



Reaching Dreams

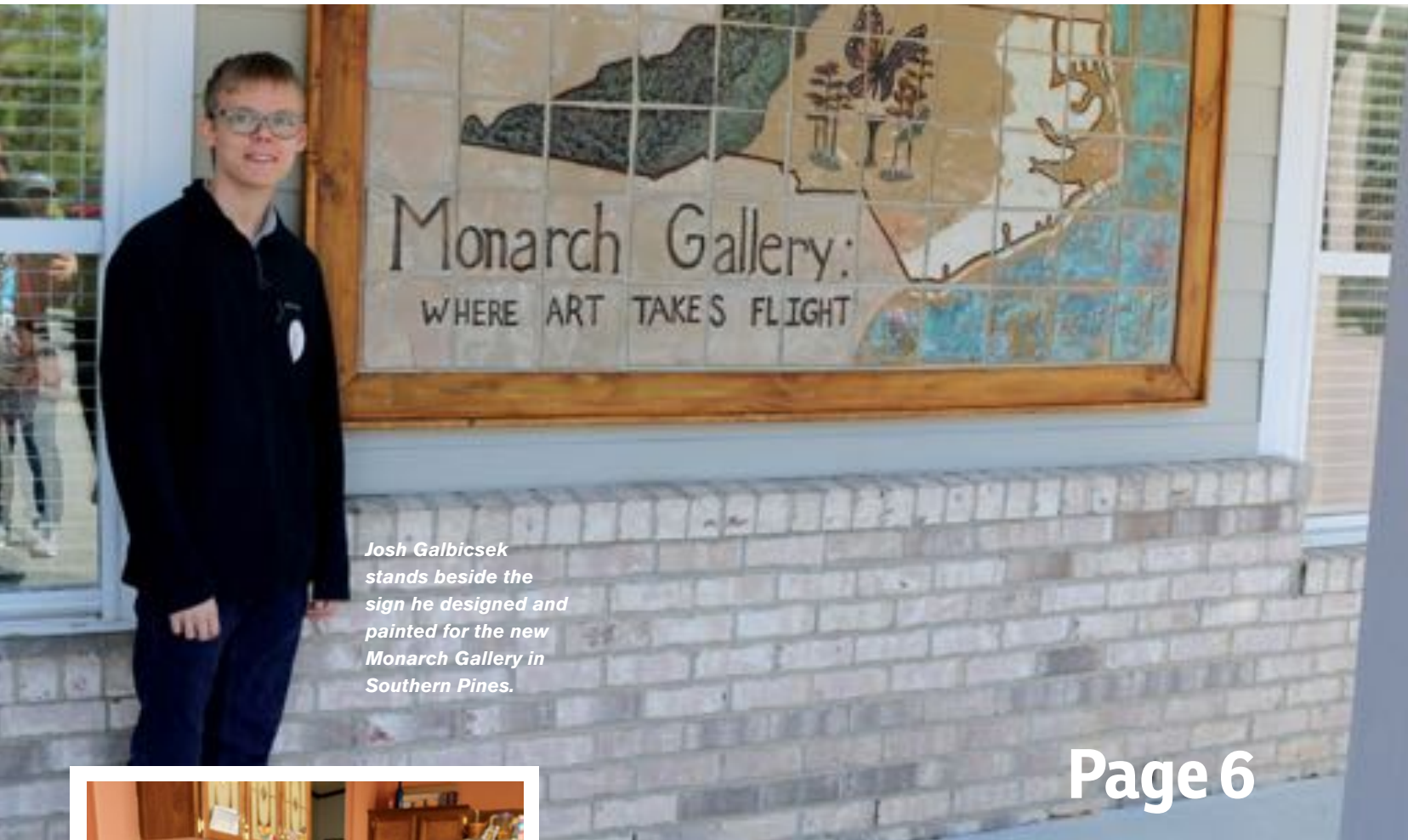
PAGE 8

SUPPORTED LIVING MODEL PROMOTES INDEPENDENCE

*Program offers flexibility and a new way to achieve
residential success for people with disabilities*



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Josh Galbicsek stands beside the sign he designed and painted for the new Monarch Gallery in Southern Pines.

