. Lausen

Marjorie Lausen

In Memory of Dan & Meg Lezer

Doug & Melissa Lezer

In Memory of Dick Sheehan

Joyce Kauth

In Memory of Mary Lou Stewart

Floyd Stewart

In Memory of Marie Dehn & Lowell Dehn

Kevin Dehn

In Memory of Charles Eldredge

Chuck & Kristen Votava

In Memory of my sister, Deidre Hedrick

Marcia Schug

In Memory of Dr. & Mrs. J.C. Mankey

Margaret Hoppmann

In Memory of Kay Sheehan

Jill Aranyi, Jeanne Dick, Vicky Iacarella,
Julie & Bill Moyer, Patrick O'Brien,
Barbara Sheehan

In Memory of Roger Toogood

Andrew & Kathleen Ebbott,
Eric & Pam Hulstrand, Colleen Tronson

Our special thanks to companies and individuals providing in-kind goods and services, including our longtime friends at Christiansen Creative, a talented Hudson-based design agency, and Styled Stems, a beautiful floral shop in Blaine that is owned by Leah Schmidt.

Every effort is made to accurately recognize every individual and organization that has given a financial contribution to Bellis since the printing of the last annual report. This list does not include registration tickets or purchase of clothing items, nor does it include those who have given donations of items for various fundraising and hosting functions. The list of friends, supporters and volunteers is long and we are truly grateful!

Please inform us if your name is not presented as you wish.



Bellis

YOU ARE INVITED

EVENING OF ADOPTION CONNECTION

Last Sunday of most months

Evening of Adoption Connection meetings are for all touched by adoption and foster care. This wide spectrum of experiences brings a sense of commonality that is affirming and encouraging. The event is free for attendees. Evening of Adoption Connection meetings will flex between in-person and virtual. Please refer to the calendar at mybellis.org/calendar for more details.

STRONGER TOGETHER DAY RETREAT

April 10 • Charlson Meadows in Victoria

Birth parents are invited to participate in educational sessions, activities and discussions intended to address topics of grief, self-care, self-worth, and identity. Most importantly, the retreat seeks to form new bonds of friendship. Lunch and snacks are provided. Discussions will be facilitated by Meagan Galbari, MA, LPCC, who has extensive experience in professional adoption support and Bellis programming. A registration fee of \$30 is requested.

STRONGER TOGETHER WEEKEND RETREAT

Sept. 16–18 • Near Deerwood

This weekend retreat offers peer-based support for birth mothers in a beautiful natural setting. One participant described it as: “Nurturing the vulnerability of our individual and cumulative adoption stories.” It is the only weekend retreat for birth mothers in Minnesota, and one of only a few in the country. Contact Bellis for information at info@mybellis.org.

For more information on these and other Bellis events, visit:

www.Bellis.org

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mybellis.org

info@mybellis.org

phone: 952-944-0866