



# Healthbeat

Issue 164 | December 2024





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Aspire Indiana Healthbeat Magazine

December 2024, Issue 164

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# Ending HIV Stigma Through HOPE

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# Ending HIV Stigma Through HOPE

World AIDS Day, [designated on December 1](#) every year since 1988, is an annual event that serves as a reminder to us to remain committed to preventing new HIV infections and provide essential services to all people living with HIV globally.



**Julie Foltz**  
*Director, Team HOPE*

"World AIDS Day is a time to remember and acknowledge those people who have lost their lives as well as a time of support for those who are still living with HIV," says Aspire Team HOPE Director Julie Foltz.

Foltz's team at Aspire, Team HOPE (Health, Outreach, Prevention and Education), has its roots in HIV care coordination. When Foltz started with Aspire in 2000, her role was focused on providing individuals living with HIV in a seven-county area with care management and support, including housing, insurance, transportation to and from medical appointments and other resources.

Shortly after in 2004, the first "prevention" part of the program was added in, which included testing for both HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV), as risk factors are often the same for both.

Then, in 2016, Team HOPE's services expanded further to include PrEP Navigation, which provides education and case management support to clients about Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). According to [HIV.gov](https://www.hiv.gov), PrEP is a medicine people at

risk for HIV take to prevent getting HIV from sexual contact.

"If PrEP is taken as prescribed, it can reduce the risk of contracting HIV through sex by about 99 percent," Foltz says. "And it can reduce the risk of contracting HIV from injection drug use by around 75 percent."

The Harm Reduction Program, now called Point of Entry, began in 2018, and then syphilis testing began in 2023 because of the significant increase in syphilis cases in the United States. In addition, Team HOPE also provides HCV care coordination, linking clients to educational resources as well as medical care and following up with them through their course of treatment.

What began in 2000 with providing 12 clients HIV care coordination and case management has now evolved and expanded to treating hundreds of clients in 32 counties throughout Indiana.

## Addressing and Reducing Stigma

"If you look back at the story of Ryan White in the 1980s and how he faced such discrimination because he had AIDS, it was because people acted out of fear and didn't know about AIDS and how it was transmitted," Foltz says. "We are more educated about it today, but that doesn't mean

all the stigma around HIV has gone away. If you look at some of Indiana's laws today, they still perpetuate stigma."

The [HIV Modernization Movement-Indiana \(HMM\)](#) seeks to modernize Indiana's HIV criminal and related public health laws. According to their website, these laws — both deeply outdated and lacking in scientific merit — lead to unfair prosecutions, stigmatize Hoosiers living with HIV and are counterproductive to ending the Indiana HIV epidemic.

"If someone living with HIV is engaged in medical care and taking their medications regularly as prescribed, they can become virally suppressed — or undetectable, which means they can't transmit HIV to another person through sexual contact."

[U=U \(Undetectable = Untransmittable\)](#) is a community-led global health and human rights movement that simplifies the science to this lifesaving message: A person living with HIV who is on treatment and maintains an undetectable viral load has zero risk of transmitting HIV to their sexual partners.

"In order to start reducing stigma, people need to be educated," Foltz says. "We fear what we don't know, and that fear perpetuates stigma. I wish more people would ask questions and do research from reliable sources, as opposed to social media and other news sources that are less trustworthy."

She also stresses the importance of knowing what we say — and how we say it — matters.

"The words we use matter so much in addressing and reducing stigma," she says. "One simple thing is to use person-centered language. Instead of saying 'this person is HIV positive,' say 'this person living with HIV.' A person is so much more than their virus, condition or disorder."

### Having HOPE for the Future

Previously called the Infectious Disease Team

at Aspire, Team HOPE serves the community in a number of different ways through Health, Outreach, Prevention and Education — ensuring Aspire's comprehensive and compassionate services are rendered in a safe, secure and non-judgmental environment.



"We strive to support our clients in achieving their optimal health outcomes," Foltz says. The case management and navigation programs help to locate, facilitate access to and monitor the full range of HIV-related or HCV-related services in cooperation with the client.

In addition to healthcare management and care coordination, Foltz and her team provide outreach support, both through community outreach events and resource fairs as well as a harm reduction street outreach team that connects people in the Anderson community with everything from NARCAN to hygiene kits and cold weather supplies.





"The conditions we work with are 100 percent preventable, and if people learn to take the steps to prevent these diseases, they could better protect themselves and their loved ones," Foltz says. "Also, treatment as prevention is a concept. If we are getting people living with HIV linked to medical care, engaged in care and adhering to their medication, they can reach undetectable status."



