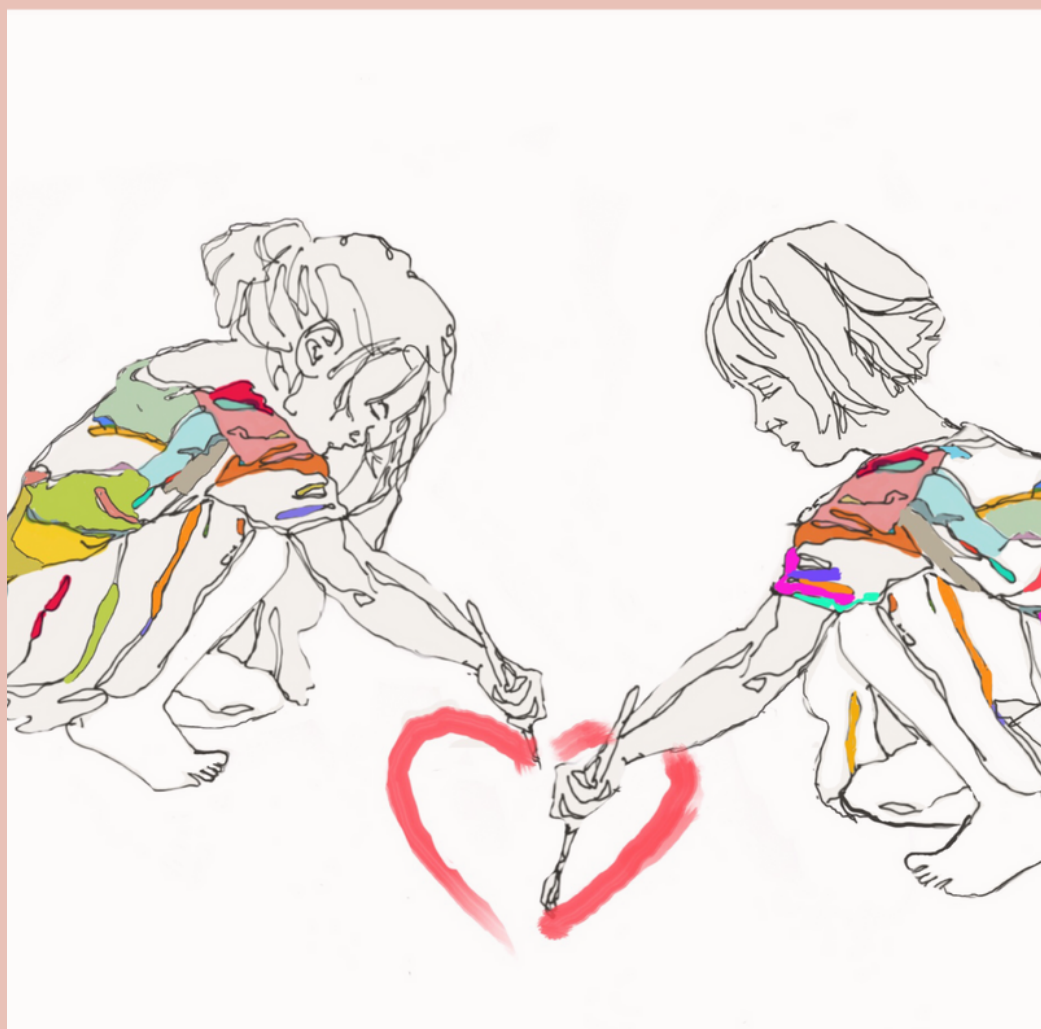


Kato towns

COMPASSIONATE CHARTER



2021-2022



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INFO@NICBLUCARES.COM

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We gratefully acknowledge that Kato Towns is on the sacred and traditional lands of the Dakota people. It is an honor to live, work, and promote community compassion alongside the Dakota and other Indigenous people in the Southern Minnesota River Valley of the USA.



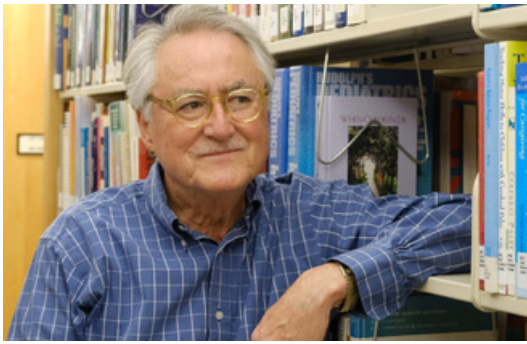
*Photo Courtesy of Twin Rivers Council for the Arts
Silo art by Guido van Helten*

MANKATO, BLUE EARTH COUNTY
NORTH MANKATO, NICOLLET COUNTY

**TWO CITIES UNITED AND REBRANDED IN THE
CHARTER AS 'KATO TOWNS'**

OUR HISTORY

The Mankato Area Compassionate Community and its Charter began as a Town Forum in 2017 led by the founder of the global Compassionate Communities movement, Dr. Allan Kellehear, then President of Public Health Palliative Care International in the UK.