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On the cover: Michelle Roberson poses with her brother Chris Hildebrand, who moved into an apartment with his longtime friend Dan Stanford. The roommates enjoy the flexibility and independence of Monarch's supported living model. "His face lights up when you talk about being an independent adult. He never had that before," Roberson said of her brother.



STRAIGHT FROM PEGGY



Spring has officially arrived. In the spirit of this welcomed season of renewal and inspiration, we continue to identify new, innovative ways to improve the lives of the nearly 30,000 people we support.

One way is through a newer residential model that offers independence. On the cover of this issue, Chris Hildebrand is featured with his sister Michelle Roberson. Chris, 44, and his longtime friend, Dan Stanford, 49, moved in together last fall and are supported by Monarch. Read their story on Page 8. This supported living environment allows these roommates, and the 11 others who receive this service at Monarch, to live on their terms with help from their families and one of our community support teams. This model aligns with our own philosophy to help people make their own informed choices about where they live, learn, work, play and worship.

This spring, we began offering a brand new service in Wake County. Monarch's Behavioral Health Urgent Care is the first of its kind in Raleigh and offers people who are experiencing mental illness and/or substance use crises a place where they can get help. See Page 3. Right now, millions of Americans are not getting the mental health they need. It's a crisis so profound that it is overwhelming emergency departments and the healthcare system. Why? Too few treatment options and a shortage of professionals to respond to people who are in crisis. This center is one innovative solution.

Monarch's new Care Management Team in Stanly County is creatively addressing another of the system's most pressing issues – the separate treatment of mental health and physical health. This team is bridging the gap by fostering collaboration between our mental health services and primary care. When Monarch received a two-year, \$3.2 million federal grant last fall to launch the Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) in Albemarle, care management services were among the first to be developed; see Page 5. Many of the people we support

face barriers, from a lack of familiarity with the mental health system, issues with transportation and housing to food insecurities, which can negatively impact engagement in treatment. With an eye on removing those barriers, Monarch's Care Management Team connects people to needed resources.

Collaboration and care management will be even more critical as North Carolina transitions to Medicaid Managed Care this year – one of the most significant changes to our state's Medicaid program in over 40 years. We have included a number and web address that offers details about these important changes.

To learn more about North Carolina's Medicaid Transformation, call (800) 662-7030 or visit: www.ncdhhs.gov/medicaid-transformation.

As I think about what spring represents, it is also about purging and pruning. We are making a change to this publication. This year, you will receive only one instead of two issues of *Reaching Dreams*. In the fall, you will get an impact report to keep you updated on company activities, the effects of our work across North Carolina and our financial health. We will continue our regular email communication to provide company and industry updates and the compelling people stories that inspire us all. If you don't receive our emails, please visit www.MonarchNC.org to subscribe. You can also stay connected with us on social media.

As we enjoy spring, and the seasons that follow, we will continue our work as a provider and as compassionate and concerned citizens. The name of this publication, *Reaching Dreams*, is not without purpose. With an exceptional board and leadership team, wonderful staff members, amazing community partners and friends, like you, I am filled with optimism about how we can continue to help people achieve their dreams. Together, let's seize these opportunities.

Peggy S. Terhune, Ph.D.
Monarch President/CEO

Reaching Dreams is the official Monarch publication for the community, people we support and their families.

Our Mission

We are committed to supporting, educating, and empowering people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, mental illness, and substance use disorders to choose and achieve what is important to them.

Our Vision

We will lead the way in the state to creatively support people with disabilities in growing toward their potential, reaching their dreams, and making their own informed choices about where they live, learn, work, play, and worship. Through partnerships and relationships with our community, we will offer a variety of innovative quality services and supports and will promote advocacy, awareness, education, training, employment, and residential opportunities.

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Direct Support Professional Larry Butler (right) and Tony McKinney pose for a selfie.



DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS' COMPASSION, ENCOURAGEMENT AND DEPENDABILITY HELP PEOPLE THRIVE

Compassion, encouragement and dependability are at the center of the bond between the people we support and Monarch's Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

Because they develop and maintain trusted relationships with individuals and families, the people we support thrive in their communities. DSPs do much more than aid people with their daily affairs and intimate needs that include managing medications, meals, dressing, mobility, vocational training, respite care and other in-home services. DSPs are change-agents who help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and mental illness lead self-directed lives.

Over 55 percent of Monarch's statewide workforce are Direct Support Professionals who, in many ways, are the most influential individuals in the lives of persons we support because they compassionately offer a shoulder to lean on, supportive words of encouragement, and are the dependable, guiding hand in helping individuals achieve their full potential.

Larry Butler works with Tony McKinney at the Mainstream Home in Asheboro and says the importance of working directly with people is creating a connection.

"The people we support depend on us to be

"This has been by far the most impactful job I've ever had." - LARRY BUTLER

on time for work, so they can be on time for their day program, job or volunteer work. A machine isn't waiting for you here, people are," says Butler. "At the end of the day, you may be the only person these individuals feel like they can connect to or can depend on."

Building on that connection is critical for DSPs to encourage the individuals they work with to achieve what is important to them.

Michelle Scales, who works at Monarch's Carmel Forest Drive Home in Charlotte, has been in her role as a DSP for 14 years. She was thrilled when Brent Powell, her person supported, was extended a job opportunity. Powell, who has been employed for over a year, is currently pursuing computer classes to enhance his skills, preparing for a promotion or additional employment opportunities, as well as working toward living independently.

"It was exciting to watch him fill out applications, make phone calls and speak to managers about being a part of their team when we were out in the community," Scales explains.

Encouraging community integration like Scales did with Powell helps shift the narrative about what people with disabilities or mental illness can do.

"DSPs are instrumental to helping the people we support grow and thrive. They are also influential in advocating with and for the people we support to ensure communities embrace all citizens and that there is a safe space for them to achieve their full potential," says Executive Vice President for Long-Term Services and Support Jim Kelley.

One thing is certain: growth is a two-way street in direct care work. Just as the people we support grow, learn and achieve new things, the people who work with them every day also grow personally and professionally as well.

"I got into this line of work expecting to help individuals grow, but I ended up growing with them. To me, this has been by far the most impactful job I've ever had," adds Butler. ●

By Nathalie Santa Maria

MONARCH NEWS AND NOTES



Monarch's new Behavioral Health Urgent Care in Raleigh opened March 25. Photo credit: BHUC Practice Administrator Brian Maxey.

MONARCH OPENS FIRST BEHAVIORAL HEALTH URGENT CARE IN WAKE COUNTY



New facility provides critical crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders and serves as an alternative to hospital emergency departments.

Behavioral healthcare is changing to meet the mental health and substance use disorder needs in Wake County with the recent opening of Monarch's Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC), a designated intervention and treatment facility. The BHUC, located at 319 Chapanoke Rd., Ste. 120, Raleigh, opened in March.

Monarch's Vice President of Operations for Outpatient Services Robin Henderson-Wiley explained that the BHUC provides assessment, stabilization and psychiatric intervention for individuals ages 4 and older who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. A

multidisciplinary team of licensed therapists and experienced medical professionals support and advocate for individuals seeking treatment.

"The BHUC is a natural extension of our existing behavioral health offices in Wake County. Those in need of mental health support are often forced to wait weeks for an appointment, but at Monarch we work to see people on the same day," said Henderson-Wiley, who oversees behavioral health operations in the eastern part of the state. "The BHUC will assist in getting those in need of the critical mental health services that most likely are not available or accessible in a

traditional emergency or trauma department."

