

## 2013 SPIRIT OF MERIDIAN

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### Frankie & Katie

Meridian's family health delivers  
a new story of life. PAGE 38

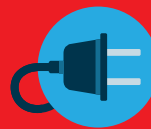
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Probing what drives  
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## Spirit of Meridian.

Meet the doctor  
who is honored  
with the 2013 award.



Dr. Saber Bahrami p.60

# CURRENT

RIALZO EDITION | MARCH 2013

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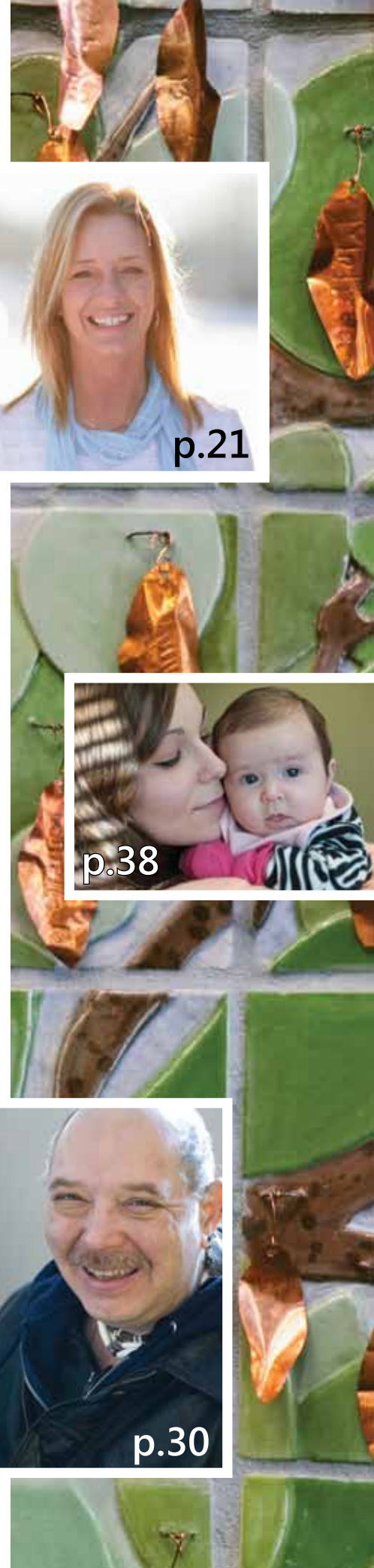
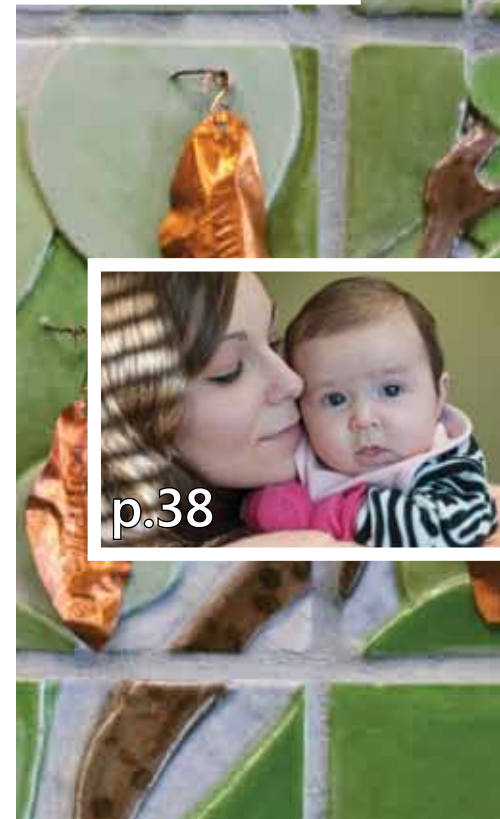
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# MERIDIAN

## HEALTH Services

Physical. Mental. Social Well-Being.

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# Rialzo

A night of fun.  
High energy.  
Caring people.

Behind this one-of-a-kind Meridian party is an important purpose: the support of an organization that is intensely focused on 'whole person' health for those we serve.



Chloe Mills p.26



**CHRIS BERGIN** is an award winning editorial and corporate photographer based in Indianapolis. Chris has a degree in photojournalism from Ball State University in Muncie and his work has been published in Sports Illustrated, People Magazine, MSNBC.com, USA Today, New York Times, Washington Post and Indianapolis Star. Chris works tirelessly to create high quality images for a diverse range of clients. Clients include: The New York Times, ESPN, Chicago Tribune, Reuters, NCAA, Amazon.com, Indianapolis Star, White Lodging and Macy's. Chris is available for assignments locally and worldwide. [www.chrisberginphoto.com](http://www.chrisberginphoto.com)

**In the words of THREE DOG NIGHT, it's 'black and white.' These photographers rock.**

We invited some of the area's best photographers to spend time with our programs and capture the heroes and the heroines of Meridian Health Services. They answered the call. Look for their talent, photo stories, and big hearts on display at Rialzo, throughout this magazine, online at [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) and on our Facebook page.

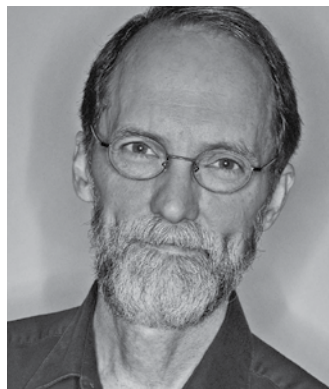
**TIM UNDERHILL** bought his first camera at a garage sale when he was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. From that point on he knew he was meant to have a camera in his hands. Not long after he found a wind-up 8-millimeter movie camera and realized that photography could go beyond the still image. Tim has worked for network television affiliates in Rockford, Illinois; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Indianapolis. He continues to keep up-to-date by freelancing for various networks. Tim's work has appeared several national and regional networks including, ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, ESPN, The Big Ten Network and FOX. He has covered the Indianapolis 500, Brickyard 400, NBA playoffs, Pan Am Games, NCAA championships, the World Basketball Championships, NFL Monday Night Football plus other college and professional sporting events. Tim's work has earned awards from many of those same organizations including NPPA, AP, and the Emmy Awards.



**KYLE EVENS** has been creating award-winning images throughout Indiana for more than 32 years. With 28 years as a photojournalist with The Star Press in Muncie and the last 4 years as the owner of Berwyn Studios, he specializes in marketing, editorial and commercial photography. "Photography started for me as a father and son project, building a home enlarger out of a cardboard box, light bulb and lens from an old slide projector. The magic of developing prints made me want to create more images to print." That creativity continues today with clients and art projects in the community. [www.berwynstudios.com](http://www.berwynstudios.com)



**MARIA STRAUSS** is a photojournalism senior at Ball State University with experience in photo, video, print journalism and television commercial production. She has completed two newspaper internships at The Star Press in Muncie, Ind., and The Journal & Courier in Lafayette, Ind. She will begin graduate studies next fall in the Center for Information and Communications Sciences at Ball State University. [www.mariastraussphoto.wordpress.com](http://www.mariastraussphoto.wordpress.com)



**TONY FREDERICK** has been a photographer at CS Kern in Muncie, Indiana for 25 years. He does a wide range of commercial photography for local, regional, and national accounts. His work includes food, architecture, people, and products. Recently, he added video to his list of services. [www.tonyfrederick.net](http://www.tonyfrederick.net)

## FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHERS



## MARY-ELLEN

**BERTRAM** opened her studio in 1988 to create high quality photography for her customers. Her educational background in both commercial photography and photojournalism creates in her work a study of contrasts. Through the help of her customers Mary-Ellen has become internationally known for her photographic excellence. Mary-Ellen's photos blend traditional portraiture skills with modern technology to create artistic images that capture the distinct personality of each subject. Located in Farmland, Indiana, Mary-Ellen continues to grow artistically, creating beautiful works of art for herself and her valued customers. [www.maryellenbertram.com](http://www.maryellenbertram.com)



Designer by day, husband by night, **ADAM STURM** is the founder of Seagull Media ([www.seagullmedia.com](http://www.seagullmedia.com)), a full-service media and graphics company with focus on design, photography and video product services. After getting his Bachelors of Arts in Telecommunications at Ball State University, Adam moved to New York City where he honed his talents as a photographer and videographer. He moved to Indiana when he met his wife, Jennifer, and is currently based in Indianapolis.



**KAREN KARKI** developed an interest in photography at a young age and took her first photography classes as a student at Delta High School. Her unique eye for composition and technical skill with the camera and in the dark room led her to major in art at Taylor University. She graduated in 1998 and worked in graphic design until starting her own photography business in Muncie in 2006. Because she loves capturing the multiple stages of life that people experience, she specializes in weddings and portraits. Clients often hire her to do their senior portraits or engagement photos and then go on to hire her again as they get married and start their families. Karen has been married ten years to Rajeev. They have two children: Arya, 6 and Alex, 3. [www.karenkarki.com](http://www.karenkarki.com)



**ELIZABETH MARX** was a graphic designer before starting Almond Leaf Studios in 2008. She recently moved to Muncie from Charlotte, NC and has traveled to many countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa and continues a partnership with Silent Images, giving a voice to the voiceless worldwide. She is a dreamer, an artist, and a philanthropist who loves to find, appreciate and capture beauty wherever she goes but primarily does this through portraiture and wedding photography. You can view more of her work at [www.almondleafstudios.com](http://www.almondleafstudios.com).

**TISHA TRICE** graduated from The Art Institute of Pittsburgh in 1999 with a degree in Graphic Design and Communication. She moved back to Indiana where she began working as a Graphic Designer/Photographer. In 2006 she ventured out and established Trice Design Studio in Hartford City where she resides with her husband and daughter. She has been awarded an Addy® for her graphic design work, as well as being a museum exhibited and an award-winning photographer.





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



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Al Rent; Brent Webster, Chair; Hank Milius, President/CEO

*Back row, from left:*

David Gobble, Doug Loy, Terry Witt-Bailey, Brian Ring, Wayne Shaffer, Steve Smith, Sue Ann Pflum, John Bowles



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*Back row, from left:*

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*Not pictured:*

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# MERIDIAN

## HEALTH Services

Physical. Mental. Social Well-Being.

Dear friends of Meridian,

WHAT A YEAR IT HAS BEEN. Through your continued support, Meridian has provided care and treatment to more than 14,000 individuals in 26 counties in Indiana.

AT MERIDIAN, WE HELP PEOPLE cope and give families hope. We continue to expand and evolve in to a progressive healthcare organization treating the “whole person” through integrating physical, mental and social well-being. At Rialzo, our annual charity gala, we raise enough money to provide resources to many of our programs in so many different ways. For example last year, our “party with a purpose” raised funds to help purchase 150 care kits for clinicians serving 5,000 children at the Suzanne Gresham Center, a children’s treatment center of Meridian. In addition, we were able to provide resources for our Geriatric Psychiatric hospital at IU Health-Ball Memorial Hospital.