*Dr. Allan Kellehear,
Clinical Professor, College of
Nursing & Health Sciences
University of Vermont*

The Town Forum started the public discussion and community development process for how we can better care for one another in difficult times. This gathering also sparked the development of Deva Nation with its mission of building compassionate communities, under the leadership of Mary Ann Boe, Déva's mom. In 2020, Deva Nation formed NicBluCares, the first public health compassionate community in the USA.



*Town Forum gathering
Mankato, Minnesota*

DEVA NATION: THE INSPIRATION

Deva Nation

FOSTERING BELONGING & COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES

[HOME](#)

[TEAM](#)

[EVENTS](#)

[DEVA'S STORY](#)

[CARE MODEL](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[CONTACT](#)



When a community member experiences suffering through loss or death, it is not solely the task for professionals to offer support. The responsibility of the care for one another in difficult times belongs to all of us.

EXCERPT FROM DÉVA'S STORY...

Over the next eight months in the hospital, we did not recognize that Déva had entered into a dying process. Spiritual and emotional needs were silenced by our frantic efforts to keep his body alive. There were, it seemed, endless surgeries trying to save a body that had reached its end. Déva never questioned his fate.



Déva 1972-1986

He never asked—Why the brain surgeries? Why a gastrostomy? Why an ileostomy? Why a colostomy? The only question I remember him asking was when I brought him to the intensive care unit for the last time. “Mommy,” he asked, “What is my new nurse’s name?”. I told him that her name was Lori. He responded, “Tell Lori I love her. Tell all my doctors and nurses thank you and I love them.”

– Mary Ann Boe, Déva's mom

NICBLUCARES

KATO TOWNS COMPASSIONATE CHARTER IS A PROJECT OF:



TOGETHER IT HAPPENS

Building Compassion
NicBluCares

NicBluCares is the USA pilot of a successful worldwide movement called "Compassionate Communities". The people of Nicollet and Blue Earth Counties in Minnesota are building a safety net of community support, strengthening our compassion and capacity to care for one another in times of crisis and loss.

NicBluCares.com

INTRODUCTION



Kato towns

COMPASSIONATE CHARTER
2021-2022

GLOSSARY

Compassion can be defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering. It is about the love that is freely given when we choose to suffer alongside the sufferer. From our global mentors: Prof. Allan Kellehear states that compassion is an ethical imperative for health; and Dr. Julian Abel, Director of Compassionate Communities UK, "Compassion is a simultaneous response of the imagination to a motion of the heart that ignites an act of the will. More simply, let's just call it the warmth of the heart."

A Compassionate Community recognizes that caring for one another at times of crisis and loss is not simply a task for health and social services but is everyone's responsibility. A Compassionate Community promotes education and opportunities to mobilize its residents to provide practical and emotional support when community members are in need.

A Compassionate Town Charter is the cornerstone of a Compassionate Community that highlights community-developed best practices to create a social culture where everyone feels that they belong and are cared for during life's difficult experiences.

The Kato Towns Compassionate Charter represents the experiential wisdom that is harvested from conversations centered around belonging, loss, and resiliency. Through grassroots community action, best practices are now established in the Kato Towns Charter, promoting healthy and supportive responses to the hardships we experience throughout life. The Charter framework is celebrated by the local government and expanded upon every year.

ABOUT THE CHARTER



The Kato Towns Compassion Charter project began in 2019. Initial focus groups were held for the leaders of fifteen sectors followed by focus groups for organizations within each of their sectors. The focus group discussions related to belonging, loss, and resiliency.

Each organization created best practices from the stories, needs, and suggestions represented by the voices of staff, employees, members, or students. The best practices were entered into the Kato Towns Compassionate Charter with the commitment of continuing a compassion-building process and the agreement to review practices annually.

THE CHARTER CREATES A COMMUNITY AGENDA THAT PROMOTES BELONGING AND INCLUSION WHERE ALL VOICES ARE INVITED AND VALUED, ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF NEED.

