

MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

Rialzo

EDITION

SUMMER 2016

CURRENT

TRANSFORMATION
THROUGH
MeridianMD

Meridian Charity Gala

RIALZO VII BENEFITS SCHOLARS
AND ADDICTION PROGRAMS

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create healthier communities.

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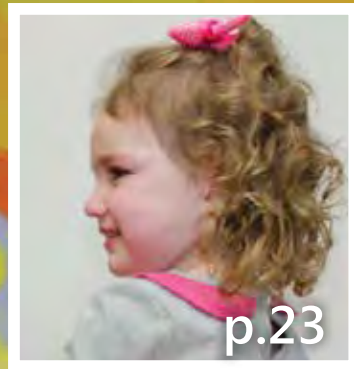
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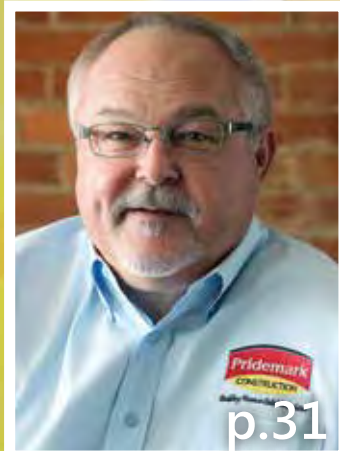
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Therapist.

Supervisor.

Positive leader.

ALYSHA NEMORE

p.65

MERIDIAN

HEALTH Services

Physical. Mental. Social Well-Being.

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

Meridian Health Services

Main Office

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

Beth.clark@meridianhs.org

765.254.5138



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CURRENT

EDITORIAL DIRECTION AND DESIGN

Editor: Beth Clark, Meridian Health Services

The JMetzger Group

Juli Metzger | John Metzger

www.thejmetzgergroup.com

765.729.1391 | 765.744.4303

CONTRIBUTORS

Dawn Fluhler, Doug Gruse, Kurt Hostetler, Tim Underhill, Tammy Kingery, Michelle Kinsey, Eddie Metzger, Don Rogers, Adam Sturm.

PRINTING

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765.286.3000 | 800.854.9101

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TO ADVERTISE, contact:

Scott Smalstig: 765.215.7373 | 765.288.1928

Scott.smalstig@meridianhs.org

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- › Home and school-based services
- › Foster care and adoption
- › HIV care coordination
- › Intellectual disabilities behavioral care
- › Supported housing and employment
- › Care coordination and skill-building

MERIDIAN

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Dear Friends of Meridian,

At Meridian Health Services we're always looking for new partners who have similar missions and add value to our "whole-person" philosophy for our patients.

We found that collaborative nature this year in Delaware County's BY5 initiative, whose principle goal is to ensure all children are mentally and physically developed by age 5 and are kindergarten-ready.

Our integrated healthcare approach distinguishes our team of medical and behavioral health experts who specialize in making children and families stronger. By treating body and mind together, early screening assessments can help treat developmental delays and better prepare children in their educational goals.

Others see that, too.

Meridian Health Pediatrics was selected by Riley Children's Foundation and BY5 as one of the select few organizations statewide to be an "Early Evaluation Hub," a place where children receive testing for developmental delays and signs of autism.

The hubs have reduced Riley's waitlist for these services from 18 months to just four months, which means we're getting help to children who need it most, quicker than ever because of this new partnership.

In this issue of CURRENT, we're able to showcase some of our finest efforts from the last several months.

None of this would be possible without the ongoing support of our corporate champions like First Merchants Bank and Pridemark Construction, featured in this edition. First Merchants has been at our side since we launched the very first Rialzo, Meridian's grand charity gala. Likewise, be sure to check out the story about our



MERIDIAN HEALTH PEDIATRICS
Dr. Bianca Maya with a patient.

friends at Pridemark Construction who saw a need and filled it at our Brentwood location in Anderson. Pridemark built a pirate ship for children to have as a welcoming, fun activity that helps children with behavioral health needs.

Finally, the beneficiaries of Rialzo and other fundraising events throughout the year are highlighted in this issue of CURRENT, along with our Spirit of Meridian winners, Dr. John Wernert and Alysha Nemore, and other programs that support our primary mission.

All this is possible because of our partnerships that crisscross the state. It is this integrated approach in our mission that strengthens our impact in our local communities. To our readers, as always, thank you for your support.



Hank A. Milius
PRESIDENT / CEO



Al Rent
BOARD CHAIRMAN



Karen Karmolinski
CHAIRMAN,
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



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Primary Medical Care



Therapeutic Foster Care



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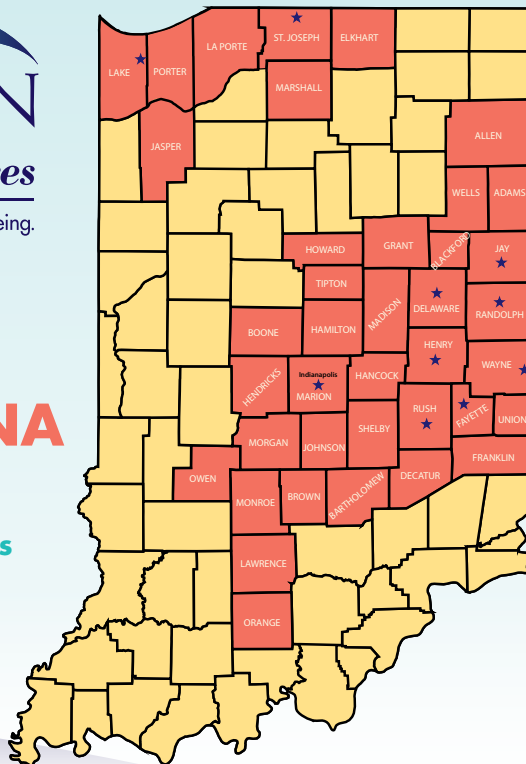


Healing and Justice

Community Report



39 Residents in
INDIANA
COUNTIES
receive health services
from Meridian.



2015 Community Benefit Summary

Making a Positive Impact
on the Communities We Serve

Meridian offers services throughout Indiana with 38 facilities in 10 cities. Delaware County is home to our main campus, the **Suzanne Gresham Center, Child Advocacy Center, Meridian Health Pediatrics, MeridianMD, Meridian Women's Health, and Meridian Senior Health – Behavioral Hospital and Assessment Center.**

Meridian serves over **27,600**
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 **971**
employees in Indiana. Nearly 200
employees are doctors, nurses and
medical assistants on our constantly
growing medical staff.

Meridian provided
649,492
outpatient visits in the past year.
In a recent survey, Meridian patients
reported a **95% satisfaction** rate with
Meridian's quality of services.

Revenue generated was over
\$99.2 MILLION
during fiscal year 2014-15.
Over **\$45.5 million** is dedicated for our
employees' salaries and benefits.

More than
270 SCHOOLS
have partnered with Meridian to bring
services to students. Over **13,527**
children received services from Meridian.

Meridian's community
investment in 2014-15 totaled over
\$38.5 MILLION
Meridian provides charity and uncompensated
care, community education and activities that
benefit the community in addition to
quality healthcare.

Community Outreach

Last year, Meridian provided care to 4,449 individuals who were unable to pay for services

which totaled **\$5 MILLION** in charity care.



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 "FamFest – Health & Fun Fair"** is a free event for families, offering health resources, screenings, education, entertainment and food for several thousand each year.
- The **"Ducky Derby – Race Against Child Abuse"** river duck race has raised over \$25,000 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 provides **After-Hours Emergency Services** which helped over **3,500 patients** 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 Meridian Women's Health** promoted an awareness campaign and free health screenings for American Heart Month as well as year-long community outreach.
- **Meridian's Senior Health Behavioral Hospital** helped to substantially reduce Emergency Room readmissions.
- 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.
- **Meridian Navigators** work throughout the year to help families enroll in much needed healthcare insurance coverage.

