

ALLIANCE



**When We're Most Vulnerable,
Three Muncie Healthcare Providers
Reach Out With Caring Services**

A photograph of two women in a professional setting. One woman is in profile, smiling and gesturing with her hand, while the other woman is facing her, also smiling. The background is a blurred office or library.

FOR THE GO-GETTERS

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A WORD

Challenging situations have a way of revealing the best in people and the organizations they serve. All across our community, in the cities, towns and townships, there's a pronounced unification of purpose.

That purpose is compassion.

Leading the charge in this battle of beneficence are three Muncie-based healthcare organizations whose employees reach into the lives of our community's less fortunate, offering helpful, healing services that together enhance our collective well-being on a daily basis.



JAY JULIAN

Chief Economic Development Officer, President/CEO

There is Open Door Health Services, Meridian Health Services and IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital's new Addiction Treatment and Recovery Center. Combined, these three organizations have staffs that are actively assisting broad swaths of our community on a variety of health fronts.

We'll also talk about how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the delivery of medicine in our community.

On the lighter side, this issue of Alliance shares the very interesting history of the Muncie Public Library's first stand-alone location: the Carnegie branch. Not only that, but we'll also detail the early, formative years of Muncie's library system.

But, the real flavor lies in the Carnegie building itself. We think you'll delight in discovering all the tasty, little tidbits of lore that surround that beautiful downtown structure.

Another of our community's older recreational establishments is the subject of yet another Hidden Gem story: the Delaware Country Club. Located on Muncie's far east side, the Country Club has been around for generations and was founded by some well-known names. Find out the club's history and what's been going on out there lately.

Last, but not least, is our ever-popular Homeward Found section in which we shed light on a Muncie-Delaware County native, as well as two who grew up elsewhere, but now call our community home.

We selected these stories and charted our course for this edition of Alliance prior to the pandemic. We already saw the importance of local healthcare providers, but clearly their work is more important now than ever.

Indeed, these are challenging times. But, have a seat and take a few minutes to read this interesting publication. Some of our community's best work is revealed within. ♦



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Tele-Medicine a Real Cure for Patients Unable to Visit Doctor

Local Healthcare Providers Detail Massive Growth in Online Visits

Hospitals and clinical practices around the globe have been rocked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Those that haven't been inundated by those actually suffering from the virus have been hit with a mammoth new reality: personal visits are out for the most part, while tele-medicine is emerging as the sole alternative to building-based healthcare delivery.

According to an article in the April 2020 edition of the medical journal *The Lancet*, physicians in China's Wuhan province, where COVID-19 emerged, urged infected patients to contact care providers online.

That practice served as a model for other countries who began seeing a surge in infected citizens. Today, virtualized approaches to medicine are ubiquitous in the face of a pandemic that has millions abiding by stay-at-home and social distancing orders. No one, least of all healthcare delivery workers, wants to get infected, and that reality is driving so-called tele-health.

Eric Tharp, Vice President, Chief Practice Officer for IU Health's East Central Region, said tele-medicine and virtual healthcare visits are a rapidly growing segment in his region. He said IU Health is utilizing expanded federal rules regarding tele-medicine to help stay connected to patients and provide them with some peace of mind during an uncertain time.

Tharp said while much of the equipment necessary for a higher volume of tele-health visits was already in place, the training for physicians and education for patients on how to use the technology is still ongoing.

"We have increased our time investment for sure," Tharp said in regard to its growing tele-health strategies. "Patients already know what to expect with an in-person physician visit. But, they may have never experienced a virtual visit before. They might need help trying to open links they've been provided. There are definitely different challenges for different patients. We've spent

a lot of time getting patients educated on how they'll be contacted and the technology associated with that. We're also working to help physicians understand some of these things."

A major factor in tele-health's rapid, virus-driven growth was a move by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to dramatically ease restrictions relating to virtual healthcare delivery.

According to *The Lancet*, in late March, CMS officials announced an "an unprecedented array of temporary regulatory waivers and new rules to equip the American healthcare system with maximum flexibility" to respond to the pandemic.

Tharp said one such regulation change now allows physicians in one state to conduct tele-health visits with patients across state lines, something strictly prohibited in the pre-pandemic rule book.

While it seems tele-health has successfully bridged the gap between doctor and patient, there are, of course, drawbacks. The most obvious, Tharp said, is the physical component.

"We can't do physical exams, and that means we can't use our instruments to help determine a patient's health," said Tharp. "For example, we are unable to look into a patient's throat or into a patient's ears. We can't listen to their heartbeat. There are definitely limits to what tele-health can do. But, it's still important that we're able to offer our patients some assurances. That's why routine checkups, even if they're done virtually, allows us to buy some time until we feel like we really need to see that patient in person."

The shortcomings of tele-health are also apparent for Linda Daniel, program director for IU Health Ball Memorial's Addiction Treatment and Recovery Center in Muncie. Daniel's patients, who come into her Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) already detoxified and ready to get on with their drug-free lives, rely on the facility's

addiction recovery community for help and guidance.

That community is now largely fragmented and absent in the face of stay-at-home orders and social distancing. Daniel lamented the closure of the popular lobby area and adjoining kitchenette, where patients once convened over snacks, coffee and conversation, drawing strength and perseverance from one another.

“They no longer have that,” Daniel told Alliance. “But, if we can still communicate and connect with them via tele-visits, that’s good, too.”

Yet, Daniel said, the online therapy and connectivity is only valuable for patients who have access to that technology. “Some may not have a smart phone, computer, or maybe even a telephone,” she said.

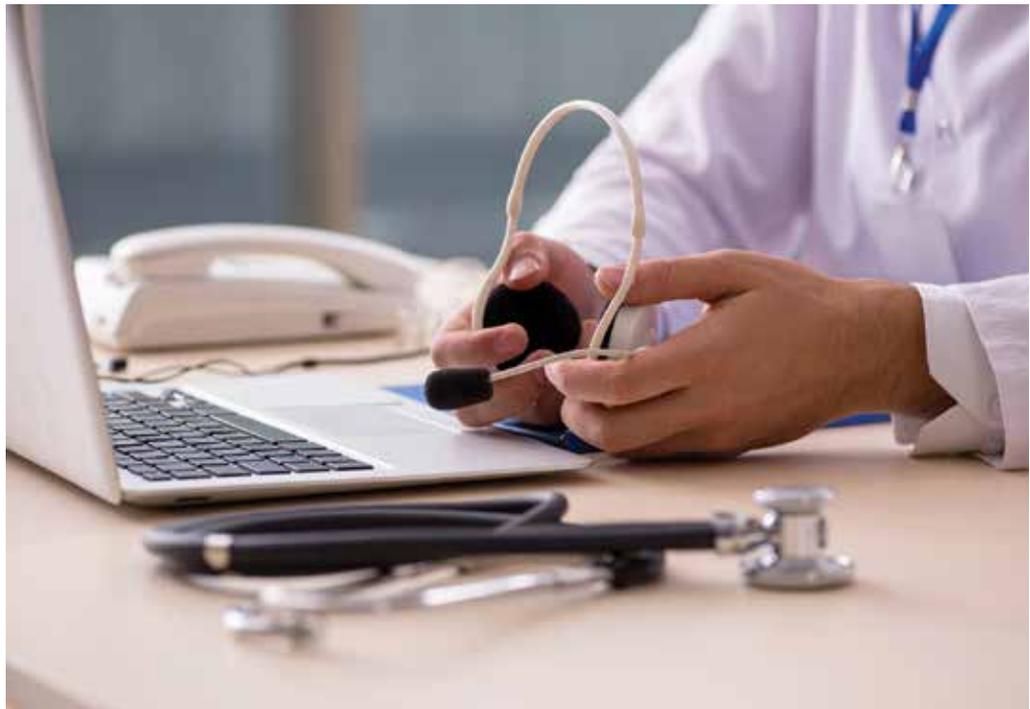
Patients’ access to technology, however, is often beyond healthcare providers’ control. Hank Milius, CEO of Meridian Health Services, tries to address the issue by enhancing patient accessibility to tele-visits on Meridian’s end. “We’re not making a huge investment in the technology,” Milius told Alliance, “but, we’re beefing it up much more. We’re adding more technology at different sites and that is increasing patients’ accessibility to tele-visits.”

For Meridian, the technology investment has been there for five years, which is how long it’s been offering tele-health services. But, Milius said, no one could’ve foreseen the explosion in tele-medicine prior to COVID-19.

“In April of 2019, we did just under a thousand tele-visits,” he said. “In April of 2020, we did 33,000!”

“Overall, tele-medicine has been a positive experience, especially in light of COVID-19. People don’t want to take the risk of visiting a healthcare facility.”

Milius offered an anecdote that illustrated the value of tele-health, particularly for older, more vulnerable people.



“We have one provider in Richmond,” he said, “who basically has to teach his older patients how to do Zoom, as an example. That sounds tedious, but once they get the hang of it, it opens up a whole new world for them. Obviously, this isn’t much of an issue for younger generations. But, for older patients, the technology can be frustrating. Since physicians usually have an ongoing relationship with their patients, it makes it easier for them to accept tech advice. They walk through the procedures together, and patients end up enjoying it. It’s all new to them, so of course people are going to be skeptical. But, once you learn it, you feel empowered; you feel confident.”