The BHUC provides immediate attention and links to support, treatment and resources for mental health crises, but serves as an alternative to seeking assistance through the traditional community hospital emergency department where waiting for treatment can be lengthy. For more details about the new urgent care including hours of operation, visit MonarchNC.org/BHUCWake or call (919) 703-2845. ●

MONARCH NEWS AND NOTES



Members from Monarch's Marketing and Communications team, A Big Idea Group, partner marketing firm, and Kim Howard (center), a person Monarch supports who is featured in one of the award-winning videos, pictured at the award's ceremony.

Monarch's "HEROES" video campaign earns first place public relations award

Monarch's Marketing and Communications department was awarded a first place Crown Award during the annual Public Relations Society of America's Charlotte Chapter Queen City Public Relations Awards presentation. Monarch's "HEROES" campaign won in the nonprofit/government video category.

The Queen City Public Relations Awards recognize practitioners who, in the judgment of their professional peers, have successfully researched, planned, implemented and evaluated communication campaigns with exemplary professional skill, creativity and resourcefulness.

"I am proud to be associated with such

a professional and cutting-edge marketing and communications team. I am also proud to have our company honored among Fortune 100 and 500 companies in the Charlotte market. We have only just begun!" said Blake Martin, executive vice president and chief development officer at Monarch.

Kim Howard is one of the people Monarch supports who shared her story on camera and accompanied the marketing and communications team to accept the award.

"I hope that by telling people how Monarch helped me, more people reach out because Monarch saved my life," said Howard, who received services from Monarch after



suffering a traumatic brain injury following a car accident.

The "HEROES" marketing campaign was a partnership with the creative agency, A Big Idea Group. The videos can be viewed on MonarchFilms.org.

CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MONARCH'S NEW CCBHC



Care Management Team Pictured (L-R): Gregory Crawford, Yolanda Pass, Chris McLamb, Paul Stroud, Monique Lucas, Brittany Cowan, Christina Vest, and Jamise Dieme

When Monarch received a two-year, \$3.2 million federal grant to launch a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) in Stanly County, new care management services were among the first to be developed.

"Care management services are one of the most critical components of the CCBHC as they support patient outreach, education, and engagement," said CCBHC Nurse Care Manager Monique Lucas, BSN, RN, CCM, CCCTM, who oversees the Care Management Team of ten. "Traditionally, these services have been difficult

to provide because they are often not supported by Medicaid and other insurers, but they add a much-needed level of support during the treatment process. The grant has allowed Monarch to extend these services to the people of Stanly County."

Many of the people Monarch supports face external barriers, from a lack of familiarity with the mental health system to food insecurity to a need for transportation, which can negatively impact engagement in treatment for mental illness or substance use disorders. With an eye on removing

those barriers, Monarch's Care Management Team connects individuals to needed resources both within Monarch and across the community.

"On any given day, our team is providing the extra support people need," said Lucas. "They may help a new patient navigate the Monarch intake and assessment process or call to check in with patients who are between scheduled visits. They may connect a person who is in need of food support to connect with available community resources. Or, they may be in the community educating people on the services Monarch's CCBHC provides."

The Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant awarded last fall allows Monarch to provide vital, expanded services in Stanly County. Over the next two years, Monarch estimates it will serve over 2,000 adults and children with serious mental illness, emotional disturbance, long-term chronic addiction, mild or moderate mental illness and substance use disorders, as well as complex health conditions. Monarch's newly established CCBHC is located at the current behavioral health outpatient office at 350 Pee Dee Ave. in Albemarle. ●

By Laurie Weaver



Join Our Team

Monarch is searching for great talent across North Carolina. If you care as much as we do about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illness and substance use disorders and want to join a growing team of professionals, visit MonarchNC.org/Careers or call (704) 986-1550 to start your application today.



MONARCH EVENTS



Top left: Communications Manager Nathalie Santa Maria assists the newest Texas Ranger player, Monty, prepare to bat in his first Miracle League baseball game.

Top right: (L-R) Meg Schults, Alesia Bailey, Tamara Bruening, Marie Gunther and Donna Bailey, staff members at the Starbucks in Aberdeen, volunteered greeting visitors during MCACC's "Art Runs Wild" event.