Services We Provide

- Primary family medical care
- Pediatric health and urgent care
- Psychiatric medical services
- Women's health - obstetrics and gynecology
- 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

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MERIDIAN

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



MERIDIAN 2015-16 BOARD MEMBERS

Seated in front, from left: Hank Milius, President/CEO, Julie Newhouse

Middle row, seated, from left:

Wayne Shaffer, Al Rent (Chair), Vicki Tague

Back row, from left:

Chris Bowles, Chris Fancher, Terry Whitt Bailey, Brian Ring, Mark Hardwick, Mike Lunsford, Steve Smith, Sue Ann Pflum, Erica Graham



RIALZO COMMITTEE 2016

Seated, from left:

Melissa Daniels, Karen Evens, Hank Milius, Fred Reese, Shar Hyman

Standing, from left:

Kim Gillenwater, Lise Hayes, Scott Smalstig, Cory Pollen, Tammy Dodson, Jeff Robinson, Beth Clark, Marilyn Cleary, Ginger Jennings

Not pictured: Al Rent, Barb Sells, Paul Tavianini, Jennifer Johnson

MERIDIAN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Karen Karmolinski, Chair	Micah Maxwell
Brian Ring	Al Rent
Brent Webster	Erica Graham
Wayne Shaffer	Wil Davis
Dr. David Gobble	Dr. George Branam
Vicki Tague	Lori Luther
Charlie Sursa	Chris Fancher

MERIDIAN INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Vicki Tague, Chair	Chris Fancher
Mike Lunsford	Wil Davis
Steve Smith	John Coldren
John Littler	Rick Kelly

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Henry County Hospital	CS Kern
3D Construction	Pengad
Jay Crew	Wilhoite Family Dentistry
Muncie Power	Great Destinations
NV Design	Muncie Liquors
The Star Press	Amazing Joe's
Woof Boom Radio	Scherrer Construction
Vera Mae's Bistro	

RIALZO VII TABLE HOSTS

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City of Muncie	Muncie Symphony Orchestra
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MERIDIAN
BOARD
MEMBER
Vicki Tague

ambassador

Jay County's Vicki Tague: Meridian on cutting edge

FOR VICKI TAGUE, A LONGTIME JAY COUNTY BUSINESS executive and Meridian Health Services board member, the secret to the success of Meridian Health Services is largely due to the approach of the board of directors and the management team. They are setting the trends in healthcare and are the ones on the cutting edge, setting the pace for others.

"Throughout my career I have served on many boards of not-for-profit organizations. I can honestly say that serving on the Meridian board is one of the most gratifying experiences I have had," said Tague, one of Jay County's standout leaders. She is now serving her third term on the board of directors for Meridian Health Services.

Now retired, Tague first learned about Meridian Health Services while serving as the executive director of the Jay County Chamber of Commerce. "I learned of the services they provided and ways in which they were meeting the needs of the residents of Jay County," she said. "Meridian's recent collaboration with Jay County Hospital has also helped enhance the services offered here to give better access to integrated care."

Meridian has two facilities now, one in Portland and the new MeridianMD at Dunkirk which is in partnership with Jay County Hospital. This has made it possible for people living in the county to get physical and mental health services all in one building without leaving the community.

Tague is "an ambassador for Meridian Health and is an integral part of the team making strategic decisions about services provided and planned growth," said Meridian's President and CEO, Hank Milius.

"Vicki gives her heart and soul to the board," Milius said. "She's so well connected in the region and helps us raise awareness of the services we provide. She's a delight to work with."

It was Meridian's integrated approach to healthcare that is the most appealing to Tague. "The whole-person health philosophy, which ties together physical, mental and social well-being, improves the lives of all patients, ranging from children to senior citizens.

"The diversity of the board members is outstanding," Tague said. "The expertise each member brings to the table is exceptional."

What's she most proud of? There are several things, including integrated care and the work done at the Suzanne Gresham Center.

"The Suzanne Gresham Center is a gem in the Meridian crown of services," Tague said. The center, which provides support for families, also houses the Child Advocacy Center. "The Center is a wonderful environment for children who may have experienced abuse. At the CAC, these young people are surrounded and protected by professionals who are advocates for their well-being. Over my years on the board, I have seen Meridian grow and expand. They have become the model for integrated healthcare and I am proud to be affiliated with the organization."

'The Suzanne Gresham Center is a gem in the Meridian crown of services.'

A portrait of Al Rent, an older man with white hair and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a grey suit jacket, a white shirt, and a yellow tie with a small blue pattern. He has his arms crossed. The background is an office setting with shelves holding various items, including a red bird figurine and some framed pictures.

Al Rent

Contributor. Steward. Advocate.

Al Rent is in his second tour of duty on the Board of Directors for Meridian Health Services, and there are few who have had more of an impact on how Meridian is perceived today.

HE HAS HAD A HAND IN MERIDIAN'S NAME, in its "whole-person" health philosophy, and in its emergence as a family-focused, medical community. He's been instrumental in the organization's strategy, communications and events, from Rialzo to the Holidays at Gresham. He originally joined the board in 2002.

Rent, who just last fall was named Executive Director and General Manager for Ball State University's Public Broadcasting Operations, joined Meridian again in 2011 after sitting out for one year, and in 2014 was named Chairman of the Board. He also served as chairman from 2005 to 2008 when he was on the board from 2002 to 2010.

"Al Rent is the kind of board member who goes all in," said President and CEO Hank Milius. "He's a remarkable contributor and a tireless community steward."

For Rent, it's been intentional. He's a sought-after community advocate for not-for-profit boards. These days, he's also chairman of the board for Minnetrista Board of Trustees and serves on the Muncie Symphony Board of Trustees. He's also on the Greater Area Council on Youth Leadership Board and the Martin Luther King Jr. Dream Team.

Rent, the namesake for The Muncie-Delaware County Chamber of Commerce "Al Rent Spirit of Muncie" award, brushes off any credit for helping to shape Meridian. Instead, he points to the Meridian staff as the reason Meridian is held in such high regard locally and industry wide.

"I've been very picky about the things I participate in," he said. "It needs to have impact."

Recent health system accreditation visits to Meridian would indicate there is impact. "We're one of a kind," he said. "We're setting the bar for evaluating organizations like us. We are establishing the best practices."

Meridian provides medical services that cross spectrums,

from physical needs to mental health to social well-being. The philosophy of whole-person health is what makes Meridian unique and is what makes Al Rent a believer.

"Meridian has found a way to provide medical services from a behavioral side, from a physical side, a social side and combine all those elements into services for patients and in multiple communities," he said. "I find that highly unique in today's delivery of medical services."

His return to public broadcasting was a return to his roots. Following graduation from Ball State in 1967, Rent joined the university's Public Information Services as coordinator of radio and television news. He left in 1970 to work in public relations and advertising, and returned to the university in 1993 as assistant to the vice president for advancement and director of marketing.

Rent has earned accolades from the community including Outstanding Achievement in Communications Award from the United Way of America and United Way of Indiana, and Volunteer of the Year in 2002 by the United Way of Indiana.

His professional broadcasting career has had a long history in the Muncie community including vice president and co-owner of WLBC/WXFN, host of WLBC Morning Show for eight years, play-by-play for more than 120 televised Ball State college basketball games on WIPB, host of more than 350 public affairs television shows for WIPB, host for WIPB Telesale and on-air spokesperson for pledge drives for Indiana Public Radio.

He also co-founded the Chamber's Muncie on the Move breakfast series, which he has hosted for 30 years and was a founding board member of Huffer Memorial Children's Center.

"Al has made such a lasting impact on Meridian and has touched so many areas of our growth and awareness in the community. We are so fortunate to have him on our board and a true friend of Meridian," Milius concluded.



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- WHBU (1240 & 103.7) - WXFN (1340 & 102.9)

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93%

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in the distance.
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the threshold.