Milius said the lifting of some federal tele-medicine regulations has enabled healthcare providers to get reimbursement for such visits from Medicare and Medicaid. Prior to those changes, a large swath of online medicine wasn’t eligible for reimbursement.

Milius predicted a brighter future for tele-health, even if the pandemic eases and rules are reinstated.

“There’s no turning back now,” he said. “It might be more restrictive in the future, but we’ve had such a positive response I doubt we go back to the old ways.” ♦



Next Door Neighbors IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital and Ball State University Use Proximity to Boost New Programs

B/MD Pathway Puts Undergrads on Path to Medical School

Location! Location! Location! Proximity means everything to a new program that relies on cooperation between next door neighbors Ball State University and IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital.

The beneficiaries of the close-knit B/MD Pathway program are East Central Indiana high school seniors who are serious about attending medical school. By embarking on the Pathway, guided by academic advisors, students who meet the program's requirements will earn a provisional seat in the IU School of Medicine-Muncie.

The B/MD Pathway doesn't result in a degree. Rather, it helps keep students on the path to medical school through community-based advising and extracurricular activities in the local healthcare scene.

Dr. Derron Bishop, Associate Dean of the IU School of Medicine – Muncie, said this guided pathway will be particularly valuable here since the hospital and university are next door to one another.

“The close proximity makes it easier to develop programming between the hospital, the clinics, and the university,” Bishop told Alliance. “It's also more convenient for students.”

Bishop said the B/MD strategy didn't just fall out of the sky as a new idea. It's an offshoot of the Optimus

Primary project launched by the hospital and the school of medicine and paid for by a cluster of grants from the Ball Brothers Foundation.

Optimus Primary was launched after a 2016 study illuminated an alarming disparity in Muncie-Delaware County: the county ranked fourth in per capita primary care physicians, but 87th in health outcomes, or the impact of healthcare activities on citizens. In short, officials discovered they have a lot of physicians in the community, but the citizens are not as healthy as other communities.

They set out to change that with Optimus Primary as their principal tool. The long-term program envisions a community in which more locally-educated primary care physicians are retained, offering citizens better access to healthcare that focuses on prevention and wellness.

The B/MD Pathway is just one of the mechanisms being initiated to achieve those goals. Bishop cited some encouraging statistics that underpin the need for such a program.

“If we take a local person - who grew up here - and we train them locally, there's an 80 percent chance they'll practice within 50 miles of where they do their residency,” he said. “According to our own internal data, if we train a local person, our odds of keeping them here are very high.”



Dr. Derron Bishop



Plus, Bishop said, those future physicians can be trained in ways that support the Optimus Primary mission of fundamentally altering local healthcare in favor of preventative medicine, wellness and overall community health.

“One thing we will do is build into these students the tenets of Optimus Primary - things like lifestyle modification and behavioral science,” he explained. “We can inculcate them and their thinking as undergraduates, so when they come to medical school it’s already part of their fabric. They can come to medical school with our way of thinking about how to change medicine.”

Bishop also touched on the positive economics of retaining local physicians. He cited a Tripp Umbach & Associates study that revealed the financial benefits of local medical practices.

“They ran the numbers,” he said. “Each doctor that establishes a practice in the state generates \$1.5 million annually in economic impact. Moreover, each practice creates six or seven additional jobs; and each practice generates an average of \$300,000 in annual regional tax revenue. Also, each doctor who has a primary care practice in an under-served area generates \$3.6 million in healthcare utilization savings.”

He defined healthcare utilization savings as money saved by people going to a doctor instead of an emergency room, or simply the process of doing preventative medicine to prevent hospitalization.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic brought an

abrupt end to this school year, Bishop said the B/MD Pathway program is already underway, with a couple of students already enrolled. He’s been meeting with area school superintendents and guidance counselors, getting news of the program out to students who are serious about attending medical school.

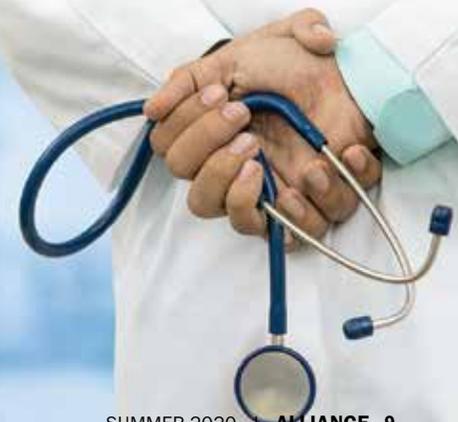
"If we take a local person - who grew up here - and we train them locally, there's an 80 percent chance they'll practice within 50 miles of where they do their residency."

– Dr. Derron Bishop

Potential Pathway participants are interviewed and screened, and admitted students always have the choice of opting out of the program if it’s not working out, Bishop said.

“I’m really happy this program is up and running” he said. “We have a lot of smart, talented high school seniors whom we’d like to get on the path to medical school in Muncie. Because of this partnership, we’re able to train them in ways that will help them be more successful going into medical school. It won’t be a big shock for them when they get there; they’ll already know what it’s all about.”

Bishop said a total of eight B/MD Pathway seats will be filled by students from East Central Indiana. The program will ramp up in earnest next school year. ♦





New Muncie Addiction Treatment and Recovery Center Underscore's IU Health's Commitment to Battling Back Against Opioid Epidemic

An explosion in drug addiction is driving a statewide push by IU Health to offer addiction treatment and recovery services. That effort took root in Muncie last year when IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital (BMH) launched its Addiction Treatment and Recovery Center (ATRC) at 210 N. Tillotson Ave.

Situated in the former home of an OB/GYN clinic, the center is led by Linda Daniel, a PhD who's a licensed Health Service Provider in Psychology. An employee at BMH for 15 years, she completed her doctoral fellowship in the hospital's neuropsychology unit, a part of the facility's physical rehabilitation department which she also directed for a time.

There, Daniel oversaw treatment of patients with dementia, traumatic brain injuries, strokes, etc. Then she switched gears, moving over to the family side of medicine in the hospital's residency clinic. Her work there revolved around delivery of compassionate care. "Part of our focus was bedside manner. We wanted to treat patients like people instead of treating them like diseases," Daniel said.

Being the hospital's only psychologist, Daniel was then offered the opportunity to lead the newly-formed Addiction Treatment and Recovery Center.

"I said, 'I'll give it a shot!'" Daniel told Alliance. "Addictions have never been a primary focus for me. Addiction was always on the side and never a primary diagnosis. So, I hadn't had much experience with it, but I was willing to give it a go."

July will bring the Center's one-year anniversary. Prior to the pandemic, Daniel said the facility was already approaching capacity, even after only a few months of operation.

It's no secret Muncie-Delaware County has been hard-hit by various addiction crises, including but not limited to prescription opioids, methamphetamine, and alcohol. In fact, the groundswell of addiction is what motivated IU Health to expand addiction treatment services in the first place.

Indiana University researched the trend and discovered an alarming statistic: two out of three Hoosiers know someone who is struggling with addiction.

That spurred IU Health to invest in and seek philanthropic assistance for a major statewide initiative aimed at curbing addiction. Since 2018, the healthcare company has established ATRCs not only in Muncie, but in Avon, Martinsville, Indianapolis, and Bloomington, with a Lafayette location forthcoming.

"Completion rates within these programs," the IU Health website says, "are above the national average of 40 percent, with some programs showing completion rates above 90 percent."

According to Daniel, ATRC's success rate is borne of a comprehensive treatment approach, combining physical, behavioral and social aspects of patient health. The Center also employs a Peer Recovery Coach, or a former addict who helps counsel current addicts.

"Our peer recovery coach is Bill Rogers, a recovering alcoholic," Daniel said. "It's important to have someone with 'lived experience.' Bill is a trained biologist with a PhD, and that helps patients understand addictions as a disease and not just a moral failing or a character flaw. He has been instrumental in helping patients. They look up to him. They see that they can get out of living in addiction and move into recovery."

Daniel also credited Fran Wehlage, the Center's



Linda Daniel



recreational therapist, with providing a critical key in addiction recovery: fun.

“Fran helps make our program different and unusual,” Daniel explained. “She helps people learn how to enjoy themselves again. In addiction, you forget how to have fun without a particular substance. So Fran organizes excursions and patients might get to go to Ball State’s David Owsley Museum of Art or Christy Woods – just so they can learn to enjoy life again.”

Another critical factor in the Center’s success has been its policy of not accepting patients into Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP) who aren’t yet ready to endure them. IOPs involve long, group therapy sessions of about 15 people. Sessions often last three hours and occur three times weekly. Patients still in the throws of active addiction, Daniel said, aren’t prepared for IOPs and cannot be accepted – yet.

“Our program isn’t going to meet the needs of someone with an active addiction,” she said. “Their thinking is still too cloudy.”

Daniel offered an all-too-real hypothetical.

“If someone shows up at the emergency room and they’ve just overdosed and they want to get their lives turned around ... if we can’t see them immediately, we lose them back to addiction,” she explained. “If they’re active in their addiction, they need to detoxify before they come to us. We don’t do detoxification. They need to get detoxed and then, after 3-4 weeks of inpatient treatment, they’re ready for individual outpatient sessions.”

