



**Cystic Fibrosis  
Association**  
of North Dakota

VOL. 39 | NO. 4  
Winter 2023

# #Breathe Easier

## OUR MISSION

*The Cystic Fibrosis Association exists to help people with CF to breathe easier — physically, financially and emotionally.*

## RUNNING FOR MY LIFE

By Sophia Backlund

“Failure to Thrive” were the words written on my medical document as the reason to receive diagnostic testing for Cystic Fibrosis.

I was one year old at the time and could not imagine the roller coaster this disease would take me on throughout the trajectory of my life. The mindset of my CF Team, family, and eventually myself once I was able to fully comprehend the severity of the illness was to simply prevent progression.

With the best efforts possible, I was able to confront Cystic Fibrosis head-on and gain strength and hope from the baby victories. With every hospitalization, exacerbation, and infection, I made a point to remain optimistic and grateful for the health I had.

In 2019, I was fortunate to start a genetically modifying drug called Trikafta. For the first time in my life, I saw a positive trajectory in my health. My cough disappeared, my hospitalizations decreased, and my energy skyrocketed. I never knew what being healthy felt like until this point.

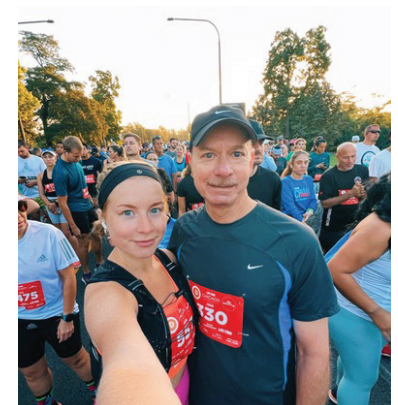
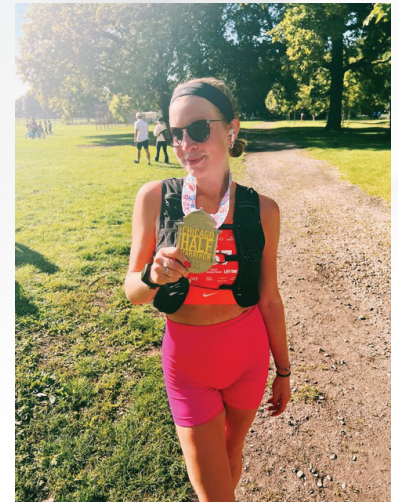
There were moments in my illness when I promised myself that if the opportunity ever arose to take my life back, I would not hesitate to act. With this newfound feeling of health, I threw myself into my body’s abilities and took up a new hobby: running.

I started slowly, knowing the scarring in my lungs would prevent any immediate success. Gradually, breathing

became easier and my distance lengthened. I found inspiration in my father who completed the Abbott Six World Marathon Majors in my honor, and signed up for my first half marathon.

I was able to train and complete the LifeTime Chicago Half Marathon in September with my dad by my side, beating my goal time in the process.

I was able to surpass the limitations that used to hinder me and discover the joy of taking my life back. By refusing to let my Cystic Fibrosis diagnosis impede me, I have made an entirely new definition of “running for my life” and can happily say I no longer meet the requirements of “Failure to Thrive”.



# CHARITABLE DONATIONS

*We extend our sincere gratitude to our friends for their recent gifts. Each gift received directly contributes to the programs and services that are offered to CFA members. Every gift, no matter its size, makes a difference!*

Kyllo Trucking  
CENTURY 21 MORRISON REALTY  
Priscilla Aipperspach  
Charles Allen  
Deborah Anderson  
Dave Anderson  
Anonymous  
Debby Barth  
Edward Bashus  
Lavina Benkendorf  
Lavonne Berg  
Fix It All LLC  
Scott Bloomenrader  
William Bobby  
Mark Brakel  
Whitney Brothers  
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Jean Cederstrom  
Julie Cofield  
Dean Deis  
Steven DeLap  
Sandra Denis  
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Emilie Fischer  
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Duska LaCount Charitable Trust  
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Mildred Lembke  
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Alden and Orpha Lieberg  
Dan Lien  
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Robert McCallum  
Dennis McCoy  
Larry McGillis  
Jon McMahon  
John Meagher  
Ashley Midgarden  
Christopher Morris  
Sharon Nelson  
Kevin Nelson  
Loretta Nesdahl  
Carol Nesdahl  
Steven and Cheryl Neu