HISTORY OF KATO TOWNS CHARTER

NOVEMBER 2019 – NOVEMBER 2022



'Kato Towns' -Mankato and North Mankato connected by the Minnesota River

Photo courtesy of Mega Matt Productions

The Charter initiative began by empowering conversations.

We are all going through difficult experiences – how do we share our experiences so that we are not feeling isolated and alone with them? The answer is in the giving and receiving of our stories. We create belonging and build bridges by sharing our stories. Stories help us to heal, to connect, and to know that we are not alone.

Our community held conversations from 2019-2021 centered around loss, belonging, and resiliency. Early partners in the conversations for the Charter include **Blue Earth County Community Corrections, City of Mankato, City of Mankato Public Safety, City of North Mankato, Ecumen Pathstone Living, First Presbyterian Church, Greater Mankato Diversity Council, Loyola Catholic School, Mankato Public Schools ISD 77, Messiah Lutheran Church, Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, Minnesota State University Mankato, Mogwai Collaborative, MRCl, and South Central College.**

HISTORY OF KATO TOWNS CHARTER

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS IDENTIFYING BEST COMPASSIONATE PRACTICES IN TIMES OF LOSS.

This initial Charter was developed as an evidence-based research project with the support of community sector leaders, members of their organizations, and researchers from MSU Mankato School of Nursing Faculty. Support for this project was provided by the Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society. Researchers include:

- Diane E. Witt PhD, RN, CNP
- Mary Ann Boe, Founder of NicBluCares
- Kelly Krumwiede PhD, RN, PHN
- Kristen Abbott-Anderson PhD, RN, CNE

The best practices below represent fourteen focus groups and the seven sectors that completed participation to the end of the project. Two additional groups added their best practices after the research project was complete and open engagement began.

THE CHARTER



Kato towns

COMPASSIONATE CHARTER

2021-2022

A CHARTER IS BORN



HARVESTING COMMUNITY WISDOM A CHARTER IS BORN

This picture captures the Mayors of Mankato and North Mankato meeting in the middle of the bridge that connects their two cities to celebrate the birth of The Charter and the start of the Kato Towns Compassionate Community. This was the first time that the Bells of Belonging rang.

KATO TOWNS COMPASSIONATE CHARTER

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS:

First Presbyterian Church
Messiah Lutheran Church
City of Mankato Public Safety
Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
City of North Mankato
Mankato Area Public Schools
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato
Bethlehem Lutheran Mankato



Messiah Lutheran Church, North Mankato

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sept 15, 2021

- Addressing grief:
 - We give people the opportunity to remember loved ones by donating flowers to mark a significant date and in an annual worship service to name the loved ones lost within that year.
 - The Pastor shares a wealth of resources to support people going through different challenges and also for the families that are grieving the loss of a loved one – specifically through the first year of grief.
 - Deacons have “sunshine cards” that go to people experiencing hard times (loss, surgeries, etc.)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

- **Addressing belonging:**

- We are a presence in the community for events that focus on building people up (e.g., Alzheimer's Walk, PRIDE, Juneteenth).
- We share our time and money with local non-profits that work on breaking down systemic problems (e.g., loneliness/hunger/homelessness) and work toward wholeness.
- We wear name tags in the church so folks can get to know one another without the awkward conversation of trying to recall names from week to week as the relationship grows.

- **Addressing loneliness:**

- We keep records of folks living alone and with limited means of travel as a part of a “Home Connections” list. These folks are offered communion at their home, visited regularly by deacons and pastor, and receive special mailings to keep connected to the community.
- We have a caregiver's group to help support, mentor, and offer community connection to those who are caring for a loved one that can no longer be fully independent.

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, NORTH MANKATO

Sept 15, 2021

"Compassionate Charter Practice: Visitation Team"

Messiah Lutheran Church has a ministry team composed of the pastor and volunteer lay leaders for the purpose of visitation and connection with other members of the faith community, especially those who may not be able to join in-person worship and fellowship activities on a regular basis. Together, this mission team:

- Identifies members who may be in need of or interested in having regular visits. This identification happens on an ongoing basis, especially as there are life changes such as a move to a care facility, the death of a spouse, etc.
- Those members who desire a regular visitor are matched with a volunteer layperson.
- Visits occur approximately every 4-6 weeks, with scheduling done on an individualized and mutually agreed-upon basis.
- Additional pastoral care visits by pastor supplement these visits.
- Lay visitors bring communion as requested.
- Lay visitors are equipped with additional resources such as prayers and conversational guidelines to assist in their ministry.