Though the Center’s protocols prevent acceptance of those with still-active addictions, Daniel and her staff are nevertheless trying to bridge that gap by initiating a hybrid program that extends therapy to those in advanced stages of detoxification.

The Center’s new “pre-care” group welcomes partially detoxified recovering addicts who can sit through about an hour of group therapy one day a week.

“We try to get them strong enough for the IOP program,” said Daniel. “We can get them medications to address their cravings, but they must have therapy to go with the medications. We can’t just give medications without therapy. We need to build up their stamina so they’re able to sit through IOPs.”

Daniel said the difference between the pre-care

program and the IOPs is very pronounced.

“In the pre-care program,” she said, “our patients are straddling the fence of recovery and addiction. People who come to IOPs want recovery; they want to avoid relapse. They want to thrive instead of just survive.”

For many patients, the Center’s services also offer a crucial bridge to primary care – something many addicts go without for long periods, according to Daniel. It’s at this juncture that ATRC’s mission intersects with the goals of the Ball Brothers Foundation’s Optimus Primary program, which seeks to improve the entire community’s health and well-being by providing greater citizen access to primary care providers.

"Completion rates within these programs are above the national average of 40 percent, with some programs showing completion rates above 90 percent."

– IU Health

Daniel said the Center’s “whole person” approach reveals not just addiction problems, but problems with general physical and mental health as well. As such, staff members routinely refer patients to local primary care providers, thereby further enhancing access to such services.

In short, the Muncie ATRC is an arsenal loaded with weapons and tools designed to effectively combat the addiction epidemic. The Center employs about 10 full- and part-time people, several of whom are licensed clinical social workers, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, licensed addiction counselors, psychologists and medical assistants.

“What we do is kind of a niche,” Daniel concluded. “Patients that come to us have to be wanting recovery. They are motivated. They are able to come in three days a week. They are able to sit in groups for three hours.”

“We want them to be involved in the recovery community: AA groups, A Better Life-Brianna’s Hope, etc. Once finished,” she continued “they need a soft place to land so they can go out and be with other people and be supported in a recovery community. That will help prevent a possible relapse.” ♦

'Whole Person Healthcare' is Top of Mind and Center of Heart at Meridian Health Services

Meridian Health Services' CEO Hank Milius has a smile that can be 'seen' over the telephone. When he talks about his passion – integrated healthcare delivery – his infectious enthusiasm bleeds through the airwaves.

"Anyone going into the health care field – anyone – really goes into it to help people," Milius told Alliance. "They don't imagine becoming billionaires. They're not exchanging stocks or looking to become rich. These are caring, nurturing people and ... I'm just a small part of it. Being around my coworkers is very satisfying because you have a common purpose and a common vision of doing good in the community."



Hank Milius

For overall community betterment, Milius and Meridian's 1,200 employees aim their efforts at offering an integrated healthcare system that treats the entire person – physically, mentally and socially.

Milius calls this unification of services "whole person healthcare" and it's a bedrock concept at Meridian, founded in 1976 as Comprehensive Mental Health Services of Northeast Indiana, Inc.

The company began offering inpatient mental health services at then Ball Memorial Hospital while



establishing three area outpatient sites.

Over its 40-year history, Meridian Health Services has steadily grown, offering a spectrum of programs designed to help patients get the most out of their lives by developing better physical, mental and social health.

"Meridian, in its small way, is really just trying to break down those barriers between types of care," Milius said. "We're trying to create more cohesiveness by bundling services together."

"Our mission is to create not just healthier individuals, but also healthier families and, hence, communities," he continued. "We work with a lot of collaborative partners and certainly with the community members themselves. But, we very much believe in the integration of medical, behavioral, and social health. It's kind of a journey. There's really no perfect model for this type of healthcare delivery. At Meridian, we really try to connect those dots (medical, behavioral and social care) as much as possible."

The Meridian approach appears to be working. What started as a tiny cluster of outpatient clinics has, over four decades, blossomed into a large healthcare provider with 47 facilities, including 27 clinics.

Last year alone, Meridian partnered with 285 school districts, helping establish drug abuse and suicide prevention programs. The nonprofit company served 40,000 patients, nearly 10 percent of which were unable to pay and received over \$3 million in free care.

Milius said the company's Mental Health First Aid for Youth is a training program for teachers, coaches, clergy and others that teaches adults to spot mental health problems in students and athletes as a means of helping prevent teen suicide. So far, said Milius, over 800 educators and others have been trained in suicide prevention.

MERIDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

Meridian Health Services believes in integrating treatment for the body and mind. With a holistic approach to wellness, Meridian gives patients the peace and harmony of medical, behavioral and social well-being through "whole-person" health.

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“We teach them how to identify at-risk signs of suicide,” he explained. “After all, no one wants to go to a mental health facility. It really has to be a courageous person who calls a mental health facility on their own. However, they will talk to coaches and teachers. So we want to equip those people with knowledge about how to identify risk factors. It’s more likely for a student to tell a teacher or coach how they’re feeling than to have that student contact a qualified care provider on their own.”

a global pandemic, Rialzo is typically a springtime black-tie gala. Milius described it as a “community coming out party” that draws a thousand people.

“When we created Rialzo in 2010, we wanted to lift up and support our community,” he said. “At that time we were in midst of one of the worst recessions the country has ever known. A lot of people wondered whether a black-tie charity gala would be successful. Who would’ve known then that we’d now have around 1,000 attendees, raising a lot of necessary funds.”

Neo-natal Abstinence Syndrome, a group of problems that can occur in a newborn who was exposed to addictive opiate drugs while in the mother’s womb, has been the focus of recent Rialzo fundraising. “We’re using some of that money to educate and treat moms who are giving birth to babies when they’re addicted to drugs,” Milius said.

“Rialzo is a great opportunity for community to engage directly in our mission,” he said of the event, which relies heavily on the Muncie arts scene, over a hundred volunteers, and other partners. “Our community only gets healthier when we help one another, and Rialzo is how the community helps Meridian with its mission.”

And that mission, of course, continues. Though the COVID-19 outbreak has disheveled the planet, Meridian Health Services continues on its mission, building on a spate of new caregiving opportunities that took root last year.

For example, Meridian acquired Madison Community Health Center, thus expanding its dental service offerings under a new flag, Meridian Dental, with locations in Anderson, Elwood and Alexandria.

General addiction and maternal addiction services were expanded in several communities, including a newly-opened residential treatment group home for women who may be addicted.

The inaugural Meridian Health Employees Wellness Fair took place in 2019. This year, the company started



Though this year's Rialzo event was postponed due to COVID-19, civic-minded revelers will nevertheless be ready for another jubilant, black-tie event hosted by Meridian Health Services.

Another Meridian suicide prevention program, the Zero Suicide Initiative, is currently active in eight school systems and four agencies, spanning 11 Indiana counties.

Programs like the Zero Suicide Initiative and Mental Health First Aid for Youth are clearly near and dear to Meridian’s heart. So strong is their desire to initiate and underwrite such programs that they undertake a major annual fundraiser known as Rialzo (Italian for uplifting). Though postponed this year in the face of

a suicide prevention initiative at Muncie Southside Middle School, a location that will see the addition of a small health clinic featuring primary and behavioral care.

The list of caring community endeavors goes on and on at Meridian. It seems like part of the company's DNA. Milius may have described it best in the prologue to the Meridian Health Services 2018-2019 Annual Report:

"Our professional staff has given their heart in delivering services to those in need," wrote Milius. "Learning of a need is one thing, but meeting that need requires a team of like-minded hearts coming together to provide solutions. All of these initiatives are a 'work of heart' and delivered to our communities through our compassionate staff." ♦



Entertainers help Rialzo revelers celebrate all the good made possible by funds raised during the annual event.

HIGHLIGHTS

In the last few years, Meridian Health services has:

- trained over 800 people in suicide prevention
- integrated health services focusing on "whole person" health – physical, mental and social healthcare
- maintained over 47 facilities, including 27 clinics
- partnered with 285 schools; served 40,000 patients; provided care to 3,920 patients who were unable to pay (\$3 million in charity care)
- expanded addiction treatment services in other communities
- expanded its maternal drug treatment program
- acquired Madison Community Health Center, becoming Meridian Dental, and expanded dental services
- hosted first Meridian Health Employee Wellness Fair
- launched nationally its Mental Health First Aid program
- launched Trauma Informed Care (TIC) team
- activated Zero Suicide Initiative in eight school systems and four agencies, spanning 11 counties
- opened MHS's new Women's Recovery Home, a residential treatment center for women who may be addicted to drugs, in June

Open Door Health Services' Growth Driven by a Desire to Help Region's Less Fortunate

Finding gratification in the workplace is a key ingredient in a recipe for a happy life. For Open Door Health Services CEO Bryan

Ayars, that happiness is driven by a pronounced desire to help less fortunate people in East Central Indiana.