Bottom: Members from Monarch's Marketing and Communications Department and A Big Idea Group volunteer at the Spring 2019 Miracle League kick-off game on Support Inclusion Saturday.



AWARD-WINNING CAMPAIGN GROWS AND CELEBRATES BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT INCLUSION

Support Inclusion Saturday 2019 took place on Saturday, March 23 and the award-winning* campaign drew great participation and registry growth in its third year.

The campaign aims to harness our collective power to foster understanding and dispel myths about people with developmental disabilities and mental illness. Support Inclusion Saturday hosts a registry of businesses and organizations that offer inclusive employment or programming opportunities in North Carolina to raise awareness and support for inclusion.

The campaign was kicked off on Friday, March 22 at Monarch's Creative Arts and Community Center (MCACC), a day program in Southern Pines, for its gallery exhibit, "Art Runs Wild." More than 100 people attended the event in support of MCACC's artists. The Support

Inclusion 2019 registry saw a 24 percent growth and welcomed new businesses like the New Bern Golf & Country Club, McDonald's in Whiteville, Extra Elite Training and The Park Church in Charlotte, JCI, and Tillman's Barbershop in Albemarle.


Several members of the Marketing and Communications Department used #InclusionSaturday as an opportunity to give back. They volunteered with the Miracle League at the Keith Family YMCA in Charlotte, and assisted children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities hit a home run and play their best game to kick off the spring baseball season. The custom-designed baseball complex has a completely wheelchair accessible surface that allows participants of all abilities to take the field.


"Providers aren't the only organizations fostering inclusive change. Support Inclusion Saturday celebrates those community partners who model inclusion every day. Encouraging people to support these businesses around the state helps generate a dialogue about the importance of inclusion while creating new volunteer or employment opportunities for people with disabilities," said Dr. Peggy Terhune, Monarch President/CEO. "We want to thank everyone who helps to make each year of Support Inclusion Saturday successful."

Visit InclusionSaturday.org to find businesses and organizations committed to inclusion that you can support year-round. ●

By Nathalie Santa Maria

*Support Inclusion Saturday won The Arc of North Carolina's 2018 Chapter Innovation Award




 Monarch

IT'S NOT JUST ADULTS.

OVER 64% OF YOUTH WITH DEPRESSION DO NOT RECEIVE ANY MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT. STOP THE TREND.

SECU Youth Crisis Center, a Monarch program, is the first of its kind in North Carolina for ages 6–17. We are currently accepting referrals.

MonarchNC.org
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Oak City Cares, Monarch partnership aims to improve mental health care for people experiencing homelessness

Oak City Cares, a multiservice site in Raleigh for adults, children and families who are experiencing homelessness and need a single source that can connect them to social services, housing, healthcare and other important community resources, is receiving on-site mental health services and support from Monarch. Monarch is partnering with Alliance Behavioral Health, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh and other community partners to provide quality, behavioral health services to people with complex clinical needs.

“Oak City Cares will serve as a hub for an array of services from multiple agencies working together to meet the unique needs of individuals and families experiencing

homelessness, needs that we know go much further than just housing. Having a Monarch therapist onsite is so helpful for connecting Oak City guests directly with the behavioral healthcare services they need,” explained Oak City Cares Executive Director Kathryn V. Johnson, MS, LMFT.

Monarch will provide a licensed therapist onsite for approximately 16 hours per week, but will not provide long-term recurrent services, although people may be seen up to three times at the site while coordinating ongoing care. The therapist will connect individuals to services with Monarch, reconnect them with an existing provider, identify other community providers or transition them to the appropriate level of

care. People seeking mental health services who arrive at Oak City in crisis will be referred to Monarch’s new Behavioral Health Urgent Care in Raleigh to help reduce hospital emergency visits.

“We are so fortunate to have Monarch as a partner at Oak City Cares,” Johnson commented. “We know that one of the greatest barriers to accessing services for those who experience homelessness is transportation. Having Monarch onsite at Oak City Cares will help to increase access to behavioral healthcare services for a very vulnerable population.”

