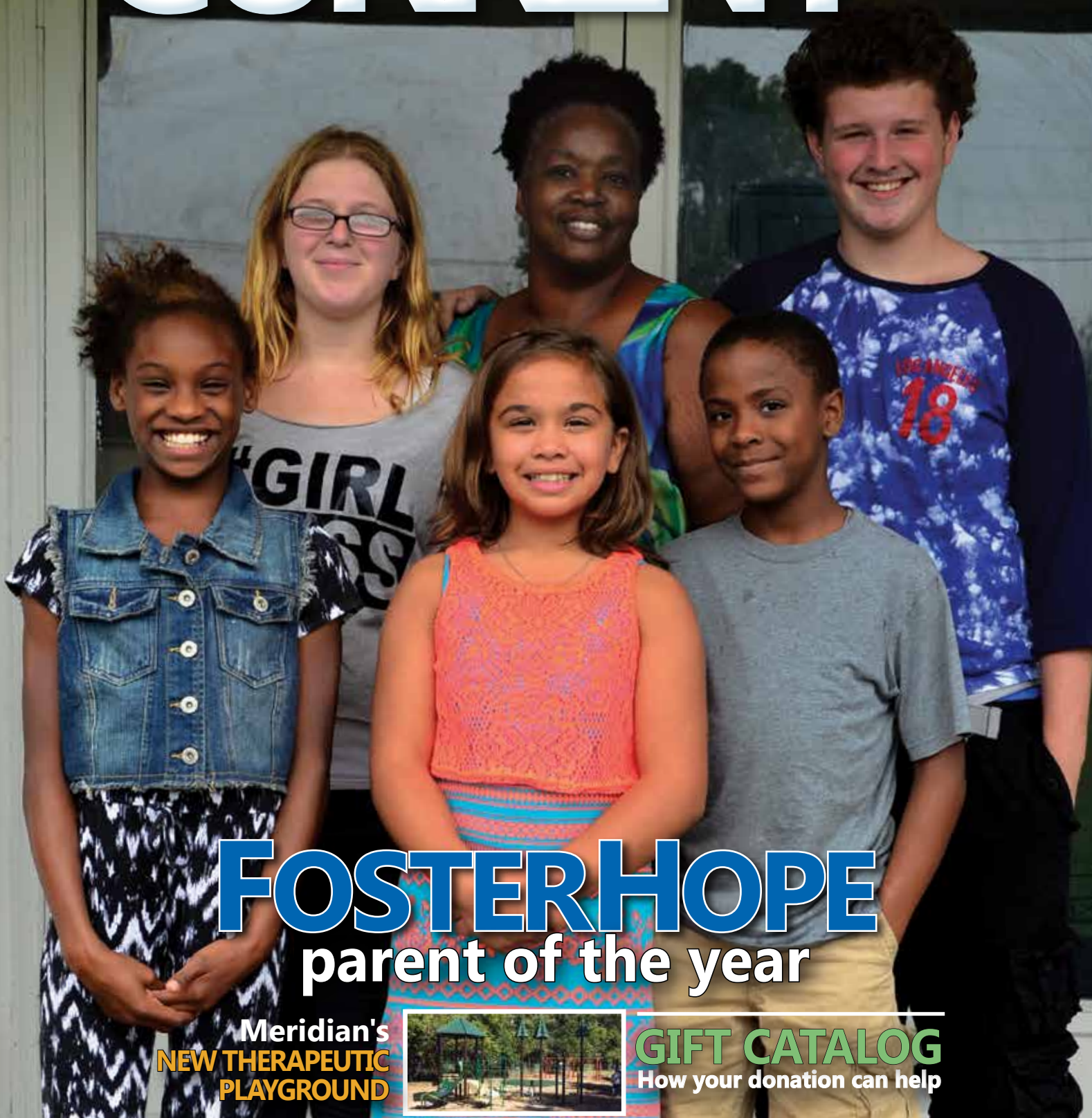


CURRENT



FOSTERHOPE

parent of the year

Meridian's
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PLAYGROUND**



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TERRY WHITT BAILEY

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MERIDIAN

HEALTH Services

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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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CURRENT

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PRINTING

Pengad Printing
1106 East Seymour Street | Muncie, Indiana 47302
765.286.3000 | 800.854.9101
www.pengadindy.com

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Helping children cope.

Giving families hope.

Meridian's integrated care.

DR. DENISSE AMBLER

p.71

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- › 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
- › Programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges
- › Care coordination and supported employment
- › Supported residential housing
- › Foster care and adoption

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Nicholas Moore is the son of Debbie Moore, Meridian Health Services' 2015 FosterHope Foster Parent of the Year.

Dear Friends of Meridian,

At Meridian Health Services, we make the increasingly difficult landscape of healthcare easier to understand and navigate.

Our integrated approach – we call it “whole-person health” – gives patients access to primary medical care providers teamed with experts in specialties like women's health, psychiatry, senior health, behavioral health and social work for complete well-being.

In this issue of *CURRENT*, which is devoted to Children and Families, you'll find examples that illustrate how this works in real lives every day. For example, for more than 10 years Meridian Health Services has offered help navigating the often complex and always confusing waters of health care enrollment. We introduce you to Jason Woods, our Enrollment Specialist Outreach Coordinator. He helps families enroll in different health care options like the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP 2.0), Medicaid Disability, Hoosier Health Wise and the Marketplace.

You'll meet Dr. Denisse Ambler, a child psychiatrist at Meridian's Suzanne Gresham Center, who joined Meridian Health Services about a year ago. Be sure to read her Question and Answer feature about children.

You'll read about the new therapeutic playground equipment at the Suzanne Gresham Center, which aids in learning and in children's cognitive and problem-solving skills.

Walnut Commons, an \$8.3 million housing development dedicated to serving the homeless, who struggle with physical and mental disabilities, opened this year. Located across the street from the Muncie Fieldhouse at Walnut and Wysor streets in Muncie, Walnut Commons has 44 apartments and provides “permanent supportive housing,” a concept that helps people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness become more independent.

The serious work we do at Meridian Health Services can only be done when we have the support from the communities we serve. We know you have choices when deciding on your medical care. 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



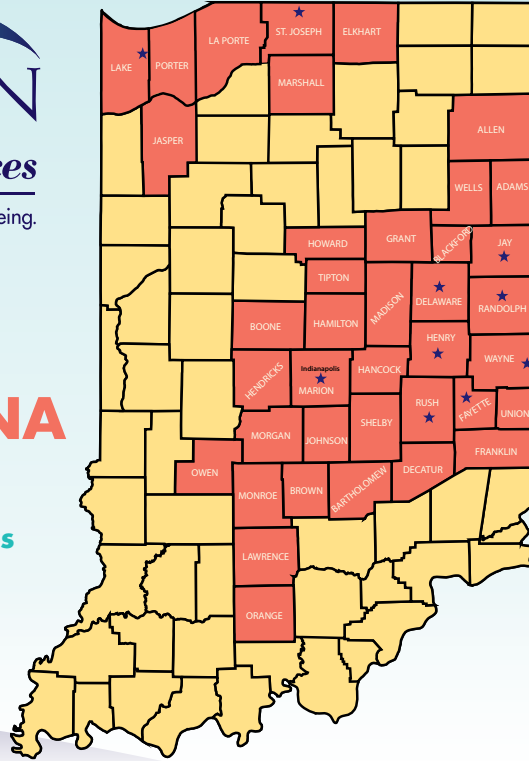
Karen Karmolinski
CHAIRMAN,
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



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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Keeping kids healthy and happy!

A New Name, Partnership and Services...Introducing Meridian Health Pediatrics

Meridian Health Services has partnered with IU Health Ball Memorial Pediatrics to bring children an integrated approach to healthcare. Meridian's philosophy of "whole-person" health is now available on site for physical, mental and social health offering parents convenience and exceptional, quality care in one location.

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Bianca Maya, MD
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Meridian Health Pediatrics
at the Suzanne Gresham Center
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Whitt Bailey passionate about Meridian Health Services

TERRY WHITT BAILEY SAID IT WAS MERIDIAN HEALTH Services' own Suzanne Gresham, for whom the Suzanne Gresham Center is named, who sparked her interest in the agency more than 15 years ago.

"I loved her spirit and what she did for the community and for her organization," Whitt Bailey said.

Whitt Bailey, who is Director of Community Development for the City of Muncie, just completed her first three-year term on the Meridian board, and she added happily, she was just approved for another term.

Muncie has been her home – with a few years away from here – for many years. Originally from Springfield, Ill., her first job out of graduate school was at Ball State University.

"I have lived in New York, Indianapolis, Los Angeles and Chicago, but there is a special charm about Muncie that cannot be duplicated," she said.

At Ball State, she worked in the College of Applied Sciences and Technology and eventually became the Director of Executive Staff and Administrative Affairs for the Office of the President. She was also the first President and CEO of Cornerstone Center for the Arts, merging Muncie Center for the Arts and the Community Civic Center in 2004. She went on to become President and CEO of the world-renowned Madame Walker Theatre Center in Indianapolis before taking the job with the City of Muncie.

Whitt Bailey is also very active in the community, volunteering, serving on other boards, and even directing productions at Muncie Civic Theatre.

Her husband, John, is a computer programmer and their son, Jeremiah, is a freshman at Ivy Tech Community College.

"We are proud to call Muncie home," she said.

And, she added, she is "proud to be affiliated with Meridian."

"Everyone has a family member who has been in need of mental or emotional health services," she said. "I have watched family members struggle with how to care for loved ones with special mental and emotional challenges. It bothers me when people are mistreated, but it really hurts me to the core when people with intellectual and mental challenges are not given an opportunity to be successful."

"Meridian has helped to level the playing field for its patients and their families. They have figured out the importance of a continuum of collaboration and care for their clients and for their affiliates. I have enjoyed watching Meridian grow and witnessing other services that focus on the whole person, such as primary care, OB/GYN and senior health care."

Whitt Bailey doesn't hesitate to brag a little about the Meridian board. "I believe the Meridian board members complement each other," she said. "While I do not have a background in healthcare, I do have a background in board governance and community relations. We all have one thing in common, however - we enjoy 'sharing the message of Meridian.' Meridian is very successful, yet humble in its operations as an organization."