"For me," he said, "what's most important is that Open Door now has roughly 250 employees who are very, very mission driven. They want to be out helping our mission succeed. They want families and individuals to get the help they need to do well in life. That is what our entire staff is trying to do on a daily basis."



care that gets you and your family involved. A Health Care Home provides education and support for every area of care that you receive. Your health

care team will consist of you, your family, your primary care provider, a nurse and medical assistant, a health educator, and behavior health or other specialists."

If those healthcare tenets sound familiar, it's because they represent the bedrock principles of the Ball Brothers Foundation's Optimus Primary program, which aims to bolster county and regional access to primary care physicians while focusing on preventative care, diet and exercise, and education.

Ayars, who took over as CEO in 2016 replacing long-time ODHS leader Toni Estep, said ODHS's mission perfectly aligns with the Optimus Primary initiative.

"Our organizational goal is to improve individual health," he said. "That better the overall community. We also want to help provide access to safe, secure, affordable housing, food, medications, and whatever else is needed for people to be able to survive and thrive."

"That's our goal," Ayars continued. "If we're taking really good care of our patients from the behavioral and medical health sides - but they don't have access to good food - we're wasting everyone's time. That's why we partner with different organizations to help provide food. Our staff members go to food pantries and will assist them. We have folks there to provide distribution assistance and other staff who can help connect people in need with other services in community, as well as health insurance information."

It's been a busy decade for ODHS, which in 2018-2019 logged almost 60,000 visits to area clinics and provided services to over 20,000 people in East Central Indiana.

Those services run the gamut of healthcare offerings, from primary and behavioral care to dental health, family planning and health insurance sign-up assistance.

Community partnerships, such as its work in Anderson, are a large part of ODHS's community outreach



Providing patients with insurance enrollment assistance is a key ODHS service.

Muncie-based Open Door Health Services (ODHS) started here in 1974 and has since grown steadily into one of this region's most relied-upon healthcare providers for low-income people. The nonprofit provider describes itself as a Health Care Home and features eight locations, a mobile unit and administrative offices.

"A Health Care Home isn't a building or a place," the company website says. "It is a way of providing health

efforts. For example, to help combat this region's growing diabetes problem, ODHS partnered with St. Vincent Anderson Regional Hospital, Second Harvest Food Bank and the Anderson Impact Center on the Diabetes Partnership Program.

Created to help provide nutritious food to diabetics living in poverty, the program successfully illustrated that, when given access to nutritious food, diabetics' overall health can improve. For a year, Second Harvest provided weekly fresh produce and other nutritious items to qualified participants, while ODHS kicked in with clinical assessments and a qualified health educator to help keep track of patients and their progress.

"The results speak for themselves!" a 2018 ODHS annual report says. "Eleven patients of all genders and ethnicities completed the 24-week program. The group was down a total of 70.8 pounds with a mean weight loss of 6.5 pounds. The group was also down 12.4 total points in the Hemoglobin A1C test. This test looks

at the elevated blood glucose levels over a three month period, and it determines how a provider will treat a diabetic. The results proved that if the person followed the program by utilizing the education combined with healthy eating habits, their progress improved!"

Other high-impact programs engaged in by ODHS include partnerships aimed at reducing low birth weight pregnancies in the region and farmers market initiatives that expand low-income citizens' access to fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables. Plus, the organization, a federally-

qualified Health Care Center, operates a mobile unit so that it can take assistance directly into communities that need it most.

"Our community outreach efforts involve extending our mission and our vision of providing needed care directly into the community to assist others," Ayars said. "If our partners aren't healthy, we aren't healthy. Our other partners, whether it's Second Harvest, Muncie



The ODHS Urgent Care facility is located at 1651 E. 29th St., Muncie.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- ODHS Pediatrics relocated to 215 W. Hutchinson Ave., taking on the former Garg practice
- ODHS Urgent Care relocated from Southway Centre Plaza to E. 29th St. in the South Walmart Plaza; the move expands capacity and creates greater visibility
- Psychological Assessment and Consulting (PAC) joined ODHS, quadrupling ODHS's behavioral health capacity
- The Mobile Unit expanded services to Anderson Community Schools sites
- Open Door became a BY5 Diaper Bank location in Delaware County
- 8twelve Coalition partnership – Leaders from multiple partner organizations planning a health center, social gathering spaces, and a food/grocery source at the corner of Hoyt and Memorial Avenues in Muncie
- PRAPARE (Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patient Assets, Risk and Experiences) pilot launched to further address social determinants of health in patients
- ODHS's Ivan Madrigal named Indiana Primary Health Care Association's "Employee of the Year"
- ODHS is the partnering organization for a Ball State immersive learning class focused on human resources and marketing initiatives



Mission, A Better Way, or the YMCA, or the YWCA - we work with them to ensure they have the resources they need and that their clients have the services they

need as well.”

ODHS staff members will also conduct their own fundraisers to help fill the coffers of partner organizations, such as United Way. A recent fundraising effort by 95 ODHS employees yielded over \$8,000 for that nonprofit organization.

Staff members also attend local and regional health fairs, offering free assistance with health insurance enrollment, health insurance questions, case management, and more.

ODHS’s primary partners include the Health Resources and Services Administration, Indiana State Department of Health, Indiana Family Health Council, United Way of Delaware, Henry & Randolph Counties, city of Muncie via a HUD Community Development Block Grant, and Covering Kids and Families of Indiana, Inc.

Learn more about Open Door Health Services by visiting their website, www.opendoorhs.org. ♦



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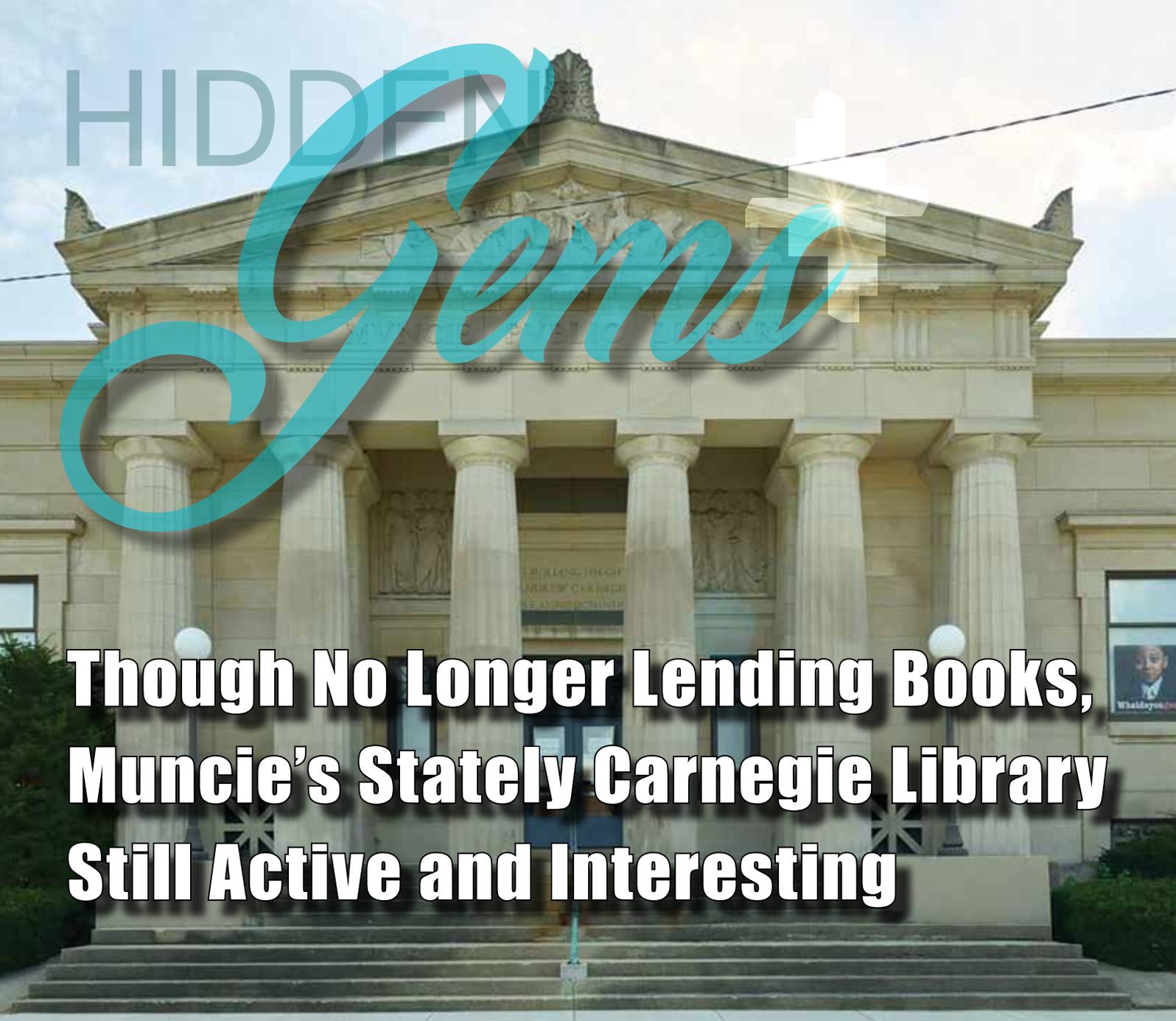


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HIDDEN

Though No Longer Lending Books, Muncie's Stately Carnegie Library Still Active and Interesting

Benevolence and philanthropy are keystones in Muncie's development. From its earliest days, this community has enjoyed the generosity of civic-minded citizens, organizations, businesses and leaders.