And the education piece is essential. In fiscal year 2024, Team HOPE served more than 10,000 clients through care coordination and management, outreach, prevention services and education.

"My hope is that we are letting people know that we love them and they are worthy of that love, and they're worthy of loving themselves."



# Patient Success Story: Ross Murray

"Substance use problems and mental health conditions, primarily depression, have been a big part of my adult life. What I have found at Aspire is that it has been a completely holistic solution to me living the life I really want to live. I'm in the best shape — both physically and mentally — that I've been in a long time."

Hear more from Aspire patient Ross Murray, as he shares his story of how Aspire has filled in the gaps of his healthcare and made all the difference in his journey toward a healthier life. Click on the image below to watch the video!







# May House Gets a Refresh

"Our goal is for our clients to live the most independent life possible."



**David Wildman**  
Controller

"At Aspire, we want to project an image that puts our very best foot forward at all times, and we felt like the time had come for May House to be part of that cycle," says Aspire Controller David Wildman. "We have a certain standard we want to see with all

our facilities, and it was time to make that happen for May House."

May House is Aspire's 15-bed transitional group home in Anderson, where high-acuity patients — those requiring high levels of medical care or monitoring — stay for anywhere from three to six months, and sometimes up to a year, depending on the client.

"We give our clients a toolbox of resources during their stay — teaching them ADL (activities of daily living) skills, medication management and how to cope with their mental illness," says Aspire Supervisor of Supervised Group Living Jennifer McClelland. "Our



**Jennifer McClelland**  
Supervisor of Supervised  
Group Living



goal is for our clients to live the most independent life possible."

After not having any major changes done to the building in more than a decade, May House needed a renovation. So Wildman, Aspire Manager of Facilities Brian McCarthy and Building Services Administrator Destiny McDermott put their heads together and asked McClelland what she had on her wish list of changes for May House.

"My number one priority was to have a safe medication room for my staff," she says. "The second thing I wanted was a bigger kitchen, and then number three was an updated bathroom. We had bathtubs here, and they're just not safe for our clients."

The Aspire team delivered what McClelland asked for — and then some.





"One of the main issues that really stood out before we even started the project was the floor plan and layout of the house," Wildman says. "We did a major redesign of the house to make it much more functional. The kitchen is designed to be between a commercial kitchen that has all the quality appliances and materials yet still feels residential and homey. And I think we hit that sweet spot nicely."

Construction was done in four phases, allowing the residents to stay at May House for most of the time. And the beauty of the inside now matches the outside.

"It was very dark and dreary here before," McClelland says. "It didn't seem like a home. Now, we have white walls with bright pops of colors, all-new furniture and windows you can actually open to let the light and air in. There's a quiet sitting area where residents can read or do puzzles, and there is a front common area where we do crafts. The atmosphere is so much more calming and inviting, and we couldn't be happier."

Wildman says he wants the staff to feel invigorated about going to work, to have a sense of pride and belonging. And the refreshing atmosphere is doing just that.

"I love it. It's beautiful," McClelland says. "I can't thank David and Brian and the Aspire team enough for all they did. They cared enough to ask what we needed and really listened to our answers. They don't understand how much the changes to May House have affected the clients. They are amazed at the difference."

The updates have made a positive impact on the staff as well.

"My staff is loyal and works so hard; this is not an easy job," she says. "It truly touches my heart to have my staff and May House be recognized to the point where Aspire staff took the time to do these renovations. Now people are coming to May House and interested in what we do, and that's a big deal for us. My gratitude is neverending."





# Deck the Halls with Good Health

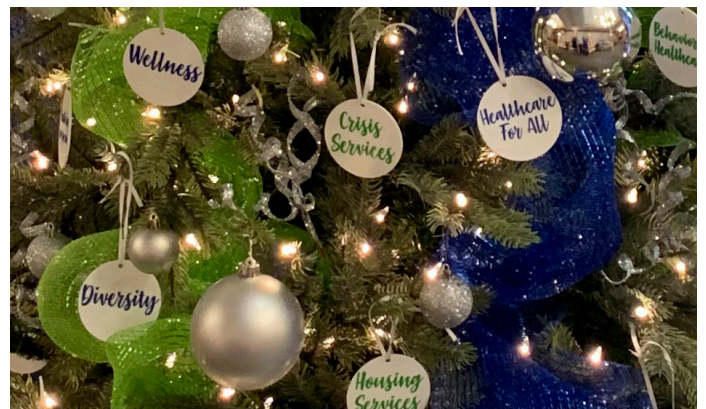
This year, Aspire is sponsoring a tree with the Indiana Historical Society's [Festival of Trees](#)! This annual holiday event features a winter wonderland of 81 trees representing individuals, families and companies from around Indiana.