CITY OF MANKATO PUBLIC SAFETY



CITY OF MANKATO PUBLIC SAFETY

Sept 15, 2021

As discussed at our sector leader meeting, one of the recommendations or best practices for our sector was to designate a person or group of individuals that can reach out and offer support when others are struggling with personal losses. Our agency is committed to doing this and will be training certain staff members in peer-to-peer support. We want to ensure that we set ourselves up for success and thus will be formally training key staff in peer-to-peer support practices versus informally adopting this as a practice.

Another suggestion and best practice is to develop or utilize quiet rooms to give space for individuals to process incidents. This is already a practice within the Mankato Department of Public Safety, and we will continue to utilize conference rooms and other quiet spaces to allow staff to have some quiet time to process calls for service.

Public Safety in Kato Towns will formally train key staff in peer-to-peer support practices, designating a person or group of individuals that can reach out and offer support when others are struggling with personal losses. Public Safety will develop or utilize quiet rooms to allow staff to have some space and quiet time to process calls for service.

MN RIVER AREA AGENCY ON AGING



MINNESOTA RIVER AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Sept 15, 2021

- MNRAAA encourages and assists in coordinating support for employees during personal life events. Support is provided by sending cards, flowers, memorials, and personal emails.
- MNRAAA values employee health and wellness, including when someone has suffered a loss or traumatic event. Employees help to develop and implement programming that is meaningful and timely. Guest speakers are solicited for staff meetings and retreats to address the current needs of employees.

CITY OF NORTH MANKATO



CITY OF NORTH MANKATO

Sept 15, 2021

Here are the practices the City will implement (and is currently offering in some capacity):

- **Public Safety Recommendation:** The City will designate or utilize quiet rooms to allow staff to have some space and quiet time to process incidents or calls for service.
- **Internal Employee Recommendation:** The City will provide an Employee Assistance Program that offers support to staff members.

MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sept 15, 2021

Mankato Area Public Schools commits to the Charter and agrees to express a view of health and wellbeing that embraces social empathy in our support of staff. Additionally, we commit to continuing a compassion-building process and will agree to an annual review of our practices.

The best practice we choose to highlight is Employee Health Promotions. It is the promotion of health and wellness activities for employees of Mankato Area Public Schools. This work influences the physical, mental, economic, and social well-being of employees and in turn the health of their families and our community. This universal program offered to each employee of every program, school, and position type is designed to be delivered through a combination of district-led activities and building or program-created communities. The work is delivered through the utilization of site representatives, who facilitate communication between the district program leadership and building or department staff members to encourage site participation in communal activities.

MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR OF DISTRICT-LED ACTIVITIES ARE:

- October Random Acts of Kindness Challenge
- November Gratitude Calendars
- December Physical health month and national handwashing awareness
- January Resolutions/Mindset
- February Heart Health Month Challenge
- March 10K a day
- April Mental Health Prep Month
- May Shape Up Challenge

Additionally, Mankato Area Public Schools Employee Health Promotions is partnering with Counseling Services of Southern Minnesota to offer targeted employee groups the opportunity to participate in bi-monthly reflective groups. This environment will serve as a place to come together and reflect on challenges within the job and think through options with fellow co-workers. The groups are free of charge thanks to legislative approval to provide school personnel with a place to discuss challenges faced in the workplace.

MN STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO



MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

Sept 15, 2021

Minnesota State University, Mankato commits to improving access to mental health care services and enhancing online resources.

We have made several advancements this past year or two with increased access to services through non-traditional means:

- Both Student Health Services and the Counseling Center began offering in-person or telehealth visits for psychotherapy and medication management.
- Mental Health First Aid was offered both in-person and online and increased the number of people certified significantly.
- An online course focusing on mental health awareness and resources was designed and offered to all students within our current learning management system.
- The Counseling Center incorporated a Stepped Care model that includes increased access compared to a 1:1 model.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Mankato

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF MANKATO

May 9, 2022

The Care and Connections Teams of the Fellowship have authorized the Minister to create Lay Pastoral Associates Program. This program will train individuals to go beyond the compassion cards and messages that these teams regularly send when acute issues are identified in the congregation. Under the direction of the Minister, Lay Pastoral Associates will be trained to assume a presence akin to that of a minister to companion congregants with chronic situations that require regular deep listening and bearing witness to pain practices. The first candidate for the position meets with the Minister soon to begin training. The program will be built out from there to assist the Minister. The other works of the Care and Connections Teams will continue, and those Teams will inform the Minister about who may have shifted from acute to chronic need.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN MANKATO



BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN MANKATO

June 14, 2022

Bethlehem Lutheran is intentional and committed to living out a compassionate presence for our members and for the community.