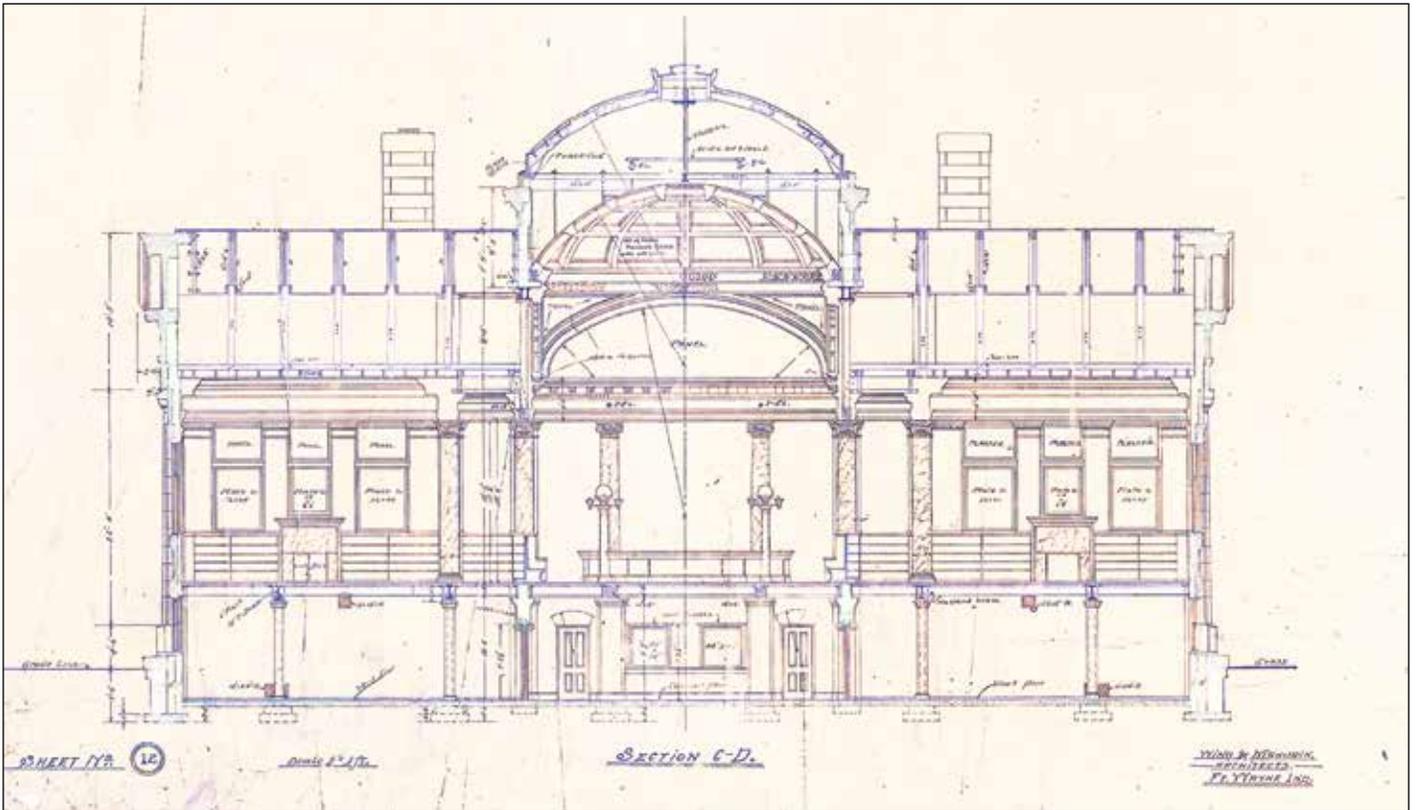
One of the most enduring symbols of that providence stands proudly on the southeast corner of Jackson and Jefferson Streets in downtown. Muncie's Carnegie Library, 301 E. Jackson St., represents what is probably the community's first large-scale building project.

Just after the turn of the 20th century, Muncie leaders and citizens, who had enjoyed a public library in some form since 1853, were pondering the idea of a new, free-standing public library open to all area residents.

They'd watched as other Indiana communities constructed new libraries with the help of American industrialist Andrew Carnegie, whose generosity yielded hundreds of new community libraries across the land. Then a booming industrial town, Muncie had a library, but it was housed in a room in the city building.

Community leaders wanted to expand their book lending system further into the city and county. They knew if their library had a home of its own, it would serve as a central point for accessing literature and knowledge; thus, improving the quality of life for citizens.

The Muncie Public Library Board of Directors, along with tax-paying citizens, convened a large meeting in February 1901 to gauge public interest in such an en-



deavor. Enthusiasm was high and the board agreed to ask Carnegie for a \$50,000 grant to fund a library. The Commercial Club requested \$50,000 from Mr. Carnegie to build the library. The Commercial Club was the predecessor of the Muncie-Delaware County Chamber of Commerce. A letter seeking a Carnegie grant was issued March 9, 1901. The philanthropist responded affirmatively a short while later, with the caveat that the city pledge \$5,000 annually for the imminent facility's upkeep.

Muncie officials quickly agreed to Carnegie's terms. The news probably sent quite a buzz through the community. Nellie Stouder, the library board's secretary, was quoted as saying, "(The library) is destined to be one of the great factors in the intellectual and moral development of the whole community."

A Fort Wayne firm, Wing & Mahurin, was chosen to design the building, and Marshall Mahurin himself

completed the plans. Mahurin's firm had successfully completed plans for several other Indiana structures and even cemeteries, among them Muncie's Edmund Burke Ball residence and Beech Grove Cemetery.

The library board also chose Muncie general contractors Morrow & Morrow to construct the building. The firm was paid just under \$47,000 for its services.

Another philanthropist also played a pivotal role in the public library's establishment here. George W. Spilker, a banker, county clerk and community booster, agreed to donate his home to the cause. Though,

"(The library) is destined to be one of the great factors in the intellectual and moral development of the whole community."

– Nellie Stouder, Board Secretary, 1901



Carnegie was paying for the library itself, Spilker's donation allowed the board to sell that property, applying the \$6,000 sale price to the purchase of the lot at 301 E. Jackson St., the Carnegie Library's future home.

Spilker's home was located at 220 S. Jefferson St., in the same block and just south of where the Carnegie Library was constructed. The former Local History & Genealogy building, currently Delaware County Emergency Operations, is located where Spilker's home once stood, according to Sara McKinley, current director of the Muncie Public Library's Carnegie branch.



Sara McKinley

The library board paid \$13,000 for the lots, and on the first of June, 1902, workers from Morrow & Morrow laid the new library's foundation. Construction continued throughout 1902 and into 1903, when it was completed.

Project supervisors originally intended to have the library up and running by February 1903, but labor and materials shortages delayed work, pushing the opening date back to Dec. 31, 1903. They eventually settled on New Year's Day, 1904, for opening ceremonies.

But, even as the project advanced, a realization dawned on officials: they didn't have enough money to adequately furnish and stock the new facility. So, another plan was hatched: an additional overture to Carnegie was readied. This time, however, it came in the form of a gift from Muncie to Carnegie's daughter, Margaret.

Along with a letter which cleverly included details of their funding shortfall, Muncie library officials enclosed Margaret's gift: a golden, commemorative spoon with an image of the new Muncie library etched into the bowl. Carnegie was reportedly delighted by this thoughtful gesture; so much so that he happily agreed to Muncie's \$5,000 request to fund additional books and new furniture.

Prior to the library's dedication and grand opening on Jan. 1, 1904, the establishment's book collection

had grown to 13,000 titles. New state laws had mandated yet another administrative reorganization, and the new Muncie Public Library board hired Ardena Chapin as its librarian. Chapin oversaw a growing list of 1,777 book borrowers, over a thousand of which were added in 1903, in anticipation of the new facility.

All Muncie and Center Township residents would have library privileges. Citizens in other areas could use the library for a \$2 annual fee.

Following the grand opening, library hours were set at 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday, and 2-5 p.m. on Sundays and holidays.

The Muncie Public Library remained as Muncie's sole library facility until the Grace Keiser Maring branch was opened on Madison Street in 1930. During that time, the Carnegie building operated as any early 20th library did, its book collection growing right alongside its list of patrons.

In 1941, a campaign of cleaning and painting was undertaken. Library officials also oversaw the removal of four large interior pillars from the main floor, providing additional floor space on the east and west sides.

A mezzanine was added in 1954, and this upper level of book stacks became home to some 30,000 more volumes, which had until then been stored in the basement. The mezzanine was later removed to make way for a large meeting room/auditorium.

