

Healthbeat

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A Culture of Care for Patients

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Improving the patient experience is ever-evolving as Aspire continues to monitor the overall process and work with leadership to amend policies, practices and procedures to ensure a positive patient experience — one that allows each patient the access to compassionate, seamless healthcare that empowers them to thrive.



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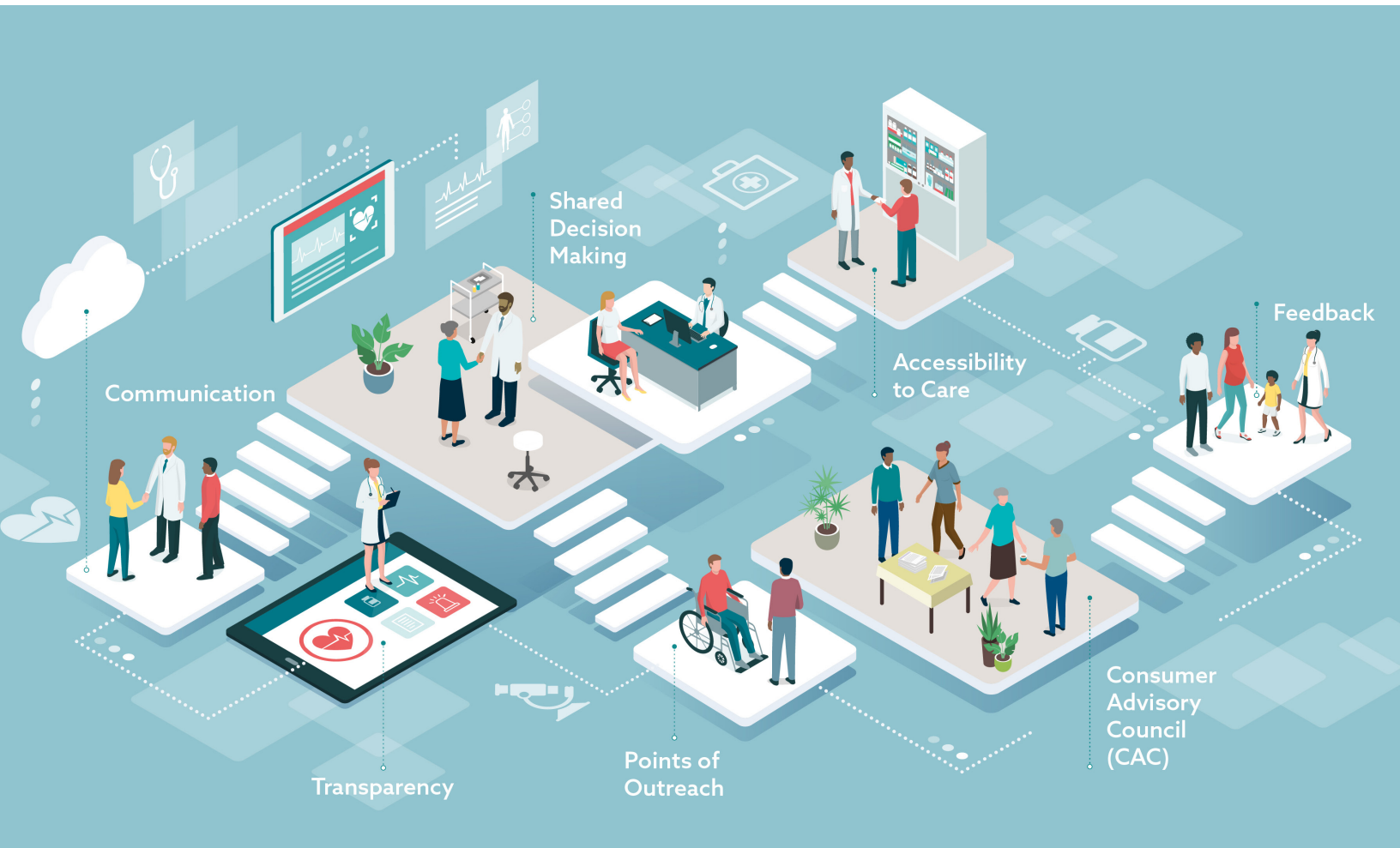
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A Culture of Care for Patients

Aspire is constantly soliciting feedback from patients, surveying them for compliance purposes, and working to address issues and areas of improvement.