Aspire's tree theme, "Deck the Halls with Good Health," highlights our comprehensive healthcare model — from medical and behavioral to addiction care and housing to crisis and employment services.

To vote on the Aspire tree, visit the Festival of Trees now through January 4. The Aspire tree is located on the 4th floor of the History Center in the board room. You can visit Festival of Trees from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday or Sunday from 12-5 p.m. There are also Twilight Tuesdays, which offer special extended hours from 5-8 p.m. for those who want to see the trees by night. Use the code "FOTBR" to get \$5 off adult general admission pricing when you go to [www.IndianaHistory.org](http://www.IndianaHistory.org).

"Healthcare to all ... and to all a good life."

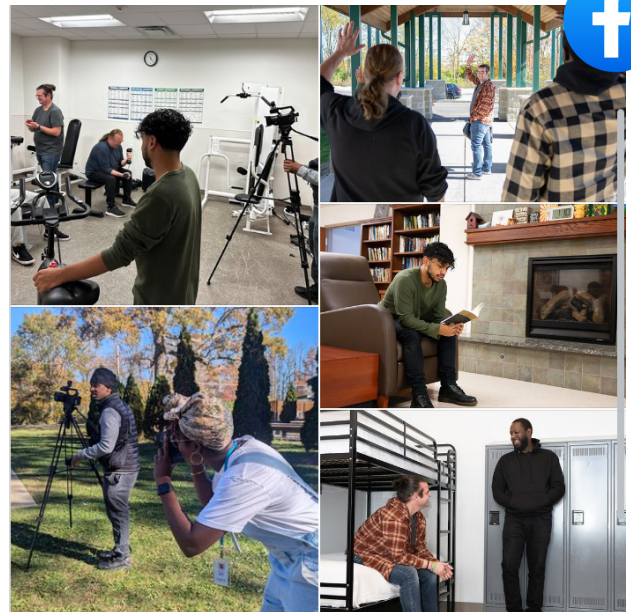






# Social Media Hits

A look back at our top social media hits in November!







# Getting to Know Brandi Brewer



Progress House), and I run digital advertising campaigns on Facebook and Google. I meet regularly with our Google representative to make sure we are reaching the right audiences and exploring new ways to increase awareness about Aspire — including reporting on all social media and website analytics and metrics. Finally, I make sure to share important news with Aspire staff through our Aspire News Space.

## **What would you like others at Aspire to know about your job?**

Since Aspire is growing so fast, please keep in mind that it's often not as simple as sending over an image or information you want to post to social media. There is a process, and each post and picture has to be approved and certain specs have to be met. We want to share all your news, so keep sending — but just have patience and understand it might not get posted right away.

Brandi Brewer, Aspire's Digital Marketing Coordinator, has been with Aspire since May 2023. If you've had a question about social media in the past or wanted to post something, then you already know her. If you follow Aspire on any of our social media accounts (which you should!), then you're at least familiar with her work. Brandi has grown Aspire's social media by 30,000 followers since her start.

## **How would you describe your role?**

I handle 12 social media pages, posting Aspire news and events, awareness month posts, answering messages and monitoring the pages. I also create blogs for three different websites (Aspire Indiana Health, Mockingbird Hill and





**What do you like most about working at Aspire?**

I like being part of a company that helps people with addiction and mental health. I have lost several friends to both.

**What is something you enjoy outside of work?**

Well, something that is pretty cool — I recently got engaged! My fiancé and I have been together for five years, but he was my very first boyfriend back in 8th grade! Ha! Also, I love the beach and traveling. My dream vacation would be in the Maldives, with a little hut over the water and a staircase that leads directly into the ocean. I also love photography and boating. My fiancé and I have a cabin on Patoka Lake in Paoli, Ind.

**What is your favorite quote and why?**

I have two. The first is "Perhaps this is the moment for which you were created" (Esther 4:14). This scripture has always spoken to me and has helped get through some tough times. The second is "Some people feel the rain, others just get wet," often attributed to Bob Marley. I love Bob Marley, and this quote to me says to enjoy and embrace everything in life.







# Employee Spotlight: Kaitlin Sims

Licensed Clinical Therapist, Youth & Family Home and Community

Kaitlyn Sims, a licensed clinical therapist based out of Carmel High School, has been with Aspire for three years. She spends her days at Carmel High School meeting with clients — about 25 clients at any given time — collaborating with school administrators, and working with the intense behavioral classrooms or students with intent to harm themselves or others. Some clients — oftentimes the most difficult cases — may be referred to Kaitlyn from various school administrators such as the school's social worker, resource officer or other administrators. Kaitlyn helps her clients with potential transportation issues, academic issues and/or behavioral issues. She collaborates with her broader Youth and Family team to assist her clients as they apply and continuously build on the life skills they are learning.