Today's Carnegie Library

The Carnegie Library continued as a normal lending library until property tax caps – installed in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis – forced a consolidation of

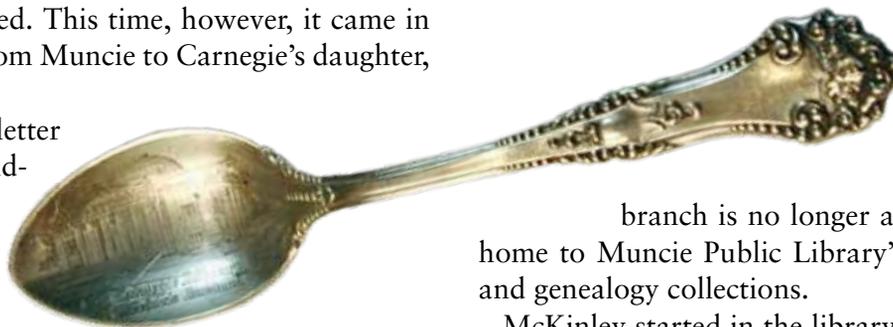
branches and some library services, notably the local history and genealogy sections.

Today, the Carnegie

branch is no longer a lending library; it is home to Muncie Public Library's entire local history and genealogy collections.

McKinley started in the library's circulation department in 2004, joining the genealogy department in 2006. Now she's the branch director and supervisor of the local history and genealogy departments. Included in this collection is a large trove of Delaware County records, some dating back to 1827, the year the county was officially organized.

The Carnegie branch is also a haven for genealogists, who can find a variety of books and documents



relating to family histories in Delaware County and East Central Indiana. Free Wi-Fi, coupled with access to popular online genealogy databases, provide family history researchers with great resources. A genealogy-dedicated computer lab is open to the public, as is a general use computer lab.

Additionally, the branch's collections also include school yearbooks, city directories, marriage records, deeds, wills, artifacts, photos, diaries, historical indexes, microfilmed newspapers, and much more.

Punctuating the branch's resources is an annual genealogy information fair co-hosted by the library, the local Paul Revere Daughters of the American Revolution chapter and the Delaware County Historical Society. Included are free genealogy workshops and presentations by area lineage societies. McKinley said other history projects are always in the works, though the global pandemic has thrown much of the branch's programming into question.

Another in-the-works project thrust into uncertainty by the outbreak is a video production of the Carnegie branch's history. McKinley said they were hoping to unveil the finished product, funded by an Indiana Humanities Historic Preservation Education Grant, in April. "Now, we're not sure when we'll release it," she said. "But, we're looking forward to sharing it with the public."

Building Maintenance Continues

At 113 years, Muncie's Carnegie Library – on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) since 1976 - is one of Delaware County's oldest public buildings.

Marshall Mahurin's design features a neo-classical aesthetic and is sheathed in Indiana limestone. The structure has, through the years, enjoyed diligent care by attentive administrators.

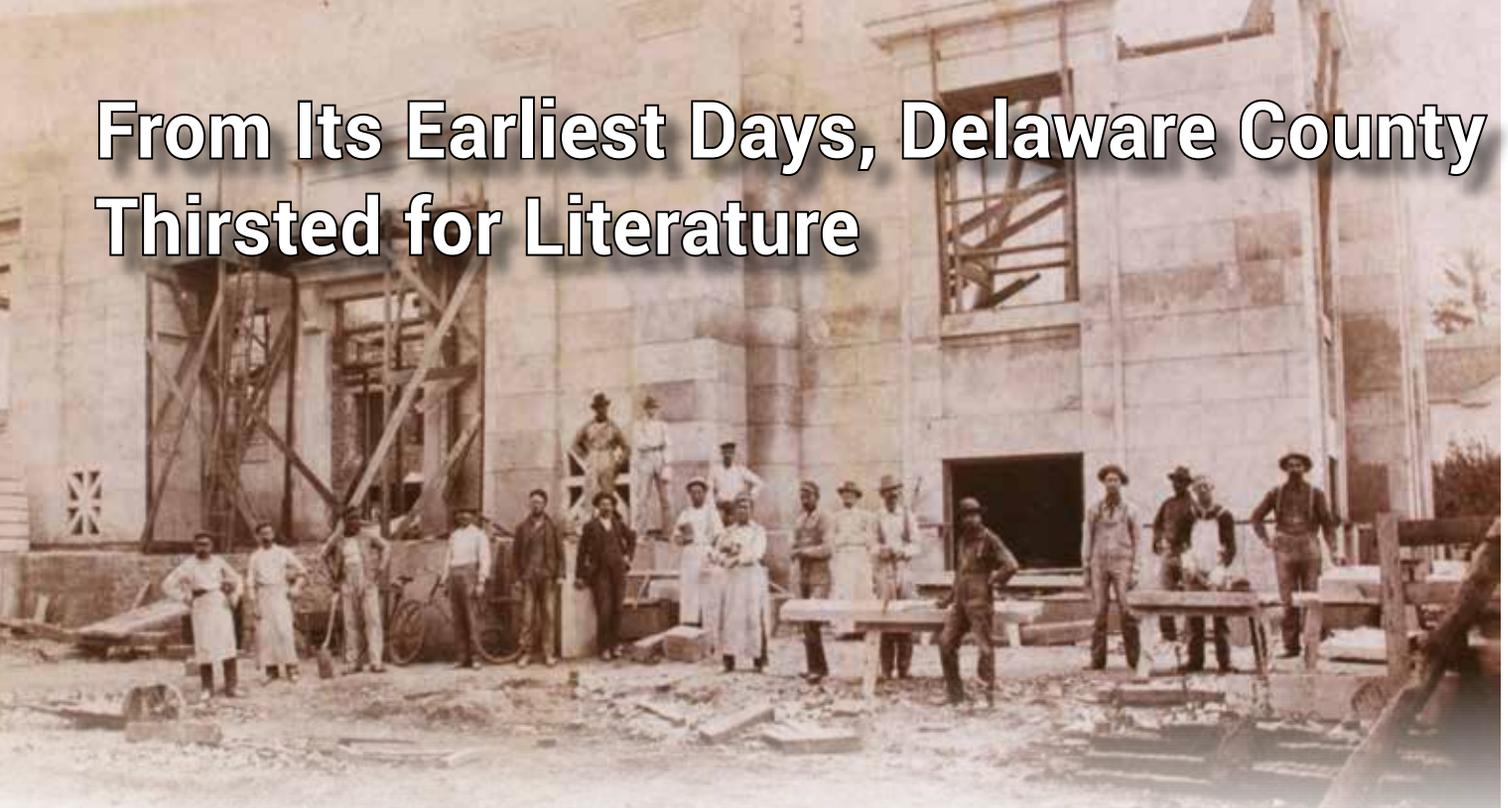
Some of the most relevant renovations occurred in 2002-2003, when the library was brought into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Handicapped-accessible ramps and elevators were installed. Heating and cooling systems were also replaced.

More recently, McKinley said the library's basement has presented an



Continued on page 32

From Its Earliest Days, Delaware County Thirsted for Literature



In 1853, 26 years after Muncie became the Delaware County seat, community leaders were working to establish a public library.

What would eventually lead to Muncie's Carnegie Library and subsequently an entire network of library branches across the county started off as a very small collection of literature. That would change, however, as early Indiana lawmakers developed an appreciation for libraries and the positive benefits they might have for developing communities.

The Indiana legislature, in 1853, enacted a law providing for county libraries. The measure allowed county leaders to levy a 10 percent tax on each lot sold in Muncie. That early revenue stream funded a small collection of books then kept in the courthouse.

Thirteen years later, in 1865, another law was passed that established township libraries as well. Muncie leaders at that time chose to join forces with Center Township officials. The group's combined levies underwrote an expansion of library titles, and control of the small, but growing library was turned over to the township.

The collection of books was then moved to the private home of a librarian, Wilson R. Smith, chosen by the township to administer the library. Later, Smith was elected sheriff and he moved his residence to the sheriff's customary home in-

side the Delaware County Jail.

Citizens, however, weren't enthusiastic about the new location. The jail/library combination was unpopular and interest in the book collection waned. Citizens turned away from the budding library.

Enter then Muncie Postmaster H.C. Marsh, who, after witnessing the library's decline in popularity, purchased his own collection of books, in hopes of reinvigorating public interest. Marsh's titles, loaned free of charge, were kept in the post office building.

But, Marsh went beyond that, encouraging the county/township library to consolidate their collection with his own. They agreed, and that small mass of literature became the nucleus of what would be the Muncie Public Library.

Interest in Marsh's offerings took hold and endured.

In 1874, a large public meeting was convened to gauge interest in a larger, more comprehensive library endeavor. Muncie schools Superintendent Hamilton McRae, a chief proponent of a revamped library, led the charge. Encouraged by McRae and others, a group of leaders established a stock company to fund expansion. Shares were sold at \$2 each, and several were sold on the night of that meeting.

A year later, in 1875, the Muncie Public Library was officially established in a room of the Muncie city building. The



A Workman's Boot Hidden in a Wall and Other Interesting Facts About Muncie's Carnegie Library

During renovations at the Carnegie Library, an old workman's boot was found hidden in a wall, with a hand-written note identifying its owner, Frank Garrett. Garrett must've been employed by the library's Muncie-based builder Morrow & Morrow, which built the structure. Boots hidden in walls represent an obscure, worldwide superstitious practice that dates back to the Middle Ages. Shoes, often associated with luck (think horseshoes!), were once thought to have magical properties, warding off evil spirits and bringing good luck to those inside.