Oak City Cares opened in April. For more details, visit: www.oakcitycares.org. ●



ROOMMATES THRIVE IN SUPPORTED LIVING MODEL THAT PROMOTES INDEPENDENCE

PROGRAM OFFERS FLEXIBILITY AND NEW WAY TO ACHIEVE RESIDENTIAL SUCCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, REUNITES OLD FRIENDS

Pictured above (L-R): Dan Stanford with his parents Bill and Andree Stanford and Michelle Roberson, Chris's sister, and Chris Hildebrand pose in Dan's and Chris's apartment. The longtime friends became roommates in October.

For over 15 years, Dan Stanford and Christopher Hildebrand called each other friend. The two men now call each other roommate since moving into a comfortable, two-bedroom apartment in Raleigh last October.

Stanford, 49, and Hildebrand, 44, are living independently – on their terms with the help of their families, friends and Monarch's community support staff in a supported living environment.

Community Solutions Team Leader Michelle Lawrence, who works closely with the Stanford and Hildebrand families and others in the greater Raleigh, Clayton and Chapel Hill areas, explained how the roommates secured the apartment and oversee the living environment with the help of family, friends and support services.

"We provide the supervision, health and safety monitoring and the hiring of the community specialists," Lawrence explained of Monarch's role in the supported living model, where they are currently serving 11 people. Because of healthcare needs, Stanford requires



24-hour staff supports, while Hildebrand is assisted only when he is awake. Both men previously lived in group homes operated by other agencies.

Shelia Lee, Director of Program Operations Sheila Lee, who oversees Monarch's supported living and several community programs, said this relatively new service option is based on a person's choice to live independently. An amendment to North Carolina's Innovations Waiver in 2016 expanded the scope of available services to include a supported living option, opening doors for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to live in their own homes with the supports they choose.

"There are instances where some don't believe people with I/DD can live alone. If there is support from families and guardians, our team will do whatever we can to provide the support necessary for people to achieve their goals to live independently.

I say, 'let's do it!' We'll help to make it work," Lee exclaimed. "I'm excited about this living model, which provides the necessary flexibility for people to seek residential options that are best suited to meet their own needs. It's all about what people want to help them live their best lives."

Once they learned about the supported service and believed it could be an option, the Stanford and Hildebrand families researched the living situation that seemed to closely align with what Dan and Christopher desired. The availability of Monarch's community support specialists trained in American Sign Language was also a priority because both men are deaf, visually impaired and live with autism.

Stanford and Hildebrand initially formed their friendship years ago at a day program. But their lives took different paths. A care coordinator with Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, who has worked with both men, facilitated communication to reconnect the

two families. Their friendship picked up where they left it.

Hildebrand and Stanford are now the typical roommates who enjoy watching movies, making dinner and helping each other out. Both families are delighted when they see photos of the roommates' activities such as decorating the Christmas tree, writing out holiday cards and enjoying outings, which are often coordinated by the Monarch team. Lawrence said the two are thriving in the short time since moving in together last fall.

"His face lights up when you talk about being an independent adult. He never had that before," explained Michelle Roberson, Hildebrand's sister. "Finding an organization (Monarch) that gets it and supports them, and to see that they both succeed is incredible," she added. "I am forever grateful every day for their supported situation."

By Melissa Tanferno



Jayden, 13, who loves learning about reptiles, shows In-Home Therapy Team Leader Merry Smith her chameleon. She says reptiles “are very calming.”

Joey, 6, shows Smith, who incorporates creative play into therapy, how to use one of his favorite toys.

IN-HOME THERAPY HELPS CHILDREN OVERCOME MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

Service provides life-changing support to families

A therapist's guidance can be a life-changing, critical intervention for children trying to overcome the effects of traumatic life events such as the death of a loved one, abuse or watching a family member struggle with substance use.

For these children, Monarch's In-Home Therapy Services (IHTS) can be a life-saving bridge to becoming mentally healthy. IHTS provides treatment and case management for at-risk children on the brink of being removed and placed outside of the home.

