FAM FEST helps families

MAKING Children HEALTHY AND SAFE

GARDEN at GRESHAM

Understanding DYSLEXIA

One family’s story of recovery

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Dear Santa,

December 2-4, 9-11 and 16-18
6:00 – 9:00 pm
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Live Nativity Scene with Animals

These nine days of holiday spirit are Meridian’s gift to the community and will be free of charge to all.

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The Suzanne Gresham Center is dedicated to improving a child’s physical, mental and social well-being.

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765.288.1928

Copyright 2016 Meridian Health Services
Meridian offers services throughout Indiana in 41 facilities including 22 clinics. Delaware County is home to our main campus, the Suzanne Gresham Center, Child Advocacy Center, Meridian Health Pediatrics, MeridianMD, Women’s Health, and Meridian Senior Health – Behavioral Hospital and Assessment Center.

Meridian serves over 32,508 patients each year. Meridian has grown its market area and expanded services to provide “whole-person” health, integrating care for physical, mental and social well-being.

Meridian has 1,029 employees in Indiana. Over 150 employees are doctors, nurses and medical assistants on our constantly growing medical staff.

Revenue generated was over $128.8 MILLION during fiscal year 2015-16. Over $56 million is dedicated for our employees’ salaries and benefits.

Meridian provided 545,097 outpatient visits in the past year. In a recent survey, Meridian patients reported a 95% satisfaction rate with Meridian’s quality of services.

More than 270 SCHOOLS have partnered with Meridian to bring services to students. Over 17,068 children received services from Meridian.

Meridian’s community investment in 2015-16 totaled over $55.5 MILLION. Meridian provides charity and uncompensated care, community education and activities that benefit the community in addition to quality healthcare.
Community Report
2016 Community Benefit Summary
Making a Positive Impact on the Communities We Serve!

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CLINTON
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ADAMS
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39 INDIANA COUNTIES receive health services from Meridian.

Residents in DELAWARE

Outreach into the community includes advocacy, events and educational opportunities.

- Child Advocacy Center supports victims of child abuse and has increased the rate of cases accepted for prosecution by 320% since it opened.
- The annual Gresham Center Fam Fest is a free event for families, offering health resources, entertainment and food.
- The “Ducky Derby – Race Against Child Abuse” river duck race has raised over $35,000 for the Child Advocacy Center.
- FosterHope helps children in need of foster care, and provides training, resources and financial support to new foster parents.
- Meridian provided 5,346 Hospital and Community - 24-hour Emergency Service care visits to people with behavioral health emergencies.
- Suicide Prevention Training is offered to local organizations with the assistance of Meridian professionals.
- Meridian hosts a statewide conference for professionals serving individuals with a dual diagnosis – intellectual and mental health challenges.
- MeridianMD and Women’s Health promoted awareness campaigns and free health screenings for American Heart and Breast Cancer Awareness Months.
- Meridian’s Senior Health - Behavioral Hospital helped to substantially reduce Emergency Room readmissions by helping people with long-term success.
- Meridian’s medical staff and employees volunteer to teach continuing education programs to healthcare professionals.
- Many Meridian employees are community volunteers donating their time and talents to local organizations.

Last year, Meridian provided care to 2,991 individuals who were unable to pay for services which totaled $4 MILLION in charity care.

Services We Provide
- Primary family medical care
- Pediatric health and urgent care
- Psychiatric medical services
- Women’s health
- Senior health - inpatient and outpatient care
- Counseling and therapy
- Children and family supportive programs
- Child Advocacy Center for children affected by abuse
- Addictions and chemical dependency services
- Home, community and school-based services
- Homelessness and independent living support
- HIV care coordination
- Programs for individuals with both intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges
- Care management, skill building and supported employment
- Therapeutic foster care and adoption

MERIDIAN HEALTH Services
866-306-2647
www.MeridianHS.org
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Gardener.
Meridian manager.
Community partner.

JENNIFER LOMBARD
Meridian Health Services is a regional, progressive healthcare organization specializing in “whole-person” health integrating physical, mental and social well-being.

Meridian Health Services
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240 N. Tillotson Avenue | Muncie, IN 47304
765.288.1928 | 866.306.2647
www.MeridianHS.org

Hank Milius, President and CEO
Contact: Beth Clark, Vice President of Marketing
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Scott Smalstig: 765.215.7373 | Scott.smalstig@meridianhs.org

Advocate.
Leader.
Board member.

CHRIS FANCHER
Meridian Health Services is dedicated to providing integrated “whole-person” healthcare. This philosophy gives patients the services and care of primary medical care, behavioral health and human services all combined in a holistic approach to treatment.

Together we can.
Healthy solutions for “whole-person” health.

Meridian Health Services
240 N. Tillotson Ave. | Muncie, IN
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- Primary medical care
- Obstetrics and gynecology
- Inpatient and outpatient care for senior adults
- Pediatric medical and behavioral care
- Counseling and therapy
- Children and family services
- Child Advocacy Center for abused children
- Addictions and chemical dependency services
- School-based services
- Homelessness and independent living support
- HIV care coordination
- Care coordination and supported employment
- Supported residential housing
- Foster care and adoption
Dear Friends of Meridian,

Welcome to CURRENT, Meridian Health Services’ semi-annual magazine, featuring the exciting work and people who are helping make our community healthier. This issue is our Children and Family edition, highlighting families, people and programs who are making a difference.

At Meridian, we’re dedicated to making healthcare a priority in the communities we serve. We work every day to make an increasingly difficult landscape of healthcare easier to understand and navigate.

Our “whole-person” health approach ensures that patients get access to primary medical care providers and experts in specialties like psychiatry, pediatrics, women and senior health, and behavioral care.

In this issue of CURRENT, you’ll find examples that illustrate how this works in real lives every day.

You will learn about a mother who lost everything due to addictions and how Meridian helped her find control and success to regain her children back, obtain a job and a have a life free of drugs.

You’ll also meet Dr. Maleena Khalid, a new OB/GYN physician at Meridian Women’s Health, and others like Chris Fancher and Emily Leas who are champions for Meridian.

Be sure to check out the photos from this summer’s Fam Fest, including Ducky Derby. We bring thousands of families together every year to have fun and learn about the vast resources we have in our communities to help keep families healthy and safe.

