

**FOUR STORIES TO GROW BY**



**A STORY OF ...  
BEGINNINGS**



**A STORY OF ...  
MISSION**



**A STORY OF ...  
COMMUNITY**



**A STORY OF ...  
DIRECTION**

# NATURE'S EDGE



## Four stories to grow by. . .

These 65 acres that are home to Nature's Edge served other purposes in other moments of time — once a cow pasture, a rock quarry, a solitary forested hill; now for nearly 20 years, a growing community of patients, families, therapists and staff who come together to focus on rehabilitation. The former quietness resonants with unnumbered footfalls of people and animals, with happy voices and conversations, all because of four stories to remember and share.

**The visionary starts with a clean sheet of paper, and re-imagines the world.**  
—Malcolm Gladwell

# A story of beginnings



Beginnings may be birthed through a flash of insight or a surprising discovery. In that moment of beginning, the first step forward materializes and beckons. The founding of Nature's Edge was realized in one such marked

moment. Founder Becky Payne, a speech-language pathologist, had invited several patients from her clinical practice to visit at her home, a 65-acre ranch in N.W. Wisconsin. During an afternoon walk down the driveway past the pasture, she was amazed by the reaction of one of her patients to the cow. Simply seeing the cow produced a motivation to form sounds and an attempt to converse in a way that had not developed in the clinical setting where she worked. Throughout the afternoon in the out-of-doors with her patients, speech-language interactions occurred fluidly, without striving to elicit responses. Becky was amazed that nature and animals had such a powerful effect and provided a very wide scope of topics and opportunities that could be easily employed for speech therapy. An idea began to form, and the Nature's Edge vision was born.



Since Becky was an accomplished horsewoman and a dog and animal person, her interest was not only piqued, but she had the knowledge base to advance the vision. She began to research the use of hippotherapy and animal-assisted therapy as treatment strategies for speech, occupational and physical therapy, as well as the benefits of nature for rehabilitation. Another fundamental component of Becky's vision was the

desire to provide therapy for all who needed it, regardless of their ability to pay. Because of this conviction, after the organization was incorporated in 2001, Becky applied for and received non-profit status as a 501(c)(3) for Nature's Edge in that same year.

Nature's Edge Therapy Center was born and a sense of mission was emerging.

*Holy cow! A cow sparked the vision for Nature's Edge?*



The Nature's Edge dream — a vision of nature and animals facilitating the highest quality of intensive rehabilitation, available to all, regardless of their ability to pay.

“Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”

— Martin Luther King

# A story of mission



The mission of Nature's Edge is to provide the highest quality of intensive rehabilitation by qualified and licensed staff to our patients and their families in a safe, natural and motivational setting, promoting the human-animal bond. Our ultimate goal is to facilitate our patients' independence and integration into family, school and society.

Essential values that support the Nature's Edge mission:

- We value each individual.
- We value and support families and caregivers.
- We value shared goals and teamwork.
- We value staff, therapists, Board members and volunteers who dedicate knowledge and effort to accomplish our mission.
- We value a generous community that reaches out and shares our mission.
- We value a better future for patients, families, and our community!



## *A story of mission — From vision to mission*

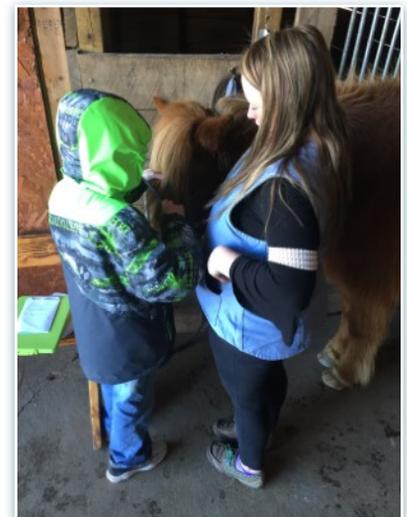
The components of the founding vision and the mission statement of Nature's Edge are quick to list:

- Exceptional therapy services
- Accelerated by integrating nature and animals
- Provided at an affordable cost and available to all.