Ashlee Nilson  
Keith Nilson  
Nilson Farms  
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Jody Paulson  
Mary Paulson  
Julie Pearce  
Peggy Peterson  
Thad Pulford  
Susan Rankin  
Debra Rham  
Patricia Ritter  
Bette Ritterman  
Kathy Rumple  
Paul Schadewald  
Farmers Union Insurance  
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Country Financial--Jodi Schmidt  
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Thomas Sletten  
Terry Smith  
Robert Sobolik  
Todd Stockert  
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Pam Suchor  
Alissa Thiele  
Cindy Thomas  
Reier Thompson  
Pam Thompson  
Megan Vatsdal  
Eunice Wagner  
Comstock WELCA  
Greg Wavra  
Teresa Welder  
Thomas Wellin  
Randy Wilke

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the gift reporting. If an error has been made in your giving history please contact us at (701)222-3998. *Thank you!*



## KAREN COSSETTE'S STORY



At the November Cystic Fibrosis Association Board of Directors meeting, outgoing board member Karen Cossette was awarded the “Caught in the Act of Caring Award” in appreciation for her 28 years of board service.

Karen has spent much of her adult life serving as a volunteer and board member for CFA, and we greatly appreciate all the work she has done on behalf of CFA.

Karen was born with Cystic Fibrosis and is living out a hope filled future thanks to advances such as the CFTR modulator, Trikafta. Karen recently shared that due to taking Trikafta since 2020, her care team has determined that she no longer needs twice daily breathing treatments—which frees us a significant time in her schedule. You can read more about the study that led to this decision here: <https://on.cff.org/46Ystf7>

We rejoice with Karen, and many other CFA members who have a greatly increased quality of life thanks to Trikafta. Your continued support of CFA makes this possible!



## 2023 VIRTUAL SONIA WALK A SUCCESS

The Balliet Family chose September 2 for the date of the annual Virtual Walk in memory of Sonia Balliet-Heidenreich. Family and friends gathered across the state and across the country to honor Sonia's memory, as well as to raise funds for CFA.



This event has raised \$7,000 in 2023, and the giving window for this year's event is still open. You may give online at: <https://ddock.co/2c01f757> or mail a gift to the Cystic Fibrosis Association with a notation that it is earmarked for the Sonia walk.

### We thank the following people for their generosity:

Paul Balliet	Patricia Kilber
Betty Jo Balliet	Jim Konrad
Paula Balliet	Melissa Kramer
Douglas Balliet	Kathy Kramer
Donovan Balliet	Ralph Kremer
Laura Bearfield	Thomas Lawler
Wesley Belter	Connie Lundin
Bridget Belter	Dennis McMillan
Lynda Belter	Mary Milchner
Maureen Bircherm	Michelle Mulberry
Kelli Burgad	Jack Nagel
Stacey Cokeley	Teri Nordby
Les Covey	Jeff Ohlhauser
William Davidson	Judane Ohlhauser
Sandra Deboer	Stacey Ohlhauser
James Decosse	Jean Ohlhauser
Rebecca Finch	Kirk Pandolfo
Betty Goroski	Dick Pearson
Nancy Hagen	Jen Pedersen
Diane Halvorson	Rosemary Pedersen
Daniel Hartley	Helen Renschler
Lori Hawk	Shari Scherr
Susan Heidenreich	Tammy Schuette
Deborah Hentges	Nicole Schwartz
Elizabeth Hermes	Carol Schwartz
Brian Jacob	Heather Sease
Shirley Jahner	Susan Sekerka
Kelly Jahner	Marcus Stalboerger
Julie Jenkins	Marilyn Surerus
Carla Job	Joe Vetter
Marianne Kalin	Carolyn Weber
Keith Kallberg	Craig Weber
Melanie Kalvoda	Tena Weber
Carrie Keener	Sheryl Zaun
Mary Kelsch	Gary Zoller
Marilyn Kelsch	

## FARMERS UNION INSURANCE DONATION

Courtney Schauer with Farmers Union Insurance dropped by the CFA office with a generous \$1000 donation to help our friends with Cystic Fibrosis to #BreatheEasier. Thanks to this generous gift, we are able to say “yes” to more people who need our help to pay for medications, or for travel to medical appointments. We are thankful for the continued support of Courtney and Farmers Union Insurance.