THIS YEAR, WE’RE INTRODUCING the faces and families you’ve been helping. In this, the premiere issue of *CURRENT*, you’ll meet Frankie, a teenager who decided to keep her baby after the healthcare support of Meridian in Rushville. You’ll also read about Tyler Hill, a deaf man who lived at the School for the Deaf until Meridian helped him find employment. Now, he works at a local restaurant and lives independently. You’ll read stories about the employees of Meridian who touch the lives of thousands every day throughout Indiana.

FINALLY, IN THIS ISSUE OF *CURRENT*, you’ll read about the remarkable life of this year’s Spirit of Meridian Community Award recipient, Dr. Saber Bahrami. You will learn about his humanitarian efforts and how closely he works with Meridian patients.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, we strive to connect to our communities. There’s the Suzanne Gresham Health and Fun Fair, a yearly event for kids and families that promotes health and safety. Thousands of families receive free health screenings, register their child’s fingerprints and have their photo ID’s taken. Your giving also supports the Eileen Moore Child Abuse Awareness Walk, a group effort to spread the word about how the Child Advocacy Center can help children find justice and be protected from abuse. And earlier this year, in response to the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, we sponsored a free community forum to discuss our schools’ preparedness and how they address bullying and/or mental health issues.

THANK YOU for what you do for Meridian and for our families. As you can see, your gifts go a long way.



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PRESIDENT / CEO



**Brent Webster**  
BOARD CHAIRMAN



**Charles Sursa**  
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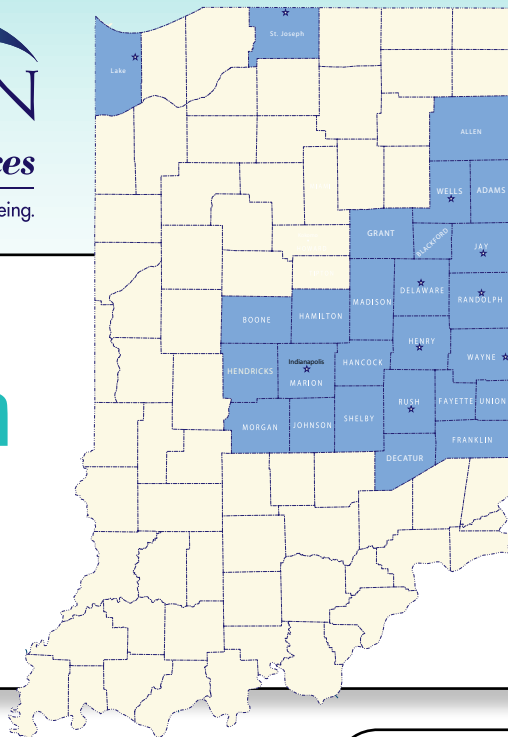
# COMMUNITY REPORT



## 2012 Community Benefit Summary

**Making a Positive Impact on the Communities We Serve**

Residents in  
**26 Indiana counties**  
receive health services from Meridian.



Meridian employees offer mobile services throughout Indiana but have 22 facilities in 10 counties. Delaware County is home to our main campus, the **Suzanne Gresham Center, Child Advocacy Center, MeridianMD** and the **Gero-Psychiatric Hospital** (located at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital).

Meridian serves over **14,000** individuals each year.

This is **60% more patients** than five years ago. Meridian has grown its service area and expanded services to provide “whole person” health which integrates care for physical, mental and social well-being.

Meridian had **433,653** outpatient visits in the past year.

In a 2012 survey, Meridian patients reported a **96% satisfaction** rate with Meridian’s quality of services.

Over **130 schools** have partnered with Meridian to bring services to students. Over 5,000 children received services from Meridian and **97% of their parents would recommend the program to others.**

Meridian has **675** staff members in Indiana.



**Over 110 employees are doctors, nurses and medical assistants** on our constantly growing medical staff.

Revenue generated was over **\$62 million** during fiscal year 2011-12.

This is a **230% increase** from five years ago.

**Over \$26 million** is dedicated for our employees’ salaries and benefits.

Meridian’s community investment in 2012 totaled over

**\$18 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 3,639 individuals who were unable to pay for services

which totaled **\$2.4 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 Fun Fair** is a free event for families, offering health resources, entertainment and food.
- The **Eileen Moore Child Abuse Awareness Walk** has raised over \$20,000 to help local children and families.
- A **Community Education Forum** was held in response to the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT.
- **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 **2,640 patients** with behavioral health emergencies.
- **Suicide Prevention Training** was completed by 25 different organizations with the assistance of Meridian professionals.
- Meridian hosts a **statewide conference** for professionals serving individuals with a **dual diagnosis – developmental and mental health issues**.
- 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.

## Services We Provide

- Primary family medical care
- Psychiatric medical services
- Gero-Psychiatric Hospital for senior adults
- Counseling and therapy
- Children and family supportive programs
- Child Advocacy Center for children affected by abuse
- Addictions and chemical dependency services
- Home, community and school-based services
- Homelessness and independent living support
- HIV care coordination
- Programs for individuals with both intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges
- Care management, skill building and supported employment
- Therapeutic foster care and adoption

**MERIDIAN**  
HEALTH Services

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# *A simple philosophy. A powerful commitment.*



LEFT TO RIGHT: *Charlie Sursa | Senior Vice President, Investments, CFP®; Dana Sizemore | Registered Sales Associate; Stan Griner | Senior Vice President, Investments*

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## *Harmony* of whole person health.

The connection between body and mind is a powerful thing. What if a healthcare provider integrated the two? Not treating one without the other.

Achieving a personal harmony for better healing and better living. That's exactly how Meridian Health Services treats you. Not as separate 'parts,' but caring for your physical, mental and social health together as one for total well-being.

To provide this higher quality of care, Meridian added primary family medical care, MeridianMD, into its core services. Providing you a true "medical home" where doctors, nurses and counselors coordinate treatments and medications seamlessly to address your total health.

Not only is health important to us, but we added it to our name. We believe surrounding people with coordinated care creates a synergy of health services for happier, healthier patients.

**A new *synergy*  
and name in healthcare.**

# MERIDIAN

## HEALTH *Services*

Physical. Mental. Social Well-Being.



# Getting schooled

Meridian's one-on-one student services focus on behaviors & skills

**I** imagine 5,000 children at hundreds of schools in 26 counties throughout the state who need help sorting out life's challenges. These are elementary children, middle schoolers and high school teen-agers, and the issues they face run the gamut.





Lindsay South and her mother, Amanda.

Photos: KAREN KARKI

“A lot of people look at these kids when they’re misbehaving and think they’re just being ‘bad.’ Instead, we look closer and say, ‘Wait a minute. What’s driving this behavior?’”

- Carrie Anacker, Meridian Health Services

CARRIE ANACKER, REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE manager of children’s services at the Suzanne Gresham Center, a division of Meridian Health Services, covers a region that includes Madison, Delaware, Wayne, Jay, Blackford, Adams, Wells and Grant counties.

Meridian’s home, school and community-based services are necessary to get help for children with behavioral issues, mental health issues, or to keep children out of more involved treatment, perhaps even residential care.

Meridian’s behavioral clinicians enter the home or the school and work with the child, to evaluate the behavior in a real-world setting.

One student benefiting from the school program is 13-year-old Lindsay South.

“I was in depression,” Lindsay says. “I was angry and sad almost all the time. So my mom took me to counseling.”

It was Lindsay’s school principal who recommended the program at Meridian Health Services. The family was placed with Alysha Nemore, a clinical supervisor with Meridian.

“Lindsay has come a long way,” Nemore says. “She has really matured a lot, which has helped her own functioning. But she actually uses what we teach her and we can see that in her.”

On an outpatient basis, children and their families work with a behavioral clinician in the home, school and community, upward of six to 10 hours a week. Children with more severe problems enter CAPRTF, or Community Alternatives to Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities, where they receive more than 12 hours of treatment each week.

Lindsay, who went through in-class help as well as office visits with Nemore, did have setbacks. But she and her family learned

how to handle them.

Under the home, school and community-based services program, a clients’ treatment has six goals:

- Identifying and working toward reducing symptoms
  - Functioning and living more productively in the community
  - Developing skills to manage illness
  - Achieving the level of independence that is possible
  - Identifying ways to become medically compliant
  - Developing and improving cognitive and social skills
- Families, not just the children, get attention as well.

“We do a lot of working one-on-one with parents on parenting skills,” says Anacker, a former behavioral clinician. “We help them provide consistency with expectations and let the child have some boundaries.”

One true believer in the Meridian program is Stephen R. McColley, superintendent of Wes-Del Community Schools. McColley worked with a similar program when he was principal at a Green County school.

“Meridian could use me as a reference any time,” McColley says. “I cannot speak highly enough how they have been. I’ve seen their work, and it’s changed kids and families for the better.”

Anacker, who grew up in the area, says she loves her job and its mission.

“I truly believe in what we do here,” she said. “I’ve seen the success, and I love those small steps. Say, a family couldn’t take their child out of the house, due to behaviors, and now they can actually go to McDonald’s, sit down and enjoy a meal. To me, those are really big things.”

**VIDEO:** To learn more about this program, watch a video and browse a photo gallery, go to [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.



Anacker

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Optional features shown. Coming late 2012.

2013 MKZ

**BILL MCCOY FORD LINCOLN**  
is excited to announce the arrival of the new  
**2013 MKZ.**

Designed in one breath, the fluid exterior of the 2013 MKZ takes yours away. Aerodynamics harmonize with elegance to create a sweeping roofline that flows all the way down to the Lincoln signature split-wing grille. To help ensure a smooth and dynamic ride, the 2013 Lincoln MKZ comes equipped with standard Lincoln Drive Control, which can read the road and actively adapt to road conditions. Get to know the MKZ at [Lincoln.com](http://Lincoln.com).



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A warm and inviting living room scene. In the foreground, a plush brown leather sofa with tufted backrest and brass nailhead trim sits on a patterned rug. Behind it, a large stone fireplace with a warm fire burning inside. Above the mantel is a framed picture of an anchor and some small figurines. To the left, a wooden bookshelf is partially visible.

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# A safe place for children to find their voices

WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF ABUSE IS MORE THAN just a job for Patty Covington, director of Meridian's Child Advocacy Center. She herself was a victim of child sexual abuse.

"I am a survivor," says the mother of three. "I went into foster care when I was 13. So that has kind of given me my passion. In my opinion, we're all put here for a reason, and I really feel like this path is just part of my journey."