That is done through several channels, including the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC), patient surveys and — more recently — a dedicated patient experience coordinator.



Baker

“The patient experience coordinator was developed because of Aspire’s strong commitment to transparency and accessibility,” says Aspire Senior Director of Quality **Dr. Michelle Baker**.

In late 2023, **Spencer Johnson** joined the Aspire team as the new patient experience coordinator. The goal — to institute a specific position where the individual in that role gathers and addresses feedback, both positive and negative, for all Aspire locations and services.



Johnson

Housed under the Quality Team, the patient experience coordinator has cultivated a more transparent, accessible and efficient process to best serve Aspire patients.

Redefining the Patient Experience

Patient-centered care is one of the most important parts of Aspire — our dedication to compassionate care for our patients, ensuring better access and empowering people to live healthier lives. And one of the ways Aspire has continued to cultivate a culture of care is through a patient experience coordinator.

From January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, Aspire received 72 patient grievances and maintained steadily throughout the year a 75% resolution rate — meaning three-quarters of those complaints were addressed to the patient’s satisfaction.

With the patient experience coordinator, Aspire can operate in a cycle of continuous improvement. Instead of looking at each piece of feedback as something needing to be fixed, the patient experience coordinator uses each point of outreach as an opportunity to hear about the experience from the patient’s perspective and examine what could have made the experience better.

Throughout the year various points of data were collected, such as patient demographics, service location and even the way feedback was collected (phone call, email, form). As this information is collected, it continues to develop a picture of Aspire’s patient base, point to gaps in service, and highlight areas for improvement — all on the continuum of improving the patient experience.

Through his role, Johnson acts as a real change agent to positively influence the experience the patient has moving forward. He works in tandem with the CARE team, Consumer Advisory Council (CAC), and other various Aspire partners.

Aspire Director of Practice Operations **Amanda Shepherd** is a member of the CARE team and has worked firsthand with Johnson as it relates to the patient experience. When she or members of her team encounter a patient who has had an experience they want to share formally with Aspire, she sets them up with the information to contact Johnson. Then they work together to resolve the issue.



Shepherd

“Spencer does a great job of filtering the feedback and communicating with the proper staff who need to weigh in on the issue before calling the patients back,” Shepherd says.

Johnson also attends the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) meetings to collect information,

offer insight and provide support. The CAC is a group of individuals who provide consumer input into administrative decisions and clinical programming. The CAC was created because Aspire felt strongly about hearing patient experiences from each area of service, and Johnson expands on that work.

A Transformative Process

By definition, the patient experience coordinator is improving the overall patient experience for Aspire Indiana Health patients.

Prior to having the patient experience coordinator role, Aspire did have a patient grievance policy but it was not widely known to Aspire staff or patients. On occasion, a patient grievance may have found itself back to a manager or Aspire staff member, but with an insufficient ability to respond, grievances were difficult to follow up with.

“It’s really been a transformation building these new processes because many people didn’t even know about the patient grievance process before,” Baker says.

Recognizing the lack of a designated person to manage the process, which created a gap in service, the patient experience coordinator was conceived.

Together, Baker and Johnson have redefined the patient experience policy and moved it out into the open — including attendance at various leadership meetings — to help disperse the policy throughout the organization.

Bridging the Care Gap

“In the nicest way possible, I’ll bug you until we figure something out,” Johnson says.

The patient experience coordinator serves as a bridge between patients and the CARE teams. Johnson isn’t necessarily solving the problems — he’s making sure the problems are heard and



addressed. While the CARE team addresses specific issues, such as finding a new provider if that is what the patient has requested, the patient experience coordinator facilitates the followup and helps the patient understand what is happening in the process.

“I’m here as an ear for them to talk to, and at least half the time, that’s really all people want. They

just want someone to listen to them and feel they are being heard,” he says.

In addition to receiving feedback, the patient experience coordinator also monitors Aspire’s Google reviews as well. If a patient leaves an unsatisfying review, Johnson reaches out to the patient to discuss further. On occasion, once the issue has been resolved, patients have gone in

and removed the initial complaint. It’s just a small testament to the customer service and care the patient experience coordinator is bringing to the patients of Aspire.