Support for those who are grieving:

- Pastors Care Ministry Team visit before, during, and after death.
- A Prayer Shawl is given to the dying and/or grieving.
- The pastors and staff offer assistance in planning a funeral or memorial service.
- Pastors offer referrals to grief support groups and resources.
- Church members who have died are remembered and honored at worship on All Saints Sunday.
- Gifts of food are informally presented or coordinated by congregation members.

Support for those who are lonely:

- Pastors/Care Ministry Team visits, phones, and sends written notes.
- Transportation to worship is provided at no cost.
- Wednesday night suppers are free and open to congregation members and the community.
- We offer a variety of small groups at different times.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN MANKATO

SUPPORT FOR THOSE SEEKING COMMUNITY:

- We are a Reconciling in Christ Congregation, offering an intentional welcome to identities and communities that have not always been welcomed in the church.
- Greeters welcome members and visitors.
- We intentionally look for ways to integrate members into small groups for service, fellowship, learning, and fun.
- We join in the Kato Bells of Belonging, showing our support for and solidarity with those who have experienced loss.

WE BELONG

Each one of us has a role to play.

We can enhance our sense of belonging and support in the places where we work, play, and call home.

We do not have to face hardships alone.

We belong. We take care of each other.

**WE
BELONG**

WE TAKE
CARE OF
EACH OTHER



COMPASSIONATE *Kato towns* CHARTER

YOUR NEXT STEPS



Kato towns

COMPASSIONATE CHARTER

2021-2022

YOUR NEXT STEPS

KATO TOWNS COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!

Support someone you know who is suffering:

Reach out with a phone call, a visit, a text, or email. Loss is not something we can fix. Compassion is about the willingness to suffer alongside another who is having a hard time. Being present and listening is often just what's needed.

Pause to remember when you hear the Bells of Belonging:

We invite you to acknowledge that we all experience loss and grief. We are all caregivers...and we all need each other.

Visit our Compassionate Community Website: NicBlueCares.com

- [Join the Kato Towns Charter!](#) Gather in circle conversations with your neighborhood, organization, or business to discuss and identify your group's best compassionate practice for The Charter. Then, add your organization's best practice(s) to Kato Towns Compassionate Charter at NicBlueCares.com.
- When you or others are looking for help, support, or opportunities for community belonging, find what you need at NicBlueCaresNOW.com, our Community Resource Directory.

INVITATION FOR CHARTER PARTICIPATION

All in Kato Towns are invited to join the Compassionate Charter. It starts by engaging in a circle conversation within your workplace, neighborhood, social club, school, or faith community.



CONVERSATION FORMULA:

1. Invitation to gather for a Circle Conversation
2. Agree to give & receive stories without judgment or need to fix
3. Talk about belonging; then loss, what was helpful or might have helped
4. Ask for a suggestion of a best practice to carry forward

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS:

Normalizes talking about loss
Deepens sense of belonging and community
Leads to resiliency and greater emotional wellbeing

CONVERSATION GUIDE: BELONGING



BELONGING DISCUSSION:

1. How do you define belonging?
2. Where are you connected with each other at work/school/community?
3. When do you feel a sense of belonging?
4. Are there any other supportive connections or activities you would like to have in your organization?

CONVERSATION GUIDE: LOSS



"THE WOUND IS THE PLACE WHERE THE LIGHT ENTERS."

--RUMI, 13TH CENTURY PERSIAN POET

Consider for a moment that while loss is painful and difficult, it can sometimes gift us with personal growth, and perhaps create meaning that can help us move forward with more strength and empathy than we had before.

You are invited to reflect on an experience around loss, whether ordinary or profound, find one word that could define a lesson or gift, and offer that word into the circle as a way of introducing yourself. For example, "My name is Beth, and my word is surrender." You are also invited to keep your word silently in your heart and simply say your name.

CONVERSATION GUIDE: LOSS



LOSS DISCUSSION:

1. With the losses you have identified, what was most helpful during that time?
2. Can you name a physical place where you felt most supportive, a person who you felt understood you most, and any words or actions that gave you comfort?
3. What was missing?
4. What role does the organization play in supporting people with loss?
5. Knowing the structure of your organization, what are creative ways to reach people with messages and actions of support and care?
6. What would be a best practice(s) that you would like to see in your organization to better prepare for loss, grief, or death?