W. Eugene Smith

Strategies to avoid triggers during the allergy season

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR, AGAIN: Allergy season. Allergies are very common. At least 1 in 5 Americans has one. Allergy symptoms include itchy eyes and skin, sneezing, nasal congestion, wheezing, and rash.

"An allergy is what happens when your immune system reacts to something that's usually harmless," says Dr. Murat Gonulalan of MeridianMD. "Seasonal allergies usually result from grass, weeds, tree pollen, or molds."

"It's important for you to know your triggers," Dr. Gonulalan says. "You may think you know that pollen is causing your suffering, but other substances may be involved as well. More than two-thirds of spring allergy sufferers actually have year-round symptoms. We want to help you find the source of your suffering and stop it, not just treat the symptoms."



Dr. Gonulalan recommends some specific strategies to avoid your triggers:

- Monitor pollen and mold counts. Weather reports usually include this information during allergy seasons.
- Keep windows and doors shut at home and in your car during allergy season.

- Stay inside midday and during the afternoon, when pollen counts are highest.
- Take a shower, wash your hair and change your clothes after you've been working or playing outdoors.
- Wear a NIOSH-rated 95 filter mask when mowing the lawn or doing other chores outdoors, and take appropriate medication beforehand.

"In many cases, we recommend one or more medications to control symptoms," Dr. Gonulalan says. "Some drugs are available without a prescription (over the counter); others, including some nose drops, require a prescription. If you have a history of prior seasonal problems, it's best to start taking medications to alleviate symptoms two weeks before they are expected to begin."

One of the most effective ways to treat seasonal allergies linked to pollen is immunotherapy (allergy shots). These injections expose you over time to gradual increments of your allergen, so your body learns to tolerate it rather than reacting with sneezing, a stuffy nose or itchy, watery eyes.

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healthy and happy!

Dr. Murat Gonulalan practices
internal medicine at
MeridianMD in Muncie.



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- › Immunizations and vaccines
- › Illness visits
- › Allergy & asthma care
- › Referrals and collaboration with specialists
- › New patients welcome

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EARLY DETECTION. Meridian is one of only a few state sites designated by Riley as an Early Evaluation Hub for autism.

Meridian's

Early Evaluation Hub helps diagnose autism in children sooner

MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES HAS JOINED A GROWING local movement promoting early childhood education that strives to do no less than change the course of a generation. BY5 is an organization dedicated to improving opportunities for children ages 0-5 to reach their full developmental potential. BY5 works with partners across the community to achieve its principle goal – ensuring all children are kindergarten-ready by 2020.

Meridian Health Services was selected as one of just a handful of organizations statewide to be an “Early Evaluation Hub,” a place where children receive testing for developmental delays and signs of autism. Indiana’s average age of autism diagnosis is 5.3 years, well over the state goal of 36 months by 2020. To address the issue, the Indiana State Department of Health and Riley Children’s Foundation established early Evaluation Hubs throughout the state, allowing for diagnostic service for children 18-42 months in the child’s home county.

TO PAGE 24



PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE. Meridian Health Pediatrics is now the Early Evaluation Hub for East Central Indiana, alleviating a wait list that was once 18 months. Above and top, Dr. Bianca Maya works with a patient.



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FROM PAGE 23

The hubs have reduced Riley's waitlist for these services from 18 months to just four and are getting help to children who need it quicker than ever.

"By age 5, most children's skills are already developed," says Carrie Bale, Executive Director for BY5, an organization that ties the community's ability to teach and train young minds with its ability to flourish economically.

"We discovered only 10 percent of children were getting developmental screenings before kindergarten," said Bale. "We want universal, developmental screenings for all children. We started a task force and looked at how to start a grassroots effort. As we started the dialogue, someone approached us and told us that there was something happening at Riley that sounded like what we wanted to do. They were elated to hear from us and have Meridian as a lead group."

Nine months after talks were initiated, Meridian Health Pediatrics is now the hub for East Central Indiana, alleviating what once was a waitlist of 18 months for Riley.

Amelia Clark, Meridian's Vice President for Community Health, said, "Meridian is a natural fit. Riley uses 'evidence-based diagnostic assessments' that determine a range of age-appropriate cues, including verbal and behavioral recognition, as well as issues that are identified on the autism spectrum."


"Like any other condition, the earlier you know, the better off you are," Clark continued. "Just like diabetes, you have to figure out your lifestyle and how to live with this diagnosis. If I were a young mom without resources, I may not recognize the clues without this diagnostic assistance."

Healthy children have a direct relationship to a healthy local economy.

"I view this on a larger scale," said Bale. "This is an investment in human capital. It is an investment in the people who will be working in these businesses."

What's all this have to do with economic development? Turns out: everything!

"If there are good things happening in a community, business wants to be there," Bale points out. "It is a shift. It used to be, you picked up your family and migrated to where the jobs and good businesses are. Now, businesses want to go where good things are happening. They come to you."

Because 90% of brain development happens by age 5, communities who best prepare their children for kindergarten are the ones who thrive economically as well. 

REASONS WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

1 As many as 1 in 4 children, from birth to age 5, are at moderate or high risk for developmental, behavioral, or social delays.

2 Regular screenings help raise awareness of a child's development, making it easier to expect and celebrate developmental milestones.

3 Developmental and behavioral screenings assure that children are making developmental progress, in areas such as language, social, or motor development.

4 With regular screenings, families, teachers, and other professionals can assure that young children get the services and supports they need, as early as possible to help them thrive alongside their peers.

5 Combining the love and knowledge families have of their children with tools, guidance, and tips recommended by experts, can help optimize the developmental support children receive.

Source: National Survey of Children's Health

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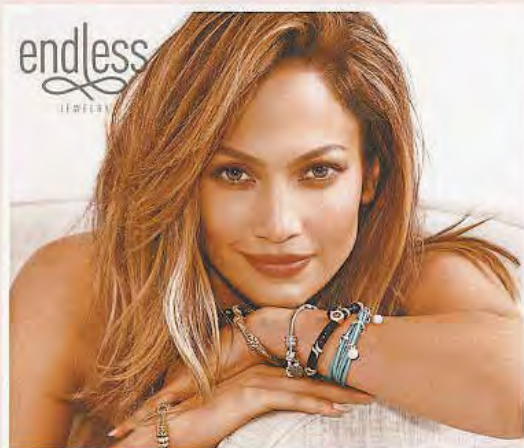
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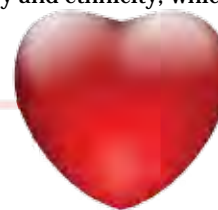
MERIDIAN HEALTH *Moment*

Lifestyle changes can lower heart disease risk in women

IN THE UNITED STATES, 1 in 4 women dies from heart disease. In fact, coronary heart disease (CHD) — the most common type of heart disease — is the #1 killer of women in the United States.

Dr. Denise Reeves, OB/GYN at Meridian Women's Health, says that there are several risk factors that are out of women's control. "We can't do anything to counteract age, family history and ethnicity, which contribute to the rate of heart disease in women."

"But there are steps women can take to lower heart disease risk," Dr. Reeves says. "Lifestyle changes can lower risk considerably."



CIGARETTE SMOKING: About half of all heart attacks in women are because of smoking! "Simply put: Don't start," Dr. Reeves says. "If you smoke, quit now." Meridian Health Services' tobacco cessation program can help make this important change.

OBESITY: The more overweight you are, the higher your risk of heart disease. This is true even if you have no other risk factors. "Proper diet and exercise is key," Dr. Reeves says. "Losing weight is difficult and women should consult with their doctors to develop a plan that really works for them."

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION: Heavy drinking can cause many heart-related problems, but moderate drinkers are less likely to develop heart disease than people who drink heavily or don't drink at all. "What does 'moderate drinking' mean? For women, that means no more than one drink a day," Dr. Reeves says. "Talk to your doctor to help you decide if the heart benefits of moderate drinking outweigh the risks."