“Patients aren’t always necessarily asking for something to be changed,” Baker adds. “They just want to be heard.”

Posted at every Aspire location is a brief, patient-friendly version of the Client Grievance and Appreciation Feedback Process, outlining how to contact Johnson to submit feedback. The policy delineates how to ask for assistance in filling out the grievance form — patients can offer either written or verbal feedback as well as appreciation to any Aspire staff member. If necessary, Aspire staff can assist the patient in completing the form.

While the patient experience coordinator role is still being explored and developed, it has already had a tremendous impact on Aspire’s ability to collect, track, and resolve patient issues.

“It’s more like a process improvement initiative we’ve created for Aspire,” Baker says. “We’re collecting the information and learning more about the effectiveness of our program by a few variables.”

Improving the patient experience is ever-evolving as Aspire continues to monitor the overall process and work with leadership to amend policies, practices and procedures to ensure a positive patient experience — one that allows each patient the access to compassionate, seamless healthcare that empowers them to thrive.



Expanding Pharmacy and Specialty Care at Aspire

Aspire Indiana Health is always looking for ways to better serve our patients and remove barriers to receiving care. When we lead with compassion, innovation follows.



So we are excited about the expansion of our pharmacy services in Noblesville and Anderson including the addition of Specialty Care Services and Comprehensive Disease Management, plus sliding-scale fees for medication.

The Aspire Anderson pharmacy is scheduled to reopen this spring, followed by the Noblesville pharmacy. Both pharmacy locations will be closed for a few weeks prior to reopening during the transition. Getting medications filled will be shifted to other Aspire locations while these locations are closed. We do not anticipate any noticeable service disruption in patient prescription delivery during this transition.

New Partnership with AndHealth

Aspire will make this exciting leap in partnership with [AndHealth](#), a healthcare organization that shares Aspire's mission-driven approach and innovative mindset. They specialize in providing high-quality specialty care and pharmacy services to high-need populations. This collaboration with AndHealth will enable Aspire to extend its sliding-scale fees to pharmacy services, making medication more affordable and accessible to low-income patients.

New Services Coming This Spring

- **Whole-Person Comprehensive Disease Management (CDM)** will be available later this spring to serve patients with progressive chronic conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, psoriasis and migraines. Eligible patients will have access to an experienced care team of clinicians, pharmacists, health

coaches and care navigators and a personalized health plan centered around their unique symptoms. These services may include medication management, lifestyle support, health coaching, nutrition and supplement assistance and wearable health monitoring devices.

- **Specialty Care Services** will roll out this summer at our Noblesville health center, with virtual appointments

also available. They will initially encompass headache neurology, dermatology, rheumatology and gastroenterology needs. This initiative represents a major step forward in Aspire's mission to make comprehensive, patient-centered care more accessible to Hoosiers from every walk of life, regardless of income or identity.

"We also want to thank our current partner, Genoa

Healthcare, which will continue to operate our pharmacies at our Carmel and Indianapolis health centers. Their dedication has set the standard we

will continue to uphold as we move forward with this transition," says **Aspire President & CEO Antony Sheehan**.



Sheehan

"We know change, even when it brings opportunity, is not always easy. We look forward to a successful transition that will help Aspire expand our reach, improve care quality and strengthen treatment options for those we serve."





Aspire Deaf Services Team Bridges the Communication Gap

There are more than 7,000 languages being used around the world today, according to [Ethnologue](#).

One of those languages is American Sign Language (ASL), used by more than a half-million people in the U.S. It is also the second language for many others, making it a widely used form of communication.

National Interpreter Appreciation Day — celebrated the first Wednesday of May — recognizes the vital work of language professionals who help bridge communication gaps.

"I got interested in signing when I was young," says Aspire ASL Interpreter Malena Dell. "Every Saturday morning, there was a signing show that came on, and I was up at 7 a.m. to watch it. Then I started going to Deaf camps, and if there was something that involved ASL, I was there."

"I met my first Deaf friend when I was four or five years old, and I was automatically fascinated by the language," says Aspire ASL Interpreter Christy Talbot. "I also had a friend in elementary school that we would finger spell in class. I knew I wanted to work within the Deaf community."