"They do so much for the communities in which they serve, but they don't feel the need to boast," she said. "Their services speak for themselves."

And let's not forget about the events. When asked about her favorite, she laughed.

"Is this a trick question? Believe it or not, most people would say Rialzo, which is now fondly referred to as the "party with a purpose." I can't wait for the next one! But I LOVE the fact that Meridian is so community-minded that they sponsor several community events each year."

"From health fairs to fundraisers for local non-profits to legislative updates to Chamber of Commerce events, Meridian is always front and center. They show the communities in which they serve that they care enough about the issues that are important to others."

As for the future of Meridian, Whitt Bailey is confident Meridian will continue to make a difference.

"I have been so impressed with Hank Milius' vision and leadership and his staff's ability to help implement his vision. Meridian has been on a 'fast track' to whole-person health because it was the right thing to do. They didn't need to have focus groups or practice runs to know that serving the whole person helps enhance the quality of life for the individual, their family, and their community."

"Whether it is a child who receives services at the Suzanne Gresham Center or a family that has decided to open their home to foster parenting, Meridian is making a difference."



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: Chair: Hank Milius, President/CEO, Julie Newhouse

Middle row, seated, from left:
Wayne Shaffer, Al Rent, 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

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Brian Ring	Micah Maxwell	Wil Davis
Brent Webster	Ron Fauquher	David Gobble

MERIDIAN INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Brian Ring, Chair	Mike Lunsford	Chris Fancher	John Littler
Terri Matchett	Steve Smith	Wil Davis	



HOLIDAYS AT GRESHAM COMMITTEE 2015

Left to right: Jennifer Lombard, Beth Clark, Alysha Nemore, Tasya Hannon, Melissa Daniels, Brenda Ireland, Scott Smalstig

Not pictured: Susy Gard, Kim Gillenwater, Lise Hayes, Ginger Jennings, Fred Reese, Jason Brooks, Josh Perkins, Mike Tschuor

Meridian partnership translates into changed lives



SPECIALTY BIKES. Mobility bikes are awarded to families through a Meridian and RAC Trykes collaboration.

IT WAS A SPECIAL SUMMER AFTERNOON in June when two area families were presented specialty bikes by RAC Trykes (pronounced race trikes), a division of AMBUCS, a non-profit service organization dedicated to creating mobility and independence for people with disabilities.

The mobility bikes, each worth \$1,000, were awarded to families at no charge because of the collaborative relationship between Meridian Pediatric Rehab and RAC Trykes. Each bike caters to specific physical needs of each recipient.

Meridian Pediatric Rehab has received close to half of the 27 bikes built by RAC Trykes over the last three years.

The bikes provide a range of motion and support for patients including trunk support

and help with pedal rotation. Other models can feature expanded seating and under seating support. According to the AMBUCS website, the bikes offer essential exercise that improves strength, tone and coordination, as well as confidence and positive peer interaction. The partnership has changed lives, said Holly Zent, a pediatric therapist with Meridian Pediatric Rehab unit. “These are the kinds of moments that remind us why we do what we do,” said Zent.

Meridian partnerships like the one with RAC Trykes translate into benefits for patients. “These families and their children will benefit enormously from these bikes,” Zent added. “Their level of activity as a family will grow exponentially because of these bikes.”



EXCELLING IN

strategy & planning

MERIDIAN BOARD MEMBER
Steve Smith

Lifelong leader predicts growth in all Meridian's markets

STEVE SMITH, WHOSE FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS IS A Muncie staple, is a firm believer in another East Central Indiana fixture - Meridian Health Services. It's why he devotes so much of his time, talent and resources to the organization, and why he is beginning a second three-year term on the Board of Directors.

"A patient will continue to encounter health difficulties until the whole-person ailments are resolved," Steve said.

"Whole-person health" is a Meridian Health Services philosophy that focuses on integrating physical, mental and social well-being. It represents a broad spectrum of health including primary care, behavioral health, and human services.

With services in 39 counties and serving more than 27,600 patients annually, Meridian Health Services has grown steadily over the last several years and Steve has helped pave the way.

Hank Milius, president and CEO of Meridian, praised Steve's service.

"It takes a high level of commitment from people like Steve Smith to make Meridian Health Services successful," Milius said. "We're fortunate to have Steve on our board. He has been an integral part in our strategy of growth over the last several years."

For 40 years, Steve has worked for Mid-West Metal Products, the last 20 as the CEO. Mid-West is a local, family-owned sheet metal and wire fabricating business. He is a lifelong resident of Muncie (not counting college and graduate school), married, and has seven children and three grandchildren (two more, he said, are on the way).

He brings decades of business experience and entrepreneurial thinking to the board including "organizational skills as well as strategic and financial planning."

"I feel like I've helped contribute a little to make Meridian the great healthcare organization that it has become," he said,

humbly. Steve is a constant supporter at Meridian's fundraisers including Rialzo, the "party with a purpose" and FamFest, an annual event promoting health and child abuse awareness at the Suzanne Gresham Center.

"We're in 270 schools and we're dealing with students one-on-one," Steve said. "It's the integrated care at Meridian that makes the difference."

Steve predicts Meridian will continue to grow "in all markets Meridian currently serves, especially primary care."

Steve knows something about strategic growth.

Mid-West Metal employs about 140 employees locally including engineers, administrators, sales people, graphic artists, skilled trades, machine operators, and warehouse workers.

While most area residents are familiar with the Mid-West Homes for Pets division of the company, all non-pet products are made in Delaware County at Mid-West's two plants on Cowan and Mt. Pleasant Roads. They include hubs for commercial air circulating fans, guards, wire fixtures for retail stores, components for the heating, ventilating and air conditioning industry, refrigeration unit racks and several OEM products.

Just as private businesses expand product lines, the public doesn't automatically know what is behind the growth for nonprofit organizations like Meridian Health Services.

Steve points out, "Most people don't realize all of the services that Meridian provides and how much impact they have on the community." He added that he enjoys learning about all of those services through Meridian events and appreciates the efforts Meridian makes to keep board members informed.

"The annual board/committee conference is very educational," he said. "I learn a lot about the healthcare industry and Meridian's strategic plan. Those efforts are very appreciated."

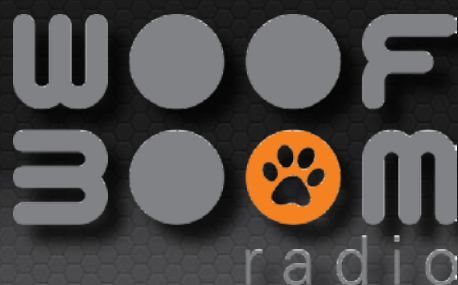
SMITH PERSPECTIVE: 'It's the integrated care at Meridian that makes the difference.'



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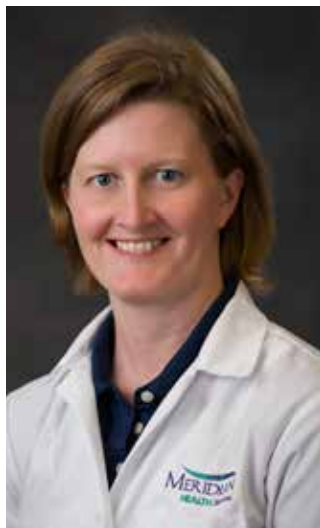


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Rushville
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765.932.3699

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MERIDIAN **MD**
Primary Medical Care





THE DESIGN. A new playground at the Suzanne Gresham Center features therapeutic games.

play and learn

Playground's therapeutic features promote children's cognitive skills



NEW PLAYGROUND. Rialzo proceeds helped fund a new playground at the Suzanne Gresham Center in Muncie.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT THAT IS INTUITIVE, THAT aids in learning and in a child's cognitive and problem-solving skills is in place at the Suzanne Gresham Center today because of Meridian Health Services' generous guests at last year's Rialzo, the community's "party with a purpose."

The equipment, designed for ages 2 to 12, replaced an aging playground at the former Morrison-Mock school grounds in Muncie. The \$75,000 cost was offset by funds raised at Rialzo VI.

"The new therapeutic playground is a great addition to our pediatric therapy program," said Holly Kiel, Rehabilitation Manager for Meridian's Pediatric Rehabilitation Services.

"It allows us to take our patients out into a real world setting

and work on obstacles and tasks that they will face in everyday life and at school," she said. "It also gives the kids a chance to get outside and do something more 'fun' than the traditional therapy program that we can offer in the clinic setting."



The new playground equipment isn't just for younger children. "It gives some of our older kids a chance to work on activities that we can't work on in the clinic," Kiel said. "Our clinic equipment is not big enough to accommodate older children."

"This was a great community collaboration," said Hank Milius, president and CEO of Meridian. "From start to finish it took two months. It was planned, designed, constructed and installed in a very short timeframe. Everyone saw the need and the urgency to get this done."

A ribbon-cutting happened early in October.

"Our goal is to make communities healthier," said Beth Clark, Meridian's Vice President of Marketing. "We have events all year long that focus on our whole-person health initiatives."

Rialzo VII, "Shooting for the Stars" is set for Saturday, April 9, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. The headlining band is suitably named "Party on the Moon." Dress for the event? Blue moon, of course.

Rialzo VII fundraising will focus on scholarships for senior-level undergraduate and graduate internships in Delaware County and Indiana. The goal is to keep and attract the area's best and brightest to work in the health care profession and at Meridian offices throughout the state.

The new therapeutic playground equipment at the Suzanne Gresham Center allows children to learn in a fun, 'real world' environment.



PEDIATRIC REHAB. Team and kids at the October ribbon-cutting.



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CLARITY FOR CLIENTS

Meridian educates about health insurance options

SINCE 2004, MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES HAS OFFERED help navigating the often complex and always confusing waters of health care enrollment.

For Jason Woods, the agency's Enrollment Specialist Outreach Coordinator, it's all about clarity of service.

"As an enrollment specialist, I help families enroll in different healthcare options like the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP 2.0), Medicaid Disability, Hoosier HealthWise and the Marketplace. We also assist in Social Security for those that need it to get Medicaid Disability. I work throughout the year with different communities and talk to folks who are looking for quality healthcare options."

Woods is also available during non-enrollment periods when a family has experienced what is considered a "life-changing event," such as loss of a job or birth of a child. When these events happen, enrollment time periods are waived and the client can enroll off-cycle for healthcare services.