SLEEP APNEA: Do you snore? Loud snoring can be a sign of sleep apnea, a sleep disorder that can raise your chances of having a heart attack. "If you snore heavily, see your physician," Dr. Reeves says. "Sleep tests can be conducted to determine the best course of action."

LACK OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Like being overweight, lack of physical activity raises your heart disease risk even if you have no other risk factors. "So pick an activity you like," Dr. Reeves says. "And do it often."

Keeping *Women* healthy and happy!

*Dr. Denise S. Reeves, OB/GYN, FACOG,
practices obstetrics and gynecology at
Meridian Women's Health in Muncie.*



Learn more:
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Keeping *Women* healthy and happy!

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First Merchants and Meridian a 'good fit'

This was not the typical afternoon of a bank executive. Karen Karmolinski, former Regional President of First Merchants Bank, was dressed in bright orange coveralls, eyes hidden behind dark sunglasses, rocking out to a Van Halen tune on her guitar.

Well, sort of. Karmolinski, surrounded by several of her co-workers at First Merchants, was lip-syncing an '80s hair band anthem for a video that would be shown during Meridian's seventh annual Rialzo charity fundraiser gala.

"Anything for Meridian," she said with a smile after the shoot. "Even if it means looking ridiculous in a music video."

The partnership between First Merchants and Meridian goes way back. "We have been involved with the board for several years and have been the title sponsor of Rialzo since it began," she said.

Karmolinski came on board at First Merchants in early 2013 and strengthened that relationship with Meridian almost immediately. She reached out to Meridian President/CEO, Hank

In mid-June, Karen Karmolinski resigned her post at First Merchants Bank to allow more time for her family. We are happy to have her continue in her role as chairman of Meridian's Development Council.

Milius, personally about helping out at the Suzanne Gresham Center. "I worked with a similar organization in Florida, one that served foster children," she said. "When I heard about the Gresham Center, I knew I had to be involved."

She now serves as the Chair of the Development Council at Meridian, helping to raise funds for the

organization and projects such as the playground at Gresham. "First Merchants and Meridian are a good fit. Both are very community-minded," Karmolinski said.

"Meridian is all about 'whole-person' health, trying to improve the overall health of the community, whether it's substance abuse, women's care, counseling, or pediatrics," she said. "At First Merchants, we are trying to promote financial literacy, financial health. For some families, the financial literacy is not present and it ends up causing families stress or even the loss of a home. We believe that is an important part of whole-person health."

First Merchants has been serving Delaware County communities and beyond for more than 120 years. Today, First Merchants has more than 100 banking locations in 27 Indiana counties, as well as two in both Illinois and Ohio, according to Karen Evens, Marketing Director for First Merchants. There are 540 First Merchants employees in Delaware County alone.

Employees at First Merchants are encouraged to spend a certain number of days each year volunteering in the community. Many of those employees volunteer with Meridian – at Fam Fest, Ducky Derby and Holidays at Gresham.

"Many of them choose to do that at Meridian," she said. "That's good for the health of our employees."

Which, in turn, is good for the overall health of a community.

"In order for any community to be healthy, you have to have leadership organizations that are not afraid to step up and play a lead role in looking at whatever the needs of the community are," Karmolinski said. "Meridian has been very proactive in looking at the needs and the changes in healthcare and finding a novel way to bring it all together to make sure that all communities are served. You can't just sit back. You have to find out what needs to be done and do it."

Just another thing First Merchants and Meridian have in common.



MERIDIAN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL CHAIRMAN
Karen Karmolinski

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Pridemark constructs projects, partnership

As Meridian Health Services renovates 6,838 square feet of space located inside its Brentwood location in Anderson, Pridemark Construction and its owner, Mike Tschuor, will make absolutely sure that it's in ship shape.

A pirate ship – shape – that is. At this location, designed to meet behavior health needs of children and families, an aquatic theme welcomes clients with textured blue carpet that resembles rushing water and ocean waves. Other floors are covered in vinyl plank material and walls are finished with pebble backsplashes. But the most remarkable feature, without a doubt, is a pirate ship play structure nestled neatly in a corner of the lobby, designed by Pridemark's architect, crafted by Pridemark's builders, and gifted to Meridian Health Services by Pridemark's owner.



Through Pridemark, Tschuor has been working alongside Meridian on renovations and total build projects for about 5 years, according to Brenda Irelan, Facilities Director at Meridian Health Services. She has been in her position for about 15 years, and has worked with Tschuor on many projects.

"Mike is very thorough in what he does," Irelan said. "He's very customer-service friendly. He is very good about seeing things that you may not see. He's very honest. He involves himself from the beginning to the end on projects. If you have an issue or any problems, he is right on it."

"We'll do anything and everything," Pridemark's Interior Designer Megan Kubick explained. "We don't do a whole lot of residential, though. We are a union company. We do retail spaces, office, corporate, healthcare obviously, concrete work and sidewalks."

"We've even been involved in the expansion of the Horizon Convention Center and its corridor connecting it to the Courtyard by Marriott hotel in Muncie," she said.

Kubick, specifically, has been instrumental in the interior design, project management and finishes at the Brentwood location.

"It's very different in that it has a theme," she said. "One of the things that we discussed with Meridian was how literal they wanted to go with the theme. And then we created the ship, which is very unique. But we've done some other facilities that involve kids, and it's always fun to use the bright colors and do something different."

And about Tschuor, Kubick said, "Mike is just a great guy who is willing to help anyone. He always does what he can for Meridian to help them help their patients."

Irelan has just one word to describe working with Tschuor and Pridemark: "Fabulous."

Tschuor is a Muncie native and has been in the construction business for a total of 40 years. His work with Meridian Health Services goes back an additional four years through the Gale Tschuor Company.

"The Brentwood location and pirate ship came about as a collaboration between Meridian and Pridemark's design team of Megan Kubick, Courtney Bell and Cynthia Hunter," Tschuor said. But regarding the gift of the pirate ship itself: "Pridemark has a great partnership with Meridian and has been involved with all their events, and as an extension we wanted to do this as a way to show our thanks for all that Meridian does for the communities they serve," he said.

The play structure includes port holes that have mirrors in them, according to Kubick, along with activity boards and a ship steering wheel that kids will be able to move around and play with.

"It will keep kids entertained until they go visit their therapist," she said.

Pridemark Construction is currently working on several other projects for Meridian, including recent renovations to their Winchester and Connersville offices, and at the Tillotson Avenue campus in Muncie.

Pridemark also works closely with the Youth Opportunity Center, Boys & Girls Club, Habitat for Humanity, Animal Rescue Fund (ARF), First Choice for Women, and Second Harvest Food Bank, said Tschuor, "because all the great impact that these organizations do for our community."

Tschuor has a giving heart for his community. He's also on the Board of Directors for several service organizations, including Blood & Fire, Inside Out, Animal Rescue Fund (ARF) and the Back to School Teachers Store.



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But that's only part of Jim Reinhart's story over the past two years of treatment at MeridianMD. A "whole-person" approach to health care tells the rest of the story – how a team medical approach and lifestyle changes were key to bringing about that change in numbers.

"The main reason why I came to Meridian was because the health services were more comprehensive than anyplace else," he said, adding that he needed guidance for both physical and mental health.

When Jim first came to MeridianMD in December of 2013, he was struggling with the side effects of previous treatments for bipolar disorder. He was on mood-stabilizing medications that contributed to problems with his thyroid, weight gain and clouded thinking. "The mental problems led to physical problems, and that fell through the cracks when I was seeing multiple doctors in various practices," he said.

Along with smoking, bad eating habits and occasional waves of depression, Jim says he felt like he was "kind of out of control." At Meridian, his initial cholesterol readings for LDL were so high, they couldn't be read. He thinks they were close to 400. "I had fat going through my veins, essentially," he said. When his weight reached 276, he said he thought to himself, "My gosh, I'm going to make it to 300." He was determined to change but depression sometimes made it difficult for him to deal with his behaviors.