Talbot and fellow Aspire ASL Interpreters Sarah McWhorter and Haylie Will took ASL as a foreign language in college and were encouraged to become involved in the Deaf community and follow the path of being interpreters.



"I've always loved languages, and when I took ASL as a foreign language and lived in the dorms at the Indiana School for the Deaf for two years, I knew that's what I wanted to do," McWhorter says.

"While still in school, Aspire had reached out to one of my professors looking for a life skills coach back when Aspire used to have the Deaf group home, so that was my introduction to this field," Will says. "Being immersed in the Deaf world at the group home while still learning their language and culture quickly humbled me, but it was an amazing way to grow my skills and inspired me to stick with this career and the mental health field."

Aspire Indiana Health is the only Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) in Indiana with a dedicated Deaf Services team. Aspire employs

four ASL interpreters who provide services for Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened individuals, communicating in ASL, Tactile Sign Language, English Sign Language, Sign Supported Speech and spoken English. Aspire also has 10 employees who are either Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

"I was born Deaf and grew up using multiple languages as part of the different cultures in my home," says Aspire Deaf Services Program Manager Silvia Lopez. "That works well for a career in mental health because clients come from all walks of life with different capabilities and needs."

Aspire's interpreters serve more than 150 Deaf patients, spread across 17 Indiana counties, and attended Mental Health Interpreter Training (MHIT), a program that provides training for interpreters who work with individuals in mental health settings.

"Aspire having interpreters on staff promotes equitable services," Will says. "We have specialized training in interpreting mental health and are able to provide consistency and continuity of care for our clients."

"I also love the advocacy part of the job and educating hearing people so they are more empathetic and understanding of the Deaf community and Deaf needs," McWhorter says.

With approximately 10,000 certified ASL interpreters in the U.S. — a ratio of 50 Deaf or Hard of Hearing ASL users to one interpreter, there is an ongoing shortage of interpreters, especially in the healthcare field, as the demand for their services grows.

"The Deaf population is more likely to have lower health literacy due to communication barriers and lack of information access," Will says. "The work we do at Aspire is so important because it is so much more than just giving Deaf clients a word-for-word English to ASL translation. An interpreter working in the healthcare field must have proficient health literacy to extract the meaning

of the English communication, and make the information visually and conceptually accurate in ASL."



"Interpreters are some of the most well-rounded human beings with a wealth of knowledge in so many areas," Lopez says.

"They are the best examples of teamwork and work so hard to help with effective communication for their clients and the Deaf community at large."

The Deaf Services team at Aspire — including Lopez, the ASL interpreters, Deaf Therapist Leesa McClelland, Case Manager Heather Smith and Life Skills Instructor Kelly Lowe — appreciates the chance to collaborate, learn from each other and offer added support.

"I really enjoy watching cultural connections made," Dell says. "I love seeing when a hearing person and a Deaf person begin to understand each other on a deeper level than just the language."

"At Aspire, we have the unique opportunity to provide access to mental health and primacy care services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers and accommodate them in a way others can't," Talbot says. "We are leading the future."



Getting to Know Rich Trotman



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

As part of the Aspire team, I'm here to support and highlight our people, patients and partners. Though I am empowered to lead the process in a specific context, it is the collaboration that makes us successful.

What do you like most about working at Aspire?

The culture here is unmatched and unlike most corporate environments I've experienced over the years. Working with people who are driven by helping others versus hitting a number truly makes a difference.

What is something you enjoy outside of work?

Immersive experiences that are thought provoking, witty and creative, with great food and great company.

What is your dream vacation destination and why?

Costa Rica. It was given to me in a vision.



Rich Trotman joined Aspire Indiana Health in September 2024 as the Multimedia Content Producer. He is a graduate from Ball State University with a Bachelor of Music in Music Technology and a Master of Music in Music Composition. He also minored in Digital Media. Here's more about Rich!

How would you describe your role as the Multimedia Content Producer?

A hybrid multimedia content role that encompasses all phases of the creative process. This includes pre-production planning, capturing and recording, post-production editing, caption generation and delivery.