She moved from the South with her biological family when she was 12, landing in Indiana. About a decade ago, Covington began her social work career.

The CAC assists in cases of child abuse, offering a safe, child friendly environment in which victims can tell their stories to receptive listeners. Meridian purchased the Morrison Mock School seven years ago and put in carpet that mimics cobblestone, street lamps in the hallways and a tree house in the lobby. Once inside, the story continues in a small 10-foot by 10-foot room, quiet and comforting. In the walls are tiny cameras and hidden microphones.

In a larger room nearby, prosecutors, DCS representatives, mental health professionals, and others pay close attention to the stories of children affected by abuse. Children also may testify via closed circuit in criminal trials. These forensic interviews can make it possible to bring abusers and perpetrators to justice without traumatizing the victims. The CAC is one of four such facilities in the state that are nationally accredited and the only one connected to a behavioral health facility.


"The wonderful thing is that when a child comes in here that has been a victim of sexual abuse or physical abuse, then we can connect them right here with a therapist," Covington adds.

Interviewers are specially trained to handle such sensitive cases, and Covington for one is gladdened. It took a long time for her to disclose her own abuse, well into her adult years, and it is not a subject she broaches lightly.

"The biggest thing that I would like to see from the article is, yes, my background and why I feel so passionately about the CAC," she says. "But I would like to talk about the sexual abuse that is out there. One in four girls are sexually abused, and usually by someone they know. It's not a stranger."

Among boys the ratio is one in six, Covington adds.

"This is just a passion I have, to be instrumental in the lives of children," Covington says.

"I feel very honored to be here." 

**A PERSONAL JOURNEY.** Patty Covington, Director of the Child Advocacy Center, a division of Meridian Health Services.

Photos: ELIZABETH MARX

**PHOTO GALLERY:** To learn more about this program, browse a photo gallery at [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.

**FACT:** In an average Delaware County classroom of 30 students, six children will be sexually abused.



# Leaves of COURAGE

## Listening Tree offers protective shade

**P**ATRICIA COVINGTON, DIRECTOR OF THE Child Advocacy Center at Meridian Health Services, leads a visitor past a wide expanse of tiled wall. From the tiles emerges the image of a large shade tree.

It is called The Listening Tree and it was designed and crafted by artist Sally Myers. Donating the tree were Dr. Jon and Janis Hendrix to honor their son-in-law, former Delaware County Prosecutor Mark McKinney. It was dedicated in April 2011.

Hanging from those branches are leaves, fashioned from metal, occasionally clinking at the indoor drafts. On each leaf is the first name and age of a young victim who has been interviewed at the center.


So far, 715 victims have come through the CAC since it was founded in 2006. Rates of abuse cases accepted for prosecution in Delaware County have increased from 27 percent to 78 percent in 2011. This ensures perpetrators are being held accountable for their actions while the victim is being treated in a safe, child-friendly environment.

"On the tree there are the 'Leaves of Courage,'" Covington says.

"The children get to hang them among all the other children's. And this says to them: There are other people out there who share the same story you have. And here at the CAC, we want to hear your story. We want you to have the courage to talk about what's happened. And then I usually read the poem."

Beside the tree hangs a plaque with this poem by Scott Smalstig, Meridian's Vice President for Fund Development. The poem was paraphrased from the popular childrens' book, "The Giving Tree," by Shel Silverstein.

*"Come cool off in my shade.  
Come rest at my side.  
Come climb my trusty trunk.  
Come swing on my sturdy branches.  
Come tell me your story.  
You are among friends.  
Come grow with me."*



**THE LISTENING TREE.** The first name and age of each child who shares a story is honored on Meridian's Listening Tree.



# Eileen Moore

## Honoring a legacy of protection

### BE INVOLVED



Those wishing to honor the legacy of Eileen Moore may make

a check donation to Meridian Health Services Fund – Child Advocacy Center, at Meridian Health Services, 240 N. Tillotson Ave., Muncie, IN 47304. Donors can also use the Meridian website, [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org).

EILEEN MOORE'S PASSION AND fierce determination to protect children was the mortar with which Meridian Health Services' Child Advocacy Center was constructed.

"She had such a passion for what she did," says Carrie Anacker, Regional Administrative Manager of children's services for Meridian. "She helped so many kids in getting the CAC going. And she worked up to the end. I think it kept her going for a long time."

Moore, a licensed social worker and CAC's program manager, died Nov. 6, 2012, after a long battle with cancer. She was 61.

The Iowa native had been with Meridian since 1993 and was instrumental in establishing the CAC, which opened in 2006.

"There are no words to describe what that woman has done, not only for Meridian but for child abuse awareness," said colleague Tammy Dodson, Group Home Supervisor.

Co-worker Patty Covington, who succeeded

Moore as program manager, said Moore "just radiated her desire to help anyone, especially those who had been mistreated."

Deceil Moore, founder and director of the Connxxions program, described her colleague. "She was this quiet gentle presence, who tried to make a difference everyday."

A mother herself of two grown daughters, Eileen Moore's instinct to protect children from predators was ferocious.

"You have to applaud someone who would sit through the interviews day after day as she did, listening to the abuse these kids have endured, and yet continued to want to do," Anacker said.

Moore conducted more than 700 such interviews at the CAC, a facility that helps child victims of abuse tell their stories in a protected environment. She also was a therapist in thousands of cases in the 15 years prior to the formation of the CAC.

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Chloe Mills and her son, Braxton.

Photos: MARY-ELLEN BERTRAM

# Fighting addiction

## makes her stronger & life better

Chloe Mills, 23, had been using drugs for almost half her life. Introduced to marijuana at a young age, she quickly moved to Xanax, then ecstasy, then opiates, including Vicodin. A victim of sexual and physical abuse, Chloe had plenty of reasons to take drugs.



# “If it wasn’t for Meridian, I wouldn’t be sober. Period.”

- Chloe Mills

“I just loved the feeling,” Chloe says. “I felt like I was Superwoman, and I could do anything.”

Chloe came to Meridian Health Services for help, through its Addictions program, but not before going through her own hell.

The Anderson native never met her father, an alcoholic who died when she was 8. She kept house for her older brothers while her mother worked as a nurse.

It was not a happy life.

In high school, her grades were good, but she was always getting into fights. She did, however, manage to become a certified nursing assistant.

She began work on a surgical tech degree, but never finished it, her work interrupted by drugs.

Then she became pregnant.

“Before I got pregnant, drugs were my top priority,” Chloe says.

Then Chloe utters a sentence that makes her choke back tears: “Braxton was born addicted to pain pills.”

Watching her newborn struggle with

chemical dependency tore at her heart, and she thought about getting sober, “but the drug was still taking over my mind.”

While bathing her infant son one day, Chloe overdosed on Tramadol and went into a seizure but not before she had let out the bathwater.

Child Protective Services entered the picture, and Chloe was hospitalized for 10 days. She had not been ordered into intensive outpatient care (IOP), but she went anyway.

“That was my last straw,” Chloe says.

Braxton, now 14 months old, is doing well, as is his mom, who is taking a treatment drug, called Suboxone, a synthetic opioid, through the Addictions program at Meridian.

“What we have is a program that provides individual and group support,” says Hope Tomfohrde, regional supervisor at Meridian.

“We have groups and treatment that range anywhere from early intervention all the way up to our intensive outpatient program.”

For Chloe, it was a new world, a world where there was caring.



**HOME.** Chloe and Braxton in front of her apartment.

NEXT PAGE



**ROAD TO RECOVERY.** Chloe Mills in her after-care group meeting, with addictions counselor Steve Wells and fellow recovering addicts.



**JOYFUL SMILES.** Chloe Mills happy in her recovery.

“With everything I’d been through, I just wanted to be high so I didn’t have to feel,” Chloe says. “And now, I love feeling. I love waking up in the morning seeing my baby boy smiling.”

One person pleased with Chloe’s progress is her Meridian counselor, Steve Wells, Addictions Therapist, LCSW, CADAC.

“She’s done very well so far,” Wells says.

“After evaluation, we put her into our Addictions outpatient therapy group. The intention is to help her stay sober and also develop some long-term sobriety skills which she can use for the rest of her life.”

“I had heard a lot of great things about Meridian,” Chloe says. “There aren’t too many programs out there where people actually care.

“If it wasn’t for Meridian, I wouldn’t be sober. Period.”

Tomfohrde says that some on the outside still view addiction as a choice.

“A lot of people say, ‘Well, you just need to choose to have different behavior.’ The staff and I view at it very much from a disease model,” she says. “I really don’t believe that anyone would willingly do that to themselves. It’s like saying, ‘Buck up and get over your diabetes.’”

Chloe spent 18 days in the program, three days a week for six weeks, for three hours a day.

“She seemed very eager,” says Steve Wells. “Initially, I think she’d been through enough, especially with the impact on her son. She started to realize that she needed to get something done right away.”

Since graduating from the program, Chloe is doing well. She gives the credit to Meridian, Steve Wells, and the Suboxone treatments.



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**SHARING LOVE.** A special kiss from Chloe to Braxton during playtime.

"It (Suboxone) has helped me a lot, and I've actually started writing down goals, instead of just saying, I'm going to do this or I'm going to do that," she says, smiling.

"It's like the greatest feeling in the world. I actually feel now, whether it's hurt or it's anger or it's happiness.

"I would not take back anything, any experience, my drug use, anything that's ever happened to me. I'm a stronger and a better person because of it."

**PHOTO GALLERY:** To learn more about this program, browse a photo gallery at [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.

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PROGRAM PROFILE | **CONNXXIONS**

# Connxxions helps patients cope with life's difficulties

M

MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES' CONNXXIONS PROGRAM is designed for people with a dual diagnosis - both mental and developmental issues.

"Basically, we help people to build skills to understand themselves and understand how best to cope," says Deceil Moore, regional clinical manager at Meridian and the founder of the program. "That's part of the job that all of us have, right? Understanding how to meet our own needs. We are doing that for people of all ages who have both developmental challenges and mental health challenges."

The program was launched in Jay County in 1994. Today, it operates in 30 counties across Indiana, and serves more than 1,000 clients.

"Connxxions is something I am passionate about," Moore said. "It's a unique program. There are few resources available for this challenging population."

The youngest client in the program is 4 years old. The oldest is over 80. And the range of mental health issues represented cover the spectrum. Connxxions is about helping patients to see the world differently and to cope whenever the need arises. A 24-hour hotline for individuals who may be experiencing a behavioral or psychiatric emergency also is available.

"The hotline is 24/7 with specialized staff," Moore says. "People can call, and they will be talking to somebody within 30 minutes. And the professionals they're talking to want to help them."

Moore adds that the hotline is not only for people who have problems but also for the people around them. The hotline is to provide ideas to caregivers on how to handle the situation.