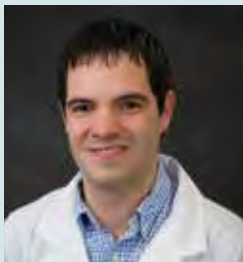
Fortunately, with Meridian's whole-person approach to patient care, Jim was able to find everything he needed to start turning his health around. For his depression, he is seeing Dr. Hector Diez Caballero, a Meridian Health psychiatrist. For the high cholesterol, his primary care doctor is Dr. Murat Gonulalan at MeridianMD. "The doctors have been very good and really helped me," he said.

With Dr. Diez, Jim's been able to wean off of certain medications and reduce the dosages of others, thus reducing harmful side effects. What he likes most about Dr. Diez is that he listens. "A lot of people dispense medication based on what they read. He's gone past that. He's more involved with the person rather than the medication."

With Dr. Gonulalan, a treatment plan has been devised that consists of a healthy diet, exercise, vitamins and fish oils along with medication for the high cholesterol.

"We set goals for the numbers we wanted to reach," said Dr. Gonulalan, "and he saw a health coach who talked with him in general about what to eat and what not to eat, someone who could work with him on a one-to-one basis."

A Meridian health coach, assigned to Jim's case, was among a group of specially trained health care workers who help figure out the lifestyle changes that are needed for a particular situation then follow up to make sure that the patient is being active in their own healthcare.



Dr. Hector Diez Caballero



SUCCESSFUL TREATMENTS. Jim Reinhart has made remarkable health improvements during the past two years, with guidance from MeridianMD.

One of the biggest challenges, Jim said, was "to get into the rhythm of exercise and the diet and basically acquiring a whole new taste for food." That meant reducing his sugar and fat intakes, especially red meats and butter. "One stick of butter every couple of days became one every few weeks, so that was a big change." He has also learned to substitute lots of fresh food, and even has his own garden with various vegetables and berry plants. "And I'm going to add a few fruit trees this year."

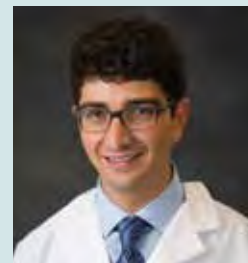
The patient educator also helped him develop an exercise program that was especially suited for him, combining cardiovascular activity with weight training. He now attends a gym four to six times a week, and has found the routine has been as beneficial for him mentally as it has physically. When he's working out, he said, "I can take a break from my brain. I get a little bit of peace. It gets your focus off of problems, to where I'm much more functional now than when I started."

Another part of his treatment was to eliminate his tobacco use. While Meridian does offer smoking cessation programs, Jim found that seeing his vital statistics was enough motivation for him to stop smoking on his own. "My heart rate, my blood pressure and my cholesterol were all telling me that I wasn't doing my job," he recalled. "So I just quit cold turkey."

Although Jim's road to recovery has not always been smooth, Dr. Gonulalan is impressed with how far he's come over the past two years. "During the last year especially, it's been constantly getting better," Dr. Gonulalan said. "We had some fluctuations before that, but now it's much better." He expects that within the next year, all of the numbers should be in the ideal normal range that has been the goal. "Every six months or so, we keep checking his levels and so far, he's much improved. Together with the psychiatry, the therapy, he's doing well."

Jim also credits his Meridian counselor as a big help in his care. "He pointed me in the right direction, kept things positive," he said.

The Meridian medical approach, Jim says, is truly a complete one. "It's not just one person treating you, it's a whole team caring for you. Everything is organized around the whole person and your whole health. They give you real information and facts, and continue care even outside the medical office, which helps quite a bit too."



Dr. Murat Gonulalan



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Dr. Akira Barhams, a native Hoosier, is one of Meridian's newest **family practice physicians** who joined this past winter. She grew up in South Bend and received an undergraduate degree from Indiana University-Bloomington and a medical degree from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Before joining the Meridian team, she had a family practice for five years in Kokomo.



Why I chose Meridian:

I like their concept of addressing whole-person health. They pay attention to mental health and offer lots of support for patients, including social work. Sometimes a person's health is poor because of different stresses in life. A lot of patients have trouble meeting economic needs, like food or shelter. In addition, poor family support can contribute to anxiety or depression, which can also lead to poor attention to one's medical health. There's a synergy in the office. Everybody here wants to help patients. There's a commitment to treating both medical health and mental health.



Diabetes a major health issue

Diabetes is a major problem, and it's on the rise across the United States. Diabetes mellitus is a metabolic disease resulting from problems with insulin secretion from the pancreas, the action of insulin on the tissues, or both. Since insulin is needed to lower blood sugar levels, diabetes mellitus is diagnosed when blood sugars are persistently elevated. Some complications include blindness, nerve damage (patients feel numbness, burning or pain), kidney failure, vascular disease (including heart attacks, strokes and peripheral vascular disease) and poor wound healing, which can lead to amputations, especially of the lower extremities. It crosses all economic levels, and it can affect people of any age. We see a lot of children, and it's dangerous at all ages. Studies show the longer you have it, the more you are at risk of getting complications.



Diabetes factors

A lot of it has to do with **lifestyle**. Diet and exercise are major issues. For the most part, I don't think people are very health conscious. Statistics show that this is especially true in Indiana. In the past, many people were farmers who worked in the fields and labored for their food. Now everything is just about convenience. Unhealthy foods are often cheaper than healthier foods. Fast food is everywhere and easily accessible.

Obesity is a major risk factor. Too much adipose tissue (fat), especially abdominal fat, leads to insulin resistance. The risk is increased even more in women. **Family history** also can play a role. Having just one first-degree relative with diabetes mellitus II increases a person's risk of getting diabetes by two- to three-fold. Some **ethnic groups** have an increased chance of developing the disease. According to scientific research, diabetes has a 7.6 percent prevalence in Caucasians, 9 percent in Asians, 12.8 percent in Hispanics, 13.2 percent in African Americans and 15.9 percent in American Indians and Alaskans.



Encouraging healthy changes among patients

I'm proud of being able to make relationships with my patients. You have to gain a sense of trust. Sometimes people are reluctant to do certain things until they feel like you care for them. For some patients, trust happens right away. Others may be more skeptical of doctors and it can take several visits. Some patients are very resistant at first to do anything I tell them, but over time, they start to understand. Meridian has done a great job of instilling whole-health practices and encouraging integration in treatment plans to have patients gain success.



Diabetes solutions

It shouldn't be about taking a pill. I always tell people to make lifestyle changes. Start with the **diet**, because food directly affects sugar levels. People need to move away from high-fat foods, high-fat dairy, red meat, sweet beverages and desserts. Think more about a Mediterranean diet, which focuses primarily on plant-based foods, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts.

The other big thing I advocate is **exercise**, which lowers the blood sugar levels. If people can lose excess fat, it will decrease their insulin resistance. I recommend 30 to 45 minutes a day — or ideally an hour — most days of the week, at a moderate intensity. It's more than just being out walking or strolling. You need to get the heart rate up. You shouldn't feel comfortable enough to be able to carry on a conversation on the phone without getting winded. You don't have to go to a gym or buy expensive equipment. There are many exercises you can do at home.





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Dr. Adrienne Bedford

Meridian Dunkirk & New Castle facilities strive to provide healthcare for all

ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY BY THE NATIONAL Rural Health Association, nearly one-fourth of the United States population lives in rural areas – but only about 10 percent of physicians practice in non-urban communities.

With facilities in Dunkirk and New Castle, Meridian Health Services is helping to address a national health crisis affecting generations of families who have difficulty obtaining access to healthcare.

Meridian's Dunkirk site, which started in December, is small in size. But according to Dr. Eric Betts, a family medicine physician and a managing physician for MeridianMD West Jay Clinic, the center plays a pivotal role in the community.