We couldn’t do the serious work we do at Meridian Health Services without a supportive board of directors, committee members and dedicated employees. You’ll read about them also. Thank you for choosing Meridian Health Services and thank you for your ongoing generosity and good will.

Hank A. Milius
President / CEO

Al Rent
Board Chairman

Karen Karmolinski
Chairman, Development Council

At Meridian, we are dedicated to making healthier communities a priority.

Hank A. Milius
President / CEO

Al Rent
Board Chairman

Karen Karmolinski
Chairman, Development Council
A simple philosophy.
A powerful commitment.

Few things withstand the test of time like a solid relationship. At Raymond James, we take great pride in the fact that the recommendations of our clients are the primary source for new business. It attests to our success in sustaining long-term relationships…ones that not only endure, but also improve with age.

Sursa Griner Wealth Management of Raymond James is proud of its relationship with Meridian Health Services and proud to follow their leadership in helping make our communities healthier.

Healthy community relationships are what we're all about.
His dad is one of our everyday heroes, keeping our roads safer and our homes brighter. He’s counting on his dad to get home in time to tuck him in tonight. His dad is counting on Muncie Power’s products to make sure that happens.

As a leading manufacturer of power take-offs and fluid power components, Muncie Power Products, Inc. has been serving the truck equipment and other fluid power markets since 1935. Headquartered in Muncie, Indiana, Muncie Power maintains manufacturing and distribution facilities across the country to best support industry professionals.
Meridian Health Services is a progressive healthcare organization specializing in “whole-person” health integrating physical, mental and social well-being.

Meridian Health Services is proud to be part of the growing national phenomena of Little Free Libraries, started in 2010 by an Amish carpenter in Madison, Wisconsin. The simple concept of “Leave a Book, Take a Book” went viral because of the desire to share knowledge and encourage reading.

Meridian’s Little Free Library at the Suzanne Gresham Center is sponsored by BY5, an organization working to improve kindergarten readiness for children in Delaware County. Meridian is an Ambassador member of the BY5 Network. Ambassadors are advocates and champions for early childhood issues, as well as financially investing in the BY5 cause. Meridian has been instrumental in advancing many of the BY5 goals and has been especially helpful in providing health care perspectives to BY5’s work and the Riley Hospital Early Evaluation Hub.

The purpose of the library is to promote the importance of reading throughout the community for adults and children of all ages. Visitors and patients of the Gresham Center can take a book to read and bring it back to exchange for another when they are finished reading it. This is based on the honor system and no official check out is required to take a book. The library was designed and created by Pridemark Construction, a partner of Meridian Health Services. Donations come from private donors as well as the Gresham Center. The library has been a huge hit since it opened in June, with 20 to 30 new books stocked every couple of weeks.

To donate to the library or other Meridian events, go to www.MeridianHS.org/donate.
DELAWARE COUNTY NATIVE AND LIFELONG COMMUNITY advocate Chris Fancher begins his second term on the Meridian Health Services’ Board of Directors.

“I first became associated with Meridian in 2011, as a member of the Investment Committee,” said Fancher, who is Senior Vice President of IT and Administration at Muncie Power Products. “I realized then what a hidden treasure Meridian was in our community.” A graduate of Delta High School, where he met his wife, Melanie, Fancher is also a graduate of Ball State University. He started in shipping and receiving at Muncie Power Products in 1978 and has worked his way up the ladder at one of Muncie’s finest global companies. “My role on the board is financial expertise due to my years as vice president of finance at Muncie Power. I analyze the financial numbers and performance metrics that are presented during the board meetings. My comments and questions are mostly related to those topics. My financial background serves me well on the Investment, Audit, Development and Executive Committees.”

Fancher is no stranger to nonprofit work.

“At Muncie Power Products, we promote serving the community in which you live. Mr. Hamer Shafer, our company founder, instilled in me the belief that if you live in a community you have a responsibility to make that community a better place for people to live. He and his wife were great leaders and instilled a culture of giving back to the community. This is why I serve on the Meridian board.”

But it was Chris’ wife, Melanie, a registered nurse at IU Ball Memorial Hospital for 20 years, who was the first in the family to learn about Meridian Health Services. “We always talk about any boards I’m going to join, and Melanie knew about Meridian and told me all about them.” Chris and Melanie have been married 41 years. They have three daughters. Daughter Kelly and her husband Shane Screnock are parents to Nicolas and Olivia and they live in Tennessee; daughter Meredith, and her husband, Travis Hargis, have three boys, Luke, Colin and Reid, and they live in Noblesville; daughter Jill Fancher lives in Muncie.

Fancher has served on many nonprofits including United Way, Ball State University Cardinal Varsity Club, Community Foundation of Delaware County, Hamer D. and Phyllis C. Shafer Foundation, Muncie & Delaware County Chamber of Commerce, Ball Memorial Hospital Foundation, and Meridian Health Services. It was Meridian’s Suzanne Gresham Center that was a particular draw for Fancher.

“I am so proud of the success of Meridian’s Suzanne Gresham Center,” Fancher said. “Their school-based programs provide clinicians to over 270 schools around the state, helping kids deal with the stresses of today’s world. Their Child Advocacy Center is a real asset to this community because it helps abused children receive treatment and holds perpetrators accountable for their actions. Also at the Gresham Center, the Development Council provided money to build an outside garden to be used by patients for therapeutic benefits. The garden is planted, maintained, harvested and then shared with Gresham families, local homeless shelters and charities. It is such a great learning opportunity and treatment tool for patients to get engaged in outdoor, skill and team building activities.”

Another huge initiative for Meridian is its attention to the growing addictions epidemic sweeping the country. Meridian formed an Addictions Services Steering Team tasked with examining the latest research and best practices to create programs and treatments for addictions.

“Meridian’s community engagement is another reason I love working on the Meridian board,” says Fancher. “Their events, such as Fam Fest, City Fit, Project Safe and Holidays at Gresham help support a great cause. Their signature charity gala, Rialzo, has raised nearly $400,000 in the last three years.”