JOIN THE CHARTER!

Had the conversation? The next step is easy! Visit:

NicBluCares.com

and complete the form.



Kato Towns Compassionate Charter

The Kato Towns Charter is a growing collection of community-developed best practices across Mankato/North Mankato representing how we care and support each other during life's difficult experiences. We are a compassionate community!

[View the Kato Towns Charter](#)

[Join the Kato Towns Charter](#)

COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY

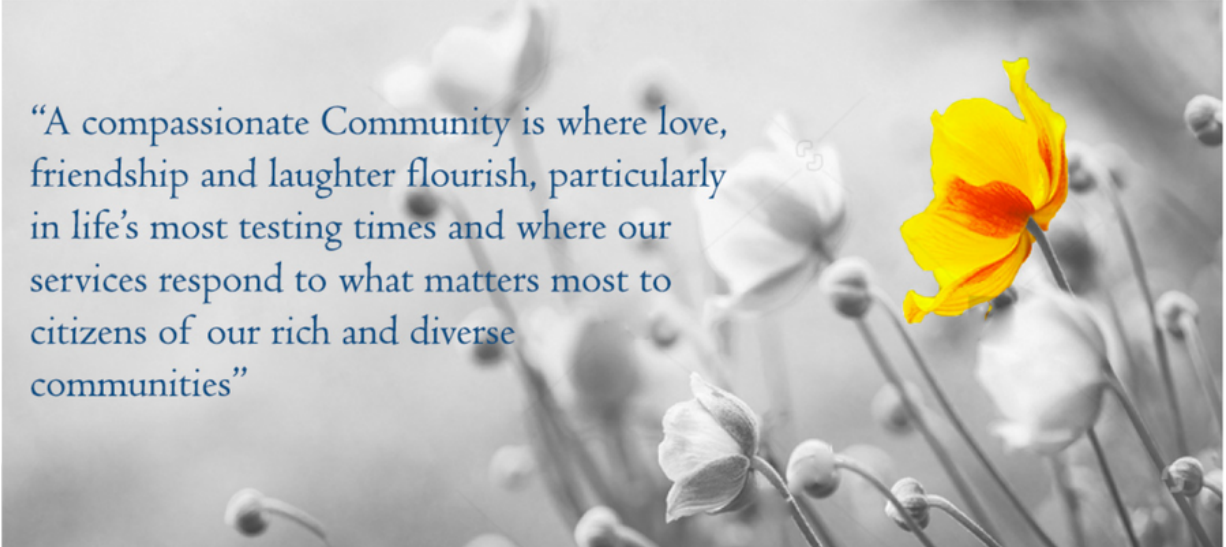


Visit NicBluCaresNOW.com

Explore, find, and connect with our community treasures of support and resources. The directory highlights free and reduced-cost social services as well as places, groups, and activities that promote wellness, belonging and social justice.

The screenshot shows the NicBluCaresNOW website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a search bar containing "community gardens" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar is a row of icons for various services: Belonging, Support, Food, Housing & Goods, Transportation, Health & Wellness, Care, Family, Work & Education, and Money & Legal. The main content area shows search results for "mankato, MN (56001) / food / Community Gardens (4)". There are filters for "Personal Filters", "Program Filters", and "Income Eligibility". A map on the left shows the location of "Blue Earth County Community Farm" in Mankato. The right side of the card provides details about the farm, including its mission, main services (community gardens), and serving area (anyone in need, all ages). It also includes contact information, a "Next Steps" section with an email address, and a "Closed Today" status with a link to see open hours. At the bottom of the card are buttons for "MORE INFO", "SAVE", "SHARE", "NOTES", "SUGGEST", and "CONTACT".

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES UK



“A compassionate Community is where love, friendship and laughter flourish, particularly in life’s most testing times and where our services respond to what matters most to citizens of our rich and diverse communities”

Compassionate Communities UK has been developed to work with communities to build compassion as a major value in life, manifesting in the way we treat each other and the world around us. Compassionate Communities is built on a combined ethos of a Public Health Approach to Palliative and End of Life Care and Community Development.