Theodore F. Rose, once president of the library board and owner of the Delaware Hotel, purchased a gift for the new library – a painting by J. Ottis Adams entitled “Wheeling Pike as it appeared in 1891.” The artwork still hangs in the library. Another work by Adams still appears there, too: a portrait of Dr. Henry Winans. Winans' daughter, Mary Winans Spilker, commissioned the work before she died in 1933. She was the daughter-in-law of George Spilker, who donated his home to the library board, which sold the property and used the proceeds to help purchase the land on which the Carnegie Library stands.



The Muncie Public Library Board sought to have the Carnegie branch entered into the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1976. The board submitted a detailed nomination form, prepared by Muncie employee Gary S. Prater, that spanned six pages. “The building,” the nomination form said, “is an outstanding example of architectural design, a specific local monument to Andrew Carnegie, and a key landmark in downtown Muncie.”

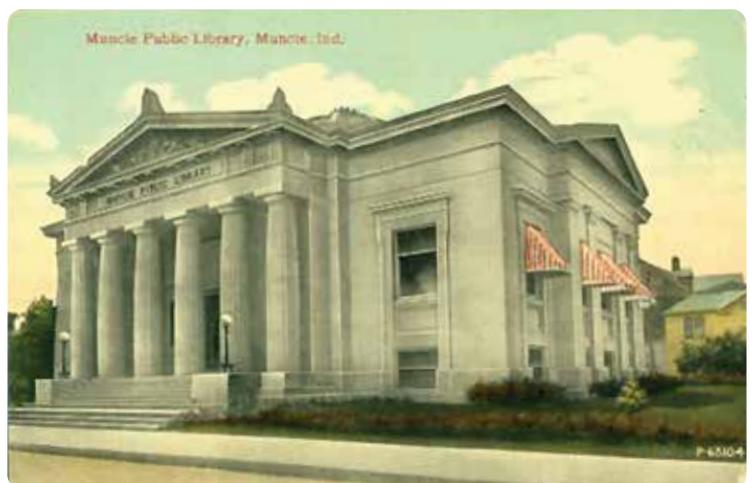
Fort Wayne Architect Marshall S. Mahurin, who designed Muncie's Carnegie Library, designed numerous other Indiana and Midwest structures, several of which are on the NRHP, including the Monroe County Courthouse, Marshall County Infirmary, Kokomo City Building, Fort Wayne U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, and the Charles Dugan house in Decatur.

Morrow & Morrow wasn't the only area firm hired to help build the Carnegie Library. Other contractors included Art Metal & Construction Co. (book stacks, furniture: \$2,500); Sutherland Manufacturing Co. (electrical fixtures: \$1,500); and Mandel Bros. (art glass, decoration: \$2,250). ♦

stock company continued selling shares, and the city was “induced” to buy stock in \$3,500 blocks. A major investment for its day, Muncie's life-giving stock purchases gave city leaders almost exclusive control over the newly established public library.

Aside from agreeing to buy Marsh's collection, library officials also agreed to hire their first librarian, Hattie Patterson, whose annual salary was \$250. To bolster her wages, leaders allowed her the privilege of selling stationery in library rooms.

Over the years, the city, township and county, as well as many individuals and organizations, continued supporting their public library, though it wouldn't have a true home of its own until after the turn of the 20th century. ♦



HIDDEN

Genius

Delaware Country Club Endures as One of Muncie-Delaware County's Oldest Social Hubs



Nestled on a tidy, 100-acre block on Muncie's far east side is one of Muncie's oldest recreational hubs, the Delaware Country Club. Now in its 130th year, the country club, like so many other quality of life-boosting attractions in the Muncie area, owes its existence to its very earliest member families.

Names like Ball, Galiher, Kitselman and Maxon can be found on early club registries.

From the outset, the Delaware Country Club aimed to provide recreation for families embroiled in Muncie's hectic industrial era. In 1910, when it opened, the facility featured a nine-hole golf course designed by Arthur G. Lockwood, who was a successful amateur golfer and golf course designer in the early 1900s.

Lockwood, who hailed from Massachusetts and designed courses all over America, also oversaw the Delaware Country Club's

Delaware Country Club course designer Arthur G. Lockwood (left) poses for a photo with a friend.



expansion from nine to 18 holes, which took place prior to 1920.

One of the first courses in East Central Indiana to earn United States Golf Association (USGA) certifications, the Club has undergone a number of renovations through the decades.

A pool and clubhouse were added in 1930, and both have enjoyed several upgrades over the years; most notably, in 2014, when major exterior and interior clubhouse renovations were made. A modern irrigation system was added in the 1960s. Club organizers built a new pro shop in 1983.

Golf instruction is also available at Delaware Country Club, which also



Photo courtesy Kishel Photography



Photo courtesy Kishel Photography

A Demanding Course

With respect to the golf course itself, Ary said the Club's links present a challenge for any level of golfer.

The golf course's current hole routing was established in 1983. In 1989, each of the course's five tee stations received USGA's slope rating, a numerical value that indicates the relative difficulty of a set of tees on a golf course.

Fourteen years later, in 2003, Delaware Country Club's links received the coveted USGA certification, the first course in the county to do so, according to Ary. The next year, several course upgrades were completed, with changes made to irrigation and drainage systems, as well as bunkers and greens.

Ary said Tim Liddy, an understudy of legendary golf course designer Pete Dye, helped redesign some of the course features.

Tight, tree-lined fairways, heavy rough, challenging hazards and fast, multi-tiered greens are hallmarks of the Country Club's 18 holes, which span pars 3-5 (course par is 70). Those who want to preview the course can do so on the Club's website (www.delawareecc.com), which not only provides photos of each hole, but also specifies color-coded tee distances and gendered handicaps.

"It's really a demanding course," Ary said. "Our signature layout includes multi-tiered

hosts a variety of PGA Junior League golf events, according to Nick Ary, the Club's general manager and head golf professional.

Certified as a PGA Professional in 2018, Ary has worked at the Club for the last nine years, the first seven of which were spent as assistant golf pro. He managed the club house in 2019 and took over as general manager and head golf pro this year. Ary replaced Tom Harris, who served as the Club's head PGA professional for 20 years.

Ary credited Harris, who was a Ball State golfer under longtime Cardinals coach Tom Yestingsmeier in the 1970s, with helping develop junior golf not only at the country club, but across Delaware County.



Photo courtesy Kishel Photography



Photo courtesy Kishel Photography

greens with a lot of undulations and movement. It's challenging.”

Accompanying the course itself are a variety of amenities aimed at comforting regular golfers. The club house features locker rooms with rich, hardwood interiors, complete with showers, seating and television. A lounge offers refreshment with cold drinks, food and card games. “The Hut,” an on-course refreshment station between holes 7 and 15, offers respite on hot days.

Neither The Hut or the club house lounge should be confused with the Club's more formal dining areas, known as the Grille Room, Gallery and Deck, which offer full drink and food menus.

A less formal food option, the Snack Bar, is located beside Delaware Country Club's seasonal, outdoor swimming pool complex. The Club's pool area features



a baby pool and certified lifeguards. Special events can be scheduled and swimming lessons are available.

“Our membership includes people from a wide variety of backgrounds,” Ary told Alliance. “Country Clubs sometimes have a negative perception of being stuck up or snobby. We’re the opposite of that here. We’re very open and welcoming, like one big family. We’d do anything for anyone. That’s why it’s a great place for families.”

But, Ary said there’s a professional aspect of Delaware Country Club membership that’s valuable as well. “There are good opportunities for people to connect here from a personal standpoint, but also a professional standpoint. There are a lot of networking opportunities here. If you’re a young professional looking to make connections with some of the older, established professionals, this is a great place to do



Photo courtesy Kishel Photography

that. Yet, you can also bring your family here, relax and have a good time.”

The Delaware Country Club, 510 S. Country Club Rd., Muncie, also hosts private events, such as business meetings, parties and weddings. ♦

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Geoffrey S. Mearns
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Ball State University



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Continued from page 23

ongoing draining problem. She said renovations have revealed water infiltration damage likely caused by a failing foundation drainage system.

“We’re currently seeking grants and additional funding to do some work on several of the basement walls,” she said. “We’re going to work on repairing the damage and restoring everything. We’re also going to do some resealing and install some water barriers.”

She said the library’s vast collection of county records spotlighted a need to protect it from ultraviolet light pouring in through library windows. Officials are eyeing adhesive window treatments that will block the UV rays.

“(The Carnegie branch) is unique in that we have a lot of original Delaware County records that were normally kept in the clerk’s or auditor’s office,” McKinley said. “Since this building wasn’t designed to house archives, we have to do our best to protect those records. Although we digitize and microfilm the records, we still want to protect the original documents for as long as we have them.”

Landscaping around the building has also been totally revamped.

“Our landscaping was all overgrown,” McKinley explained. “Plus, we were worried about it potentially damaging the foundation.” She and library officials used historical photographs and old postcards to determine what the original landscaping may have looked like. Then they set about uprooting some old bushes and replacing them with items that more closely resemble the original design.