Meridian’s mission of whole-person health is easy for Fancher to support. “Meridian’s focus on whole-person health helps people in all aspects of their life, which is the most realistic way to approach health. The body and mind work together as well as environmental factors influence total well-being. The more we can get people to think of Meridian this way, the better.”
A $5 GIFT:
~ Can buy a baby-proofing kit for outlets and cabinets for a FosterHope family welcoming an infant into their home  
OR  
~ Can buy towels and washcloths for a homeless person transitioning to Walnut Commons

A $10 GIFT:
~ Can buy bus passes for an HIV patient to get to needed doctor’s appointments  
OR  
~ Can buy art supplies for weeks of therapy sessions for a child who’s been having difficulty in school  
OR  
~ Can buy a haircut for a person headed to an interview in our Supported Employment program

A $20 GIFT:
~ Can buy a carbon monoxide detector enabling a family to become licensed foster parents  
OR  
~ Can buy a Substance Abuse Education Workbook allowing someone battling addictions to make progress in recovery

A $50 GIFT:
~ Can provide a therapy session for an abused child  
OR  
~ Can buy new video games to keep the seniors physically and mentally active in the Meridian Senior Health-Behavioral Hospital

A $75 GIFT:
~ Can buy a week’s worth of groceries for cooking classes which help us teach our clients how to live independently  
OR  
~ Can buy a digital “Health Buddy” which monitors a patient’s heart rate, blood pressure, and blood sugar alerting us to health issues and enabling us to reduce emergency room visits

A $100 GIFT:
~ Can provide a child with a yearly-check up  
OR  
~ Can provide a holiday party for a group of Connxxions clients dealing with both intellectual disabilities and mental health issues
A $250 GIFT:
~ Can buy a portable “Wheeling for Healing Kit” enabling a behavioral clinician to take therapeutic tools and games directly into schools and homes

OR
~ Can buy emergency clothing for a child and family displaced by abuse

OR
~ Can pay for training, incentives, and supplies for a new foster family

A $500 GIFT:
~ Can provide the first year of immunizations for a child without insurance

OR
~ Can provide a treadmill for a group home so that the physical well-being of the clients is enhanced and improved

A $1,000 GIFT:
~ Can pay for a year’s worth of care and training for a therapy dog that reduces client stress levels and improves therapeutic results

OR
~ Can pay for an addicted mother’s treatment program to help her deliver a healthy baby

A $2,500 GIFT:
~ Can provide a Sensory Room complete with lights, music and tactile objects to help children with ADHD, autism, and/or learning disabilities learn to process their surroundings in a stimulating but calming atmosphere

PLEASE CONSIDER A HOLIDAY GIFT.

Simply scan this QR Code with your mobile device or tablet or enter meridianhs.org/About/Donate in your browser. You’ll zip to our secure website, where you can find more information and donate.
THE PERRY FAMILY. Nanci and Dr. Kirk Perry are surrounded by their children (from left): Nate, Julia, Lydia and John.
A

AS OUR SONS GREW, WE DEVELOPED some concerns. They walked late, talked late, had difficulty crossing the midline with body movements, had difficulty following multi-step directions, and were slow to add new words to their vocabulary. We now know those can be early warning signs of dyslexia. Due to their delays, our boys received speech therapy through First Steps, Indiana’s early intervention program. Once the boys were school age, their language difficulties continued. They were articulate, but they had a low vocabulary and their speech patterns were very halting.

After completing First Steps, they continued with speech therapy through what is now Meridian Pediatric Rehab to address expressive language concerns. Today, Meridian is also beginning to connect the delays my boys experienced as warning signs of dyslexia. Two of their speech therapists are now trained in a structured literacy approach known as Orton-Gillingham, and are beginning to incorporate that approach into the services they provide for students with warning signs.

Consistent with dyslexia, in grade school John and Nate struggled to learn the alphabet and had difficulty learning the connection between letters and the sounds they make. Reading was difficult, spelling was even more difficult, and they had a hard time remembering the details of a story. One day they would know spelling words or test material perfectly, the next day it was as if they had never been exposed to it before. We now know that was due to a low working memory, the vehicle that moves information from short-term to long-term memory, a difficulty of some dyslexics.

The day we found out we were expecting twins was one of the happiest and most surprising days of our lives. We knew something was different about this pregnancy, so we were relieved and excited by the news. We could now focus our research specifically for the journey ahead.

LEARNING FROM

dyslexia

By Nanci Sears Perry
Because the boys exhibited many of the warning signs listed on the International Dyslexia Association’s website, at a well child visit I asked the pediatrician if the boys could be dyslexic. He wondered as well and suggested that we contact our public school for educational testing. We requested an educational evaluation and the school identified them as having a “Specific Learning Disability,” which we later learned is the umbrella term under which dyslexia falls. When we asked about dyslexia, the school told us we would have to see our doctor to get a dyslexia diagnosis. We were now in the circle many parents of children with dyslexia find themselves, having a child that shows early warning signs, asking the right questions, having each professional send us to the other, all the while the child is in the middle often times not getting the targeted interventions needed. A private educational psychologist later confirmed what we suspected, the boys are dyslexic. Relieved that their difficulties had a name, we now knew how to focus our research to better equip us for the educational journey ahead.

Early identification of dyslexia is key to ensuring children develop at a pace on par with their peers, but even with our backgrounds as an educator and a pediatrician, (Kirk is a pediatrician with Meridian Health Pediatrics), the road to a diagnosis and appropriate intervention was difficult.

According to the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity and the National Institutes of Health, dyslexia is a language based learning difference that affects as many as one in five. The International Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as a learning disability that is neurobiological in origin that may affect an individual’s ability to read, write, spell, comprehend, develop vocabulary and/or do math. These difficulties are unexpected, and typically occur in children with average to above average intelligence.

According to Joseph Torgeson of the Florida Center for Reading Research, with early identification and appropriate interventions, dyslexics can catch up with their peers if identified and appropriately remediated before third grade. Undiagnosed, a child will often feel dumb or misunderstood, and will perform at a level well below his/her potential. Teachers may even mistake a dyslexic child for being a student who doesn’t try hard enough or who is lazy. Dr. Sally Shaywitz, M.D. of the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity notes that in spite of great difficulties with language, dyslexics often show tremendous areas of talent. In our home we know this to be true. Both of our sons are skilled woodworkers and distance runners, interests that draw upon their patience and perseverance.