"Jay County Hospital and Meridian partnered to create a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center (FQHC) in Dunkirk. The hospital had already been running the West Jay Clinic here at Dunkirk," Betts said. "Meridian partnered with them to create the FQHC to broaden the services available and provide behavioral health integration and be able to reach out to the underserved in the area."

The building has five exam rooms and employs, in addition to Betts, two front-office staff, a licensed practical nurse, a medical assistant, a clinical coordinator, a community health worker and a part-time nurse practitioner. A licensed social worker also is being added.

The facility is the first primary care site for Meridian in Jay County and allows the healthcare provider to offer a wide range of services by being a FQHC.

"Tracy Lax, our nurse practitioner, and I both take care of people of any age, from newborns to the elderly. I also go to nursing homes in the area and take care of patients at Jay County Hospital," Betts said.

Betts said Dunkirk's health challenges are similar to many rural communities.

"Tobacco abuse, obesity, poor dietary habits and lack of routine exercise are problems. This leads to the common Indiana problems of COPD, diabetes mellitus II, hypertension and hyperlipidemia. This sometimes leads to coronary artery disease and/or chronic kidney disease," he said.

On a daily basis, Betts sees how economic factors affect overall health.

"We have many working low-income people in the area with little to no health insurance, which just compounds the problem.

Many people with insurance can't afford their medications," he said.

The MeridianMD New Castle facility serves a similar population.

"This clinic was able to open because of the Affordable Care Act, which gave community health centers grant money to create new access points around the country," said Dr. Adrienne Bedford, a family medicine physician and medical care director at the New Castle location. "The grants have helped open up centers in a lot of places where people would have to go outside of their communities to get quality healthcare."

The New Castle expansion, which should be complete by summer, nearly doubles the size of the site's previous building, according to Bedford. The addition will round out the care provided in the location, fulfilling Meridian's goal of "whole-person" health services, providing both medical and behavioral health.

"I think there's definitely a need for this site in New Castle, which has been underserved as far as primary care is concerned. We are reaching so many people in the community who otherwise would have to drive to Muncie or neighboring cities," Bedford said.

The facility will help serve the region's diverse population, with a focus on preventative medicine and chronic illness management.

"Our demographics are across the board. I've seen the full range of the population, from children to the elderly," Bedford said.

The concept is meant to be all encompassing, with an emphasis on physical, mental and social health.

"Social health influences overall health and the health of a community. I'd like to see us become a true community center with social programs on issues like finding jobs and learning how to fill out a resume," Bedford said.

Bedford applauds Meridian Health Services for bringing positive health changes to rural Indiana.

"Since I was in medical school, I always worked in community health centers," she said. "To be on the front line of getting one going has been a dream come true. The community has been so welcoming, and I'm so proud that Meridian is reaching out to these communities and trying to make a difference."

Meridian Health Services is helping to address a national health crisis affecting generations of families.

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"Dementia isn't an actual disease itself. It's a group of symptoms that can be caused by many different diseases," says Dr. Abdul Subhan, Psychiatrist at Meridian Senior Health.

Caring for a person with dementia at home can be demanding and stressful for family caregivers. Dr. Subhan offers a few tips that can make it easier to communicate with a person with dementia:

SET A POSITIVE MOOD: Speak to your loved one in a pleasant and respectful manner. Use facial expressions, tone of voice and physical touch to help convey your message and show your feelings of affection.

GET THE PERSON'S ATTENTION. Limit distractions and noise—turn off the radio or TV, close the curtains or shut the door, or move to quieter surroundings. Maintain eye contact and use nonverbal cues and touch to help keep your loved one focused.



STATE YOUR MESSAGE CLEARLY. Use simple words and sentences. Speak slowly, distinctly and in a reassuring tone. If you aren't understood the first time, use the same wording to repeat your message or question. If that doesn't work, wait a few minutes and rephrase the question.

LISTEN WITH YOUR EARS, EYES AND HEART. Be patient in waiting for a reply. If your loved one is struggling for an answer, it's okay to suggest words.

BREAK DOWN ACTIVITIES INTO A SERIES OF STEPS. This makes many tasks much more manageable. Visual cues can be very helpful.

MAINTAIN YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR. Use humor whenever possible, though not at the person's expense. People with dementia tend to retain their social skills and are usually delighted to laugh along with you.

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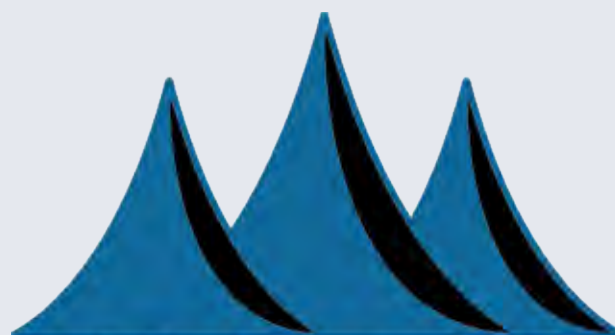


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Talk to Mike Swinford for a few minutes and you quickly know three of his passions – people, community and giving back. He's made Meridian Health Services his charity of choice.

Swinford, president of Fort Wayne's Briner Building Inc., is no stranger to Muncie and Delaware County.

"Our lifetime passion has always been working with people and giving back to our community," said Mike. "We generally try to support adult and children services and shelters. It's all about helping people and making our community better than we found it. We are a small part of this American legacy."

Mike and his business have long been active in the community, leaving an impressive footprint of good work and good deeds.

Briner built the 50,000-square-foot pre-cast concrete shell building just off I-69, in Daleville. The company is also adding a 60,000-square-foot pre-cast concrete plant to Muncie's Mid-West Metal Products on Cowan Road. First Merchants Bank is their local lender. Swinford makes a point to use local businesses, local employees, and local subcontractors, whenever possible.

"The goal of our Delaware County partnership and Daleville building project is to create 45 new jobs for Delaware County residents," Mike said.

Mike and wife, Debbie, are generous contributors to Meridian Health Services and always are guests at Rialzo, Meridian's charity benefit gala and Muncie's premiere fundraising event.

"We cannot say enough about Meridian's Rialzo charity gala, which is a community extravaganza," Mike said. "It's very professionally organized and choreographed. It's a heartfelt event for the Muncie regional people to come together and support Meridian Health Services."

The Swinforts, married 41 years, have two adult children, Krista and Nick. Nick attended Ball State. Debbie and Krista are graduates of Indiana University and Mike is a Purdue graduate.

"We met at the Indiana/Purdue Fort Wayne campus at a card game," Mike said. "We lost the card game, but it was



CELEBRATING THE MISSION. Meridian supporter Mike Swinford and his wife, Debbie, at Rialzo with Meridian's Hank Milius.

the best hand I ever played," referring to winning Debbie over.

Why choose Meridian? For the Swinforts, it's an opportunity to support a medical home that is uniquely suited for today's health care challenges.

"We have chosen to help support Meridian Health Services because of their unique approach using both individual medical and behavioral support services," Mike said. "Medical-only is certainly not an end-all. Healthcare is no longer a square box solution. Our medical world is largely over medicated with mixed results. Physical therapy, personal counseling and mentoring can be very successful for individual health solutions."

The Swinforts not only endorse Meridian for the work they do, they urge others to consider a similar path.

"We encourage you to get engaged in your passion, whatever that might be. Our passions are people, community, and Meridian Health Services."



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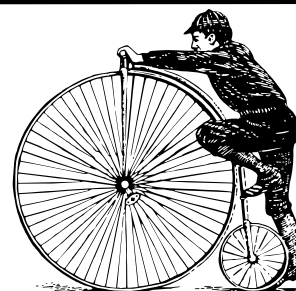
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The new structure will deepen Meridian’s “**whole-person**” **health** concept: the integration of physical, behavioral and social health.