Woods works primarily in Delaware, Rush, and Wayne counties. Since the inception of the Healthy Indiana Plan, Meridian has enrolled more than 600 applicants.

"I meet with area organizations and let them know about the services of enrollment specialists," he said. "My job is to educate the community about these programs."

Meridian offers these services to the general public, not just Meridian clients. "What's great," explained Woods, "is all of my services are open to the whole community, not just Meridian clients. And they're free of charge." For example, Woods is at Meridian's Drop-in Center the third Thursday of each month, talking to homeless men and women. Free haircuts are offered on these days each month and there are more visitors than usual.



SERVING CLIENTS. Jason Woods, Meridian's Enrollment Specialist Outreach Coordinator, helps ease insurance plan confusion.

There are three primary forms of insurance coverage that Woods details in his meetings with clients: the Healthy Indiana Plan, Medicaid Disability Insurance and Affordable Care Act.

"A lot of people like to take plans home or want to call their family physician for advice," Woods said. "We can also help with that. Some clients can't remember what they need and when that happens, we can help them finish the enrollment process."

Overall, reception to this service "has been unbelievable," Woods said. "When clients go down to Division of Family Resources, they don't get the follow through they need. When they try to do it on their own, it's confusing. We can walk through the process and help them every step of the way."

UNDERSTANDING INSURANCE OPTIONS

Jason Woods, Meridian's Enrollment Specialist Outreach Coordinator, details three primary forms of insurance coverage in meetings with clients:

1 Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP 2.0)

This is the state's way of expanding Medicaid. They found that when the Affordable Care Act was rolled out, some people were trapped between being eligible for either Marketplace insurance or Medicaid. That's when Indiana Gov. Mike Pence redesigned HIP and expanded it to 138% of the poverty level income guidelines, essentially pulling in those who were caught in the middle. Meridian Health Services cannot be an authorized representative for HIP but it can be designated as an "authorized person" and can check on the status. No Medicaid disability insurance approval is required. One must simply meet the income guidelines to qualify. The enrollment process generally takes 45 days. The state has added a "presumptive" eligibility feature, which means we can gain medical coverage the same day, while paperwork is in process. It's meant to be a temporary coverage until the full HIP application is fully approved. Since becoming available in April, Meridian has enrolled 260 presumptive eligibility applications.

2 Medicaid Disability Insurance

Just like the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0, Medicaid Disability requires certain income guidelines be met. Starting last year, to be eligible to apply for Medicaid Disability insurance, clients must first go through the Social Security eligibility process. This application process for Medicaid Disability insurance can take 90 days or longer. It's a complicated process that requires medical records requests from the state. An enrollment specialist can be particularly helpful in this process. Meridian Health Services can act as the client's authorized representative.

3 Affordable Care Act

This is often referred to as marketplace healthcare or Obamacare. Open enrollment goes Nov. 1 through Jan. 31. Anyone outside the income guidelines for Healthy Indiana Plan or Medicaid, may apply for this insurance through the Healthcare.gov website.



FOSTER FAMILY OF THE YEAR. Debbie Moore with the special five adopted, soon-to-be adopted or foster children she is raising now.

A STRONG heart

55 children have known
the love of Debbie Moore

For Debbie Moore, Meridian Health Services' 2015 FosterHope Parent of the Year, the best times are the noisy, chaotic, spontaneous, crazy times.

"I get bored when they're not here," said Moore about the five adopted, soon-to-be adopted, or foster children she is raising now. She is also referring to her only biological daughter who is 34 and living on her own as well as numerous – adopted and fostered – who've been through her home and are adults now.

Luckily, the house is rarely quiet these days. There are two teenagers and three children under age 12. They're all growing up, much as Debbie did, in her parents' home in rural Wayne County. The small, ranch-style home is inviting and sits on just enough land to give children a safe place to play.

FosterHope is Meridian Health Services' specialized foster care program for Indiana children in need of emotional, behavioral, or mental health support. It is a therapeutic program that recruits, trains, and licenses new foster families within the State of Indiana. FosterHope foster parents offer special care and support for the child and provide the connection to community health services. The state foster care system is not easy on the children, so finding a fit is huge.

The latest available data shows Indiana has 5,700 children in need of homes and only 5,200 available foster homes. FosterHope has about 20 foster families as of June 2015 and about 25 children in foster care.

"There are never enough homes for the need," says Mary Grey, FosterHope's Operations Coordinator.

Debbie has been a foster parent to upwards of 55 children over the last 20 years. She was selected for Meridian's annual honor earlier this year for her nurturing nature and willingness to take on even the most difficult cases.

"Debbie has a huge heart," Mary explained. "She's taken sibling sets and kept them together. A prime example are the four she adopted," Grey said. "To find a home that could take four at once is rare but she didn't have a problem with that. There are a lot of special things about Debbie."

The need is great for families to foster children in Indiana.

"There have been times when she's had children, I have felt, that may have needed more restrictions and a less home-like

TO PAGE 27



2015 FOSTERHOPE PARENT OF THE YEAR. Debbie Moore's nurturing nature and willingness to keep siblings together are just two of her special qualities.

Indiana has 5,700 children in need of homes and only 5,200 available foster homes. FosterHope has about 20 foster families and about 25 children in foster care.



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Meridian's thorough, customized family care makes a difference.

FROM PAGE 25

environment," Grey said, "but no, she persisted in keeping them in her home and giving them that home atmosphere and home care."

This work is not for the faint of heart.

"There have even been occasions when the law got involved and she's still accepted them into her home," Grey said. "She's taken children out of residential placements and she's kept children out of residential placements."



Nicholas Moore is a sophomore at Richmond High School. He's been with Debbie since he was an infant.

"It's a great life to see where I could have

Grey been to where I am," said Nicholas. "If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be the man I am today."

Access to Meridian Health Services' child psychiatrists, behavioral clinicians, therapists and medical physicians made a difficult job – foster parenting – a positive experience even through the challenging times.

"It didn't always come naturally," Debbie said. "There were things I didn't know; I had to learn. Children need to know about their families, especially if they come from a foster care setting. They've been uprooted out of their homes and often don't know why. Find out as much as you can. And my advice is to pick and choose your battles. Some things you need to just let go."

Meridian's thorough, customized family care makes a difference.

"Each one of my children has worked with behavioral clinicians and work on things specific to that child's needs," Debbie explained. "Then they come back and share with me some things to try. Each child is so different and unique. My goal is to provide the best care I possibly can."

Meridian's expertise means FosterHope families have the medical and psychological support that goes well beyond determining placement.



Nicholas, who meets twice weekly with a Meridian therapist, says it helps him stay grounded.

"It's another opportunity to let me vent," explained Nicholas, who described himself as a young man doing "the best he can with his own struggles."

N. Moore "You can go down a path that you don't have to go down in life," said Nicholas, who wants one day to be a military doctor. He says life with Debbie has put him on a path where he can find success and a place in life.

The FosterHope Parent of the Year award included a trip to Kings Island for Debbie and her family. "We had a blast," she said. But it was the recognition that had the most impact.

"When my name was called, it was indescribable! The things I do for my kids, I do because I want to. These are my kids, not my foster kids, they are *my kids*."

CURRENT

HEALTH MOMENT

BEAT CABIN FEVER



"I'm bored!" It's a phrase every parent hears once or twice during the winter months. Seize the opportunity to have some family fun! Here are some area activities (in no particular order) that will beat even the toughest cases of cabin fever!

- 1 Take a walk, run or cross-country ski.** Get some fresh air and spend some family time on the Cardinal Greenway, which winds its way through Delaware County. Learn more: www.cardinalgreenways.org
- 2 Enjoy a show.** The historic Muncie Civic Theatre offers a wide range of family-friendly plays and musicals. For this season's schedule, go to: www.munciecivic.org
- 3 Learn about history.** A visit to Minnetrista Cultural Center will fill you in on Muncie's past and give your family something to talk about! To learn about schedules and special events, go to: www.minnetrista.net
- 4 Take a class.** Cornerstone Center for the Arts offers a huge range of art and music classes for every age, not to mention a dizzying number of special events for the family. Learn more: www.cornerstonearts.org
- 5 Get some exercise.** With three facilities in Muncie and Yorktown, the YMCA offers programs that will help get your blood going! www.muncieymca.org
- 6 Enjoy a concert.** The Muncie Symphony Orchestra offers music for all ages. For a schedule of special events and the current season, go to: www.munciesymphony.org



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but our new patio completely
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Meridian Home health coaches

MOTIVATE PATIENTS BY BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

EMILY HAS JUST BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES BY her primary care physician at Meridian Health Services.

So what happens next?

Instead of sending Emily on her way with a few brochures and a sea of questions, her medical PCMH team is waiting to help her every step of the way.

PCMH stands for Patient-Centered Medical Home and according to Jennifer Henderson, it “ensures our patients are getting the best care possible.”

“It’s about following up with the patient, educating that patient, and perhaps most importantly, making sure they are being active in their own healthcare,” Henderson, a regional manager for Meridian, added. PCMH is offered at all of Meridian’s primary care facilities.

So, that means Emily would be contacted by one of Meridian’s patient health educators. They would set up a time for an in-depth conversation about her current lifestyle that would cover diet, exercise, and everything she would ever want to know about diabetes and its treatment. A “care plan” would be established and follow-up appointments would be scheduled.

That plan, based on the conversation, would determine who would be involved on the PCMH team; a community health worker, a licensed social worker, a dietician, a nurse or all of the above.

Emily would learn about the importance of checking her sugar levels, getting regular eye exams, and what she should and should not be eating.

Helping her get that accomplished might require some help. This is where the community health worker comes in.

Think of the community health worker as a coach.

Ronnie Reese Jr. is one of Meridian’s coaches. On an average day, he will make contact with about 30 patients.

One call might be to remind a patient about an appointment. Another might be to check in about whether or not a patient has checked their glucose levels. Another might be to offer encouragement for a patient who recently stopped smoking.

“For me, it’s about building relationships and empowering people to take control of their health, their lives,” he said.

He recalled a patient who was very resistant to checking her blood sugar levels. “I called her and she said ‘I haven’t done it, but you aren’t going to stop checking on me until I do, so I’ll do it now,’” he said with a laugh. “I called back and she had it done. Her levels were not where we wanted them to be, but it was a step. At least we had something to build on.”