# HOPE FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS

As we look forward to Christmas, I once again, am reflecting on the Hope of the season, and the hope within the cystic fibrosis community.

I am rounding out my eleventh year of working for the Cystic Fibrosis Association of North Dakota, which feels like both an exceptionally long and a noticeably fleeting time.

I am not going to lie, when I first came to CFA, I was not sure how long I would work here. I was new to the world of fundraising and absolutely new to the world of Cystic Fibrosis. The CF landscape in 2013 was quite different than it is today.

I witnessed our members enduring hospitalization after hospitalization. I sat and listened to grieving mothers whose children fought CF bravely. I had come to accept that for many, an eventual lung transplant may be many of our people's only hope.

It was challenging work. I often felt unable to help these people that I grew to care for as if they were my own family members.

The tide began to turn as researchers were able to create CFTR modulators which have been nothing short of life-changing! The optimism and hope that many of our members have is nothing short of miraculous.

If you have time for an engrossing and informative read this winter, I highly recommend the book, *Breath from Salt* by Bijal P. Trivedi. This 500-page book traces the narrative of the CF community 1935 to 2020, and I guarantee that it will have you cheering at the end.

The same passion and enthusiasm that has helped to improve the lives of people with CF all over the world is also present right here in North Dakota with families that keep pushing for more and better, and health care teams that continue to show up for and fight for their patients.

In this coming year, I challenge you to dream big for the CF community. I know that our little team here in the CFA office sure does!

Thank you for your support in the past year, and I ask that you continue to support us in the new year as we strive to help all our members live out their hope-filled futures!

Pam Thompson



## MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

Giving memorials and honorariums are special ways of remembering and honoring someone who has made a difference in your life. The idea of helping someone else by honoring these individuals extends the positive impact of their lives in our world. Our thanks to those who remember, and to those they remembered. *Thank you to all who have donated!*

**In Memory of  
Sylvia and Jan Fatland**  
Dean Fatland

**Ryan Pritchett**  
Bob and Meredyth Pritchett  
Whitney Brothers

**Carley Buchanan**  
Terry and Cindy Thomas  
Kay Suko  
Michael Lehn

**Donald Olson**  
Dean and Sandy Swenson

**Paul Christianson**  
Dean and Sandy Swenson

**James Thompson**  
Dean and Sandy Swenson

**Tom Schmid**  
Dean and Sandy Swenson

**Neil Buringrud**  
Tom and Sandra Payne

**Duane Buzick**  
Tom and Sandra Payne

**Darrell Belka**  
Tom and Sandra Payne

**Marsha Bergman**  
Tom and Sandra Payne

**James Swank**  
Tom and Sandra Payne

**Geneva Miranowski**  
Dan and Phyllis Lien

**Jack Weise**  
Debby Barth

**Bill Gackle**  
Cindy Gackle

Mavis Seim  
Erhart Hehr

Karen Lindgren  
Brent Meidema

Linda McIonia  
Pat Zimmerman

**Arnie Nyhusmoen**  
Dean and Sandy Swenson

**Don Erickson**  
Dean and Sandy Swenson

**Shawna Gackle**  
Jill Denning Gackle  
Family of Ray Busch  
Family of William Gackle

**Dan Alexander**  
Jeff Hafner

**Clint Danielson**  
Susan Fischer

**Marcy Weight**  
Dean and Sandy Swenson

**Judy Siggerud**  
Pam Wohlwend

**Norman Rost**  
Norma Rost

**Joe Eversvick**  
Dean and Sandy Swenson

**Tom Mattern**  
Marjorie Johnson  
Al Jaeger

**Codie Eldridge**  
Jerry and Candace Eldridge

**Hannah Kramer Braaten**  
Sue Kramer  
Brent Winkelman

**Merry K Johnson**  
Pam Wohlwend

**In Honor of  
Chelsey Haukos**  
C Arlene Haukos







## BIRTHDAYS

Included are those members who have passed. In keeping with the reality that though they are not here with us now, they are never forgotten.

