

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For information contact:**

**Kris Fehr**

**(701) 483-8615**

**kris@bestfriendsnd.org**

**Best Friends Mentoring reopens office to public**

Joining other community re-opening efforts, the Best Friends Mentoring Program (BFMP) is launching new summer hours effective Monday, June 1.

Located in downtown Dickinson at 135 W. Villard, BFMP will open its doors from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday to the public. The mentoring program invites potential volunteers, donors, special event attendees and partners to its historic offices in the former Mandan Mercantile Co. building constructed in 1904.

“As we look at the community, we see the desire to engage with one another again in a safe and healthy format,” said Kris Fehr, the BFMP executive director. “We look forward to reconnecting with new people and those we may have missed in our virtual initiatives.”

BFMP pairs youth ages 6-16 with a trained mentor for one-on-one relational building and positive role-modeling meetings once per week. The organization is using several established virtual mentoring platforms now, including iCouldBe and Cricket Together, and anticipates a strong need for school- and community-based mentors this fall.

“Some youth may have done very well with distance learning but others may have struggled academically, socially and emotionally,” said Mark Billings, BFMP’s coordinator in Dickinson, Bowman, Glen and Hebron. “We may see an increase in the number of youth referred to us by the public schools and hope to have trained mentors ready to meet the call.

“In the right context, mentoring can provide an immediate infusion of hope, encouragement and empathetic listening to students who need it the most,” he added.

BFMP follows best-practice protocols issued by the North Dakota Dept. of Health and Centers for Disease Control. Washrooms and hand sanitizer are available at the office; however, face masks, gloves and other protective wear are not. The organization encourages all visitors to schedule an appointment with staff ahead of time by calling (701) 483-8615 or emailing Billings or Fehr at mbillings@bestfriendsnd.org or kfehr@bestfriendsnd.org.