‘For me, it’s about building relationships & empowering people to take control of their health, their lives.’

Ronnie Reese Jr.

UNDERSTANDING PATIENT-CENTERED MEDICAL HOME



Jennifer Henderson and Ronnie Reese Jr.

What can a patient expect from their 'medical home'?

ACCESS TO CARE: Being there when needed.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Taking responsibility to ensure patients receive the best healthcare possible.

COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION: Helping patients navigate the healthcare system to get the care they need, in a safe and timely way.

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY-CENTERED CARE: Recognizing that the patient is the most important member of the care team and that he or she is ultimately responsible for their overall health and wellness.

COMPREHENSIVE “WHOLE-PERSON” CARE: Providing and/or helping patients get the healthcare and services they need.

CONTINUITY: Being a true health partner over time.

TO PAGE 30

And as any good coach will tell you, persistence is a big part of the job. "I'm going to be in your ear until we get it done," he said with a smile. "A relationship with the patient lasts, well, as long as it needs to," Reese said. He is still setting and checking off goals with patients he met in January. "As long as they are in the practice, I am here for them," he said.

Sometimes even longer.

"We can go to the grocery store and someone will want to share what is going on with their life," Henderson said. "It could be 'I got an apartment or a new cell phone. I started a new exercise routine.' It just shows us that we are making an impact. We are making a difference. And that means the world to me. To Meridian."

Taking control

For many patients, it takes time to make those "important connections," Henderson said.

"You may know you have to lose weight or stop smoking or that your blood sugar is out of whack," she said, "but until you have the right mindset, you are not going to do that. That's why we have to address the whole person. Until you do that, it's not going to work."

"When you are trying to address weight, for example, what is the weight associated with?" Reese said. "Bad eating. What is that associated with? Maybe it's stress. How are they dealing with that? Maybe we need to start with that and then we will make a plan to get everything else in order."

"And when patients see it working, they get motivated," he added. "They begin to take control."

The results are always rewarding for the PCMH team.

"There was a young lady who had very high cholesterol," Reese said. "She was smoking and not eating well. We checked

'It just shows us that we are making an impact. We are making a difference. And that means the world to me. To Meridian.'

Jennifer Henderson

on her regularly to see how those numbers were. They started decreasing. She had stopped smoking. We started coaching her about proper eating habits and daily exercise. She's doing awesome now!" Another called to say they are tobacco free. "So now we move on to the next goal," he said. "Because there is always another one to hit. When you stop smoking, sometimes the weight picks up. So we will need to make sure we add diet and exercise into the mix."

Making it official

It's hard to pinpoint exactly how long Meridian has been focused on PCMH. "We were doing it before it had a name," Henderson remarked. In April, Meridian additionally received a Level 2 accreditation for its PCMH practices. There are three levels, with three being the highest. "Since it was our first time trying for it, we were expecting a one," Henderson noted.

It was a complex process, Henderson said of the accreditation, pulling a large, heavy binder stuffed with pages from her shelf. "This was the manual," she said, adding that a new accreditation - and a new manual of requirements - is offered every three years. "It was definitely very challenging but worthwhile," she said, noting that the documentation definitely outweighed the manual binder. "And we received a wonderful reward in the end - knowing that what we've been doing here all along was right."




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Meridian's good STORY

It was March 13, 2013.

Beth Good will never forget that day. It was the day she left her old life – the one filled with social anxiety, daily tantrums, weight loss, frequent hospital stays, and flea-bitten arms and legs – behind.



Beth Good.



A GOOD TEAM. Meridian client, Beth Good, visits with Nichole Carr, program manager at Meridian's Wayne County Adult Services.

It was the day she left treatment in Ohio and, based on a therapist's recommendation, decided to give Meridian Health Services a try. "It has just been a remarkable journey for me," she said. "I have come so far. The transition I have made from then to now, you would swear I'm not the same person. I can honestly say I wouldn't be here without Meridian."

Specifically, she credits the Specialized Community Intervention Team (SCIT). The team is comprised of physicians, therapists, social workers and more, each dedicated to providing intensive case management individualized for clients trying to live independently. The grant funds services for 100 clients, split evenly between Muncie and Richmond.

"These are people who need more services than the traditional case manager/client relationship, because for some, mental health needs do not end at 5 o'clock," said Nichole Carr, program manager of Wayne County Adult Services. "They might need to meet three times a week or every day or even several times a day. We go into the community, where they need us." Meridian has been operating the grant-funded program, which includes 24-hour services, for four years. Good is deemed a program success story. That might be an understatement.

GOOD PROGRESS

She was sitting recently in a downtown Richmond office with two SCIT team members, Carr and Nicole Whallon, operations coordinator for the Wayne County team.

Good, 36, was dressed immaculately, her hair pulled neatly back from her youthful face. She was beaming. Whallon and Carr couldn't contain their enthusiasm for Good's progress.

"This is the best success story I have seen in 10 years in social work," Carr said, her eyes wide. "The gains I've seen her make ...they are just incredible."

The journey has not been without its struggles, however.

Initially, the team was making visits to her apartment daily, sometimes three times a day to make sure she was taking her medications. Without them, she would "deteriorate" and land in the hospital. Good, who has a thought disorder, had trouble connecting the struggles she was having could be helped by medication. Eventually, those 15 medications became eight and today, only three.

She was also having trouble living independently, keeping her apartment clean, and caring for her dog, Emma. When she wasn't doing well, her dog wasn't either. On March 13, 2013, Good

moved into a new apartment in Richmond by herself, arranged through Meridian. She brought Emma with her.

"I did not make a very good transition at first," she admitted, "but these people would not give up on me. No matter how many tantrums I threw, even when I didn't want to be seen, they would still show up. They would not give up on me. They really do care about me, what happens to me. It finally hit me that I should take a chance on them like they were taking a chance on me."

SETTING GOALS

Those meetings eventually led to outings to grocery stores and arboretums, bowling alleys and chocolate tours, restaurants and animal farms; places she never would have gone to just a few years ago. It was at the arboretum where she met Whallon. "I have learned to trust her and open up to her," she admitted, "and she gets on me when she needs to."

They both laugh, recalling their "battles" at the beginning.

Battles that eventually led to goals – goals that, one by one, have been scratched off Good's hand-written list. The first thing on her list was being on her own, which meant, "getting off guardianship." The fact that her parents were in control of her decisions, medical and otherwise, strained their relationship. She completed that on June 3, 2014.

Good also wanted to get her driver's license. She did that, with the help of her parents, with whom she now had a better relationship, and got a car. She has started computer classes at the library. She has even been awarded for her volunteer efforts at her apartment complex.

ACTING OUT

Perhaps the biggest accomplishment so far has been Agatha Christie. "I have always wanted to be a part of a theater," she said, noting that her parents took her to her first big show – "Cats" – when she was 8 years old. She tried out several times ("with much coaxing from the team") before landing a spot this year as an extra in "The Three Musketeers" at Richmond Civic Theatre. Then she was in the chorus for "The Music Man."

"I wasn't going to stop until I got a speaking role," she said. She did that, too, as one of the main characters in "Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None."

"I am so proud of her," Whallon said. "Whatever we want her to do to better herself or get to one of her goals, she does it. She knows she can do it now. There's no stopping her!"

And there are some goals that still remain on that hand-written list. She wants to be her own payee. She also wants to go to college, and then get a job. "Actually, I'll probably just keep adding more," Good said with a laugh. "Most importantly, I am here, alive and well. I have my mental illness under control."

Her eyes begin to fill with tears. Her voice starts to crack.

"My parents say they don't have to worry about me anymore. My mom doesn't have to sit by the phone at night anymore wondering where her daughter is and what's happened to her. And my dad is just thrilled about how far his daughter has come along." One of the main goals of SCIT is to keep clients out of the hospital. "Before Meridian, I was in and out of the hospital all the time," Good said. "It was like a revolving door."

She hasn't been in the hospital in two years.

"Because whenever I need them, the team is there for me," she said. "Their doors are always open. Their phones are always on." She paused. "This has really been my year. I just hope that this reaches somebody somewhere and it can help them like it has helped me," she said.



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A Giving COMBINATION

Health, education, and service continue to define Chris Bowles

CHRIS BOWLES WILL HUMBLY TELL YOU THAT SHE didn't always know what she wanted to do for her career, but as a 17-year-old freshman-to-be at Ball State University, she wrote an entrance essay explaining that she wanted to combine health care and education for her career and complete a future doctoral degree.

Nostradamus couldn't have been more prophetic.

Now with more than a half century of experience in the rear-view mirror, Chris is still driving to combine those academic loves, all the while helping make her community healthier. As a Board Member and perennial donor to Meridian Health Services, Chris continues a long family tradition of serving and giving.

"Everyone needs to serve," says Chris, who shared this belief with her banker husband of 43 years, John Bowles, who passed away last fall. "John and I both believe that, and we each had tremendous mentors in servant leadership."

Raised by an Episcopalian minister father, who was trained at the Cleveland Clinic in psychiatric services, Chris has long understood the role the mind plays in everyday health. Interest in her father's counseling led to her first chosen profession out of Ball State's nursing program, psychiatric nursing.

"There's so much need for mental health services," says Chris. "What impresses me about Meridian is that they are at the forefront of combining physical and mental health and treating the whole person. They get it, and believe me, I know."

In her 43 years as a registered nurse educator and manager at Ball Memorial Hospital, she practiced as a medical-surgical nurse, a nurse manager, director of leadership development, a certified professional in healthcare quality improvement, a risk management consultant, and teacher at the former Muncie School of Practical Nursing. After earning her master's in teaching of medical-surgical nursing, she was instrumental in developing patient education programs for diabetes and cardiac rehabilitation before helping implement Ball's first skin cancer and prostate cancer screenings.



She had managed Ball's Geriatric-Psychiatric Assessment Program, an entity now part of Meridian Senior Health. "I've told Hank Milius, (President and CEO of Meridian Health Services), that I would still like to volunteer for that program," Chris says with a sincere smile.

"But what I'm most impressed with is MeridianMD," continues Chris. "To me, access to care is critically important. Some people can't get in other places. Meridian's focus is on total well-being and gives people lots of healthcare options."