While making a list is quick, implementing this broad mission has been a day-by-day and year-by-year effort for nearly 20 years of providing therapy services.

Exceptional and supportive therapy provided by diligent therapists, led by a dedicated board of directors, accompanied by committed staff and a full team of well-trained and well-maintained animals on a well-groomed 65-acres of pastures, woodland trails and gardens at rates affordable to all is an involved and complicated undertaking.

A visitor to Nature's Edge one day asked, "Isn't what you are doing just a form of luxury therapy?" No, luxury therapy is designed for a selective audience at a luxury price. The mission of Nature's Edge is to provide effective and affordable therapy that has every possibility of initiating a better future for patients and families.



# A story of community

If you visit Nature's Edge, you will meet staff and see animals, buildings and the natural setting. However, what is visible is the "tip of the iceberg." Nature's Edge is upheld by a large community of people and organizations who share and support this mission of providing exceptional therapy that is affordable. Collaborative relationships make the Nature's Edge mission possible: physicians and agencies who refer patients; volunteers who contribute creativity, time and energy; animal sponsors who donate financially or provide quality animals or top-of-the-line products for animal care; board members who lead and guide; donors who contribute financially. This generous community exhibits a dynamic linking of skills and resources that sustains the Nature's Edge mission. Exceptional therapy at Nature's Edge is built on the foundation of a vibrant community!



*Nature's Edge is such an amazing place! Everyone was so amazing to my daughter and has helped her so much! She has come a long way from when she first started! Everyone made such an impact on my daughter and I know neither one of us will forget it! Thank you so much. She got 2019 Miss Petite for Mardi Gras this year! I just wanted to share as she was nervous and scared but we used techniques you all have taught us to help her get through it and this was the end result! She used her big girl voice for speaking and I could not have been more proud . . . so proud I cried! Thank you all again. 😊*



REFLECTIONS FROM PATIENTS AND FAMILIES —  
"SHE LOVES EVERY SINGLE DAY THAT SHE GETS TO GO TO THERAPY . . ."

"HOW DO I LIKE NATURE'S EDGE? I LIKE TO TAKE MOSES FOR A WALK, MAKE CUPCAKES, AND SWEEP WITH BRITTANY . . ."

"NATURE'S EDGE HAS HELPED HIM ALOT TO BETTER EXPRESS HIS EMOTIONS. ALSO HIS ATTITUDE HAS IMPROVED!"

"IT WAS NOT EASY FOR HIM TO LEARN THAT BEHAVIOR AT HOME AFFECTED WHAT HAPPENED AT THERAPY . . ."

# A story of community



A mission this big can only be accomplished by a dedicated community!

## “Behind the scenes” community — our appreciation for these contributors and an invitation to new volunteers!

- Sidewalkers—Hippotherapy sessions need sidewalking helpers; some sessions necessitate tall and strong sidewalkers!
- Barn Assistants—Morning and evening chores, stalls to clean, buckets to scrub, animals to groom, floors to sweep . . .
- Summer “Reminiscing” Assistants — We welcome volunteers to help with summer sessions with Seniors.
- Fund-Raising Event Helpers and Participants— **Gala 2020 is January 17th!** Donate, help out and attend!
- Gardeners—Plant, weed, prune and develop horticulture therapy projects!
- Office Assistants—Office duties, organization, cleaning indoor cages. . .
- Writers, producers, photographers, grantwriters . . .



“This little (BIG) boy loves Becky so much! She has taught him basically how to talk since he was 3 years old. She is amazing and very very talented at what she does. My son has grown very close to Becky and enjoys going to therapy every week.