– Dr. Julian Abel, Director Compassionate Communities UK



DEVA NATION & NICBLUCARES TEAM

Kristen Abbott-Anderson, PhD, RN, CNE, Associate Professor, School of Nursing MSU, Mankato; Director, Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society (2019-2022)

Julian Abel, MD, Director of Compassionate Communities UK; Author of The Compassion Project; Host of Survival of the Kindest podcast (2019-2022)

Mary Bliesmer, RN, Emerita Nursing Faculty MSU, Mankato (2019-2022)

Mary Ann Boe, 2020-2021 Executive Director, NicBluCares; Founder of Deva Nation and NicBluCares; Founding member of Journey Guide Project (2019-2022)

Kevin Bradley, Rev, Holistic Stress Management; Final Exit Network Board (2019-2020)

Janet Brown, End of Life Doula; Climate Change Advocate (2021)

Jim Bueche RN, PHN (2019-2022)

Mary Conley, Stifel, Vice President Investments (2019)

Erica Fischer, President, One Bright Star (2019-2022)

Kristen Friedrichs, SHIP BE WELL Coordinator, Blue Earth County (2019-2020)

Joe Hunziker, End of Life Doula (2020-2022)

Allan Kellehear, PhD, FAcSS, Clinical Professor, Academic founder and international lead for the public health approach to palliative and end of life care (2019-2022)

Kelly Krumwiede, PhD, MA, RN, PHN, Associate Professor, School of Nursing MSU, Mankato (2019-2022)

DEVA NATION & NICBLUCARES TEAM

Lynn Kuechle, Coordinator, Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society (2019-2022)

Greg Kutcher, MD, Family physician and health care leader; Founding member of Journey Guide Project (2019-2022)

Bill Manahan, MD, Assistant Professor Emeritus, U of M Academic Health Center; Co-Chair MN Holistic Medical Group (2019-2021)

Kami Norland, CEO, Integrative Re-Sources (2020)

Shelly Olson, Scandian Lutheran Church, St Peter, Pastor, ELCA; End of Life Doula (2019-2020)

Ceceli Polzin, Community/Customer Relations Manager, Mankato Clinic (2019-2022)

Jim Sinkbeil, BS, MA, EMT, Retired Mortician (2019-2020)

Semerit Strachen, Director of Medicine, Cultural Wellness Center Minneapolis (2019)

Caleb Siem, Health Care Ethics, Community Member (2020)

Lynn Waterbury, 2022 Executive Director, NicBluCares; Death Educator (2019-2022)

Melinda Wedzina, COO, MRCI WorkSource (2019-2020)

Donnette Wheelock, End of Life Doula; Community Educator; Hospice Volunteer (2022)

Dani White, RN, Mayo Clinic, Registered Nurse Case Manager Hospice (2019-2020)

Diane Witt, PhD, APRN, CNP, Associate Professor, School of Nursing MSU, Mankato (2019-2022)

Alison Zelms, - Deputy City Manager, City of Mankato (2019-2020)

WHY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY?

From the Leadership of NicBluCares 2022

"Compassionate Community empowers residents to give comfort, healing, and make a difference in their own space. Our neighbors, family, and friends can easily access tools to navigate tough situations and remove any fear or hesitation. Support and resources are available, this project connects the dots for you."

-- *Lynn Waterbury, Executive Director, NicBluCares; Death Educator*

"A compassionate community is one where community members look outside of themselves, and the busy-ness of life, to reach out to those who share the community with them in times of need, loss, grief, isolation, and also in times of joy. Living in a compassionate community allows for those who are experiencing loss, grief, or other needs, to freely reach out to others and to be confident that their needs will be heard, honored, and supported."

-- *Kristen Abbott-Anderson, PhD, RN, CNE, Associate Professor, School of Nursing MSU, Mankato; Director, Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society*

A Compassionate Community has the potential to touch so many lives in the community to help ease suffering during the acute and chronic phases of grief. Most people want to help but don't know what to do or say when they see another person suffering. In fear of saying the wrong thing they often choose to do nothing. This program helps empower people to be able to express their care and support."

--*Diane Witt, PhD, APRN, CNP, Associate Professor, School of Nursing MSU, Mankato*

WHY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY?

“A Compassionate Community is where everyone feels a sense of belonging, where we all have access to support, and no one feels alone in their suffering.”

--*Mary Ann Boe, Founder of Deva Nation and NicBluCares; Founding member of the Journey Guide Project*

“Modern health care has made amazing advances in treating disease. At the same time, the personal impact of living with a serious illness makes folks desperate for support and resources as they cope with the burdens it causes. Compassionate communities will help fill this gap.”

--*Greg Kutcher, MD, Family physician and health care leader; Founding member of the Journey Guide Project*

“Compassionate Communities is the work to gather the threads of the fabric that holds us together. Building connections where human connectedness engages the power of caring can be a fertile soil where grief and healing meet.”