Our sons are now juniors in high school and are on track to receive a Core 40 diploma. Their success is due to late nights doing homework and rereading material, the consistent implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) at school, parent and teacher support, assistive technology, speech therapy from Meridian Pediatric Rehab, and Orton-Gillingham structured literacy tutoring at Cammack United Methodist Church. We are again relieved and thankful. With appropriate identification and support, our sons have been able to excel.

Nanci Sears Perry is the wife of Dr. Kirk Perry, Pediatrician at Meridian Health Pediatrics and Chair of Pediatrics IU Health BMH. She is a graduate of Ball State University and is a founder of Decoding Dyslexia Indiana, a grassroots movement of parents in all 50 states and Canada. She is also on the board of directors of the Indiana Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, an organization dedicated to literacy research and teacher training. Together they have four children.

Dyslexia resources

WEB SITES
Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity
http://dyslexia.yale.edu

International Dyslexia Association
http://www.interdys.org/index.htm

International Dyslexia Association—Indiana Branch
http://www.ida-indiana.org

Decoding Dyslexia Indiana
http://www.decodingdyslexia.net

Wright’s Law
http://www.wrightslaw.com/topics.htm

Headstrong Nation
http://headstrongnation.org/tags/ben-foss

BOOKS
Overcoming Dyslexia by Bennett & Sally Shaywitz
The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan by Ben Foss

MOVIES
The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia by James Redford (HBO special, roco films)
Journey into Dyslexia (HBO special)
Embracing Dyslexia (free on-line, profiles families of early elementary school students)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBiK0XVPbXo
Dislecksia the Movie by Harvey Hubbell
F.A.T. City Project by Rick Lavoie (available through PBS)

ARTICLES
“8 Things Every Teacher Should Know About Dyslexia”
http://www.weareteachers.com/blogs/post/2014/08/10/dyslexia-8-things-every-teacher-should-know

“What Every Classroom Teacher Needs to Know”
https://app.box.com/s/fsxvph0hmseuc50we0jpix1c3qho95v

“Beyond the Classroom: How Can I Help My Child with Dyslexia”

FOR MORE INFORMATION
In education like in medicine, the best approach to wellness is early identification and appropriate intervention. It is important to make sure children receive their well child visits with their pediatrician to ensure physical and developmental milestones are being reached. If your child is experiencing difficulties, call for an appointment with Meridian Health Pediatrics as a first step in evaluating your child at 765-288-1995. For more information on speech therapy or multi-sensory structured literacy approaches for dyslexia, call Meridian Pediatric Rehab at 765-254-9717.
Meridian Health Services is dedicated to providing integrated “whole-person” health. Meridian’s partnership with IU Health Riley Physicians offers parents convenience and exceptional, quality care in one location for physical, mental and social well-being.

Keeping Kids healthy and happy!

A New Name, Partnership and Services

Meridian Health Services is dedicated to providing integrated “whole-person” health. Meridian’s partnership with IU Health Riley Physicians offers parents convenience and exceptional, quality care in one location for physical, mental and social well-being.

› Comprehensive pediatric care
› Prime-Time urgent care
› Well-baby/child check-ups
› Physical exams
› Child psychiatry & behavioral care
› Rehabilitation services
› Immunizations and vaccines
› Illness visits
› Allergy & asthma care
› Referrals and collaboration with specialists
› New patients welcome

Pediatric Medical Care
765. 288. 1995
Prime-Time Pediatrics
765. 281. 4599
205 N. Tillotson Ave. | www.MeridianHS.org

Pediatric Rehab
765. 254. 9717
Childrens Behavioral Care
765. 751. 3173

Division of Meridian Health Services

in collaboration with
Riley Physicians at IU Health
Jay-Crew provides professional Landscaping, Lawn Care, Irrigation, and year round Maintenance Services to keep your business looking its best.

Jay-Crew is proud to support Meridian Health Services.
Their approach to building a successful life and businesses in East Central Indiana can be found in their giving to Meridian’s Holidays at Gresham light display that has become a fixture in the local community holiday landscape.

“We got involved as a corporate “Partner with a Purpose” and have supported all of Meridian’s events,” said Jason Brooks. “Everything they do is about lifting the community up and we love being partners with them.”

While the idea for Meridian’s holiday gift to the community came from CEO Hank Milius, leaders like Jason Brooks put his mind and staff behind the idea to help it grow into a multi-weekend attraction that drew nearly 15,000 people in just its third year last year.

“I’ve always felt that if you want to do something, you might as well do it right,” says Jason. “Meridian shares that philosophy.”

And doing it right is exactly what The Holidays at Gresham is all about. A small committee was assembled to tackle the idea of giving Muncie a ‘point of destination’ light display, which for many years had existed at the ME’s Zoo in nearby Selma.

The group consisted of Meridian employees as well as businesses with whom Meridian does work with. They transformed the Gresham Center, a former elementary school campus, into a winter wonderland for kids and families. Brooks’ Jay Crew company was integral in doing things right from the beginning.

“Our primary business of providing superior outdoor impressions through professional landscape design and maintenance is weighted a bit more to spring and summer, so this project was a nice fit for us for calendar reasons in addition to corporate values reasons,” said Brooks.

While the company does snow and ice management for businesses as well, that season is typically busier after the first of the year. “Because we believe in this event so much, our staff is covering all of the volunteering for the event on opening weekend. It has been a real bonding experience for us.”

In the first couple of years, as displays were added, electrical infrastructure needed to be added to better illuminate the entire 15-acre campus. Mike Tschuor of Pridemark Construction participated heavily in the planning with Jay Crew in order to help ensure the best possible experience. Design of the displays and arrangement comes from Fred Reese of NV Design, formerly Willowbrook Interiors.

“Needless to say, it’s a fun team,” continued Brooks. “Great things happen when good people get together to try to make this community better. This is a perfect example of that.”

Brooks’ business has taken off in much the same way that the Holidays at Gresham has. Started in 1996 with a couple of mowers, a group of college friends, some rented garage space, and a strong desire to take care of clients, Jay Crew now has hundreds of clients all over central Indiana. Although the company has grown and seen many changes, their dedication to outstanding client service remains the same, and is exemplified by the multi-year commitment to the Holidays at Gresham.

“At Jay Crew we want you to have an outstanding experience and recommend us to others,” said Brooks. “With the Holidays, we just want to keep you coming back. It’s better every year.”
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W. Eugene Smith
PLAY TIME. Ashlee Dotterer and her son, Brennon.
A FAMILY saved

The power of whole-person health

The life of a 25-year-old single mom is not an easy one, but Ashlee Dotterer was doing the best she could.