Employee Spotlight: Justin Nelson

Clinical Manager, Crisis Services



Originally from Utah, Justin Nelson moved to Indiana more than a decade ago. He spent time working in home-based services at Meridian Health Services before he started his career at Aspire, where he has honed his crisis management skills for the past 10 years. Initially, Justin began at Aspire completing intakes and leading the substance use groups at Hamilton County Community Corrections. Eventually, Justin was tapped to provide individual therapy as well as lead substance use groups for adults and children beyond the correctional facility. After a few years in individual therapy and some organizational changes, Justin once again provided intakes for incoming patients. He met with them as they began their journey with Aspire to establish a base for their treatment.

As time continued, Aspire acquired the accreditation to become a CCBHC (Certified Community Behavior Health Clinic), which

required the crisis team to rapidly grow. For decades, crisis services had mainly been handled through the call center. Aspire needed to establish a mobile crisis unit and a crisis stabilization facility. During this time, Justin applied for the clinical manager of crisis, hoping to help build out the new crisis management team. "I like to say I've done every job a therapist does at Aspire. Every single one of them. I have a good basis from those experiences and also working with crisis services. I understand how crisis works."

"When you do intakes or are working with someone in crisis, you don't get to see the end results of your work often," he says. "But every once in a while, you do hear from someone about the work you did together in treatment or that a certain interaction was really life-changing. That's what I enjoy the most."

Justin's zeal for his work and for Aspire shines bright. "Aspire has always been supportive. I've always appreciated the culture here," he mentions. When he isn't spending time with his family or working, Justin is training for the Mini Marathon for the second year in a row with two good friends.





Social Media Hits

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



Aspire News

Women's Health Clinic Launches

We are excited to announce the launch of our [Women's Health Clinic](#), led by **Dr. Joanna Chambers** and **Dr. Olivia Smith**! Located at Aspire's Noblesville Health Center, 17840 Cumberland Road, the mission of the Women's Health Clinic is to care for mothers and caretakers from pregnancy onward as well as children from birth through high school. The clinic is based on a medical home model — where obstetrics (OB) care, psychiatry and pediatric care are integrated — working together under one roof toward a common goal of improved health for caregivers and their children. [Check out the flyer for more information.](#)



Swing into Action at Golf Outing

Get those foursomes registered for a beautiful day at the golf course for our Golf for Recovery outing! Join us on Monday, May 19 at Plum Creek Golf Club in Carmel for a day of fresh air, friendly competition and fundraising for a great cause. This annual event supports Progress House and our mission to provide vital resources for individuals in recovery from substance use disorder. Grab your spot today — [register here!](#)



Aspire Featured on American Dream Network

A recent episode of American Dream Network's "Selling Indianapolis" featured Aspire Indiana Health! "Selling Indianapolis" is a national lifestyle show highlighting local real estate, businesses and organizations. Host Andy Liechty talked with Vice President of Community Partnerships **dianna Huddleston** and Vice President of Service Access **Vanessa Pataky** along with a former Aspire patient about Aspire's services and the comprehensive healthcare Aspire offers Indiana's most vulnerable Hoosiers across Central Indiana. [Check out the episode here.](#)





Family Recovery Court Celebration

Congratulations to Aspire’s Youth & Family Team on celebrating one year of involvement with Madison County’s Family Recovery Court! Partnered with Madison County DCS, Madison County Courts, Firefly and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), Aspire helps provide intensive services and support to families struggling with substance use disorder (SUD). Twenty-two parents are currently being served, who are receiving multiple services per week plus drug screening and court appearances that provide both support and accountability. The ultimate goal is for each parent in the program to achieve sobriety, obtain viable employment, safe housing, and to be reunified with their children. The first Family Recovery Court graduation is on



May 21, and Aspire will have four graduating participants who have been fully reunited with their children. Thanks to our team: **Vivian Hinders, Valerie Anderson, Courtney Tanner and Anna Marhoefer.**

Boone County Housing Task Force Becomes Official

Shortly after starting her role as Aspire Community Engagement Coordinator, **Diadra Spalding** began



Spalding

meeting in 2023 with a small group of leaders in the Boone County community discussing the county’s housing crisis and what could be done about it. That group of leaders has grown and recently became [official as the Boone County Housing Task Force](#), advocating for more affording housing in Boone County as well as educating the community about existing resources and all of the various housing-related assistance. Thanks to Diadra for all her efforts toward immediate housing needs in Boone County as well as the long-term process of helping find solutions in the housing industry.