--*Jim Bueche RN, PHN*

“Becoming a Compassionate Community will only excel our already amazing community, bringing us together even more. This is especially important when preparing for end of life. Death is not a failure. If we prepare and know how/what to expect with death, maybe we can help with the grieving process. Death and grieving do not have to be the elephant in the room.”

--*Erica Fischer, President, One Bright Star*

WHY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY?

"The main benefits of the development of a Compassionate Community: contributing to the vitality of our community; decreasing isolation; building awareness of community resources; and as an enhancement to our existing health and social services."

--*Mary Bliesmer, RN, Emerita Nursing Faculty MSU, Mankato*

"This project meets the purpose of the Institute to "create partnerships to support the health of families and society." And "develop models that translate knowledge to change practice and improve family and societal health and healing."

--*Lynn Kuechle, Coordinator, Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society*

"Observing the societal landscape even prior to pandemic fears—the angst, overload, deception, tribalism, denial, the non-believing—clearly speaks to the value of the need for communication and compassion. The challenge is to listen to others, to seek similarities rather than differences, and to nurture our connections. Embracing compassionate communities that strive to bring people together in communication and engagement is worth the effort."

--*Joe Hunziker, End of Life Doula*

Compassionate 'Kato Towns' Community matters because the community has the opportunity to support and care for one another during times of loss and struggles. This effort belongs to the community, promotes healing, and empowers everyone, community members and all sectors, to implement simple actions that help us develop strong connections and a sense of belonging.

--*Kelly Krumwiede, PhD, MA, RN, PHN, Associate Professor, School of Nursing MSU, Mankato*

BELLS OF BELONGING

One of the best practices that has been adopted by Kato Towns is the Bells of Belonging. Listen to the sound of a compassionate community:



**FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH
FOR ONE MINUTE AT NOON**

Spread the word! Put a reminder bell on your phone, find a bell to ring out from your front porch or in the office, and let the school bells ring!

The bells remind us that while we all have losses,
we also all have each other.

"The acts of compassion the Church can participate in is written in the fabric of who we are and how we are taught to care for one another. This small act (bell ringing) is just another way we can reach out to remind our community that we are here and listening and loving through whatever they are going through."

--Pastor Lindsay Jacaruso, First Presbyterian Church

"The sound of the bells breaks into our days and reminds us of another reality—a connection to a power beyond us and within us. The connection we all know is strengthened in community. As we hear the bells may their sound urge us to find compassion within ourselves, in our relationships, and within the larger community of Mankato/North Mankato."

--Father John Kunz, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

BELLS OF BELONGING

We are ringing together to appreciate our shared humanity, to remind us that we are not alone. In this monthly minute of community solidarity, pause to consider how you might reach out with a kind word, a listening heart, or a helping hand to someone who is having a difficult time.

WE BELONG. WE TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER.



KATO END-OF-LIFE DOULAS



In 2019, thirty Sacred Passage End-of-Life Doulas from the region were trained in Mankato/St. Peter by The Conscious Dying Institute.

Please see [NicBluCares.com](https://www.nicblucares.com) under the **IMPACT** tab, Community Care, to connect with one of the featured Kato Doulas.

KATO DOULAS



KATO END-OF-LIFE DOULAS

How Can an End-of-Life Doula Help?

Offer help as you and your loved ones
navigate the challenges after a terminal diagnosis

Engage in conversation to determine what matters most

Determine the kind of support you need
(physical, practical, emotional, spiritual)

Build a caring network of support

Present resources, ideas, options, and education

Provide non-medical companionship before, during and after death

Work cooperatively with medical professionals and hospice

Listen to your hopes, fears, and goals around serious illness
(Best Three Months Coaching/Care Planning)

Use relaxation techniques and create a comfortable setting

Discuss legacy/life review work – explore meaning and your impact

Discuss end-of-life planning
(ceremony ideas, traditional and green options for burial/cremation)

Walk with you and loved ones through grief

Honor individual beliefs, cultures, and values

Provide respite care for family and bedside presence



*Life after a serious disease diagnosis can be profound, meaningful, and high quality.
Together, we can make your wishes and preferences reality.*

THANK YOU!

Thank you to our corporate and foundation sponsors and to the many individuals and organizations who generously gave support and encouragement to Deva Nation and NicBluCares.



**Dotson Family
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**L&N ANDREAS
FOUNDATION**



We continue to celebrate and grow
the treasures of compassion in our Kato Towns.



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