She had a steady job with a cleaning service in Muncie. Her sons had a good place to live and were enrolled in a charter school with a low student-to-teacher ratio. Her work schedule allowed her to be home with them after school and in the evenings.

But when she broke up with her boyfriend, the stress became too much and she had two devastating weeks. She lost her job and her home. She was in a car accident. She had to send her two young sons away to live with their father. All because she had started using heroin. Again. And she couldn’t stop.

“It wasn’t until the drugs no longer numbed my inside that I decided I needed to do something,” said Ashlee Dotterer.

A few months later, Ashlee tried to pull herself back together. She stopped using heroin and self-medicated with suboxone, a synthetic opioid that is less addictive than methadone. Two weeks after that, she weaned herself off the suboxone. Depressed and still experiencing some withdrawal symptoms, she finally called Meridian Health Services for much needed professional help. Soon after, she became the first patient at MeridianMD to be treated with Vivitrol, an intramuscular injection that blocks the cravings and the “highs” associated with alcohol and opioid use.

“Vivitrol provides a threshold that finds receptors in the brain that typically heroin or opioid would find – and it blocks them to eliminate the results and cravings of the drug or alcohol,” explained Adrienne Collins, practice manager at MeridianMD. “So if they try and use something like heroin, they won’t feel the effects of it.”

The danger of this drug is that if they use too much of an opioid, they could even overdose without ever getting high.

FAMILY. Ashlee Dotterer with her sons, Brycen (left) and Brennon.
FOR MORE INFORMATION on how you or someone you know can win their battle with addictions, call Meridian Health Services for professional medical and therapeutic integrated treatment at 866-306-2647 or visit online at www.MeridianHS.org.

But that knowledge, along with a dramatic decrease in physical cravings, goes a long way in conquering addiction.

In order to get the injection the patient must be clean, or free of opioids and alcohol, for seven to 10 days. “You don’t have to be clean when you come in,” said Collins. “If you cannot do it by yourself, we will help step you down so you can eventually get a Vivitrol injection.”

Injections can be given every 28 days by a medical professional for as long as the patient needs it. Ideally, the therapy will continue for nine to 12 months, giving the person time to change their circumstances and restart their life. “The injection alone is not going to help,” said Collins. “It will help you get off the substance, but it is not going to prevent a relapse.”

For that reason, the Vivitrol program at Meridian also includes an intensive outpatient therapy component that consists of both group and individual therapy sessions.

Combining behavioral and social health supports are key when helping people with addictions. “The body and mind are both being controlled by addictions, so it takes medical and behavioral treatments working together to create success. Meridian’s philosophy of “whole-person” health really is unique as it integrates physical, mental and social health to care for all the needs of a patient,” continued Collins.

For Ashlee, now 26, the path to heroin addiction began about six years ago. Giving in to peer pressure, she decided to try a narcotic. Eventually, it became a daily habit. She also started to experiment a little with heroin because it was easier to get than prescription painkillers. In 2012, she went to a rehab center where she was introduced to a pill form of Vivitrol, which she used for a few months. “It got me started on being clean for a couple of years until I relapsed last August. I didn’t have the emotional supports I needed either.”

Although she had almost completely detoxified herself by the time she came to Meridian in December 2015, she knew she couldn’t stay clean on her own. In her first visit with Brandy LoPilato, a Meridian nurse practitioner, she said, “I’m a drug addict and I need help.” And she asked for Vivitrol.

LoPilato, who joined Meridian in September 2015 and became involved in the Addiction Steering Committee soon after, had just started a Vivitrol program that would work in conjunction with Meridian’s mental health professionals.

As a primary caregiver treating addictions, LoPilato says, “I use the approach of what I can do to treat the withdrawal symptoms, keep them clean for seven days, get them on Vivitrol, then address the whole picture, including their mental and social well-being.” Currently, LoPilato has 30 active patients using Vivitrol. Over the past year, she estimates that she has dealt with close to 100 such cases – some successful, some not. “We see an average of five new patients a week for addiction,” she said.

They come from all walks of life, increasingly as a result of dependence on prescription pain medication. Once they are clean, she can do as many or as few injections as necessary. Side effects are minimal and there are no withdrawal symptoms when you stop. After four Vivitrol injections, Ashlee felt that she was in control of herself well enough that she didn’t need to continue them. “It seemed to make a difference immediately,” she said. During that four-month period, she also did a six-week group therapy program and attended about five one-on-one sessions with a counselor from Meridian.

Along with the Vivitrol, the therapy sessions from Meridian proved beneficial, giving her coping strategies and the motivation to make positive changes in her life. In March, she got her job back and started to rebuild her life.

“I had to change the people I hang out with, the places I go, but now I have a whole new set of friends who are just like me who are clean.” She attends the Serenity Club for recovering addicts and a community church. Today, she has a car, a home and most importantly, her sons, ages 7 and 9, are back living with her full time. She also continues to see LoPilato for any health-related issues that come up, and appreciates the complete approach to addiction treatment offered by Meridian.

“It’s not all puppies and rainbows, but today I am free on the inside because of taking the steps to do it,” she said. “The most important thing was getting my family back. That was my strength. It was either that or I was ready to die.” She also hopes her story will let someone else who is struggling as she did know that they can change. “That’s what it’s all about.”

LoPilato is happy to see that her first Vivitrol patient is doing well nearly a year after starting her treatment. “I was so excited when she came back in not long ago,” she said. “I hadn’t seen her in a while, and I said ‘Did we win this or did we lose this?’ and she said ‘Of course, we won this’. And it was a major relief – that’s what I needed to hear.”
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Dr. Maleeha Khalid

Meet Meridian’s newest Women’s Health physician

Dr. Maleeha Khalid is an obstetrics/gynecology specialist who recently joined the Meridian Health Services staff in Muncie after finishing her U.S. residency at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. A native of Pakistan, Dr. Khalid graduated from the prestigious King Edward Medical University in her home city of Lahore. Although she had a medical practice in Pakistan, she moved across the globe because she wanted to continue learning.