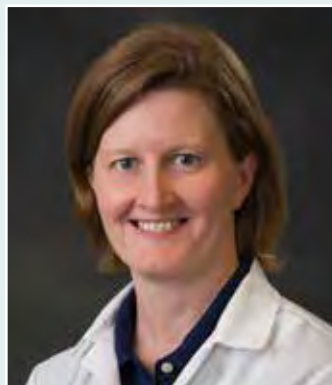
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A photograph of the Muncie Civic Theatre building, a large, ornate brick structure with multiple stories and arched windows. The building is the central focus of the image. A yellow banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the theatre's name and establishment date. Large, semi-transparent letters spelling 'UPHOLD CIVIC THEATRE' are overlaid across the entire image, with 'UPHOLD' at the top, 'CIVIC' in the middle, and 'THEATRE' at the bottom.

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The Spirit OF MERIDIAN: Dr. John J. Wernert

Because he is the son of a physician and a nurse, there was little doubt that the career and life of John J. Wernert, M.D., MHA, and now Secretary of Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration, would have lasting impact.

For his ongoing contributions to integrated healthcare, his influence in launching the Healthy Indiana Plan, and acknowledgement of his pursuit in building bridges between government and healthcare providers, Dr. Wernert is the winner of Meridian Health Services' annual Spirit of Meridian award.

"I'm honored to receive this award," Dr. Wernert said. "As part of the state's administration, we appreciate everything Meridian is doing and the leadership role they have taken in making Indiana healthier... from all perspectives. We look forward to our continued partnership."

The Spirit of Meridian award goes to outstanding individuals who exemplify the Meridian focus on patient care and "whole-person" health, and regularly go above and beyond as an example to others.

"I cannot think of a more suitable recipient," said Meridian's President and CEO, Hank Milius. "John is an important partner for Meridian Health Services, linking critical statewide healthcare services to patients and providers. His work supports Meridian's whole-person health initiatives and is critical to our ability to connect healthcare providers throughout the state."

Dr. Wernert, a psychiatrist, was selected in June 2014 by Governor Mike Pence to head the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA).

"We have a governor who is committed to improving Hoosiers' health and willing to change things," Dr. Wernert said in a recent report to the state. "Not only does Governor Pence want to isolate programs that don't work, he also wants to emphasize social supports that do work well and increase support for those programs."

Dr. Wernert is the first physician – or healthcare provider – to hold the position of Family and Social Services Administration secretary.

"John was instrumental in establishing HIP 2.0," Milius added. "As a practicing physician he has the added expertise and perspective to give him a good grasp on Indiana's healthcare issues."

Since inception of the Healthy Indiana Plan, Meridian has



SPIRIT OF MERIDIAN. John J. Wernert, M.D., MHA and Secretary of Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration.

enrolled nearly 1,000 applicants. Meridian's own enrollment specialists work with communities across the state to educate the public about the healthcare program and how best to leverage its features.

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration affects 30 percent of Indiana's citizens. The agency represents just over 40 percent of state government spending. Wernert has worked to eliminate silos.

"My first priority is to make sure patients and families are at the center of what we do at FSSA. The Division of Mental Health is concerned about the mental health of citizens, and the Division of Aging works primarily with the needs of elderly Hoosiers – but these divisions need to work in concert and coordinate their services for maximum impact."

"In medicine, we moved to the primary medical home model a number of years ago, so in a similar way, I see opportunities to gain efficiencies and improve coordination

of care in FSSA. Integrated care is how we practice medicine now, so it's not a big jump to come to state government and say we need to be about helping our fellow citizens in need, rescuing families, restoring lives and giving folks a hand up, not a hand out."

That logic fits perfectly with Meridian's integrated care philosophy, which blends specialties in physical, mental and social well-being.

The FSSA and the provider community seek a more positive, collaborative partnership.

"The governor wants me to spend as much time as possible mending fences and working with provider groups – like the hospital association, nursing home industry, physicians and advocacy groups to reassure them that we are working as partners," said Dr. Wernert.

"We opened up our processes across the agency, in strategic planning and determinations of payment policies by bringing in the end-users – the doctors, prescribers and providers at all levels who are impacted by these policies – giving them a chance to collaborate and give input."



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The Spirit OF MERIDIAN: Alysha Nemore

Alysha Nemore has always wanted to be a therapist. Really. Always.

"It was always my goal from when I was very young," she said.

The reason? Her grandmother. When Nemore was about 8 years old, her grandmother retired from Marsh after four decades. "She didn't like being retired, so she went back to school to become a counselor," Nemore said. She would spend the summers with her grandmother, and that meant tagging along to her college classes. "I would sit in those classes, loving it, asking a lot of questions," she recalled. "From that moment, I knew that's what I wanted to do."

Her grandmother worked with inmates in a penitentiary. "I took a different path, but the people she was helping did influence my decision," she said. "Seeing the struggles that she would deal with when working with her clients in prison, I wanted to help prevent people going to prison and making bad choices. I wanted to make sure children have the skills and support they need before they end up there."

Today, she is the Children's Services Clinical Supervisor at Meridian Health Services and the winner of the Employee Spirit of Meridian Award. "I wouldn't be doing anything else," she said. "Now I am able to help even more people by supporting our great staff." Her staff is predominantly in Madison County, where Meridian started its Children's Services program 6 years ago.

The program has expanded so rapidly that construction is wrapping up on a new location.

Nemore came to Meridian as an intern 9 years ago. She was working as a behavioral clinician while she completed her master's degree at Ball State University. "I became a therapist once I received my masters," she said. She then became a licensed therapist at the Suzanne Gresham Center.

It wasn't long before Meridian's management began to notice her leadership skills. Co-workers were always coming to her for advice or compassion. Her official job consists of running the Madison County children's program, offering clinical support for staff and for other supervisors there. That's about 35 people in all. "I love helping them develop the skills needed to do the very best we can for these kids," she said.

In all, Meridian serves about 650 clients in Madison County.

Nemore also keeps partnerships, like the one with Anderson Community Schools, strong. The new Children's Services building she is in is shared with the school district. The partnership began last year as a way to help with the district's alternative school, offering the "mental health component" for the program. Meridian provides staff to work with students during the day and after school at homes and with their families.

"These kids have had it rough," she said. "They don't have a lot of support. They are in this program because they were either suspended too many times or expelled from their home school.



SPIRIT OF MERIDIAN. Alysha Nemore is the Children's Services Clinical Supervisor at Meridian Health Services and the winner of the Employee Spirit of Meridian Award.

It's everything from anger issues to drug abuse to bringing weapons to the classroom."

The partnership, she added, has been very successful, with many of the students involved returning to their home school.

Nemore said her "heart" is with the Madison County program. "I could have stayed at Gresham, and it's right down the street from my house," she said, adding that she lives there with her husband and their three children. "But we have developed an amazing team here," she said of Madison County. "We all really depend on each other, support each other."

Especially when they didn't even have a building to call home.

"We did whatever we had to – meet at the library, at schools, other places," she said. "We really grew up together here."

And now that they have a building, they can grow even more.

"Now we will be able to offer walk-in hours, we will have a consistent place to bring clients to," Nemore said. She helped design the area, which was formerly six large classrooms.

There will be a room for children with sensory sensitivities. Many autistic children are oversensitive to sound, touch and other stimulation of senses. In addition, the building will house a training kitchen where middle and high school students can learn life skills. There are even plans for a community garden.

"But, still at the heart of it all," Nemore said, "are the people. My staff, the clients, that's what motivates me," she continued. "I really do love my job and I will tell *everyone* who will listen!"

“RIALZO,” THE ITALIAN WORD THAT MEANS “to lift up” is what buoys some of Meridian Health Services’ most critical initiatives. The annual charity gala has raised more than \$300,000 in just the last three years. Proceeds have gone to support children’s programs, medical advancements and equipment. “Welcome Home” kits for the homeless moving into Muncie’s

Walnut Commons, a 44-unit apartment complex, offered essential belongings to aid in the transition to apartment life. “Wheeling for Healing” kits were portable kits for behavioral clinicians to use when meeting with patients off-site; and last year, proceeds were used for a new playground at the Suzanne Gresham Center. Here’s what Rialzo proceeds will help achieve this year.