Welcome New Employees

ANDERSON

Sherry Fuqua, Life Skills Coach - Full-Time Hartung

Melinda Garrett, Staff Nurse Hoak

Taylor Hunnicutt, Community Health Worker - Housing Ward

Kenzie Short, Peer Specialist DeHaven

Adrienne Steele, Life Skills Coach - Full-Time Hartung

Nicole Wilbur, Patient Access Specialist Hoak

Darkela Williams, Certified Medical Assistant Hoak

Emily Wright, Residential Recovery Technician Mockingbird Hill

CARMEL

Monyca Belton, Care Coordinator/Life Skills Instructor - Home & Community Based Carmel

Autumn Brown, Crisis Response Provider Carmel

Melodie Howes-Blaze, Crisis Response Technician Carmel

Treyvon Matthews, Care Coordinator/Life Skills Instructor - Youth & Family HCBS Carmel

Ebony Teague, Crisis Response Technician Carmel

ELWOOD

Donna Barker, Licensed Therapist - Outpatient Elwood

INDIANAPOLIS

Dawn Blanchard, Assessment Technician Willowbrook

Courtney Schuler, Care Coordinator/Life Skills Instructor - Youth & Family HCBS Willowbrook

NOBLESVILLE

Mila Behny, License Eligible Therapist - Youth & Family Noblesville

Sara Godfrey, Director, Practice Operations - Crisis Noblesville

Kaitlynn McIntyre, Care Coordinator/Life Skills Instructor - Youth & Family HCBS Noblesville

Sahara Walker, Building Services Administrator Administration



Antony Sheehan
President & Executive Officer

In last month’s [Accent on Compassion](#) feature by Aspire Indiana Health President and CEO Antony Sheehan, he shares his fascination with LEGO sets, how the company’s humble beginnings led to a global creative empire, and how Aspire, too, can learn something from LEGO.



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 visit [here](#).



Jenna Flanery, License Eligible Therapist - Y&F Home & Community - DeHaven, has been doing an incredible job building relationships with our partner schools. Jenna builds relationships with external providers and families and does well connecting with the clients she serves. She embodies Aspire's values and works hard to make an impact on the population served.



Kaylee Jones, Crisis Response Provider - Carmel, does frequent crisis checks with a client and has really helped this client feel seen and heard. Kaylee does a great job connecting with this client and helping validate her feelings while also problem solving ways to work through concerns. Kaylee has communicated with me frequently as the client's therapist to promote collaboration, and I've definitely seen progress for this client in her journey as Kaylee has been working with her!



Kelly Stamper, Medical Records Auditor - DeHaven, very quickly prepared documents and notes for court for a client and family. This allowed the therapist not to have to go to court. Kelly was very thorough and efficient in getting the family what was needed, despite having very short notice.



Cyera Young, Office Coordinator - DeHaven, is a wonderful office coordinator. She is kind, compassionate and helpful. She is always ready to answer questions when you have them, and always ready to help with any problems you may face. She really cares about our clients as if they were her own family, making sure they get the care and support they need and deserve. She is always willing to lend an ear if you just need someone to listen. She is definitely a shining star. DeHaven is so very lucky to have an office coordinator like her, and Aspire is lucky to have such an amazing caring person.



Darrian Southern, Peer Specialist - DeHaven, goes above and beyond to help anytime she can. In the time she has been with Aspire, I have seen her grow in the work she does, and the impact she has on the clients is amazing to see.



Brittani Case, Scheduler - Patient Access - Carmel, is the glue that holds Same Day Access (SDA) madness together. Brittani has been an integral part of SDA coordination since the beginning. Her ability to manage multiple tasks and stay organized is unmatched. Brittani has onboarded several people to her team so we can continue to ensure the process we have implemented runs smoothly and clients can get into services and be seen as quickly as possible. She is a bright light, and her positive attitude and willingness to go above and beyond is an example for us all. She is one of the reasons SDA has continued to be a success, and we are so fortunate to have her onboard.



Cindy Jeske, CMA - Noblesville, worked very hard to make sure the day went smoothly after there were several calloffs. Thank you!



Zoe Rodriguez, CMA - Noblesville, was so helpful after several calloffs, working hard to ensure the day continued to go smoothly. Thanks so much!