With Kaitlyn's office located at Carmel High School, she is able to be there regularly with her clients. She excitedly recounts stories of students who have since graduated and come back to share with her their successes after graduation. Kaitlyn has an exuberant passion for her clients' success. A Carmel High School graduate herself, Kaitlyn moved to Chicago for both her bachelor's and master's degrees. Before coming back home to Indiana, she spent time working with young patients at a wilderness camp, going on long canoe trips and helping her clients learn crucial life and coping skills.





"It's a rewarding moment when you've had a lot of ups and downs with a client but they're able to persist and meet their goals," she says. In her downtime, Kaitlyn enjoys spending time with her husband and their young son — they love taking their camper on trips together.

***Hear more from Kaitlin! Click on the video!***



## Accent on Compassion

In last month's Accent on Compassion feature by Aspire Indiana Health President and CEO Antony Sheehan, he talks about the power of a story — how storytelling is essential to understanding others, and ourselves.



***Read more here!***



At Aspire, we want to recognize our employees for the “Great Job” they are doing! We have re-imagined our Recognition and Way to Go programs — our new Great Job recognition focuses on our people, patients and/or partners and incorporates one or more of the Aspire values of impact, innovation and inclusion!

***To nominate an Aspire employee for doing a “Great Job,” please [click here](#).***



**Rich Trotman**, Multimedia Content Producer, has brought an impressive set of skills combined with a thorough professionalism in creating a variety of videos, photos and other creative material. We’re really excited to have him on the Marketing Team!



**Jennifer Suttles**, Patient Access Specialist, has really pulled her weight with the Aspire Way! She tackles working with many providers a day without any complaints. Her work ethic is unmatched, and her attitude is even better. I nominated Jennifer because she makes sure each client is scheduled; and no matter what, she completes her task with a smile!



**Jerry Durham**, Safety Coordinator, has shown he is determined to make an impact when it comes to safety for all. Patients and people are affected on a daily basis when they set foot onto Aspire property and are met with a safe environment — because Jerry not only ensures environment of care (EOC) rounds are complete, but he also physically walks locations and makes suggestions of improvement along the way. Jerry uses his prior experience and has come up with innovative ways to solve safety concerns, including assisting in resolving Joint Commission findings from our most recent audit. Additionally, Jerry helped to partner with Resolver and build an all-in-one incident reporting system. The passion Jerry has to help out and ensure all are safe when they come to Aspire shines in all he does. Thank you for all you do!



**Diadra Spalding**, Community Engagement Coordinator, has such a giving heart! I reached out to our Lebanon team about any potential resources for a bicycle for one of my clients who has a fear of driving and needs a better way to get to and from work. Diadra responded the same day that she had a bicycle to give away, and she even brought it into the office so I could then take it to the client. Her willingness to help without question made a huge difference. The client was happy and thankful about getting a bicycle, and it made a positive impact on me knowing I can rely on my team for the people we serve. Super grateful for Diadra!



**Isabeau Cueto**, Certified Medical Assistant (CMA), is such a win for our Deaf community. She is a primary care MA and is fluent in ASL. As an interpreter, I stepped back and watched magic unfold — Deaf patients receiving direct medical care in their language. I could have cried honestly. We are thrilled to welcome Isabeau to the Willowbrook clinic!



**Deaf Services Team** is truly a center of excellence for the Deaf Community. It has been a joy to see Deaf Services team up and work on two particularly difficult cases, working both as a department and across departments, bringing everyone to the table for the benefit of the Deaf patient.



**Amber Gordon**, Manager, Social Drivers of Health, and Rachel Inman, Housing Coordinator, are deserving of recognition for their exceptional dedication and compassion in assisting a Deaf client facing severe homelessness. Their tireless and quick efforts to connect the client with essential housing resources and support services were instrumental in preventing ongoing homelessness. Their impact on going the extra mile to ensure the client's well-being exemplifies the highest standards of housing assistance.



**Janis Ashburn**, License Eligible Therapist - Residential Addictions, stepped up when her teammates were sick and on PTO. Janis covered all the therapy groups at Progress House for two days! Janis showed our clients that Aspire cares about their wellbeing, and she supported her team in taking care of themselves.