"We try to do what we can by phone," Moore adds, "but if we need to send somebody to someone's home at 2 a.m., we will do that."

The simplicity of Connxxions is to help those with a dual diagnosis to identify their thoughts and feelings and cope with them. When these individuals come up against a barrier in school, work



Moore





JIM

or home, it's not because they don't know what they are doing, says Moore.

"It's almost always because they have an emotional need that they don't know how to handle. Sometimes the best thing to do is to say, 'Wow, you seem scared. Come sit by me so we can talk about why you're scared.'"

Moore says she is "very honored" to be working with the Connxxions program at Meridian.

"My life has been enriched in so many ways. I know how to look at things differently and how to appreciate things. How do you replace that?"

**PHOTO GALLERY:** To learn more about this program, browse a photo gallery at [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.



Behavioral clinician Leslie Dailey works with Jizeal and her mother, Jessica.



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## Residential homes build bridge to independence

**“WELL, LOST, BUT IN A WAY, FOUND.”**

That’s how Andrew Hughes describes his feelings since moving into the Eber House, one of six Meridian Health Services residential group homes.

“I think it’s a blessing,” says Hughes, 32, who is diagnosed with a chronic mental illness. “I had my own apartment and I had food and everything, but there wasn’t any structure to it. I didn’t know how hard it was.”

Upon moving into Eber House in 2009, Hughes says things began to improve.

“When I finally got here, I actually started to relax,” Hughes adds, “because it wasn’t a daily routine by myself, every day, every night of my life.”

Tammy Dodson works at Eber House, supervising two Meridian group homes.

“We provide a safe, protected home for adults who have chronic mental illness,” Dodson explains. “We assist these individuals with daily living skills that they may have never learned. Our goal is to get them as independent as possible, to hopefully live independently.”

Skills that the residents need to acquire include cooking, managing schedules, maintaining finances, and keeping up with their daily medication.

“We’re here to teach and train them and get them to where they can manage their illness,” Dodson says.

The staff is there to help patients to function better

NEXT PAGE

**TEACHING  
MOMENTS.**  
Clients are  
educated  
on their  
medication.



Photos: TONY FREDERICK

# ‘found’





‘Some of my life experiences just kind of made me **ragged**, inside & outside. It’s important that I have a **place to go**. And this was definitely that place.’

- Army veteran Andrew Hughes suffers from schizophrenia and lives at the Eber House Group Home.

**FACT: 99.98% of the individuals who transition from Meridian group homes to independent living are successful.**



**GROWING INDEPENDENCE.** Andrew Hughes is able to leave the Eber House for three hours every day without supervision, providing opportunities to interact with others in the community.

in their everyday lives.

"We talk to them about the importance of medications. A lot of them can't tell you the medication they are taking, but they can tell you what will happen if they don't take it," Dodson said.

Patients like Hughes are grateful. He says, "It's good to be around people."

Dodson explained that group homes are an effective means to keep people out of the hospital. She says, "They still have acute moments, you know, but the longer we can keep them out of the hospital and going toward independence is a success."

Many residents can go on to live well on their own, with periodic checks by Meridian staff, who will contact them two or three times a week. Dodson, who has been with Meridian Health Services since 2005, is a Yorktown native. She is currently attending Indiana Wesleyan University finishing her degree. In 2014, she will enter IUPUI, where she will

pursue her master's degree in clinical psychology. Dodson has grown children of her own and a foster daughter. She also is a grandmother of a 2-year-old. She says she admires Meridian's vision: treating the whole person.

"In the mental health field, clients get single-tracked, one focus, one direction," Dodson says. "And people are just now coming to the realization that if you're a diabetic and you're having symptoms from your diabetes and you're struggling with that, that can affect your psychological and emotional well-being. People were not putting that together."

"The reason I came to Meridian was for a paycheck. The reason I stay is because of what we do."

Hughes is happy living in Eber House. "Some of my life experiences just kind of made me ragged, inside and outside. It's important that I have a place to go. And this was definitely that place."

**PHOTO GALLERY:** To learn more about this program, browse a photo gallery at [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.

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# FRANKIE and Katie

An unforgettable  
Meridian story of life  
& happy beginnings.

Photos: ADAM STURM

MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES ADVOCATES “WHOLE person health” – that is, caring for all aspects of a patient’s well being. Physically, mentally, socially, Meridian seeks to integrate health care.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of Francesca Maio, who prefers to be called Frankie.

Frankie, who is from Indianapolis, was visiting with her aunt, Kim Daum, who lives in Rushville and works in Meridian’s Rushville Clinic.





**SUPPORT TEAM.** Dr. Nykki Boersma, a family physician at the Meridian's Rushville clinic, holds Katie while her mother, Frankie, watches with a grateful smile.

Then 17, Frankie told Kim her secret: She was pregnant.

"My first thought was, 'I'm 17. I'm in no position to have a baby. I need to have an abortion,'" Frankie says. "So we set up an appointment, and I went in.

"Then I saw her on the screen, and I couldn't do it," she said referring to Katie, the infant daughter, whom she holds as she talks.

"I knew this would be the best place for her," Kim says, "not just because I work here, but because I believe in the providers and their dedication and the love and support we show our patients every day. I knew that she would love it here."

Along with medical and prenatal care, Frankie also received counseling.

"I didn't know that they did therapy, which is something I didn't think I needed," she says. "But once I started it, I realized I really did need to talk to somebody. I needed to vent. I needed to get things out, because having a baby at 17, 18 is really hard."

Dr. Sarfraz Khan, Medical Director and Vice President of Medical Affairs for Meridian Health Services, heads up the MeridianMD program. To him, the story serves as evidence of its effectiveness.

"Once the medical community started to become specialized, we started providing better care but in the midst of the change, we lost the human touch. At Meridian, we're bringing that back."

Frankie was ready to place her unborn child up for adoption. That is, until she met the staff at Meridian Health Services.

"Without the care here and the people here, I probably wouldn't have kept her," Frankie says. "Honestly, they're the main reason I did. And I'm very thankful for that, because she is everything to me."

Frankie credits the Meridian staff with helping her get through her pregnancy.

"I received so much care here at Meridian," she adds. "All my prenatal was done here. And even though I didn't come until I was five

NEXT PAGE

Frankie was ready to place her unborn child up for adoption. That is, until she met the staff at Meridian Health Services.



A HEALTHY SUCCESS STORY. New mother Frankie Maio and her daughter, Katie, have been beneficiaries of Meridian Health Services' clinic care.

“It’s just the spirit of this clinic. The nurses and staff take people in and make sure they have the things they need.”

- Dr. Nykki Boersma



LOTS OF LOVE. Frankie’s aunt, Kim Daum, entertains young Katie.

**VIDEO:** To learn more about this program, watch a video and browse a photo gallery, go to [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.

months along, they took care of me. They got everything done in a great time. After Katie was born, I brought her here for pediatric care.”

That’s just how Dr. Nykki Boersma would have it. A family physician at the Rushville clinic, Dr. Boersma, who has delivered 112 babies in her 3 1/2 years with Meridian, says she entered medicine specifically to provide that quality of care.

“It’s actually, from my perspective, what family medicine is supposed to be about,” Dr. Boersma says.

“I take care of pregnant women. I see their babies. I see them grow up. I continue to take care of the family throughout their life span,” she said.

Dr. Boersma and the rest of the team have “adopted” Frankie and Katie.

“Frankie came frightened, not quite sure of what she was going to do,” Boersma said. “And it’s just the spirit of this clinic. The nurses and staff take people in and make sure they have the things they need.

“And we have just all fallen in love with Frankie, which is an easy thing to do, and with Katie, it is even easier.”

When people love what they do, they change the world. Just ask Frankie.



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# Three Dog Night

During Rialzo IV, three more lucky puppies will be auctioned, joining this growing alumni.



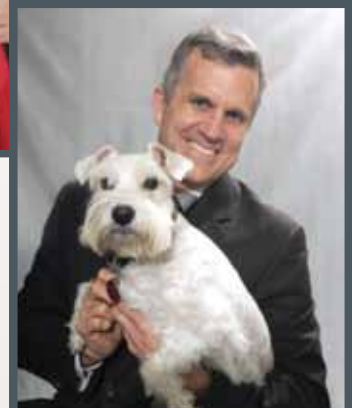


## RIALZO PUPPIES & THEIR PEOPLE



Oullie and  
Fred Reese

Winston and  
Scott Smalstig



Scout and  
Kathy Rapkin



Stevie and  
Kim Miller



Bella and  
Charlie Sursa



Photos: KYLE EVENS

TWO BLACK LABS, ONE MINIATURE SCHNAUZER, AND A Labradoodle tugged at their leashes and dragged their owners one recent crisp winter afternoon. They ran. They played. They posed for pictures. Each are pedigreed, in tip-top shape. These are the puppies of Rialzo.

If it isn't their lineage that makes these dogs special, it is their people, the ones who believe profoundly in Meridian Health Services. It's their people who are Meridian devotees. Every year since 2010, Rialzo fans have been bidding on dogs and betting that they can make a difference. The payoff: Community-wide awareness regarding whole-person health.

Labradors from the same litter, sisters Bella and Scout, were the first Rialzo dogs auctioned in 2010. Bella won Charlie and Claudia Sursa. Scout went to Kathy and Dr. Jeff Rapkin, who that year had boarded the labs until the auction. In 2011, Winston, the Miniature Schnauzer, won the hearts of Tara and Scott Smalstig, and last year, a Labradoodle went to Kim and Greg Miller, who named her Stevie.

It turns out Kim is a die-hard Fleetwood Mac fan and couldn't resist creating a namesake for lead singer Stevie Nicks.

"She gives kisses on command," said Kim Miller, as she cradled all 50 pounds of her nearly one-year-old puppy as though she were a lap dog.


All Rialzo owners say they had no plans to buy a dog when they showed up to the area's biggest charity event of the year. "You don't plan these things," said Charlie Sursa. "I was across the room when someone said, 'your wife's bidding on the puppy.'" By the time Sursa made it across the dance floor, it was all but over.

This story isn't complete without mention of the honorary Rialzo dog called "Oullie" (pronounced like Julie with the "j" silent). One of Rialzo's most tireless volunteers, Fred Reese, agreed to board the 2011 Rialzo pup until the auction that evening in May. He and Fred were together three weeks. What Fred did not count on was the connection he made with Winston. When the Smalstigs outbid him, Fred was admittedly grief stricken. Even he was surprised by his reaction.