FRIENDS OF MERIDIAN. John and Chris Bowles at Rialzo in 2013.

John and Chris Bowles' direct connection to Meridian began when John came home from work one day and asked his bride if he should accept a nomination to the Meridian (then Comprehensive Mental Health Services) board. John had been influenced early on for community service by local leaders Ed Ball, David Sursa and Van Smith. Chris was serving on the Muncie Altrusa board with then CMHS President, Suzanne Gresham. John served over three board terms with Meridian.

"We've been a part of the Meridian family for a long time, and I'm thrilled to see all the growth," says Chris. "As a donor, I'm excited to give to programs that need additional medical equipment. I know what it takes to build and run effective programs, and I'm excited to be a part of it."

Chris Bowles is not just a part of it. She is right in the middle of helping Meridian help our community become healthier.



MERIDIAN

HEALTH *Services*

GIFT CATALOG



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

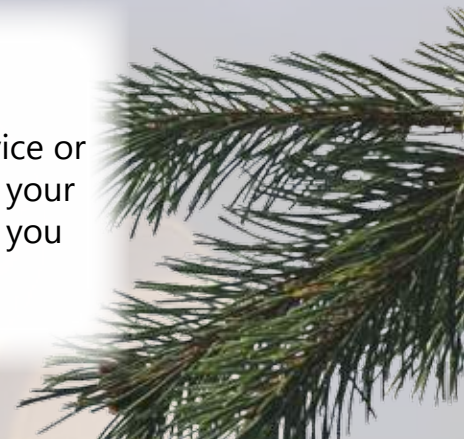
A \$2,500 GIFT:

- ~ 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

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COMING HOME. Penny Rosauer is celebrating three years of sobriety and calls Walnut Commons home.

Meridian's Walnut Commons offers
renewal

**‘Meridian
Health Services
saved
my life.
Eight years
homeless,
couch surfing,
I lived in my car
for a while.’**

– Sue Blackburn



Walnut Commons' residential housing supports Meridian's 'whole-person' philosophy

TRYING HER HARDEST TO HOLD BACK TEARS, SUE Blackburn sat in her fully furnished studio apartment on the third floor of Walnut Commons, a new 44-unit complex at the intersection of Walnut and Wysor streets in downtown Muncie, Indiana.

The \$8.3 million collaborative effort spearheaded by Meridian Health Services was built to serve the homeless with physical and mental disabilities.

For Blackburn, Walnut Commons is more than a beautiful building. For her, it signifies renewal.

“Meridian Health Services saved my life,” she said. “Eight years homeless, couch surfing, I lived in my car for a while and took baths at McDonald’s (restaurant).”

Blackburn considered herself a productive citizen, earning \$15.50 an hour, when her world turned upside down. Her employer, bought out by another company, cut costs and the result for her was a cut in pay – exactly half what she had been making.

“You can’t live off \$7.75 an hour,” said Blackburn,



GRATEFUL FOR LIFE-CHANGING SERVICES. Walnut Commons is providing Sue Blackburn with a new beginning.

blaming her financial shift for the deep depression that took over her life. Unaware herself of where to find help, someone directed Blackburn to Meridian Health Services. A few months later, she moved her few belongings into a third-floor studio, which overlooks North Walnut Street.

TO PAGE 40

CURRENT

HEALTH MOMENT

BULLYING FACTS



Understanding the warning signs of bullying can help parents prevent their children from becoming bullies or help them avoid becoming a bully's victim.

Counseling or therapy are good methods in helping to treat a child who exhibits symptoms of bullying.

Children who are victims may also need counseling to help resolve underlying issues of emotional feelings of inadequacy. Children who are confident and have higher self-esteem are less likely to fall prey to the attacks of bullying.

Your child might be the victim of bullying if:

Comes home with unexplained injuries, with damaged or missing clothing and belongings; Has change in eating habits; Makes excuses not to go to school; Has fewer friends; Feels helpless; Talks about suicide; Acts out of character; Avoids certain places or playing outside alone; Feels like they are not good enough; Has trouble sleeping; Blames themselves for their problems.

Signs your child might be bullying others:

Becomes frequently violent; Has trouble controlling anger; Is manipulative and controlling of others and situations; Is quick to blame others; Does not accept responsibility for their actions; Needs to win or be the best at everything.

SOURCES: mychildsafety.net, www.stopbullying.gov

Is bullying a factor in your child's life?

Contact Meridian Health Pediatrics at (765) 288-1995 or go to: www.meridianhs.org

FROM PAGE 39

"I love it," she said.

That's exactly the attitude that Meridian staff wants residents to embrace at Walnut Commons.

"Meridian understands the importance of residential housing in helping people with mental health needs," said Hank Milius, CEO and President of Meridian Health Services.

Milius noted Walnut Commons is simply another example of what Meridian Health Services has always done – provided key



Milius

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 adopted its "whole-person" health concept, providing physical, mental and social well-being to patients.

"Walnut Commons is a perfect example of that," Milius said.

Aside from spacious apartments, the complex includes a computer lab offering computer classes, a fitness/workout room, case manager offices, and MeridianMD, a primary care physician office with three exam rooms, which is also open to the public.



Moore

People generally assume homelessness is only a problem in larger cities. But as Kevin Moore, director of the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction, points out, homelessness hits every corner of Indiana, whether it's rural or urban areas.

"A cycle of homelessness can really be overcome by projects like this," Moore said.

"It will make a huge impact on the lives of people who it serves today and on the lives of many in future generations."

It's made that difference for Penny Rosauer, a transplant from Waterloo, Iowa, by way of Chicago, who landed in Muncie and has received treatment for alcoholism. After three years of sobriety, she is happy to now call Walnut Commons home.

"I don't allow any alcohol in my home and I know that I'm okay," said Rosauer, who lives a few doors down from Blackburn.



Karmolinski

Karen Karmolinski, Regional President with First Merchants Bank, which provided some financing for the project, applauded the vision behind Walnut Commons.

"We're always looking for projects that have high impact in the communities we serve," Karmolinski said. "When you do something like this, you're investing in the community. You're investing in the well-being of the community."

First Merchants is a founding premiere sponsor for Meridian's largest annual fundraiser, Rialzo, which has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars the last six years that has gone toward Meridian programming.

"To see the City of Muncie and all their partners come together, it just says so much about our community," Muncie Mayor Dennis Tyler said.

What these 44 apartments have done for the lives of the residents is almost indescribable. "It's a statement about how the great state of Indiana values all of its citizens," said Cullen Davis, CEO of Daveri Development Group, owner of Walnut Commons. "We at Daveri could not imagine a better partner than Meridian Health Services, whose mission, to help make our communities healthier through whole-person health, is perfectly illustrated through the work they've done."

Meridian's happy beginnings



Penny Rosauer:

'Meridian has always told me I'm worth saving.'

Penny Rosauer left her hometown of Waterloo, Iowa when she was 18 years old. After getting married and starting a family, her problems with drug and alcohol began to surface. It wasn't until she was 59 years old that she "surrendered" to her addictions and sought help. "I was done. I grew up in an alcoholic home, but saw my mother overcome it. I knew it was possible." She went through treatment at Road to Recovery in Chicago before moving to Muncie. Penny stayed with a friend who relapsed just over a month into her stay. "My sobriety is No.1. If I don't have that, I have nothing. I left my friend's home and asked for help. I was able to get into Meridian's program and eventually into Bridges Homeless Shelter." After an outbreak of bed bugs at her former housing complex, Penny went back to Meridian to help deal with the overwhelming depression and anxiety from losing everything. "Starting over is scary, but it's a risk you have to take. My therapists and case manager at Meridian have always told me I'm worth saving." Now at Walnut Commons, Penny leads AA meetings on Saturday nights and spends her extra time volunteering at local ministries and food kitchens.

At the age of 5, Joe Odom moved with his family from his home in Oklahoma to Alexandria, Ind. After spending most of his adult life staying with his mother or with various friends, Joe found himself living at the Muncie Mission. "I was homeless for about seven years before I went to stay at the Mission. I didn't have anywhere else to go." It was through his counseling and care management teams at Meridian Health Services that Joe learned about Walnut Commons. "I spent about 14 months at the Mission before my application was accepted. Any homeless person will tell you this is better than a shelter." Now that he has a permanent residence, Joe is able to register his scooter and have a mode of transportation again. "I like having my own place and look forward to finding out what there is to do in Muncie now that I have a place to call home."



Joe Odom:

'I have a place to call home.'

When David Smith lost his job nearly three years ago, he was living in the same home he grew up in as a child. As work became harder to find and bills piled up, David was left without electricity and no means of transportation. "Most nights in the winter, I would lie under a pile of blankets and just hope I didn't freeze to death by morning. I had some friends who would sleep under the bridge, so at least I had shelter. It was hard, though." With the help of friends who would occasionally let him stay in their home and have a warm meal, David was able to get through the long winter months. It wasn't until he was accepted into Walnut Commons that David has a permanent solution to his housing problem. Since then, he has been working with Meridian and Work One to find a new job and



Mary McCollum:

'It takes little steps.'

Mary McCollum moved to Muncie from Chicago after her mother became ill in 2002 and needed affordable healthcare. Rather than put her mother in a nursing home, Mary chose to become her primary caretaker. After 10 years of care, Mary's mother passed away in January 2013. Later that year Mary finally decided to have the lump in her breast checked out. As she had suspected for five years, it was cancer. While undergoing radiation and chemotherapy, Mary stayed with family and tried to hold a steady job. As family tensions rose, so did Mary's anxiety and depression. "I didn't realize I was depressed at the time. People would tell me, but sometimes it takes a disaster to realize something is going on." After losing her job and leaving her family's home, Mary sought treatment for her depression and alcohol addiction at Meridian Health Services. She moved into the local YWCA and was able to secure a job at the Downtown Farm Stand before moving into Walnut Commons earlier this year. She continues to fight to overcome her alcohol and anger issues while still undergoing chemotherapy every three weeks in an effort to keep her cancer at bay. "Walnut Commons has been such a blessing in helping me get on my feet. I'm learning to keep a budget, so I can save for my own home. It takes little steps to get there."



David Smith:

'I really like it here.'

start to save up for his future. "I really like it here. I want to be able to save up and buy furniture and necessities before I try to move out on my own again."