Rialzo funds help addictions team



MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES LAUNCHED AN innovative Addictions Services Steering Team last fall that was tasked with examining the latest research and best practices in the field of addictions and mental health.

Already, it is making a difference as it strives to establish protocols and build programs designed to address the growing number of addictions to opioids – prescribed painkillers – and the street-drug, heroin.

Funding for the team and the work they’re doing is boosted this year by Meridian’s premier fundraiser, Rialzo VII.

“We see this as a critical area of focus for Meridian and for our community,” said President and CEO, Hank Milius. “Our integrated care model is a perfect fit for this kind of treatment.”

The concentrated focus on opioid prescribed medications and drugs like heroin extends across the country.

“This is not a new problem, but how we’re addressing it is different,” said Eldon Solomon, M.S., LMHC, Regional Manager, Adult and Addiction Services. “Insurers, individuals and families have been paying for the same treatment over and over again. Initiatives such as Affordable Care Act (ACA) and other funding streams expect to see new results in order to validate the increased funding of addiction treatment.”

New in the 2017 federal budget request is \$1.1 billion for drug treatment for people addicted to opioid medications and heroin, which the White House says kills more people than automobile crashes.

Prescription opioids – which are painkillers – and street drugs like heroin and methamphetamine, are closely linked. Healthcare providers wrote prescriptions for 259 million painkillers in 2012, enough to give every American adult a bottle of pills, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Many believe people addicted to prescription

painkillers are turning to heroin because it’s cheaper and easier to get after government crackdowns on prescription drug abuse.

“The opioid prescription drug problem in Delaware County, along with meth, has turned into what the attorney general calls an epidemic,” Solomon said.

“Key to solving the addiction problem is keeping treatment affordable,” Solomon continued. “Before ACA, addiction was not classified as a mental health issue and insurers did not have to pay for it. Under terms of the ACA, it is considered a mental health issue and insurers are demanding a new kind of accountability.”

Meridian started responding to the emerging crisis three years ago.

“We saw a need for referral for addiction of co-occurring issues,” Solomon said, adding that 80 percent of those who suffer from addiction also are suffering from mental health issues or symptoms. “We want to address the recovery process in the context of their mental health issues like depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions.”

“Today, Meridian’s footprint extends into primary care, a key segment for identifying mental health issues, as well as addictions. The treatment we’ve been doing the last few years translates into success among the patients we’re seeing now.”

“We have the ability to be integrative on the whole-health context,” Solomon said. “We’re in primary care, pediatrics, women’s health, and behavioral health. At every level, our patients are using these services.”

In March 2015, Meridian launched The Opioid Addiction Treatment (OAT). “It is an aggressive, intensive program that uses all services of those healthcare entities, as we stage clients through the recovery process,” Solomon said.

The more recently appointed steering team developed as a result of the success of this kind of integration.

Meridian Scholars launch careers

THE PROCEEDS FROM RIALZO VII WILL HELP provide money for a new, innovative scholars program that will offer students as much as \$10,000 if they make a two-year employment commitment to Meridian Health Services.

"We hear so much about the brain drain in our state but this is a brain gain," said Scott Smalstig, Vice President of Fund Development.

For years, Meridian Health Services has hired 10 to 15 student interns every year, according to Meridian Health Services, Senior Recruiter, Diana Roach. "Some stay to become full-time employees, others don't make the cut, and some move to other employers.

This is an effort to retain the best people and keep them here in our community, which helps everyone."

The interns cross disciplines and departments within Meridian's fast-growing network of clinics and primary care practices. Meridian has nearly 40 facilities serving 39 counties. There are three locations in Marion County alone. Meridian employs about 1,000 people across the state.

"We have interns from medical, nurses, therapists, social work, accounting and other disciplines," Roach said. "Meridian recruits from colleges and universities across the state."

"We're already a leader in behavioral health and we're fast approaching that leadership role in medical services, as well. We like to hire interns. They know us, we know them; it's a win-win."

The scholarships will help people like Brandy LoPilato, a family nurse practitioner who started with Meridian last September. She spends half of her week at MeridianMD, Meridian's primary care practice and the other half with Meridian Primetime Pediatrics, Meridian's urgent care facility for children.

"I was one of the lucky ones to be selected for an internship," said LoPilato. "I love working at Meridian and being able to offer my patients a spectrum of health options. It gives me access to treat the whole person and their entire needs for a comprehensive treatment plan."

LoPilato, who worked through college, went almost immediately from her undergraduate degree in nursing into the graduate program at Ball State University. She graduated with her Master's of Science degree in nursing last July.

"I was a home-health nurse before working with pediatric and adult patients," she said. "I've also taught as an LPN instructor."

LoPilato has ties to Muncie and wants to stay in the area. "I have roots here. It's a good fit for me and for Meridian."

Meridian Scholars is designed to nurture more partnerships like the one they have with LoPilato, so there is additional incentive that attracts the best and brightest, which leads to a greater opportunity to retain and transition these scholars into full-time employees.



PARTNERSHIP. Meridian Scholar Brandy LoPilato and Senior Recruiter Diana Roach.



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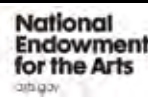
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CITY FIT, MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES' new annual event in Richmond, brought together dozens of community partners on Saturday, May 21 to promote physical, mental and social well being.

The event started four years ago but stalled last year in search of a new lead sponsor. Meridian took on that role and expects to help grow the event each year. "We want to be able to do more of these kinds of events that are good for the community because they promote health and wellness," said Gerry Cyranowski, vice president of adult clinical services for Meridian. "Richmond now represents our second largest location, offering a full spectrum of services from medical care to behavioral health to social services."



Despite a steady rain early in the day, City Fit started with the Wayne County 4-H Color Run at the Glen Miller golf course. Activities also included Zumba, roller-skating, Yoga and basketball free throws. Booths set up across the lawn promoted wellness and health screenings.



Partners in City Fit included Reid Health, Richmond Family YMCA, Richmond Parks and Recreation, the Boys & Girls Club of Wayne County, Family Fitness Works and Heartfulness Meditation, along with sponsors Centerstone of Indiana, McDonald's, Meijer, Lindsey Rush Photography and VanVleet Insurance Agency.



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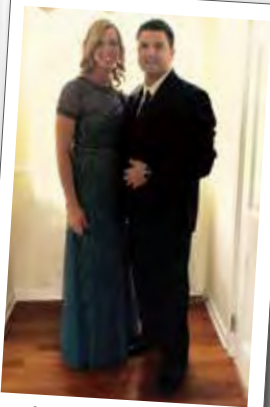
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SHOOTING STARS WERE EVERYWHERE AT RIALZO VII,
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But as we all put our heads together at Redhead Salon Boutique,
a few stand-outs emerged from the stellar crowd.

Here are our picks for the Best-Dressed of Riazlo VII.



*Wynde Ashman
with
Michael Ashman*



*Barb Smith
with
Steve Smith*



*Melissa Milins
with
Eric Milins*

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9 RIALZO VII WAS DESCRIBED by many as the "best yet" in the survey of the more than 950 attendees.

Meridian's charity gala not only garnered over \$150,000 in donations for its addictions and scholarship programs, but it also featured a new partnership with the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel in downtown Muncie.

VIPs and guests flowed from Three Wise Men to the Courtyard lobby and through the corridors to the exquisitely decorated Horizon Convention Center while being entertained by talented and creative arts partner performers from Muncie Civic, the Muncie Symphony Orchestra and Cornerstone Center for the Arts.

Corporate partners kicked off the night with a take-off on the "Dreams" music video before the audience learned of the community's need for enhanced addictions programs and quality healthcare talent. "Party on the Moon" delighted patrons with a 3-hour-plus continuous set of hits that kept the dance floor covered well past midnight.















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