IHTS Team Leader Merry Smith, a licensed professional counselor, aims to provide therapy that can serve as hope for those children. During in-home visits, Smith works to manage the child's behavior following a diagnosis of a serious mental illness that makes it difficult to pursue traditional, office-based outpatient care. After the child's initial assessment and once a crisis plan is in place, IHTS typically lasts six months and is followed by ongoing behavioral health outpatient services as the child works toward recovery.

Three teams deliver Monarch's IHTS, which can accommodate a total of 36 families covering Stanly, Rowan, Davidson, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg and Union counties under the auspices of Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, the managed care organization for those counties.

A full-time team leader and a part-time qualified professional (QP) make up each team. Smith is joined by fellow IHTS Team Leaders Melissa Barbee and Katie Gartland, with administrative and organizational support provided by Qualified Professionals Hanna Bundy and Marva McCain.

Monarch also provides Intensive In-Home Service, similar to IHTS, available for children with profound mental health issues who require the availability of around-the-clock crisis assistance.

Regardless of the child's mental health diagnosis, Smith feels her initial step as a therapist is building trust.

“I make sure they don't feel judged. I meet them where they are and see what they need,” explained Smith. “I give them space and let them know they are in control of the situation. I let them create their own boundaries. Letting them know they are in control puts them at ease.”

After receiving her bachelor's degree in general studies from Indiana University, Smith was unaware she was heading for a career as a licensed therapist. She moved from Indiana to North Carolina to work at a family member's summer camp for at-risk youth when she was 28. She believes this opportunity changed her life. While working full time at the camp, Smith went

on to earn her master's degree. She has been a Monarch therapist for the past four years.

Most days, Smith's schedule is busy with driving to and from each child's home, providing therapeutic services and linking families with critical community resources. As she travels, Smith fields phone calls from families, the qualified professional who supports her and prepares for the next visit.

Smith said one of her favorite parts of her job is getting to know the families: “Each family is different. Every child is different and just seeing how they evolve is interesting.”

How do the families feel about having Smith as a resource? Jennifer Dirzuweit relies on Smith's professional suggestions in working with her 6-year-old son Joey.

“Merry gives me ideas of what to look for because Joey is a puzzle. I can't figure out all the pieces,” she said appreciatively.

Fred Nunen, guardian of his 13-year-old granddaughter Victoria, looks forward to her visits. Smith serves as his sounding board. “She's helping me to understand my granddaughter. She is my support,” Nunen explained. “I've seen a good change in my granddaughter after the sessions with Merry.” ●

By Melissa Tanferno

WHY I SUPPORT MONARCH



“It has been my privilege to be involved as a volunteer chef with Monarch for almost a year now for the Friday cooking classes. Getting to know and spending time with both the program participants and staff at Monarch has been a great experience. In our culinary classes the students are developing personal and practical skills, working with others in a team environment, along with building their self-confidence... and have made some pretty darn good food along the way. I have very much enjoyed my time as a Monarch volunteer and I look forward to our future 'culinary adventures!'”

— **Karen Cusano**, a community volunteer who facilitates a weekly cooking class at Monarch's Creative Arts and Community Center in Southern Pines.



Program participants at MCACC enjoy learning new cooking skills during Chef Karen's weekly cooking class.

Monarch's first ever Staff Giving Campaign raises nearly \$13,000

As part of the culmination to its year-long 60th anniversary celebration in 2018, Monarch held its first-ever Staff Giving Campaign last fall, inviting employees from across the company to support Monarch services and programs through a personal donation. A total of \$12,897 was raised by staff members companywide from all divisions and departments.

“I could not be prouder of our staff,” said Dr. Peggy Terhune, Monarch's president and CEO. “Team members from across the organization

answered the call to personally support Monarch programs and services. Their contributions send a powerful message to other donors, corporate sponsors and community organizations and foundations. Monarch employees are invested in the work we do, both as staff and as donors.”