# Welcome New Employees

## ANDERSON

### **Melvin Dallas**

Food Service Worker  
Mockingbird Hill

### **Bridget Spinner-Baker**

Nurse Practitioner - Psychiatric  
Hoak

### **Kelly Bons**

Nurse Practitioner - Psychiatric  
Mockingbird Hill

### **Darrian Southern**

Peer Specialist  
DeHaven

### **Trinity Dorn**

Residential Technician  
Hudson

## CARMEL

### **Vanessa Aguirre**

Patient Access Specialist  
Carmel

### **Stephanie Beechler**

Crisis Response Provider  
Carmel

### **Olivia Cowan**

Certified Medical Assistant  
Carmel

### **Eric Schildtknecht**

Crisis Response Technician  
Carmel

### **LaPrecia Sanders**

Certified Medical Assistant  
Carmel

## LAFAYETTE

### **Chelsea Stockton**

Infectious Disease Case Manager  
Lafayette

## INDIANAPOLIS

### **Kalyn Joson**

Master's Level Therapist  
Indianapolis

### **Jenna Cohen**

Care Coordinator/Life Skills Instructor -  
Home & Community Based  
Indianapolis

### **Shaquita Smith**

Community Health Worker - Employment  
Indianapolis

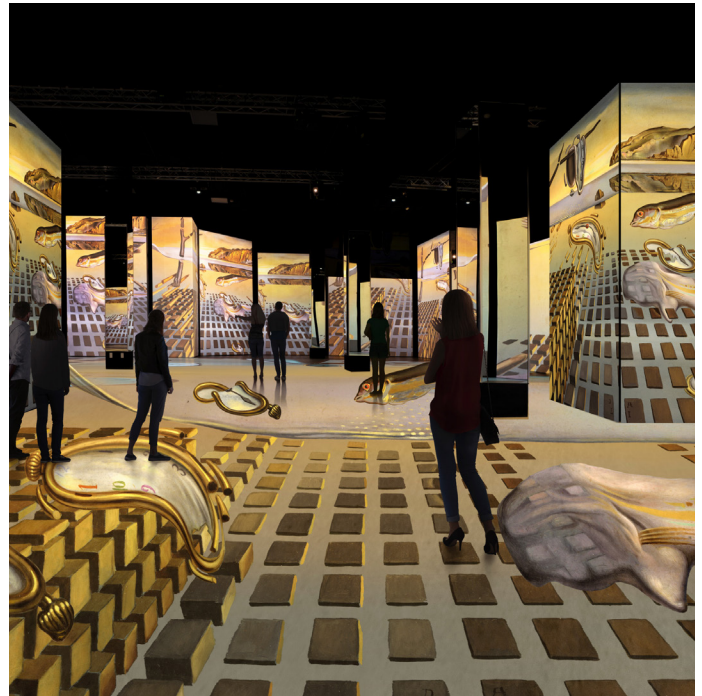
### **Gigi Shipley**

Certified Medical Assistant  
Indianapolis



# Aspire News

Aspire's *Compassion* GALLERY '24



## LAST CALL FOR COMPASSION GALLERY TICKETS

You've got one last chance to purchase tickets for Aspire's Compassion Gallery 2024 — a unique walk-through experience reflecting on and celebrating a year of compassion while enjoying the Winterlights and THE LUME at Newfields! The event takes place on Monday, December 16 and includes complimentary appetizers, desserts and non-alcoholic beverages throughout the evening. There will also be a cash bar. Purchase your tickets [here!](#)

### Nicole Felten

Licensed Clinical Therapist - FQHC Patient Care Team  
Indianapolis

### Sarah Sprewer

Patient Access Specialist  
Indianapolis

### William Vinson

Physician's Assistant  
MACY

## LEBANON

### Brittany Nelson

Patient Access Specialist  
Lebanon

## NOBLESVILLE

### Terri Lee

Senior Director - Health Equity Administration

### Aysha Hussain

Director, Health Information Management Administration

### Johnathan Fletcher

Assessment Technician  
Noblesville

### Aarika White

Lead Psychologist - HSPP Administration

### Gwendolyn Keller-Lusk

Grant Compliance Associate Administration



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR 2025

We don't want you to miss some of Aspire's big community and fundraising events next year! Please save the dates below and make sure to attend. We look forward to seeing you there!



**Stand Up for Kids** - Friday, February 21, 2025,  
7 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 1124 Meridian St.,  
Anderson: <https://e.givesmart.com/events/F8g/>



**Progress House Golf Outing** - Monday, May 19, 2025, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Plum Creek Golf Club,  
12401 Lynnwood Blvd.,  
Carmel



**Aspire Indiana 5k Fun Run**  
- Saturday, September 27, 2025, 7 a.m.-12 p.m.

Conner Prairie, 13400  
Allisonville Road, Fishers