Q. What is your medical philosophy?

My job is not just a job. You have to help people out. You have to feel for the patients. I think the best thing I’m going to take with me as a physician and surgeon is empathy. I can sit with a patient and have compassion for what is going with them. I think it is important to talk to patients and be open to all of their questions and concerns.
How does your personal philosophy align with Meridian’s structure?

I like that Meridian focuses on treating the whole person. A group of doctors is available to each patient, and we can communicate as a team and take care of our patient as a whole. When someone comes to me and they have two problems, I have other physicians I can refer them to.

What has surprised you about healthcare in America?

I came to America from an underdeveloped country. Nowhere in the world can compare to the medicine and healthcare in the United States. Before I moved, I did not think that health was an issue in the United States because of the resources that are available. As I began working in Texas, it was strange to me to see that so many people weren’t receiving basic preventive medical care. I am glad that Meridian focuses on taking care of the entire community.

Why aren’t people getting the help they need?

I think it is a national problem. Part of it is insurance. If people don’t have insurance or are underinsured, they don’t think it is important to see their physician unless they are experiencing a problem. Preventive care is so important because it helps get to the root of things before a major health problem develops.
What are your biggest concerns for women’s health?
As an OB/GYN, preventive care is part of my job. It’s really frustrating to me that more people aren’t getting mammograms and pap smears. I’ve seen cases where advanced cervical cancer could have been prevented with a pap smear, but the person never went to a doctor. Pap smears make it possible to diagnose a pre-cancer many years before it happens. It’s our responsibility as physicians to make sure that women are aware of the importance of getting pap smears.

The HPV vaccine is also important. More than 70 percent of cervical cancer is related to an HPV infection. We need to tell the masses. Just a small vaccine given to boys and girls can help so much.

As a physician in a new practice, how do you build a relationship with your patients?
You have to be a caring human being. You have to think of your patients as people and realize they are just like you — they have an everyday life and family. I want them to understand that I am here for them. The other day, I saw a patient for the first time, and I started talking to her about her family and her disease. I recommended that she receive a minor surgery. It ended up being cancer, and I had to tell her about it. Tears came up in my eyes. Even after I told her the bad news, as she was obviously upset, she hugged me and said she was so thankful. She said she had been delaying the surgery for two years and I had encouraged her to get the help she needed.

Why did you become a doctor?
My father is a scientist, and he has been a big motivation in my life. He told me and all of my siblings that the sky is the limit. That’s why we have always worked hard. We have always tried to be the best human beings. I chose a career in healthcare because I wanted make a difference in people’s lives. I could have been an engineer or a lawyer and worked fewer hours and made more money. But it’s a different feeling when you are in healthcare. You are not making a machine. You are the one who is going to make a difference in somebody’s life.
From family medicine to psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology to gerontology and pediatric health, meet these 9 new medical providers who are deepening Meridian's "whole-person" health services.
ADHD myths and facts

As more is learned about attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), misinformation about the condition becomes more plentiful as well. Dr. Bianca Maya, pediatrician at Meridian Health Pediatrics and Prime-Time Pediatrics in Muncie, debunks a few of the more common myths about ADHD.

**MYTH: Bad parenting is the cause of ADHD in children.** ADHD is actually a brain disorder that interferes with functioning and development. Because many of the symptoms are behavioral, some people think that a lack of discipline is the cause. There are also lifestyle factors including stress and poor eating habits that can contribute to ADHD symptoms. That’s why Meridian’s “whole-person” approach to healthcare is so important. We look at all the factors (physical, mental, social) that might affect conditions like ADHD in order to make the correct diagnosis.

**MYTH: ADHD is a childhood condition that they eventually outgrow.** Many children are diagnosed with ADHD during the elementary school years, so it’s a common misconception that it occurs only in children. But we see many adults with ADHD who were never diagnosed as children. And research shows us that at least 60 percent of children with ADHD will continue to exhibit symptoms during adulthood.

**MYTH: ADHD doesn’t cause severe problems.** A person with ADHD can have wide-ranging difficulties in functioning, interpersonal, social, academic and professional skills. It can lead to significant issues at school and work, relationship problems, anxiety, depression, financial struggles and legal difficulties. It can even contribute to psychiatric disorders and higher suicide rates.

**MYTH: Medication is the only treatment for ADHD.** Medication can make a difference but behavioral therapy should always be considered as a first-line treatment especially for young children. Behavioral therapy has been proven to improve the symptoms and can be as effective as medicine without the side effects in some cases. Therapy involves family oriented sessions led by a therapist that will help foster positive behaviors, improve communication, learn skills to manage it, and help establish structure and routines. It also strengthens the relationship between the parent and child. Meridian offers family-based pediatric and psychiatric care along with social services when needed for a complete treatment plan in helping children with ADHD.

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Dr. Bianca Maya is a pediatrician at Meridian Health Pediatrics and Prime-Time Pediatrics in Muncie.

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IN SEPTEMBER, JUST ONE YEAR AFTER UNVEILING Walnut Commons, the 44-unit housing complex for the homeless, Meridian Health Services opened MeridianMD, a primary medical care office on-site that also is available to the public.

Walnut Commons is an $8.3 million collaborative effort spearheaded by Meridian Health Services and Daveri Development to serve people at risk for housing with physical and/or mental disabilities.

“Meridian understands the importance of residential housing in helping people with behavioral health needs as we have been involved with supportive housing for many years,” said Hank Milius, President/CEO of Meridian Health Services. “The demand for housing and support services is unbelievable. Supportive housing represents the social health aspect in whole-person health.”

Walnut Commons is an example of what Meridian Health Services has always done – provided key services to those in need. Walnut Commons is an extension of the supportive type housing that Meridian has offered since 1987 when it opened two group homes in Muncie and New Castle. Since then, Meridian has 10 housing facilities and adopted its “whole-person” health concept, providing physical, mental and social well-being to patients.

MeridianMD at Walnut Commons is the first primary...
FROM PAGE 41

care clinic embedded into a supported housing facility in the area, as well as being one of very few in the state. “Giving people access to on-site medical care helps ensure recovery success and total well-being,” says Dr. Sarfraz Khan, Medical Director, Meridian Health Services. “Many of the residents have been without proper healthcare. Now having MeridianMD located where they live will provide better access to treatment and the convenience of not having to worry about transportation issues or relying on a caregiver.”