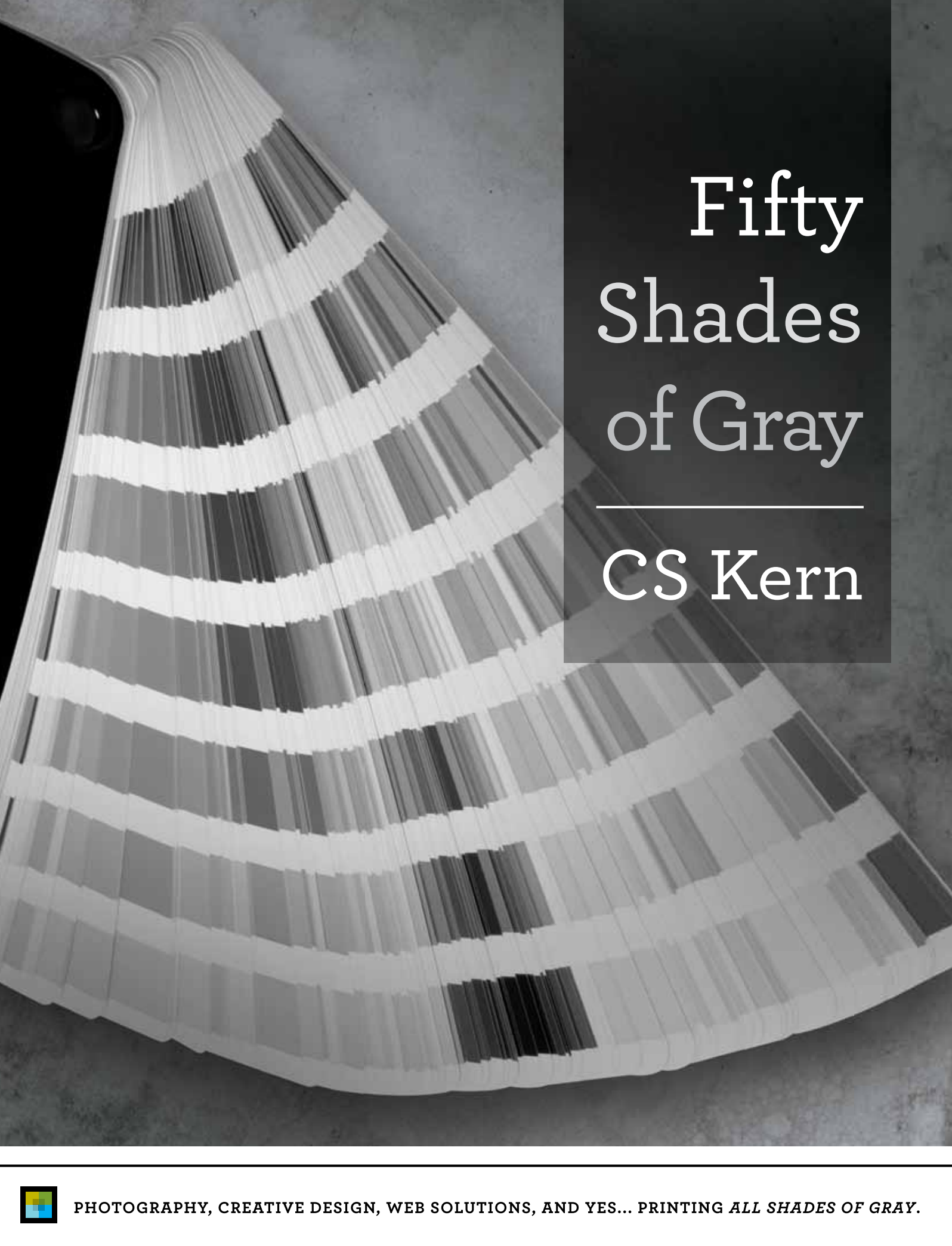
"I was in such a state," Fred explained. The next morning, a seven-pound mix breed ARF dog, was brought to his home. "His full name is Reese Raoulo Reese or Oullie for short, which is what my cousins called my mother." He goes everywhere with Reese and both have visitation rights to see Winston.

In honor of this year's musical group - the legendary Three Dog Night - Rialzo IV will have three puppies to auction.

Rapkin, who works for Meridian and whose job it is to find the puppies, gives fair warning:

Come prepared to fall in love. 

**VIDEO:** For a behind-the-scenes glimpse at the Rialzo dogs and their people, go to [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.



# Fifty Shades of Gray

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“Meridian just fit what we were looking for. They passed the test for us. They’re local, doing great work and growing.”

- Steve Thompson

# Meridian is right fit for the Thompson family



STEVE AND CARRIE THOMPSON ARE IN A GOOD place in life.

He’s a licensed pilot whose job at Muncie Aviation is to sell airplanes. He’s a three-time national motorcycle road racing champion and a hunting enthusiast. Carrie, a Purdue engineering graduate, runs the family residential and commercial real estate businesses, Bobcat Real Estate and Bobcat Properties. Nine-year-old daughter, Bailey, a third-grader at Royerton Elementary School, is never far from their side.

The family doesn’t take what they have for granted and acknowledge that philanthropy for families like theirs is a responsibility to be taken seriously. Like most people, the Thompsons are discreet about to whom or what they give their money. But the Thompsons gladly acknowledge that Meridian Health Services is a charity of choice for them because of what it does and what it strives to be.

“We were to the place where we knew that we wanted to support charities,” Steve said. “We have the ability to do that. Meridian just fit what we were looking for. They passed the test for us. They’re local, doing great work and growing. They care about the community and they treat their employees right.”

The Thompsons used to give like many others do.

“At first we gave without a plan. It’s easy to just say we’ll give them a little bit and walk away but it’s not very responsible,” Steve said. “For us, we feel a responsibility to police what we support.”

The Thompsons also wanted an organization that would provide them opportunities to volunteer when they reach that point in life. “We would lose interest pretty quickly if we gave to organizations that didn’t make sense for us to be a part of.”

Meridian’s depth of work with abused and neglected children, homelessness and housing for those with mental and behavioral needs, as well as foster-parenting programs and work in addictions all struck the right chord for the Thompsons. Steve and Carrie have been licensed foster parents in the past.

“We wanted to know that there would be something we could plug into

later when we’re able to do that,” Steve said.

The Thompsons returned to Steve’s hometown in 2005 after being away several years. His father, Mike Thompson, was the corporate pilot for Ontario Corporation for 30 years. His mother, Pat Thompson, was a fourth-grade teacher at DeSoto Elementary School until she retired. Carrie grew up in Cincinnati and her mom and dad and sisters are still there. Together, they’ve built a comfortable life on Muncie’s northeast side. On this morning, they were just weeks before motorcycle road racing season started.

“What I get out of motorcycle racing is very different from what Steve gets out of it,” Carrie said. “It’s a great family hobby. We go to different tracks, camp as a family, enjoy good food and friends,” she said.

Steve’s the racer.

“I like the whole thing,” he said. “I like building the motorcycles. Racing them; all of it,” he said. “I like going fast and racing, but winning isn’t that important to me.”


What is important for Steve and Carrie Thompson is giving back and doing it in a way that makes sense to their family. The real winner is Meridian Health Services. 

Photo: MARIA STRAUSS

GIVING FAMILY.  
Carrie, Bailey and  
Steve Thompson.





## [ PARTNER PROFILE: FIRST MERCHANTS ]

# Outreach produces healing

COMMUNITY PARTNERS LIKE MERIDIAN Health Services are an easy call for First Merchants, the largest financial services holding company in Central Indiana.

Both organizations believe in public service and make it a priority in the corporate culture and encourage employees to find ways to make a difference, too.

As part of an outreach program called “Wheeling for Healing,” Meridian employees helped assemble “Behavioral Clinician Care Kits” that are designed to give tools to front-line staff to better connect them with clients in the field.

The kit is a suitcase on wheels filled with therapeutic tools, skill-building puzzles, games and ice-breakers, and other educational materials for families. The 150 kits cost \$30,000 and were made possible by Rialzo proceeds and First Merchants’ presenting sponsorship.



Last year, Meridian provided programs and services to more than 5,000 children.



*KIM MORRIS, MIDDAYS  
STEVE LINDELL, WAKE UP CREW*

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[ **FACT:** There are more than 105,000 people with multiple and profound disabilities working nationwide. ]

PROGRAM PROFILE | **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

# New abilities lead to independence

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Supported Employment, as it is called, is actual paid work experience for people who have severe disabilities and a demonstrated inability to gain and maintain traditional employment.

## BE INVOLVED

If you or someone you know owns or works for a company who would like to hire some incredible people, we encourage you to take a look at Meridian's supported employment program. These individuals are motivated. With your help, they regain their independence and you get a quality, hard-working ambassador for your company. Contact Susan Buckingham at 765-288-1928 for more information.

**T**YLER HILL NEEDED A JOB, SO IN MANY ways his story was no different than that of any other young person looking for work.

Except Tyler Hill is deaf.

The 23-year-old New Castle native had lived at the School for the Deaf during his teen years. Now older, he wanted to get a job. But he had no experience. That's where Meridian Health Services came in, with training and counseling that helped Tyler.

"Before I found a job, I tried to go to college, but that didn't work out," says Tyler through interpreter Susan Howell. "So I decided it would be better for me to get a job."

After searching for agencies that might be able to help, Tyler turned to Meridian.

"My goal was to find a job so I could have a better life and take care of myself," he says. "And I found this, and it has been helpful."

Supported Employment, as it is called, is actual paid work experience for people who have severe disabilities and a demonstrated inability to gain and maintain traditional employment. Before 1986, there were few opportunities for the disabled to find and keep a job. Today, according to one study, there are more than 105,000 people with multiple and profound disabilities working nationwide. The obstacle is not getting a job, says Susan Buckingham, who supervises the supportive employment program. It's keeping it.

"Communication is the key," Buckingham says. "The worker and the employer have to communicate well. Otherwise, there can be problems. Sometimes, the employer may be scared to death of hiring a person with a disability, because they don't think they know anyone with a disability, although there are a lot of people with disabilities."

One of the services at Meridian that helped Tyler was counseling.

"The counseling and the supported employment really improved my life," Tyler says. "It's made things a lot better. For example, I could share my personal problems with the counselor, and she



Photo: TIM UNDERHILL

**HAPPILY EMPLOYED.** Tyler Hill gained independence through Supported Employment services.

would give me some advice on how I could help that and how I could improve my life and make that better."

Tyler's job coach stepped in to assist when Tyler found a job opening. "So the job coach talked to the restaurant and said, you know, 'Do you have new vacancies? How would you feel about this? Would you do an interview?'"

"And so she helped me set up the interview and things like that, and it went well. Red Lobster hired me, and it has been good ever since."

Tyler says he benefited from the care Meridian Health Services provided him through vocational counselor Kathy Maynard.

"She's very friendly, very flexible," Tyler says. "It's easy for her to understand me, and it was very easy for me to get along with her."