Supporters, residents celebrate at ribbon-cutting

AMONG A THRONG OF COMMUNITY, STATE AND national supporters, Meridian Health Services on a summer morning in July officially opened an innovative and collaborative endeavor – Walnut Commons, a housing complex dedicated to serve the homeless, who struggle with physical and mental disabilities.

Located across Walnut Street from the Muncie Fieldhouse and across Wysor Street from American Legion Post 19, Walnut Commons provides “permanent supportive housing,” a concept that helps people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness become independent. The objective is to prepare them for life after Walnut Commons.



Cynthia Wilkey

Residents like Cynthia Wilkey say it's hard to believe the gift of Walnut Commons.

“We are all so grateful,” Wilkey said, as she showed off her fully furnished studio apartment. “Meridian Health Services has been a Godsend to me.”

“Walnut Commons is a perfect example of our ‘whole-person’ health concept,” said Hank Milius, President and CEO of Meridian Health Services, who partnered with several national, state and local agencies to provide permanent housing for Meridians’ clients.

Daveri Development Group, a Chicago affordable housing developer, owns and operates Walnut Commons.

“I think the building speaks for itself,” said Cullen Davis, CEO for Daveri.

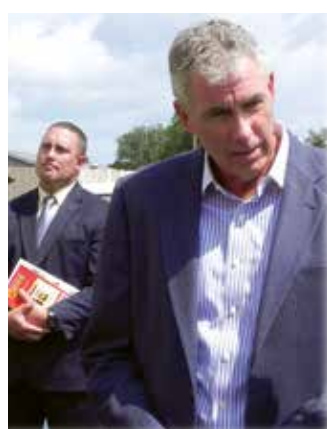
Muncie Mayor Dennis Tyler used the oversized scissors to clip the red ribbon. He said he believed projects such as this would help the community's economy.

“I think over the years you'll see people migrating to Muncie,” he said. “They will want to be a part of Muncie because of what we're wanting to do for their family and loved ones.”



Cullen Davis



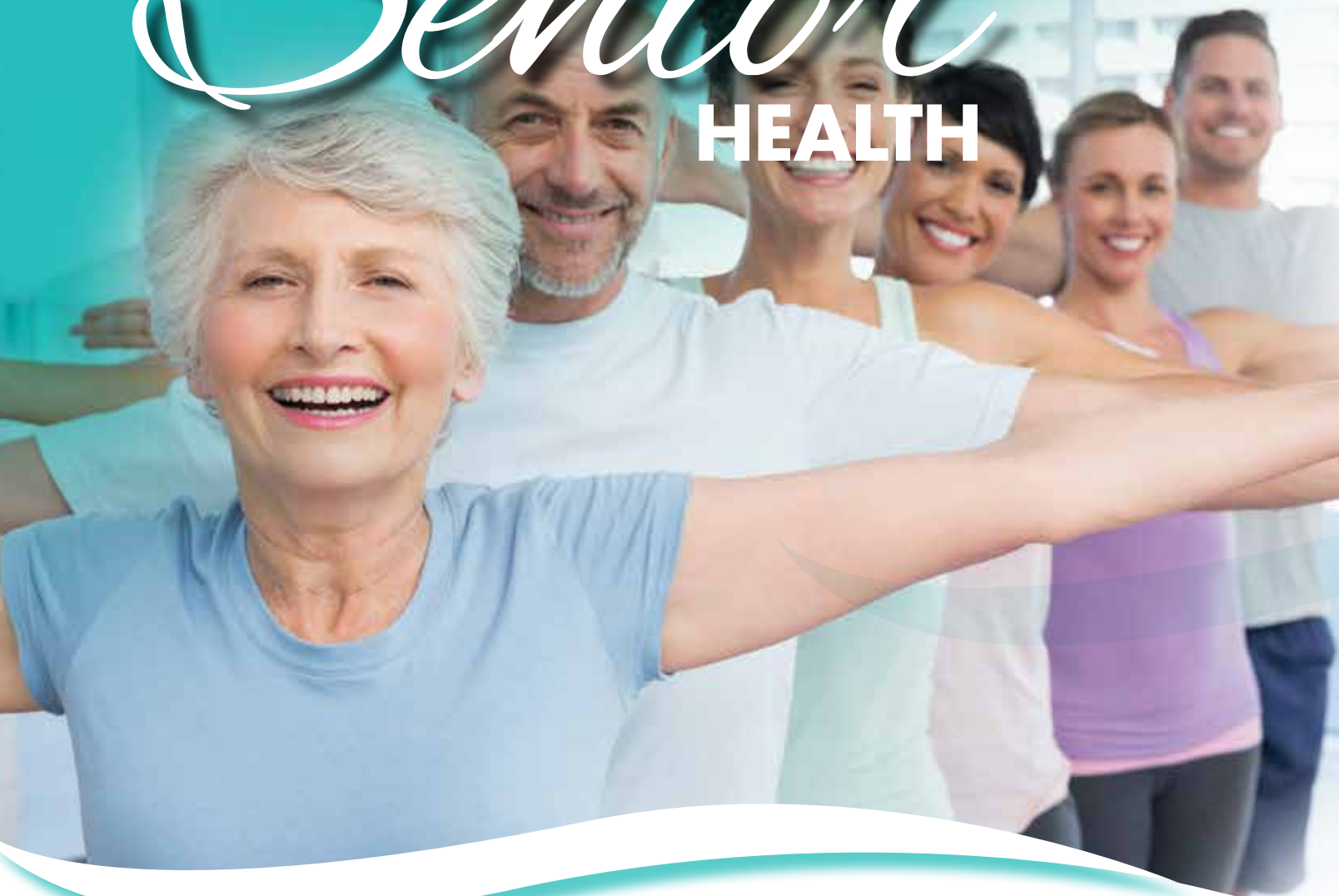






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Liberty Pass

On October 22, 2015 the Muncie Sanitary District dedicated the Liberty Pass Canal. The canal's impact is far greater than a nice place to sit and have lunch. MSD installed a 96-inch storm sewer, completing the combined sewer overflow project. Instead of simply paving over the pipes, the canal was added to benefit our community's quality of place and life. We aim to leave our community better than how we found it at the beginning of each project.

“The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children.”

~Nelson Mandela

Many thanks to Meridian Health Services for reminding our community that our most important assets are children and family.

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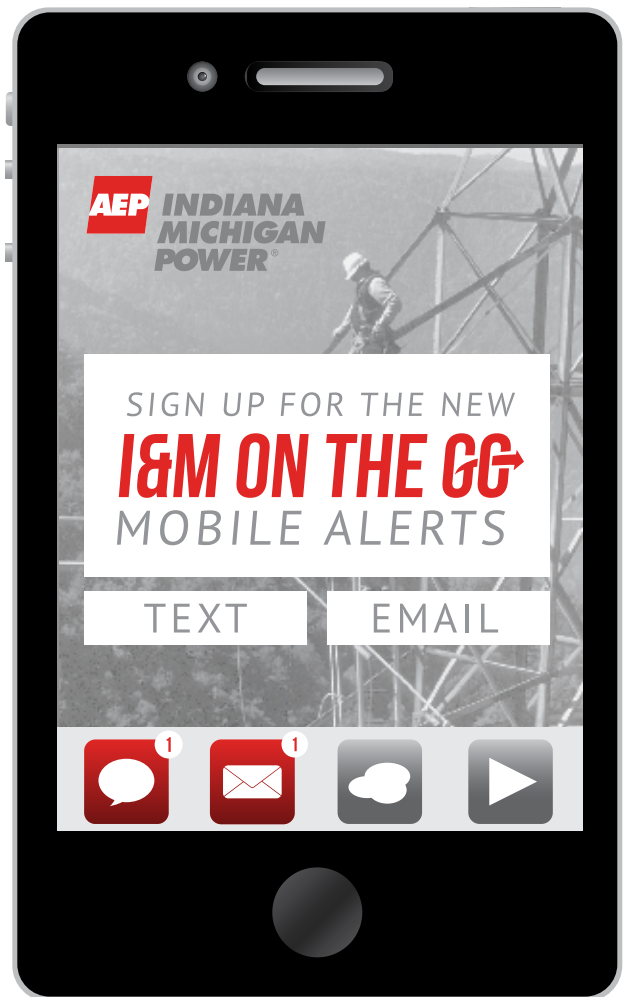
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HAPPIER LIVES. Mackenzie and her mother, Trina Cool, are appreciative of Meridian's Connxxions program, which is teaching life skills.

Meridian's CONNXXIONS

outpatient program receives highest
possible three-year accreditation

Meridian Health Services' Connxxions program, now serving 39 counties and employing more than 100 staff, is the first outpatient program in North America to be certified by the National Association of Dual Diagnosis.

"We've been very, very intentional," said Deceil Moore, Connxxions Director. "This designation by international experts in the field, signals that we're doing a great job."

TO PAGE 52

Meridian's Connxxions program soars as those served increases from 100 people in three counties to 1,000 people in more than 39 counties.

Meridian's Connxxions program ranking followed 15 months of intense preparation by the dedicated and quality Meridian team.

FROM PAGE 51

It's also an important cue for caretakers. "Would you want unlicensed contractors to work on your house?" Moore said.

"The ranking follows 15 months of intense preparation," Moore said. The National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD) measured the program against 18 best practices for persons with IDD as well as mental health concerns. According to the NADD website, the organization is the leading North American expert in providing professionals, educators, policy makers, and families with education, training and information on mental health issues relating to persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Patient Luella Durbin knows firsthand the value of the Connxxions program.

"Meridian Health Services has been a big help to me," said Durbin this summer as she prepared to leave full-time care and move back out on her own. "They help you. They are concerned about everything you're feeling. They've helped me with my finances, my budget, and have gotten me ready to live on my own again. I'm looking forward to going back out on my own and being a vital part of the community again, possibly getting a part-time job."



FINDING HER INDEPENDENCE. Luella Durbin has benefitted from Meridian Health Services' whole-person approach to programming. Through the Connxxions' program, she has received assistance with day-to-day skills to help her live on her own.

Trina Cool is the mother of a 20-year-old woman who has struggled with behavioral and mental health issues since high school.

TRANSFORM LIVES

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"We first went to Meridian's Connxxions program for Mackenzie's school problems," Cool said.