Staff members were able to direct their donation to the site or program of their choice or to the Monarch Society, which provides donor support for Monarch's highest and greatest needs throughout the year. The campaign, which

came on the heels of Hurricanes Florence and Michael, also provided staff an opportunity to support Monarch's internal hurricane relief efforts for homes, programs and people that were most affected by the storms.

“I know we have a generous staff,” said Terhune. “This first Staff Giving Campaign was a huge success and I'm so grateful to all those who generously contributed.” ●

By Laurie Weaver

SUPPORT CONTINUES TO GROW FOR THE SECU YOUTH CRISIS CENTER IN CHARLOTTE

The SECU Youth Crisis Center, a Monarch program that opened in Charlotte more than one year ago, and the children and adolescents it serves have remained on the hearts and minds of area state employees, State Employees' Credit Union (SECU) members and local SECU Advisory Boards.

Throughout the year, these organizations have been interested to hear about the program, tour the center and, at Christmas, responded to the call to play Santa Claus.

Because the crisis center serves young people 365 days a year, staff were concerned that any children or adolescents who were experiencing a mental health crisis at the center over the holidays might not have the opportunity to open presents and enjoy holiday cheer. When this was shared with leadership at Charlotte area SECU branches, they quickly answered the call and gift collection began.

Just before Christmas, four carloads of gifts and supplies were delivered to the Youth Crisis Center, where Monarch staff were overcome with gratitude by the generosity of SECU members and employees. Monarch staff members reported that the gifts made the holidays so much brighter for the young patients who received care during that time. Extra gifts were held for use in the center throughout the year for children celebrating birthdays or to support daily program activities.

In addition to gifts provided by SECU branches across the community, the State Employees' Association – District 13 has made several donations to the program, supporting the purchase of clothing, supplies and other needed items.



Team members at the SECU Charlotte-Providence Road Branch prepare to load gifts for delivery to the SECU Youth Crisis Center in December. Pictured (l-r) are Laura Thomas, Brianna Valenti, Amanda Owen, Tyrone Tyler and George Hoffman.

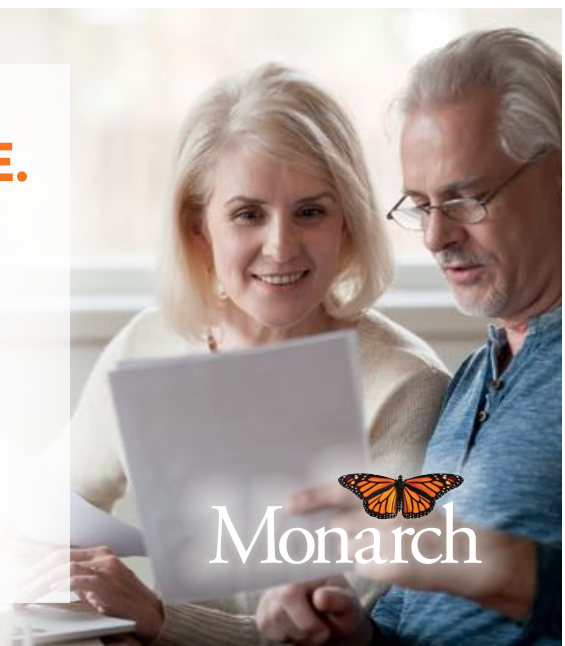
"Our partnership with SECU is a such special one," said Senior Director of Philanthropy Laurie Weaver. "At every turn, people affiliated with the State Employees Credit Union have had the very best interest of these young people at heart. We are so grateful for their continued support of this important program." ●

YOUR COMMITMENT. OUR FUTURE.

By including Monarch in your will and estate plans, you ensure that life-changing services for people we support will be available when and where they need them in the future. Your commitment now will help shape Monarch's future.

Visit us online at MonarchPlannedGiving.org for information on the many benefits of making a legacy gift and request a FREE Estate Planning Guide to help you as you plan.

For more information on how you can include Monarch in your estate plans, please contact Laurie Weaver at (704) 986-1536 or Laurie.Weaver@MonarchNC.org.



Monarch
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