Tyler says his next goal might possibly be college, to study psychology.

"I like to help people when they're going through a hard time," he says. "I've had hard times in the past, too, so I understand."

For now, though, he's concentrating on his job and maintaining communication with his co-workers.

"I feel that they really respect me and enjoy working with me, and I enjoy working with them," he says. "My life's a lot better now than before, for sure."



## PARTNER PROFILE: IVY TECH

# Ivy Tech delivers job talent

JACKIE SIEFKER CONSIDERS HERSELF pretty lucky. Her job is to help her students find jobs and often she's placing her students with Meridian Health Services.

Ironically, it was not that long ago she herself was working for Meridian Health Services in a crisis program.

"It was rough job, but I am so thankful to have had that experience," she says. "There is no doubt that the hands-on 24-hour on-call environment, working with folks, not just individuals in crisis but the their caretakers and programs that support them - all of it - have made me a better teacher and a better person."

Today, Jackie is assistant professor and internship coordinator in the school of Public and Social Services at Ivy Tech Community College. Meridian Health Services employs 700 people serving 26 counties in Indiana. "I help students decide what kind of experience they want to have,



**Jackie Siefker**

and I point them in the right direction," she said. "But it is the student who makes the call and applies for the job."

Jackie says 40 percent of Ivy Tech's students go on to get a Bachelor of Science degree and go into social work, making them good job candidates for Meridian Health Services.

The talent pipeline that Ivy Tech fills for Meridian Health Services has created a strong partnership and a lasting relationship among countless individuals.

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**[ FACT: There are 6,000 children currently in foster care, but only 5,000 available homes. ]**



PROGRAM PROFILE | **FOSTERHOPE**

# FosterHope

leads to a family reunited

FosterHope parents Sherry and Joe Saunders.

**KYLE WIRE, AN AUTISTIC TEEN, WAS DEALING WITH** challenging issues. He lived with his divorced mother, who at one point entered a nursing home due to illness.

What would happen to Kyle?

Kyle's older sister briefly took him in, but that ended in disagreement. Kyle's father worked in Michigan, so that was not an option. Kyle had been a Meridian Health Services' Connxxions client, and in this difficult situation, Meridian would help Kyle once again.

Through Meridian's FosterHope program, Kyle would temporarily live with a special foster family.

Sherry and Joe Saunders were drawn to children with special needs. Kyle was the first child FosterHope placed with the couple. "I can't say it was easy," Sherry said of dealing with Kyle's anger issues.

Then came a turning point. Joe and Sherry took in two younger children to adopt. Mostly on his own, Kyle began monitoring his own behavior, for the sake of the young ones.

"Living with the Saunders family, in my opinion, has been wonderful for Kyle," said Amy Neff, Kyle's therapist through FosterHope. "They provided the structure, love and nurturing he really needed."


Kyle's mother, Kelli, agreed: "Kyle seems more mature. He doesn't seem to get as upset or angry."

Kelli credits Amy Neff, Michelle Keller and others with FosterHope for the change.

"While I was trying to regain my health, the one thing I didn't feel like I had to worry about was Kyle. I knew that he was being taken care of," Kelli said.

In May 2012, Kyle reunited with his now-recovered mom and his dad, Mark, who had returned home.

"I would recommend Meridian Health Services because they have talented individuals who are very dedicated," said Mark.

FosterHope is a special program that can truly make a difference in the life of a child with special needs. 



Photos: ADAM STURM

**REUNITED.** Kyle Wire lived with a couple through Meridian's FosterHope program until he could be reunited with his family.

## BE INVOLVED

There are children with needs throughout the community who need special parents. If you or someone you know would like more information about becoming a FosterHope parent, call Brandon Golder at 765-288-1928 or email him at [brandon.golder@meridianhs.org](mailto:brandon.golder@meridianhs.org)

**PHOTO GALLERY:** To learn more about this program, browse a photo gallery at [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.



## PARTNER PROFILE: VERALLIA

# Kool and the Gang slept here

FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T HAD THE pleasure, a stay at the Verallia Guest House is a peek into the past. Stately. Classic. Historic.

But on Rialzo night, it is a respite before and after for the featured performers. Kool and the Gang slept here. So did the 5th Dimension and the Pointer Sisters. And this year, so will Three Dog Night. Opening this historic home, this place that holds so much meaning to Muncie, is but one way that Verallia supports Meridian Health Services.

The Verallia Guest House was the home built by William C. Ball in 1897, and he resided there with his wife, Emma, and son, William Hudson. They named their home "Maplewood." But even this visionary and philanthropic family couldn't have imagined using the home for a 'home away from home' for some the country's musical icons.

The idea for the use of the facility bubbled up in Rialzo committee meetings as members brainstormed ways to cut event costs and funnel more money to Meridian programs.



Enter Joseph Grewe, President and CEO of Verallia North America.

"We could see that Meridian was leading the way for a great community event, benefitting their programs as well as some of our best friends in the community, the arts partners," Grewe said. "How could we say no?"

This year, for the fourth time, Verallia was able to accommodate the Rialzo date and give the band with 21 Top 40 hits a dose of Muncie chart-topping hospitality.



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# PARTNER PROFILE: DENNIS WENGER & ABRELL

## A committed community team

THE ATTORNEYS AT DENNIS Wenger & Abrell have a reputation for being committed, thorough, tenacious and hard working.

They are people you want on your side. Even local nonprofit organizations know the value of having DWA attorneys fight for their causes.

Since the firm's founding in 1980 by Ralph Dennis and Fred Wenger, volunteerism and community service has been an integral part of the firm's culture.

"We don't like to be just 'involved' in the community. We're committed," says Jennifer Abrell, managing partner for the firm. "If we're in, we will do our very best for your organization, just as we do our best for our clients. We just don't know how to do it any other way," Abrell says.

Senior partner, Ralph Dennis, who has practiced law for more than 50 years, has set the standard for the firm, having served on countless nonprofit boards and committees including the Muncie Community School Board.

Following his footsteps, Abrell has served on numerous boards, including the Muncie School Board, the Muncie-Delaware County Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Delaware County.

In 2011, Tom Malapit, partner, was one of the 100 Men Who Cook and was a winner at the Big Brothers, Big Sisters "Dancing with the Stars" event in 2011.

Tara Smalstig, partner, has served as chair of the boards of

the Chamber of Commerce, Cornerstone Center for the Arts, and currently the YMCA.

David Karnes, partner, serves on the United Way Board and is active in leadership at Grace Baptist Church. He also is the past president of the Hillcroft Services Board.

Senior Associate Mark McKinney currently serves on the boards of the United Way, Boys and Girls Club, and Delaware County Child Abuse Prevention Council.

Michael Foley, associate, just completed the Academy for Community Leadership.

Meridian Health Services is no exception to this philosophy

of commitment from DWA. Nearly every attorney in the firm is involved in doing legal work for Meridian. As a result, they are aware of the impact Meridian has had on the communities it serves.

"More people need to make Meridian a charity of choice," says Mark McKinney, former Delaware County prosecutor. McKinney has known Meridian since the inception of the Child Advocacy Center (CAC), which assists victims of child abuse and neglect. "When this community

needed a leader in developing the CAC, Meridian stepped up and now our community is safer for our children," he added.

Everyone at Dennis Wenger & Abrell, a premier sponsor of the Rialzo Gala since its inception, enjoys the partnership with Meridian.

"We love being a part of Rialzo," said Karnes, "because we feel the rest of the community is just starting to get to know what we've known all along: Meridian is a key player in the health and well-being of all of East Central Indiana."



Jennifer Abrell and Tom Malapit with The 5th Dimension at the first Rialzo in 2010.



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## PARTNER PROFILE: INDIANA MICHIGAN POWER

# Dependable, caring partners

WHEN JIM RIGGLE, MANAGER OF Community Relations for Indiana Michigan Power, considers supporting an organization, he first looks at its community impact.

“Meridian Health Services is such a well-run organization and it encompasses a large portion of the same communities we serve,” Riggle said. “We have that in common.”

The company started its support of Rialzo at the very beginning in 2010. It was “AEP Lights Up the Red Carpet.” Since then, the company has expanded its support to become a premiere sponsor.

“Indiana Michigan Power Company has been a tremendous partner of many community events and we consider ourselves lucky to be on the list,” says Scott Smalstig, Vice President for Fund Development for Meridian. “Without them, these kinds of events just don’t happen.”

Along with wife, Melissa, Jim has become a constant in



*Melissa and Jim Riggle*

Muncie. He’s everywhere you turn. He’s a former Chairman of the Board of the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce and a tireless volunteer for innumerable organizations.

Like the electricity that powers the Rialzo event, Jim and Melissa are dependable partners, always ready, always willing always available to be there when you need them.

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# PARTNER PROFILE: MUNCIE POWER PRODUCTS

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Products is visible everywhere—from its headquarters building downtown, the distribution facility on Pershing Drive to the Shafer Bell Tower on the Ball State campus.

But, its real legacy lives in the values handed down by founders Hamer and Phyllis Shafer. Values like integrity, hard work and taking care of employees. It's the latter of these values that initially attracted Muncie Power and Meridian to one another. As Muncie Power Products CEO Ray Chambers and Charlie Sursa, Chair of Meridian's Fund Development Committee, discussed Muncie Power's potential involvement in Rialzo last year, Chambers shared story after story of the Shafers and their love of their people.

Sursa took notice and asked Chambers to consider sponsoring its "Spirit of Meridian" awards, which recognize Meridian's employee of the year, and a community citizen who embodies above and beyond effort and leadership.



**Ray Chambers, CEO**

"It was a natural tie for us and great way for us to get started," said Chambers. "And this year, we're proud to be even more involved in such a solid community event."

Since 1935, Muncie Power Products has given back to this community. Words like strength, competence, generosity and trust come to mind. The company's primary objective – dominate the industry with the best products and service.

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**D**r. Saber Bahrami is a remarkable man.  
Just ask anyone who knows him.

Born in Afghanistan, his youth was spent in abject poverty.

He was the only one of his mother's children to survive infancy.

PAGE 62



**SINCERE.** Dr. Saber Bahrami comforts patient Doris. Bahrami is the 2013 Spirit of Meridian Community winner.

**Photos:**  
**MARIA STRAUSS**

# Spirit of Meridian



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**GIVING TO OTHERS.** Bibi Bahrami and her husband, Dr. Saber Bahrami, formed an organization called AWAKEN to help women and children in Afghanistan.

His widowed mother and her brother somehow orchestrated an education for Dr. Bahrami. Once in high school, he eagerly participated in a youth exchange program, spending a year in Missouri.