"They sent an aid to the home who connected with her. She's taken her into the community; she teaches everyday life skills. The Connxxions program is amazing. It's made her more independent."

"It may not seem like a lot to other people, but when you're having meltdowns every day and you're at the school more than she (your child) is, you just want your daughter to have a happy life and that's what they've done for us. They've made her life happy and our life easier."

"Connxxions received the highest three-year accreditation possible," Moore explained. "We're building measurements around our patient's goals. We want the program to get our patients to a place they want to be," she said.

The surveyors remarked about Meridian's support of the program, the program's ability to help those served generalize their skills across all environments, the dedicated and caring staff, and the ability to serve patients of all ages.



Trina Cool

"Our program has grown very fast in its first 10 years," Moore said. "We've gone from serving 100 people in three counties to providing services to more than 1,000 people in more than 39 counties. Preparing for the national accreditation survey allowed us to examine our services and make sure they were up to national standards. This accreditation is a testament to the staff and the services we provide."

Hank Milius, President and CEO of Meridian Health Services, said the program is indicative of Meridian's overall goal to treat the whole person by providing a full compliment of healthcare services.

"We know that our patients have the best shot at success if they have access to health care across the full spectrum. Whole-person health does just that by offering the services for physical, mental and social well-being."

"The NADD accreditation is significant because it affirms the credibility and high-achieving outcomes of this program by nationally ranked standards and international experts," Milius said.

Meridian President and CEO, Hank Milius, said the Connxxions program is indicative of Meridian's overall goal to treat the whole person.

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CURRENT

HEALTH MOMENT HEALTHY SNACK RECIPE

Bag the chips and stow the sugar! Treat your family to a healthy snack instead! Try this easy and yummy recipe for GORP. "Good Old Raisins and Peanuts," has evolved to include dried fruits and chocolate! In about 5 minutes, you and the kids can prepare a snack that's delicious and healthy!

Ingredients

1/2 ounce whole shelled (unpeeled) almonds
1/4 ounce unsalted dry-roasted peanuts
1/4 ounce dried cranberries
1 tablespoon chopped pitted dates
1 1/2 teaspoons chocolate chips

Preparation

Combine almonds, peanuts, cranberries, dates and chocolate chips in a small bowl and serve. Yep, that's it!

Servings

This recipe is for 2 servings. Increase ingredients to serve more people. Try customizing the recipe with your favorite dried fruits and nuts.

Nutrition

Per serving: 102 Calories; 6g Fat; 1g Saturated fat; 3g Monosaturated fat; 0 mg Cholesterol; 11g Carbohydrates; 3g Protein; 2g Fiber; 29mg Sodium; 69mg Potassium.

SOURCE: *EatingWell*

Deceil Moore: Serving with a passion for an underserved community population

DECEIL MOORE, A CHAMPION FOR PEOPLE WITH dual diagnosis was promoted to Director of Connxxions this year. Connxxions is a program designed to provide quality mental health services to individuals of all ages with both intellectual and mental health challenges.

Moore, whose credentials include LCSW and NADD-CC, started as a therapist with Meridian Health Services more than 20 years ago.

Moore also holds a master's degree in Social Work from Indiana University. Her dedication to persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities and mental health needs has led to the success of Meridian's Connxxions program. She was named the Connxxions Program Manager in 2004 and then Manager of Developmental Disabilities Programs in 2007 and Regional Clinical Manager in 2011.



Moore

In 2013, Meridian Health Services selected Moore as the "Spirit of Meridian" winner, an award for employees exemplifying the organization's commitment to care and "whole-person" health.

As Regional Clinical Manager, Moore helped the Connxxions Program gain accreditation by the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD). In addition, her research article *Building Understanding of Attachment Issues in Persons with Intellectual Disabilities for Direct Support Professionals* was published earlier this year in the NADD Bulletin. She has presented her work nationally and continues to pursue avenues to help gain quality care for people with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues.

"It was important for me to see people with intellectual and mental health challenges have quality behavioral health options," Moore said.

"It has been an incredible privilege to teach others that this unique population can be successfully treated, especially within Meridian's whole-person treatment approach."

Gerry Cyranowski, Regional Vice President, Meridian Health Services praised Moore for her focus and endearing manner.

"Deceil has a contagious passion for making a difference for this underserved population and has been at the forefront of creating clinical programs that are nationally recognized," Cyranowski said. "We are excited to see her develop this service even greater as she will oversee the entire Connxxions program."

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CURRENT

HEALTH MOMENT

HOLIDAY HEALTH & SAFETY

The holidays are a great opportunity to enjoy time with family and friends. They are also a time to appreciate the gift of health. Here are some tips to support your efforts for health and safety this holiday season.

- 1 **Wash your hands often.** Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.
- 2 **Manage stress.** Keep your commitments and spending in check. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Be sure to get proper sleep.
- 3 **Stay warm.** Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers.
- 4 **Travel safely.** Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt appropriate for his/her height, weight, and age.
- 5 **Be smoke free.** Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke. If you smoke, quit today! Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW, log on to www.smokefree.gov, talk to your health care provider or contact Meridian Health Services for help.

SOURCE: CDC Office of Women's Health

CURRENT HEALTH MOMENT

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FARM EQUIPMENT

Lessons in generosity start early in the Allen household

WHEN BETSY AND COLE ALLEN'S daughter, Camille, turned a year old in June, the parents decided to forgo the traditional birthday celebration. Instead of gifts for Camille, they requested that their gifts bring items from a "needs" list supplied by Meridian Health Services.

"We are fortunate to be able to provide Camille with anything that a 1-year-old could possibly want," said Betsy, a mortgage loan originator at First Merchants Bank. "We wanted to use her birthday as a way to give back." The decision to donate was an easy one for the Yorktown family. "First and foremost, we feel that children are pure at heart and inherently good. When it comes to donating, who more would you rather give to than children?" said Cole, a Quality Manager at Phillips Patterns and Castings, Inc. "On top of our passion for seeing children happy, we also do what we can to support local organizations. After attending Rialzo, we knew that Meridian Health Services & the Child Advocacy Center at the Suzanne Gresham Center was the perfect place."



VIRTUE OF GENEROSITY. Camille Allen sits among gifts from her first birthday party, which were donated to Meridian's Child Advocacy Center.

A tour of the Child Advocacy Center helped solidify that decision. "We were happy to learn that the center has a full-time doctor on staff who can provide children with the care they need in an atmosphere where they already feel safe and comfortable," Cole said. "We were surprised by how busy it was on the day we were there. That showed us just how big a need there is for that type of facility in Delaware County and how much those children use the services provided." While the couple was pleased by the amount of donations the 35 guests brought, it was no big surprise. "Our family and close friends are the very people who taught us the virtue of generosity," said Betsy. "Even some people who couldn't attend sent donations." The Allens expect this

birthday tradition will reinforce Camille's understanding of the importance of generosity. "We hope that it turns in to something that Camille looks forward to each year and can get more involved the older she gets," Betsy said. "We hope Camille learns the value of 'giving back' and that when she sees someone in need and she has extra to give, she gives."



Reconstruction of intersection at Riverside Ave. and McKinley Ave. at Ball State University



Construction of the Marilyn K. Glick Center for Glass on Ball State University campus



Roundabout at Morrison Road and Jackson Street in Muncie

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Ducky Derby

Race Against Child Abuse

THIS YEAR, THERE WERE GIANT YELLOW DUCKS leading the “Race Against Child Abuse” down the White River and serving as the opening act for Meridian Health Services’ FamFest, an annual family festival promoting health, wellness, family fun and safety.

“Every year, we make more and more progress shining a light on child abuse and the work done by Meridian,” said Patty Covington, director of the Child Advocacy Center at the Suzanne Gresham Center, just down the road from where Ducky Derby festivities were held. “It’s a critical issue and these events help us raise funds that are used to do important work.”

Proceeds from the Ducky Derby benefit the CAC, and provide funding for community outreach and training programs that focus on prevention of childhood sexual abuse. FamFest also raises money for the Suzanne Gresham Center, a division of Meridian Health Services which helps improve the lives of children and families through counseling, family assistance, medical care and child abuse and neglect recovery.

This year’s Ducky Derby raised more than \$15,000 for the CAC, and a priceless amount of awareness for children of abuse.

The need for community engagement is strong. The statistics have remained the same for the last few years:

- About 1 in 10 children experience child sexual abuse before their 18th birthday.
- 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser.
- 30% of children who are sexually abused are abused by family members.

SOURCE: Stewards of Children/
Darkness to Light



Meridian’s Child Advocacy Center is a place where victims of child abuse can reveal the harsh details of their tragic experiences under the watchful eye of trained staff. But it is Meridian’s family-focused events where the ongoing education awareness campaign crosses educational and socio-economic barriers. “We have these events to spread the word about what we do. Based on what we hear from people, it makes a difference,” Covington said.

Delaware County Deputy Prosecutor Judi Calhoun attributes a better prosecution rate to the CAC.

“Nobody wants to believe that child abuse happens, or child molest happens,” Calhoun said. “They think it happens in someone else’s home, in someone else’s county; not with our kids, but we know it does. Meridian and the Child Advocacy Center provide a place where children who are victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect, can be interviewed. They don’t feel like their going to a police station. It’s a safe place, where they tell us their story; they tell us what happened to them. Because of the CAC, we can prosecute more cases. We have better disclosures, we have better information.”





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Ducky Derby

Race Against Child Abuse





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Health & Fun Fair at the Suzanne Gresham Center

FAMFEST, MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES' ANNUAL family festival promoting good health, family fun and safety, drew thousands to the Suzanne Gresham Center for both the Health & Fun Fair and Ducky Derby.

Nearly 100 volunteers worked to put the events together this year, which drew about 3,000 people.

More than 40 community vendors including IU Health/Ball Memorial Hospital, MD Wise, American Health Network and Prevent Child Abuse Indiana (PCA) framed Meridian Health Services' "whole-person" health initiatives. Festival-goers received wellness checks including vision, blood pressure, and body mass index (BMI).

There's always plenty to do at FamFest, but Meridian Health Services uses the fun to raise awareness of health resources throughout East Central Indiana. Not only was there inflatable fun for children, but information for adults on assistance with improving their mental and physical health as well as finding resources for their families.

"Our staff are amazing and they work very hard to make this event the success that it is," said CEO and President Hank Milius. "The community has so many resources. We try to bring them all together here every year. We couldn't do this without them."