Aside from spacious apartments and the primary care clinic with three exam rooms, the complex includes a computer lab offering computer classes, a fitness/workout room, community room, large outdoor patio and garden, and care coordinator offices for therapy and skill building.

People generally assume affordable housing is only a problem in larger cities. In fact, homelessness hits every corner of Indiana, including rural and urban communities. For its work in this area, Meridian and Daveri Development of Walnut Commons received the Indiana Lt. Governor’s Excellence in Affordable Housing Award. “Our staff deserves a lot of credit,” Milius said. “This kind of honor helps us emphasize the importance of the work they do every day.”

About 40 of the 44 residents have found now a steady monthly income through work and benefits. The support services at Walnut Commons are helping people gain an independence of their own including traditional employment, volunteerism, job training or moving out on their own. Residents also initiated the planting and maintenance of the garden.

In the past year, Meridian has helped reintegrate about 20 residents back into the community and reunited with their family.

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In September, Leas brought together staff from both offices in Jay County including MeridianMD and organized Project SAFE (Substance Awareness and Family Education), an event presenting substance-abuse education through family friendly programming. Held at the Jay Community Center, the four-hour festival featured food, carnival games, vendor booths, educational material and interactive demonstrations all focused around awareness, prevention and treatment of substance abuse.

“We heard great feedback from many of our patients who attended as they appreciated Meridian taking a lead to help fight drugs in our community. They enjoyed a day of fun for their family, while also learning about substance abuse and how we can prevent it. That was our goal,” said Leas, who works on the behavioral health side, overseeing the day-to-day programs in Jay, Blackford, Grant, Howard and Wells. “We wanted the community to be able to attend a free event with their family to have fun, but while also learning. Any way we can make education fun is always a great idea.”

Many organizations supported Project SAFE, which included Jay County Hospital, Portland Police Department, Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition, Jay County Health Department, A Better Way and Celebrate Recovery. Marsh, Coca-Cola and Pak-A-Sak sponsored a free lunch, and partner sponsors included Jay County Hospital, Diamond Outdoor Solutions, Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition and Bingo Bugle Newspaper of Indiana.

“One of the requirements for vendors was to have an educational activity related to substance abuse at their table. 5 facts that illustrate the importance of Project SAFE

Substance Awareness & Family Education
1) Indiana saw a 59% jump in overall drug-overdose deaths between 2006 and 2014.
2) Indiana had the 15th-highest rate of drug overdoses in 2011 through 2013 — 16 deaths per 100,000 residents.
3) 156% increase in prescription drug-related arrests from 2012 to 2013 in Jay County.
4) 46% of removals from Jay County Department of Child Services were drug related in 2013.
5) Indiana exceeded all but eight states in the number of pain prescriptions written per 100 people in 2012 — more than enough for every Hoosier to have his or her own bottle of pain pills, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
When the kids came in, they received a bag full of information related to substance abuse awareness and drug facts. They also received a card that they had to get signed at each of the education stations. When they completed at least five of the stations, they could turn in their card for a chance to win awesome door prizes,” Leas said.

Project SAFE will be an annual event, and Meridian plans to continue the spirit of the collaboration by increasing awareness in the community. “Now with the addition of our primary medical care clinic, MeridianMD, we have medical options to help treat addictions for our patients and can provide integrated therapy with behavioral health. We want to be able to provide a place for treatment for those of all ages who are struggling with addiction,” Leas said. “Our program manager and clinical supervisor are already thinking of ways we can grow and increase these programs. We also would like to reach more people in the community next year. We have been talking with different leaders in the community about combining forces to all work together on this project. The Portland Police Department has already stated that we could combine an event they do with our Project SAFE event next year.”

The efforts will increase what Meridian is currently doing to fight substance abuse in the region.

“Meridian in Jay County offers a PRIME class, which is an education-based program related to substance abuse. We also offer an aftercare treatment group. We work with the Jay Superior Court so that when they court order someone for substance abuse assessments and treatment, they come to us,” Leas said, adding the Meridian staff continues to look for ways to directly address drug issues. “We hope to increase our programming on the treatment side of services so that we can offer a more intensive program. We are also looking at starting an adolescent substance abuse group,” she said.

Leas is hopeful that Project SAFE will help children make better choices as they grow older.

“We hope to be bigger and better each year so that we can increase awareness and education in our community to hopefully prevent some substance abuse,” she said.

When preparing for a big feast, don’t skip meals. It’s best to eat small meals and snacks throughout the day, especially at breakfast time. Otherwise, we have a tendency to overeat when the main meal is served. Be sure to include lots of fiber in your diet by eating fruits, vegetables and whole-grains.

Try these strategies to avoid overeating:

~ Use a smaller plate, and start by filling your plate with vegetables and salad before going to entrees and desserts.

~ Eat slowly, and when you are finished, wait for 10 minutes before going for seconds to make sure you are really still hungry.

~ Get some physical activity. Go for a walk after dinner and catch up with family members. Get outside and move around.

The family cook can affect our eating habits as well. Here are some of Dr. Miller’s suggestions:

~ You can reduce the sugar in recipes by supplementing with citrus, vanilla, cinnamon or nutmeg. Honey and molasses can be used to add sweetness that is a healthier option than sugar.

~ Substitute solid fats like butter and shortening with vegetable oil, coconut oil or canola oil. You can also substitute half of the oil with applesauce, canned pumpkin, or sweet potato puree for a healthy, tasty kick of fiber and vitamins.

~ Cut the sodium: Use fresh herbs and flavored vinegars to add low-sodium flavor. Mustard, pickles and ketchup are all sodium-heavy. Try using fresh tomatoes, salsas or cucumber slices instead.

~ Even chocolate lovers have healthier options: Dark chocolate contains antioxidants, and unsweetened cocoa powder is an option for less sugar.

Joni Miller, M.D., is double board certified in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics and practices at MeridianMD in Muncie.

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Teaching your child how to be generous

As the holidays approach, parents are faced with many opportunities to teach their children to be generous. Ideally, generosity is a lifestyle, not just something we talk about at certain times of the year. Teaching a child about sharing is not as difficult as it sounds. A few simple things practiced routinely help children learn how to be generous. Dr. Denisse Ambler, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Suzanne Gresham Center, offers the following ideas:

**Demonstrate generosity.** Teaching by example is one of the most effective ways to influence your child’s behavior. Most children want to be like their parents, and when they see adults routinely sharing, they will most likely follow suit.