It was during this time in his life that he managed to get some paid work and, as the story goes, he did not spend even a penny. Instead, he sent it all home to his mother and uncle to help support them.

These kinds of selfless acts would become Dr. Bahrami's trademark stamp as a physician, philanthropist and friend. He is the 2013 Spirit of Meridian Community winner.

After his high school exchange experience, Dr. Bahrami

returned to Afghanistan and by 1980, despite great turmoil in his country, he completed medical school. But Dr. Bahrami's personal hardships were far from over. It is around this time that he was imprisoned by the Russians for practicing his religion.

His wife, Bibi, tells the story that someone of influence wrote a letter on his behalf, which helped him get released from prison. However, he soon learned that it was likely that he would be arrested again, so he fled the country.

Living as a refugee in Pakistan, Dr. Bahrami met Bibi, where her family, too, had fled.

Dr. Bahrami came to the U.S. to further his medical education, then to Muncie in 1986 to begin his residency in family practice medicine at what is now IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Jeff Bird, Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of Operations for IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital, has known Dr. Bahrami since early in his own residency.



Dr. Bird

"He was one year in front of me," Dr. Bird recalled. "We developed a close relationship. He was one of my teachers and mentors. He always has played an important part in my life."

It was the team at the Geriatric Psychiatric Hospital, a collaborative effort between Meridian Health Services, and IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital, who nominated Dr. Bahrami for the Meridian Spirit Award.

"Saber is one of those family physicians that has that keen knack about him to connect with patients," Dr. Bird said.

"He is absolutely one of the most genuine people I've ever met in my life," he said. "Patients are continually reassured by the care that he provides. It's easy to understand how he feels about



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# “The spirit of Meridian is the spirit of Dr. Bahrami.”

- Dr. Jeff Bird

you. You can feel the compassion he has for patient care.”

Dr. Steve L. Rousseau, a colleague at American Health Network, agreed.

“Dr. Bahrami has had a profound impact on me both personally and professionally. His valued advise on personal issues such as how to deal with growing children to his consistent support and encouragement professionally have meant the world to me. His input was invaluable and greatly influenced the coming and progress of AHN in our community.”

To Dr. Bird, it makes perfect sense for Dr. Bahrami to receive this year’s honor.

“I think the whole philosophy of how Meridian treats their patients is perfectly congruent to what Dr. Bahrami and his practice is all about,” Dr. Bird said. “It’s that mind, body, spirit . . . treating the whole person. The spirit of Meridian is the spirit of Dr. Bahrami.”

Gary Garofolo, Meridian’s Director of Systems Services, is a longtime friend and colleague. He, too, remembers the early years in residency.

“He approached learning about psychiatry with incredible enthusiasm,” Garofolo said. “I remember that it seemed as though he could not learn enough fast enough, as though he



Dr. Rousseau

had to take advantage of every minute so as not to squander the opportunity.

“I know today that this was not only because he cares about the mental health needs of others, but also because he had learned to cherish every opportunity that had come his way, often through the sacrifice for others.”

In 2002, Garofolo and the Bahramis formed a nonprofit organization called the Afghan Women and Kids Education and Necessities, Inc. or AWAKEN.

In the last decade, they’ve built a school, provided vocational and literacy education to women in nine different villages, and built a health clinic. To learn more about AWAKEN, go to the website: [www.awakeninc.org](http://www.awakeninc.org)

“I now clearly understand how this is paying back a debt to all of those who provided loving care and support to both of them,” Garofolo wrote in a tribute to Dr. Bahrami. “By being benevolent, accepting, and respectful of others in spite of our diversity, and helping others recognize that despite the ugliness and adversity in this world, there is also a great deal of beauty, dignity and joy to be shared.”



Garofolo

**VIDEO:** To learn more about this program, watch a video and browse a photo gallery, go to [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.

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[ FACT: Half of those who live with HIV don't know they have it. ]

PROGRAM PROFILE | HIV CARE COORDINATION

# Helping those who live with HIV

**T**O TRIS REHFUS, THE AMOUNT of misinformation about HIV, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is troubling.

Rehfus is a social worker and supervisor of the HIV Care Coordination program, a medical program at Meridian Health Services, with patients in Delaware, Blackford, Grant, Jay, and Randolph counties.

Rehfus educates clients, their friends and family, and the public about HIV, especially its dramatic rise among young people, age 18-26.

"There is still quite a bit of ignorance about how HIV is contracted," Rehfus says. "That's one of the things we battle on a regular basis."

It's regrettable, too, Rehfus adds, because these days, there is an upside in the fight.

"Just because you have HIV doesn't mean you're going to die. The survival

rate for folks who have HIV is a lot better than it was 20 years ago."

In Indiana, that means 149 HIV deaths in 2010 out of a total of about 10,000 diagnosed. Still staggering is this statistic: half of all people who have HIV don't know they have it.


In the program, those living with HIV gain access to group of health and social services, including information about medical services and insurance, housing and utility assistance, testing information, support groups, counseling services, legal referrals, and advocacy, as well as an individualized plan of care for each client.

"It's a misunderstood group that needs care and help," says Dr. Sarfraz Khan, Medical Director and Vice President of Medical Services at Meridian Health Services.

Services are provided in the home,



HIV TEAM, from left: Randy Lykens, Tris Rehfus and Melody Waggoner assist clients across Central Indiana.

community, or office. The program respects cultural diversity, emphasizes confidentiality, and strives to ensure the client's freedom of choice and self-determination. Services provided through the program are free. For information, call Meridian Health Services at (800) 333-2647, or the Indiana State Department of Health at (866) 588-4948, option 2. 

A large advertisement for WEEK-FM 104.9. The top half features the station's logo in large, stylized blue and orange letters. Below the logo is a black and white photograph of a group of six people, likely a band or a group of performers, standing together. The bottom half of the ad contains the text "WEEK-FM proudly supports Meridian Health Services!" in large, bold, blue letters with a white outline.





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GATHERING PLACE.  
William Hickman II  
enjoys a cup of coffee  
as he talks to a friend  
at the Drop-In Center,  
which offers a place  
to relax, get a cup  
of coffee and talk to  
someone.

Photos: CHRIS BERGIN

# SO MUCH MORE THAN A safe place



## Meridian program creates path for the homeless

**D**AVID EMEL COMES TO THE DROP-IN CENTER EVERY morning. Five days a week. He's a regular. He's 53.

"How can I put this," he says, searching for the right words. "I have a kind of anger disorder. I like coming here. I can talk it out with any one of them."

David participates in Meridian Health Services' PATH project, (Project Assistance for Transitioning out of Homelessness), which prepares a way for the homeless to maintain and find a home for themselves. Without the service, he's likely to be on the street fending for himself.

"When I moved into my apartment, Meridian helped to secure my first month's rent," he said. "It was pretty nice. They've been there for me. If they can help me, they can help anyone."

"We really try to provide whatever they need," said Susan Buckingham, supervisor of homeless and vocational services.

Meridian's Drop-In Center is located in the basement of the former St. Lawrence Catholic School at 900 E. Charles St. and is open 9 to 11 a.m. Monday through Friday. The soup kitchen next door makes it convenient for clients who want a hot meal.

It's a noisy place most mornings - a sure sign the program is at work in the lives of the men and women who seek it out. Friends are reconnecting. Some are watching a movie; others are talking to Meridian Health Service staff, working out the challenges they face on this brisk January morning.

"It's a busy place. We have 50 to 100 people a day go through here," Buckingham said. "They get breakfast, or popcorn, or use the telephone or read the newspaper. We try to provide services we know they need."

Once a month, clients can get a free haircut. "It's



**TALKING IT OUT.** David Emel laughs as he drinks a cup of coffee at the Drop-In Center.

NEXT PAGE

[ FACT: The national average age of death of a homeless person is between 42 and 52 years. ]



REACHING OUT. Danielle Rupsis, the Homeless Outreach Coordinator, talks to a client at the Drop-In Center.

important that you look your best if you're going on a job interview so we provide that."

Danielle Rupsis is the homeless outreach coordinator for Meridian Health Services. She starts her day at the Drop-In Center each morning.

"Today is a giveaway day," she says. "All the time Meridian staff members donate things to us to help these people in need." It means much-needed blankets, clothing, even pots and pans are available for them.

"This is a place to warm up, to hang out," Rupsis said. "It's a safe place. A lot of people with mental illnesses are homeless. We connect them with the resources they need. We smile. We care. We listen. We're just here for them."

**VIDEO:** To learn more about this program, watch a video and browse a photo gallery at [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) and on our Facebook page.

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# Following the advice of counsel

## Services concentrate on 'whole person' components

**W**HOLE PERSON HEALTH MEANS being able to treat the physical, mental and social well-being of an individual. In Indiana, Meridian Health Services provides it all.

"That's one of the greatest benefits for us as a health care organization. We have diverse programs that meet all aspects of health," says Hope Tomfohrde, Regional Manager of Meridian Health Services.

"I have a little bit bigger staff. We're going to do our best to provide the right professional services to meet your needs."

Going to Meridian Health Services is easier than ever. Along with the introduction of Meridian's "whole person health" mandate come unexpected bonuses. The severely mentally ill receive

**FACT:** Meridian offers individual, group, couples and family counseling.

treatment for medical conditions that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Types of counseling include those specifically for common issues such as relationship problems, or issues with children's behavior, phobias, marital conflicts, grief, depression, anxiety and stress disorders, and anger management.

"We have individual counseling, group counseling, couples counseling, family counseling," says Tomfohrde.

"And I would say that the majority of the people who we see have a mix of depression and anxiety. That's fairly

typical, as those are the most common."

Meridian also has the expertise to treat severe, persistent mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia.

Many members of the staff are encouraged to study a branch of mental illness that they might specialize in.

"We've tried to create a broad array of services and, so that I have somebody on staff that can work well with just about anybody that comes through the door," Tomfohrde says.

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Photos: TIM UNDERHILL

PROGRAM PROFILE | **GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES**

## Geriatric services bring clarity to care decisions



ADA

MERIDIAN'S GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES program - a collaborative project with IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital - is only a few years old, but already has made a difference.

Its goal is to work with seniors who live with a psychiatric illness – dementia, Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression – so that they may return home, whether it is to a private home or an assisted living center. Psychiatrists, physicians, social workers, nurses, therapists, family care givers, all work together toward this goal.

"Geriatric specialty inpatient units are something that over the past 20 years or so have been growing," says Dr. Sarfraz Khan, Medical Director and Vice President of Medical Affairs.

NEXT PAGE

**FACT: Meridian's geriatric team includes physicians, nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, therapists and care givers.**



Greg Johnson talks with Marjoire.

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Why is psychiatric treatment for seniors needed? For one reason, people are living longer, and such problems have more time to develop.