What a lucky kid! 🤔👍💙

“We have heard improvements in speech since he started therapy at Nature’s Edge — increased volume, quicker process time and response time, and increased initiation of conversations. He laughs more, tells more jokes, and communicates more clearly. . . . We have seen improvements due to occupational therapy — a more even gait, increase in balance, a decrease in involuntary movements. These improvements increase his independence and physical safety at home and in the community.”



# A story of direction

## The power of a scholarship

Five years ago, in 2014, the Board of Directors of Nature's Edge Therapy Center initiated a major change of direction. A new course was charted to progress the mission of exceptional therapy services available to all, regardless of coverage or private pay resources. The goal established was to seek scholarship assistance to help patients with financial need access therapy. Embarking on the unfamiliar path



was challenging, as we began promoting the idea of scholarship assistance for patients who needed therapy but who were not able to afford it. From a humble beginning, each year produced growth. Because of this effort, since its initiation, Nature's Edge has been able to award nearly 2,000 scholarship hours of therapy, benefitting patients and families who would not have been able to access therapy without scholarship assistance.

The power of a scholarship assistance package is surprising. Often parents and caregivers do not pursue therapy, even when they are convinced that it will help their loved one to progress, because they

are held back by financial concerns. When the financial obstacles are removed, a door of hope opens. Little steps of progress in daily living skills and movement and communication goals realized through therapy sessions can exponentially change their world! Your gift for therapy scholarship assistance is a dynamic impetus for a patient that multiplies its benefits beyond that individual to family, school, work and other community connections. Your generosity touches lives and moves the mission of Nature's Edge another step forward.

## Moving the mission forward, step by step!



"I'm kinda sad my sessions are already over next Friday. 😞

I really enjoyed working with you and meeting all the staff. You all have made a difference in my life.

I'm very grateful to you all and for the scholarship!" 😊

# A story of direction

## Scholarships provide new directions!



Dr. Brittany Meyers joined the Nature's Edge team in January 2019 as our Occupational Therapist. Brittany and Becky not only provide therapy to patients; they share the vision and mission of Nature's Edge with groups and at conferences.

### Gratitude for scholarship opportunities

- Thank you for everything you provide to Nature's Edge. Through your scholarship help, my daughter is able to get therapy, which has been so amazing for her. After a few sessions we already see changes. I am so grateful . . .
- Thank you for giving me the chance to experience therapy. It gave me a huge boost of self-confidence.
- Thank you for the scholarship funding. It has helped me grow and become more independent in my daily skills.
- Thank you so much for the scholarship you have generously given to my daughter. In just a few sessions, it has already proven to be incredibly beneficial and she loves it!
- Thank you for blessing me with a scholarship for Nature's Edge. I feel very fortunate to receive the help I need to improve my life. Nature's Edge has been very positive for me. Thanks again!



YES! I want to support the Nature's Edge mission by helping patients with disabilities access the therapy they need. A scholarship package for a patient includes a two-hour diagnostic evaluation and 10 therapy sessions. I want to help provide a scholarship package!

**I want to make a gift in the amount of :**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_     \$500     \$250     \$150     \$100     \$50

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please return your donation with this form to:

**Nature's Edge Therapy Center, 2523 14 3/4 Ave., Rice Lake, WI 54868**

*Nature's Edge is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. No goods or services were received in consideration of this donation.*





Treating Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Brain Injury

2523 14 ¾ Avenue  
Rice Lake, WI 54868

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



Check us out on the web or Facebook

[www.naturesedgetherapycenter.org](http://www.naturesedgetherapycenter.org)



Therapy at Nature's Edge

- ✓ Not a typical clinical setting, but in a setting that is vitalizing, motivating, safe and natural!
- ✓ Not one treatment strategy, but an integrative approach that addresses each patient on a multidimensional level!
- ✓ Not an unconnected session, but an opportunity to begin carryover of functional skills and strategies immediately in a homelike setting!
- ✓ Not a single therapist, but a community of committed individuals united around a common goal — our patients!