### September

Vicki Zacher 9-6  
Dillan Helbling 9-8  
Shayne Haustviet 9-19  
Adalynn King 9-19  
Michael Crawford 9-20 †  
Erik Swenson 9-20  
Neveah White 9-21  
Mason Kline 9-23  
Richard Eddleston 9-26  
Daviney McKay 9-27  
Ty Mills 9-28

### October

Logan Hahn 10-4  
Gunnar Bruce 10-8  
Joseph Bettenhausen 10-11  
Angela Schmidt 10-12  
Monte Deis 10-14  
Weston Bohner 10-15  
Tom Mattern 10-18 †  
Ashlee Nilson 10-19  
Khloe Schmidt 10-28

### November

Rebecca Dahl-Dwyer 11-1 †  
Kevin Thom 11-3 †  
Andrew Jahnke 11-6  
Ellen Voegeli 11-7  
Morgan Johnson 11-9 †  
Hannah Kramer-Braaten 11-11 †  
Denice Vetter 11-24 †  
Thalia Lanz 11-26 †  
Robert Schank 11-27  
Rita Rott 11-29

### December

Mandy Anderson 12-4  
Caleb Dorich 12-7  
Nicole Schwartz 12-13  
Kenna Brockpahler 12-16  
Seth Brown 12-16  
Jesse Hehr 12-20  
Sonia Balliet-Heidenreich 12-21 †  
Silas Sundby 12-31

## SUNNY SKIES FOR THE 34TH ANNUAL TURKEY TROT

Mild November weather allowed for a record number of 1900 Turkey Trot registrations. The Turkey Trot continues to be the biggest fundraiser of the year for the Cystic Fibrosis Association of North Dakota. The community of Bismarck Mandan continues to come together for this Thanksgiving morning tradition.



We are grateful to all who came out to run, walk, trot, and shuffle! We have been adding to the festive environment inside the Elks before and during the race. This year we were joined by KZ Photo Booth, Feil Orthodontics with delicious bananas, Make a Wish handed out granola bars as well as information about wishes for children with CF. Dr. Jacob Retzer with Unbound Physical Therapy offered free athletic assessments. In the parking lot 3andMe served up coffee and treats and AlphaLit Bismarck set up a fun TROT23 display. If you have not participated in the Turkey Trot—make plans to join us next November 28 in Bismarck! **Thank you to our sponsors who made our event possible and profitable.**



## GIVING HEARTS DAY

Once again, the Cystic Fibrosis Association of North Dakota will be participating in Giving Hearts Day on February 8, 2024.



# GIVING HEARTS DAY

On this one day online giving event, we hope to raise \$25,000 for the Cystic Fibrosis Association of North Dakota.

Giving is easy! Simply go to **GivingHeartsday.org** on February 8 and donate to the Cystic Fibrosis Association of North Dakota, or mail a check to CFA, 107 W Main Ave. #150 dated February 8 with "Giving Hearts Day" on the memo line.

We hope to use funds raised this Giving Hearts Day to help better serve some of our members who not only live with CF, but also face food insecurity—which is a very real problem in our current economy.

So, mark your calendars and get ready to make a difference in the life of someone living with CF!

P.S. - We are always looking for generous donors or businesses who desire to offer matching funds for Giving Hearts Day. Your generous gift can help double someone's donation. Contact Pam at [pthompson@cfand.org](mailto:pthompson@cfand.org) to help.



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Bismarck, ND 58501

Mike Zimmerman  
*President*

Pam Thompson  
*Development Director*  
*Newsletter Editor*

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BISMARCK, ND



## 2023 NACHOS NAVIDAD

A big spicy thank you to Taco John's for once again donating to the Cystic Fibrosis Association of North Dakota with the Nachos Navidad promotion. A portion of each Nachos Navidad sold at select Taco John's locations will be donated to CFA. What a tasty reason to grab a delicious lunch!

## UPCOMING EVENT

### GIVING HEARTS DAY

February 8, 2024

Mark your calendars!

**FIND US  
ONLINE!**



The CFA Newsletter is also posted on our website: [CFAND.org](https://cfand.org)

If you would like to stop receiving a paper copy in the mail, please let us know by emailing Pam at [pthompson@cfand.org](mailto:pthompson@cfand.org) or call 701-222-3998 or toll free: 1-800-767-3593.