**Sharing can be temporary.** Your child will feel better about sharing a toy if he or she knows it’s not permanent. Explain that his/her friend is just borrowing the item and he/she will get it back in a while.

**Generosity isn’t limited to material things.** A child can learn to share time, talent AND treasure. Playing with another child on the playground can help a child understand that sharing doesn’t always mean sacrifice.

**Let your child learn from peers.** One of the best ways to teach a child to share is to let young friends show the way. Try not to get involved in every battle over toys. Kids eventually learn how to compromise when they realize that selfish behavior drives playmates away.

**Be patient and consistent.** Remember: Learning to be generous is part of development. It won’t always happen quickly. When your child is selfish, gently express your disapproval and encourage a different behavior the next time.

**Pile on the praise.** When your child does share, say how happy it makes you feel. Your child will be happy that you are pleased, and will want to do it more often. It will eventually come more naturally.
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MORE THAN 300 COMMUNITY members attended Meridian’s St. Joseph County Fam Fest, which helped link Meridian patients with area organizations.

"Through this event we were able to give many of our families a fun-filled afternoon together and helped introduce them to numerous beneficial organizations in the community," said Luke Morgan, Meridian’s Regional Manager for Northern Indiana. "Hosting and coordinating this event also helps Meridian work towards fulfilling its vision of ‘whole-person’ health, integrating physical, mental, and social well-being.”

More than 25 community organizations participated in the Health and Wellness fair, and many of them donated raffle items including the opportunity to throw out the first pitch and signed sports memorabilia from the South Bend Cubs, the Chicago Cubs Single A affiliate.

Health screenings, a dunk tank, face painting, free access to the splash pad, and a vendor fair scavenger hunt provided family fun and reinforced health and wellness in the community.
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GROWING Gresham GARDEN

500 pounds of food in its first season make communities healthier

'This isn't just our garden. It's a community garden.'
—Meridian President/CEO Hank Milius

THINGS ARE GROWING AT MERIDIAN’S SUZANNE Gresham Center. Normally, that statement would refer to not only the number of children served every year, now 17,000, but also to any number of programs housed there:

1. the school based programs that serve 270 schools around the state with behavioral clinicians
2. the Connxxions program that serves kids with dual diagnosis of developmental delays coupled with mental illness issues
3. the Child Advocacy Center that interviews an average of 3 victims of sexual abuse per week

But now the growing at Gresham is quite literal and comes in the form of tomatoes, zucchini, squash, corn and peppers of many varieties. The end result has been nearly 500 pounds of food in its first season of harvest, all of it helping Meridian meet its mission of helping make our communities healthier.

The seed of the idea for the garden came from Jennifer Lombard, Manager of the Suzanne Gresham Center for Children and Families. “I come from a family of farmers and gardeners, so I know that the lessons learned in the process of gardening can be truly eye opening and life-changing,” said Lombard.

Because of her dedication to this project, what started as a small patch of possibility has morphed into a plot of multiple partnerships. “I didn’t want it to be just any ol’ garden,” Lombard said. “I wanted it to be something all of us at Meridian, and the whole community, could be proud of.”

Presentations were made to the local Farm Bureau and they responded with cash donations as well as tilling and planting expertise. The local Master Gardeners club donated expertise, resources and volunteers hours as donations of plants came in from Wapahani High School and Charlie Power’s Greenhouse.

“This isn’t just our garden,” said Hank Milius, President and CEO of Meridian Health. “It’s a community garden.”

The Purdue University extension has even brought students to the garden for observation. “I couldn’t be happier with the results,” said Lombard.

And the results are indeed fruitful, and go well beyond the 500 pounds of produce that have been shared by Connxxions’ families, Meridian group home clients, residents of Walnut Commons, a transitional housing facility for the previously homeless, the homeless outreach program at Meridian’s Drop In Center, as well as community beneficiaries like Second Harvest Food Bank.

“The ‘Garden at Gresham’ gives us the opportunity to teach our clients through dedication, hard work, nurturing, love and caring, they too can find healing and growth within themselves,” Lombard said.

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FAM FEST, MERIDIAN’S ANNUAL FAMILY FESTIVAL promoting fun, wellness, safety and healthcare resources - combined with the Ducky Derby, which calls attention to child abuse awareness - drew one of its biggest crowds ever in 2016.

More than 200 volunteers and 50 community organizations worked together to host the events this year. Fam Fest draws around 2,000 families to the expansive lawn of the Suzanne Gresham Center, Meridian’s specialty center for children and family programs.

Meridian introduced a renewed focus on health and community education through its new HEALTH HUB featuring free health screenings, resources and education. Meridian and community experts presented on the indoor education stage at the Suzanne Gresham Center to discuss everything from women’s health issues to pediatrics to healthy living.

Ducky Derby, one of the Fam Fest events, was held across the street along the White River. It raised dollars and awareness for children of abuse. Meanwhile, the annual Health & Fun Fair showcased the synergy of children’s physical, mental and social health.

“Our goals for the Child Abuse Awareness Duck Race and the Health & Fun Fair are much the same,” explained Hank Milius, President/CEO for Meridian Health Services. “We want everyone in this community to know the resources they have available to them to keep their families healthy and safe.”

Meridian’s Child Advocacy Center is a place where victims of child abuse can reveal the harsh details of their tragic experiences to be investigated. It is a child-friendly environment that brings together a multi-disciplinary team including investigators, legal team, child advocates and Meridian mental health professionals to help the child and pursue their offender. But it is Meridian’s family-focused events where the ongoing education awareness campaign crosses educational and socio-economic barriers.

For families to come together at a single event that focuses so heavily on healthy living and being safe creates a bonding experience and positive influence for all.

“This community has an incredible amount of healthcare resources available and this is an opportunity to promote our essential partners,” Milius said. “We have a lot of fun and at the same time distribute a lot of information.”

The need for awareness remains strong. Consider the statistics:

- 1 in 10 children will experience sexual abuse by the age of 18.
- 1 in 5 children are solicited sexually while on the internet.
- 20% of children are sexually abused before the age of 8.
- 60% of child sexual abuse victims never tell anyone.
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