“Seniors who need inpatient psychiatric services have more specialized needs,” Dr. Khan adds. “They often have more medical problems, and, as you know, Meridian believes in whole-person health.”



Dr. Khan

Services under the program include:

- Complete medical, psychiatric and social evaluations
- Group, individual and family therapy
- Medication evaluation and adjustment
- Medical care and monitoring
- Skill development
- 24-hour nursing care within a hospital environment

Participation of the patient’s family is strongly encouraged, and family members receive education regarding the patient’s specific condition and needs.

Kevin Knott, a social worker for Meridian, works on the geriatric psych unit of IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital.

“Part of my work,” Knott says, “is to connect with those entities outside the hospital, which may be assisted living, may be nursing homes, and to work with them and the family and the patient to help move that patient on to the next level of care that they need, that’s going to help them sustain a balance in their life.”



Knott

Knott works closely with Dr. Meghana Bhat at the geriatric psychiatric hospital.

“I see a patient, do an initial evaluation, provide further care, what is needed following the evaluation, come up with a treatment plan, do medication management for them while they’re here.”

Dr. Bhat says although she has been with Meridian for about a year, she has been impressed with what she has seen.

“The all-around care for the patients while they are here is what is very impressive,” Dr. Bhat says. “As a psychiatrist, I am providing medication management for the patient. We have a very well-trained and caring therapist here, which is a part of the treatment for these patients.

“The combination of therapy plus medication management for these folks does help. That’s one of the positive sides I have seen.”

Those who work with Meridian Health Services on the psychiatric care of seniors are impressed with the people at Meridian.

NEXT PAGE

## GERIATRIC SERVICES

- Complete medical, psychiatric and social evaluations
- Group, individual and family therapy
- Medication evaluation and adjustment
- Medical care and monitoring
- Skill development
- 24-hour nursing care within a hospital environment

## ELITE IS PROUD TO SUPPORT MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

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I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy.  
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I served and I saw that service is joy.

— Kahlil Gibran



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“Their approach in working with our residents is excellent. We’ve seen nothing but benefit come from the association with Meridian.”

- Dee Harrold

“I think when Meridian comes into our facility, the professionalism that they bring with them is certainly appreciated on this end,” says Dee Harrold, Executive Director of Kindred Transitional Care and Rehabilitation in Muncie.

“And I think their approach in working with our residents is excellent. They seem to understand how to reach out to those residents, and we’ve seen nothing but benefit come from the association with Meridian.”

“They improve (the patients’) quality of life,” Crystal Mendez, a Kindred social worker, says of the staff at Meridian.

“They make sure they’re comfortable, whether it’s a medication adjustment to their medical health vs. their mental health, they look at everything as a wide perspective and then recommend changes which benefits them in the long run.”

“I will say definitely that one of the things that I really appreciate about Kevin Knott is he truly cares about the whole person,” says Dianne Hovermale, Kindred’s clinical liaison.

“Obviously he’s very concerned with their well-being but also very concerned that individuals receive the whole-person care that they need. His heart is truly in serving others.”

Knott says the experience of helping seniors with psychiatric problems is satisfying.

“There is a huge amount of satisfaction, not just for me, but in this field and the people who work in it,” Knott says.

Dr. Bhat agreed. “There are a lot of patients who are very



A WORKING TEAM. Dr. Meghana Bhat works closely with social workers on the geriatric psych unit.

satisfied with the care that we provide here. And some of the families that I have worked with, they have mentioned to me several times, ‘Next time something happens, I want my dad to be here,’ or ‘I want my mom to be here.’”

**VIDEO:** To learn more about this program, watch a video and browse a photo gallery, go to [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) or visit our Facebook page.

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# RETRO

MERIDIAN

WHILE THE FIRST Rialzo didn't carry a Roman numeral with the new moniker, its success set the stage for viability and sustainability of the event. What better way to get things off the ground than with the band that made "Up, Up and Away in My Beautiful Balloon" an international hit in the late 1960s. Not only did **The 5th Dimension** dazzle the crowd of 350 on hand, its sound was masterfully enhanced by the Muncie Symphony Orchestra, a partnership symbolic of the event's relationships with the MSO other arts partners, Muncie Civic Theatre and Cornerstone Center for the Arts.

THE ENTIRE EVENT came together in just three months, with area event divas Fred Reese and Marilyn Cleary ensuring decorative and culinary class and elegance. Area pillars of community leadership First Merchants Bank, IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital, Dennis Wenger and Abrell, The Sursa Griner Group of Raymond James and Indiana Michigan Power partnered to ensure a memorable community celebration!













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“CELEBRATION” WAS indeed the word of the event’s second iteration as world famous **Kool and the Gang** turned the Horizon Convention Center into a dance party unlike any other in the history of the facility.



# RETRO

MERIDIAN

MERIDIAN ANNOUNCED its first-ever “Spirit of Meridian” Award winners, those who embodied selfless giving, above and beyond effort, and setting an example for others to follow, making the event’s theme, “Great Cause for Celebration,” relevant to the entire community.

DOZENS OF NEW corporate partners helped the event experience tremendous growth, swelling the audience to 550, and cementing the event as Muncie’s premiere charity gala. Another tradition that gained footing, four-legged footing, in fact, was the auctioning of a puppy for the charity’s sake.













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THEY SAY “THREE IS a magic number,” and Rialzo III was certainly that. “Pointing to a Healthier Future” headliner **The Pointer Sisters** excited the crowd of 650 after a dinner plate of 3 entrees sated guests’ palettes.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, Rialzo III was able to raise funds for Meridian’s new “Wheeling for Healing” program, which helped outfit 150 Behavioral Clinicians with a large but portable kit stocked with therapeutic tools and games as well as child and parental training materials for its school-based programs serving more than 100 schools in 26 counties —and 5,000 kids during the course of the year.

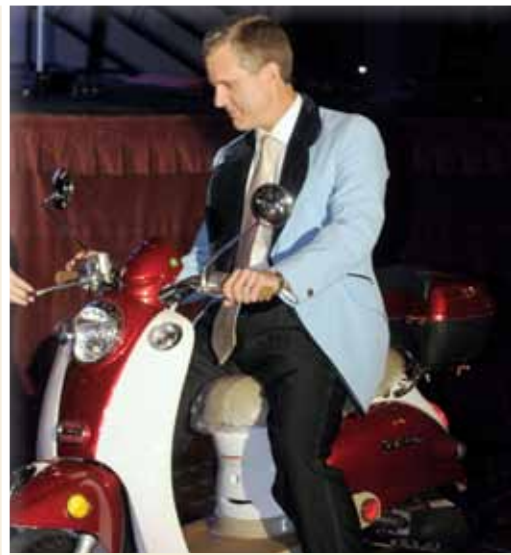
AS WITH EVERY OTHER facet of Rialzo, growth ensued as the volunteer army swelled to over 100 Meridian and arts partner able bodies who helped execute every aspect of the Rialzo charity experience. Guests even drove away with a ‘thank you’ CD of a collection of songs donated by local musicians.















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# Eileen Moore Child Abuse **AWARENESS** walk

Event expands, moves to October



**MERIDIAN'S FIFTH Child Abuse Awareness Walk** will not only carry the name of longtime Child Advocacy Director Eileen Moore, who died last year after battling cancer, but will carry with it some new aspirations. Because of its solid base of perennial support and new partnerships with local schools, the event will likely move to the Muncie Central Fieldhouse, and have both walk and run components. Look to [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) for more details soon.







ENTERING ITS SIXTH YEAR, **Meridian's Suzanne Gresham Center Health and Fun Fair** draws thousands of families looking for information on anything and everything to do with children's health and safety. Dozens of exhibitors combined with face painting, free throw contests, bouncies, dunk tanks and free pizza make for a winning event. Watch [www.meridianhs.org](http://www.meridianhs.org) for more details on this late summer event.



  
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behind Rialzo

FRED REESE, OWNER OF WILLOWBROOK Interior Designs, is the creative force behind Muncie's largest party with a purpose, Rialzo.

He was among the first names to come to mind as Meridian Health Services developed the idea. And his countless hours plotting and planning over each of the events, including this year's Rialzo IV, featuring Three Dog Night, has paid off. Rialzo has become the area's single largest evening gala. The event is expected to top out more than 800 this year, a capacity crowd for a concert/dance at the Horizon Convention Center.

"Fred's energy and creativity with regard to event planning is second to none," said Scott Smalstig, Meridian's Vice President for Fund Development. "He has an incredible passion for lifting this community up."

Long-time friend, Marilyn Cleary, compliments Fred's work on Rialzo. The two are joined at the hip in the weeks leading up to the event.

"Marilyn then becomes his foil," Smalstig said. "She and Fred are a perfect balance for one another."

Cleary and her husband, Dr. Pat Cleary, a surgeon at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital, are, themselves, devoted community givers.

"He is the idea man," says Marilyn of Fred. "No question. I'm the reasonableness factor. I think we both think alike. We reason things out together."

Fred and Marilyn know no boundaries when planning an event. They will brainstorm every detail, every angle until it is perfect. Fred is quick to add that there is another Willowbrook partner working on the Rialzo project.

"Last year he was an intern. This year, Cory Pollen, is a full time associate. He's been essential."

Reese, whose longtime interior design business has been located on North Wheeling Avenue, is relocating to downtown Muncie, next to Vera Mae's Restaurant, in time for Rialzo IV.

Why Rialzo? Fred and Marilyn are passionate about the arts programs in Muncie. They help organize and execute the event, but have developed a deeper appreciation for Meridian Health and its array of programs.

"It's an incredibly good time but an incredibly good message that the health of this community is important and that the arts in this community are important," Reese said. "That's why I continue to do it."

Fred is incoming chairman of the board for Cornerstone for the Arts and has been involved with Muncie Civic and the Muncie Symphony boards for years. Marilyn served for years on both the Cornerstone and symphony boards, as well.

"We started out helping because it benefitted the arts," Marilyn says. "Now it's about educating people about Meridian Health Services. I really did not know the depth of their works. Now, I do it for Meridian Health Services."



Photos: CHRIS BERGIN  
**THE TEAM.** Fred Reese, Cory Pollen and Marilyn Cleary team up for Rialzo.



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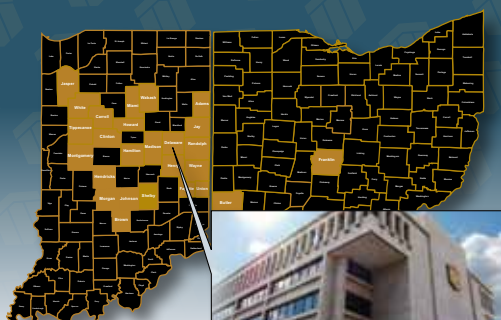


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