"Our mission is to bring people together to raise awareness about health, wellness and safety for our children, but also offer a free, fun event for families," said Beth Clark, Vice President for Marketing.





Fam Fest!
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Health & Fun Fair

at the Suzanne Gresham Center





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MERIDIAN EXPERT. Dr. Denisse Ambler says parenthood makes her a better child psychiatrist.

Pediatric psychiatrist helps children cope

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES HAVE LESS OF A SOCIAL STIGMA today, but the need for psychiatry, especially for children, is on the rise.

“For kids, structure and stability are key,” said Dr. Denisse Ambler, a pediatric psychiatrist at Meridian’s Suzanne Gresham Center.

Children face so many challenges growing up in today’s society which can affect their mental health. This is especially true for children of lower-income families.

“Limited resources can lead to decreased access to things that would help children fulfill their potential. If they are not getting their basic needs met, how can they focus? How do they manage their frustrations? Homelessness and housing issues may lead to serious problems,” Ambler said.

Hunger can complicate the situation as well.

“The number of children in the area who are on the reduced- and free-lunch program is pretty high. Food insecurity is a real problem. Breakfast and lunch might be the only times these kids are offered a major source of nutrition, and some medicines can take away their appetites,” Ambler said.

Ambler sees a number of other issues – including drug abuse – upsetting family life. “I’ve been really saddened by the number of children in foster care, and often substance abuse is at the heart of that. And many children are exposed in utero to substances,” she said.

Ambler is also seeing younger children using illegal substances. “Some adolescents are experimenting with drugs, and it’s easy to find the hard stuff. Prescription drug use is an issue, and marijuana is extremely prevalent. It’s disheartening and scary sometimes,” she said.

Ambler, who has been with Meridian for a year, believes the Suzanne Gresham Center is a valuable resource to help the local community address complicated socioeconomic problems and their effects on children. “It was all set up with children in mind. I’ve gotten to know the other doctors, and I am very impressed,” she said. Ambler has been in practice for 17 years.

Since becoming a mother six years ago, she has approached the field with an enhanced perspective.

“I feel like I have become a better child psychiatrist since having children. I understand development on a deeper level. I think I can relate to parents in a different way now that I couldn’t before. I commiserate with some of their struggles,” she said.

Her education in child psychiatry has also shaped her parenting style. Ambler’s time counseling children has increased her awareness of the many dangers young people face.

“For my own children, it has made me a little more protective in some ways. You get to hear more about the bad in society that affects kids,” she said. Her career has given her the tools to communicate more effectively with her family.

“Having done this work for such a long time, it has helped me to talk to my children in a different way,” she said.

Denisse Ambler: IN HER OWN WORDS



PEDIATRIC PSYCHIATRIST

Dr. Denisse Ambler, a pediatric psychiatrist at Meridian's Suzanne Gresham Center, joined Meridian Health Services about a year ago. She has been in practice for 17 years, most recently in North Carolina. She and her husband and two children live in Muncie.

Do children think differently than adults?

Kids in general think outside of the box and are less confined by conventional rules. It can be exciting to hear how a kid thinks about a problem. A child may be very concrete in thinking, but at the same time not be able to distinguish between fantasy and reality. Children go through a number of stages of development. In the very young years, from 0 to 5, they progress from being completely dependent and unable to express themselves to communicative and curious. They start showing more independence and begin to solve problems. Through the school years, they become more self-aware and are capable of making more decisions on their own. As kids move on toward adulthood, their problem-solving skills become more refined and their thought patterns are much more complex. But there is no exact number for when each change happens for kids, and kids with developmental disabilities can be on very different paths. As kids advance, they don't move 100 percent through each stage – there's some fluctuation at times and a back and forth. And under stress, regression can happen.

Are children growing up too fast today?

It does seem like kids are growing up too fast. However, if I think back to many hundreds of years ago, children had to work. They didn't have all this "childhood" time. Physiologically, kids are developing faster physically these days. And their cognitive development hasn't kept pace with that. Eight-year-olds are entering puberty, but they are not thinking like a high-school aged kid.

How can parents determine if a child should see a psychiatrist?

Parents know their children best. If they notice any significant changes in their child's behavior, including sleeping and eating habits, changes in grades and physical activities, or if a previously social child does not want to spend time with friends or is being uncommunicative with family, they should be concerned.

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Are children on sensory overload in the Digital Age?

We used to say to limit screen time to 2 hours maximum – and 0 hours for children younger than 3, but things are changing. Schools are giving children tablets at a very young age. This generation is considered a native of electronics. This is their world and this is what they are going to do in their lifetime. If we don't allow them to access electronics at all, they will be behind their peers going forward. I think it is important to carefully monitor and make sure the content is age appropriate. Making sure there isn't the ability to access the Internet freely is vital. I highly recommend kids don't have their own computer hidden away in their room. It should be in a common area. Limiting screen time is sometimes necessary, but balance is important.

How is parenting different now than it was in the 1950s?

Certain things about parenting always are going to be the same, but there are more women in the workforce now and the make-up of families is less traditional. It's harder now, I think. Children are exposed to so much so quickly. It's harder to shelter very young children and still allow them to be children. It's difficult to shield them from overt sexuality and violence – you even see it on the news. Before, you would have to search it out, now it's everywhere.

There is talk in the media about 'helicopter' parents, often seen as overprotective, and 'free-range' parents, who want their children to have personal freedom. Does either approach make sense?


I'm not seeing helicopter parenting as much in our region. Kids should be able to make some choices and be allowed to fail. There is some thought that if you are not allowed to fail early in life and learn how to handle it, it will be very difficult to handle later in life. There's concern when parents are being overly watchful. Free-range parenting, however, could put kids into a position where they are in over their heads. They don't have the judgment yet and the reason and the capability to handle every situation. It's easy to get exposed to things or be put in an unsafe situation. I'm a big fan of moderation. Kids need to go outside and fall down and scrape their knee, but a parent should be somewhere outside observing. Don't try to solve every problem for them. We should provide a safe place for them to explore their world and help them learn.

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State award honors Meridian for tobacco cessation efforts

Meridian Health Services' commitment to tobacco cessation in Delaware County has gained recognition and a grant from the Indiana State Department of Health.

The award makes Meridian Health Services the lead agency for Delaware County's Tobacco Prevention Coalition. Grants were awarded to community partners on a regional level to coordinate local community and minority-based components of Indiana's tobacco prevention and cessation program.

"Tobacco cessation is a critical component of our overall health objectives," said Amelia Clark, Meridian's Vice President of Community Health. "It's one more way to achieve our focus on whole-person health."

The vision of the Indiana State Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Coalition is to significantly improve health in Indiana and reduce the disease and economic burden tobacco use places on Hoosiers of all ages.

"This partnership is critical to Indiana's statewide strategy to help prevent tobacco use and help tobacco users quit and increase smoke-free environments," said Hank Milius, President/CEO Meridian Health Services.

"We are excited to have been selected as the leader for the Tobacco Prevention Coalition, as this is a very important aspect of community population health management," said Milius.

Meridian is a strong advocate in promoting healthy lifestyles and well-being for people in communities throughout the state.

"Tobacco related disease poses the single most serious threat for premature and preventable deaths for consumers we serve," said Clark. "Tobacco dependence and active tobacco use interfere with successful treatment outcomes and impedes the effectiveness of psychiatric medications. Active tobacco use can even make it difficult for our patients to secure and retain employment and housing; not to mention, lessen financial resources critical to sustaining day-to-day living."

Meridian Health Services believes that addressing tobacco dependence issues in its entire advocacy, program, and client service functions will improve wellness outcomes and speed the successful return of consumers to productive roles in the community.



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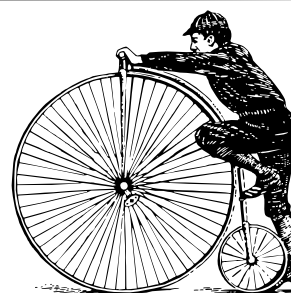


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As a salute to the good work they do, Meridian Health Services pays homage to those employees annually by naming employee "Spirit of Meridian" recipients. The Spirit of Meridian award signifies a high level of commitment to the agency's integrated health care philosophy and "whole-person" thinking.

This year's overall winner is manager Alysha

Nemore, a clinical supervisor who specializes in working with children and families affected by abuse and neglect. Nemore, who has a master's degree in counseling psychology, most recently headed an effort in the Anderson Community Schools in Madison County. C.O.M.P.A.S.S., or Community Organizations and Mentors Partnering for Anderson Student Success, is a program that identifies students with severe behavioral problems which affect their academic achievement.

"Our employees are our greatest asset," said President and CEO Hank Milius. "This is one way to show them how much they are appreciated."



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CURRENT HEALTH MOMENT FACTS ABOUT THE FLU

What is influenza? Influenza – also called the flu – is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

Signs and symptoms People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms: Fever or feeling feverish/chills (but not everyone with the flu has a fever), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue (feeling very tired). Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

How flu spreads Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or nose.

Period of contagiousness You may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

Complications of flu Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

Get vaccinated The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season. Contact your provider or Meridian Health Services to update your vaccine.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS. Meridian employees and community members show their support at the 2015 Alzheimer's Walk.



FALL HEALTH FAIR. Meridian Health Services-Connersville employees educate children at Fayette County's Fall Festival.



COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE DAY. Volunteers gather to assist residents with a variety of free items including food, winter clothes, haircuts and blankets.



SUPERHERO CHECK-UP. Meridian medical providers offer screenings to young "superheroes" at Muncie's 150th birthday celebration.



VISION CHECKS. Meridian nursing staff offers eye screenings at Inspire Academy in Muncie.



PHYSICIAN OUTREACH. Dr. Bianca Maya and Dr. Naseer Syed speak with parents at Headstart about primary medical care for children.



BSU HOMECOMING. Meridian volunteers and team members march in Ball State University's 2015 Homecoming parade.



"WELLOWEEN" WELLNESS. Meridian care providers offer wellness screenings and demonstrations at Ball State University's Welloween.

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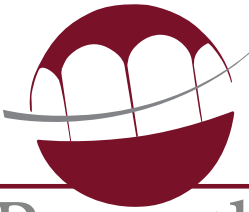
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