While heating and cooling systems were replaced very recently, McKinley said the Carnegie branch will need a new roof sometime soon.

“The basement project, however, will be the most expensive repair we’re facing,” she added.

Not Just Historical Data

While historical records and genealogical resources make up most of the Carnegie branch’s offerings, there is more. A public computer lab is open to patrons. Free Wi-Fi and Internet access are provided.

The Carnegie branch also issues library cards and is a drop-off location for library materials borrowed elsewhere. Patrons can reserve a 45-seat meeting room during regular Carnegie branch hours. ♦



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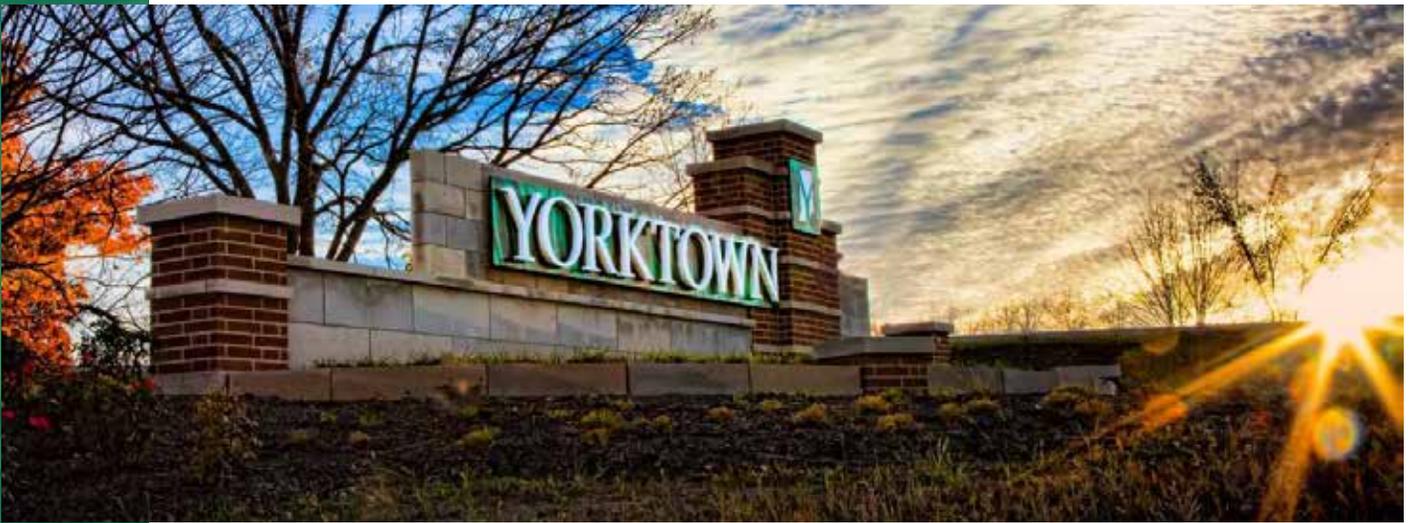
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Homeward Found

Who they are; what they do; what made them stay



Akilah Nosakhare



Age: 63

Company & Title: Muncie Public Library Director

Hometown: Muncie (My family moved to Muncie when I was 8.)

High School/Year Graduated: Muncie-Burris, 1974

Extracurricular Activities/Class Officer: School newspaper

College Attended, Year Graduated: BSU 1983 B.S. Secondary Ed, 1984 M. Ed

Family: My husband, Charles 68; 3 step children and 13 grandchildren in California and Texas

Q You grew up in this area. What made you choose Muncie-Delaware County as your home base?

A I wanted to be close to family and take the helm of the public library.

Q Do you have a memorable teacher or mentor at local schools? If so, please explain what made them special and the impact they had on your life and career.

A I sure do! Mrs. Mary Smothers and Mrs. Zenobia Faulkner were my elementary teachers (at Blaine). They led me to love reading and language arts.

Q Please describe what makes Muncie-Delaware County schools a good fit for your family.

A My relationship with Muncie Community Schools (MCS) is professional only. Muncie Public Library (MPL) provides after-school programming for MCS students and supports others in a variety of ways. The Muncie Public Library works with MCS to increase access to the latest in books (print, audio and electronic), films (digital or DVD), and music (digital or CD) for all ages and grade levels. MCS students and faculty get free READ cards each year to access the shared online catalog (UCAT) that integrated all school library holdings with that of the public library for appropriate level access to all MCS personnel. Items can be placed on hold and delivered to the school library weekly.

Q In terms of recreation, what are the best local attractions for you, your family and your coworkers/employees?

A Honestly, we like the trail around McCulloch Park at Granville and over near North Wolfe Street in Whitely. My husband uses a wheelchair and it is not always easy to get around, but these areas are smooth and the river is lovely to view.

Q In your opinion, what makes Muncie-Delaware County a great place to live, work and raise a family?

A I admire the willingness of the people to set goals and the commitment to work toward their fulfillment. They are real go-getters!



Hank A. Milius



John Hersey
High School
Class of '72

Age: 65

Company & Title: Meridian Health Services President/CEO

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

High School/Year Graduated: John Hersey High School, 1972

Extracurricular Activities/Class Officer: Fly-fishing; skiing: downhill & cross-country.

College Attended: University of Chicago (MA), 1978

Family: Wife, Terri; four sons, Nathan, Eric, Brad and Ben; 10 grandchildren.

Q Why did you move to Muncie-Delaware County and how long have you lived here?

A Our family moved here in 2002 when I was hired as President/CEO of Meridian Health Services.

Q Briefly compare and contrast your new home with the community from which you came.

A We lived in several communities. I was born and raised and met my wife, Terri, in Chicago, Ill. We moved to Michigan, Missouri and Alabama before we finally landed in Indiana. All the moves were related to career steps in the healthcare industry.

Q Please describe what makes Muncie-Delaware County schools a good fit for your family.

A Our twin boys went to Yorktown Schools and loved it. They had a great education and, equally important at that time, they were nationally-ranked wrestlers and the school had a fantastic program.

Q In terms of recreation, what are the best local attractions for you, your family and your coworkers/employees?

A The White River is a great asset to the community. I actually do some fly fishing on the White River and have kayaked it several times. In addition, my wife and I love the Cardinal Greenway and go biking quite often. We also belong to Delaware Country Club, which has a fantastic golf course.

Q In your opinion, what makes Muncie-Delaware County a great place to live, work and raise a family?

A We have lived in various regions of the country and find the Midwest to be the best fit for us. I find the culture to be low key, diverse and very family-oriented. Muncie was a great choice due to its proximity to Indy, Chicago, Cleveland and Michigan, where we spend a lot of family time. Muncie also offers a great Division I school, Ball State University and, in terms of my career choice, offers a great healthcare delivery system.

Personality Quickies

Early Bird	Night Owl
Spicy	Mild
Elevator	Stairs
Vegetarian/Vegan	Carnivore
Dream	Plan
Coffee	Tea
Diet	Exercise
Read	Watch TV/Surf Internet
Talk	Listen
Fast	Strong
Stay In	Go Out
Drive	Walk/Ride Bike
Water	Soft Drink
Travel Abroad	Close to Home
Always Breakfast	Never Breakfast
Beer	Wine
Do It Now	Put it Off
Sit	Stand
Grit	Talent
Punctual	Tardy
Salty	Sweet

New Arrival

Who they are; what they do; what made them stay



Bryan Ayars



Age: 59

Company & Title: Open Door Health Services CEO

Hometown: Landisville, Pennsylvania

High School/Year Graduated: Hempfield High School, 1979

Extracurricular Activities/Class Officer: While in High School I was the co-stage manager of the Stage Crew, directing the backstage activities for school plays, musicals, and assemblies. I was also an active volunteer with the local volunteer ambulance group, and was class officer for a few years.

College Attended, Year Graduated: Graduated with a Masters Degree (MS) in Health Care Administration from Western Kentucky University in 1998.

Q Why did you move to Muncie-Delaware County and how long have you lived here?

A I moved to Muncie in June of 2016. Just prior to moving to Muncie I lived and worked in “The Berkshires” in western Massachusetts. This area is more rural than Muncie-Delaware County and is a mecca for cultural tourism and vacation homes. The Berkshires had gone through an economic downturn similar to the one in East Central Indiana. Except instead of depending up automobile manufacturing, the area I lived in had been dependent upon paper mills. In both places, the residents are kind and welcoming, although the Berkshires had more residents who were new to the area.

Q In terms of recreation, what are the best local attractions for you, your family and your coworkers/employees?

A I think the Prairie Creek Reservoir and both bikeways are gems – and probably underappreciated. The same is true for the David Owsley Museum of Art and the Muncie Civic Theatre. All these venues add so much to the quality of life here.

Q In your opinion, what makes Muncie-Delaware County a great place to live, work and raise a family?

A The cost of living is low and the amenities for residents keep increasing. I’ve lived in different communities through the years and the residents in Muncie and Delaware County are kind and seem eager for opportunities to improve the area. The proximity to Indianapolis is a plus, and having both Ball State and Ivy Tech as active partners with the community leaders is something rarely seen in other communities.

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Always Breakfast	Never Breakfast
Beer	Wine
Do It Now	Put it Off
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