

ANNUAL REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Covering July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

2025

*A Thriving Community
Growing Together*



MERIDIAN
HEALTHCARE



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Our Purpose

We restore and build community with *life-changing* care.

Every day, we walk alongside our patients and their families on a journey toward hope, recovery, and lasting wellness. We equip them with the tools and support to overcome challenges and discover new possibilities. The word Meridian means “a high point,” and that is exactly what we strive for: lifting our entire community by helping people reach their greatest/fullest potential. Because when one person rises, we all rise.

For more than 50 years, Meridian has grown alongside the communities we serve – expanding our healthcare services and extending our network to reach across 14 counties in North Central Florida. Through all of this growth, one principle has remained constant: people first, always. This means we approach mental health and substance use challenges with compassion and dignity, ensuring every individual receives care that honors their humanity. We also invest in our team, because their dedication and expertise are what make Meridian such a special place.

Our Values

Hope – A healthy dose of *hope* helps us stay positive on the most challenging days.

Empathy – We are committed to compassion, understanding, and *genuine* human connection.

Accountability – We all have a *responsibility* to work with integrity as we strive to deliver high-quality care.

Resilience – Our community depends on us to show up and *continually* give our best.

Teamwork – *Collaboration* is key to providing exceptional care.



CE • TEAMWORK • HOPES • EMPATHY

Our Ambition

Together, we will transform our communities from the inside out.

There's more to Meridian.



MERIDIAN
HEALTHCARE



Executive Team



Lauren Cohn

President /
Chief Executive
Officer



Annmarie Attaway

Senior VP /
Chief Financial
Officer



Alan Paulin

Senior VP /
Clinical &
Community
Services



Michelle Lisk

Senior VP /
Organizational
Excellence



Don Savoie

Immediate Past
President /
Chief Executive
Officer



Ashley Brooks

Executive VP /
Chief Operating
Officer



Melisa Urrutia

Senior VP /
Chief Information
Officer



Richard Anderson

Senior VP /
Chief Clinical
Officer

Board of Directors



Jeff Feller
Chair
Alachua



Bob Milner
Vice-Chair
Bradford



Stephanie McClendon
Secretary
Suwannee



Tina Seifert
Executive Committee
Columbia



Patricia Knight
Executive Committee
Gilchrist



Amanda Manske
Executive Committee
Union



Jason Cason
Levy



Becky Sharpe
Lafayette



Jon Cherry
Alachua



Irma Phillips-Maxwell
Alachua



Kindall Crummey
Baker



Stuart Wegener
Alachua

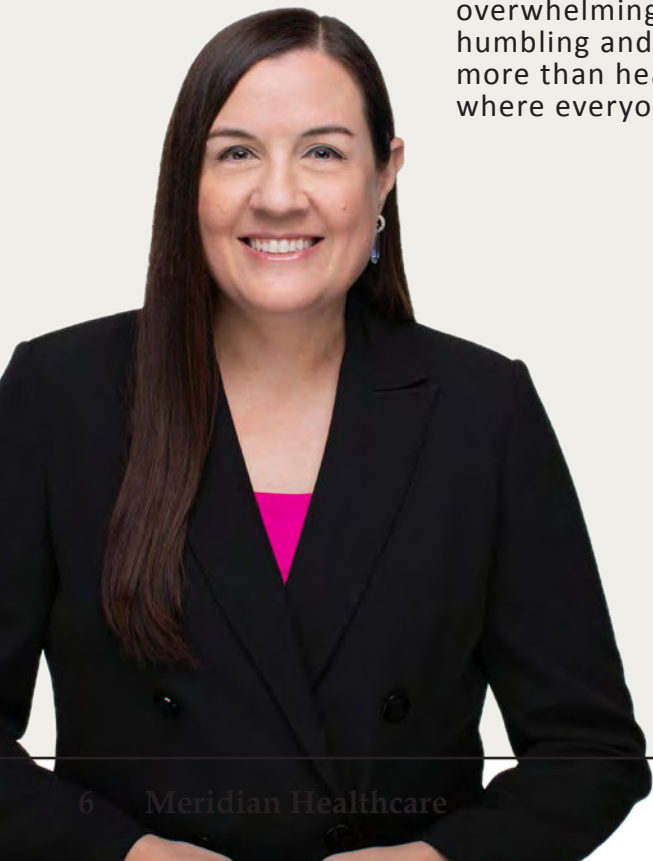


Paul Metts
Emeritus

“Meridian’s strength lies in our commitment to bring hope, empathy, and resilience to the communities we serve. Together, we are not only expanding access to care — we are creating communities where every person has the opportunity to thrive.”

- Jeff Feller, Board Chair

Letter from the CEO



As I look back on my first year as CEO of Meridian Healthcare, I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Stepping into this role has been both humbling and inspiring. Every day, I am reminded that our work is about more than healthcare—it's about people, hope, and building communities where everyone has the chance to thrive.

This past year has shown me the incredible strength that comes from working together. I've seen our team go above and beyond to expand access to care, embrace innovative approaches, and deepen partnerships that truly change lives. These aren't just initiatives—they are stories of trust, resilience, and compassion lived out in countless moments across our communities.

As we look ahead, my heart is full of optimism. We are not just breaking down barriers; we are changing the way people think about behavioral health. We are creating spaces where whole-person health is understood as a shared responsibility—where no one feels alone in their journey. Together, we will continue advocating for resources, building integrated systems of care, and strengthening the connections that hold our communities together.

At Meridian Healthcare, heart is our foundation—it beats through every act of hope, every moment of empathy, every choice rooted in accountability, every challenge met with resilience, and every success built on teamwork. These values come to life each day: in the compassion of our staff, in the courage of those we serve, and in the steadfast support of our partners. This is how we grow stronger – together.

Thank you for trusting us, for walking alongside us, and for believing in this vision. Together, we are building a future of thriving communities—one life at a time, one community at a time.

With gratitude,



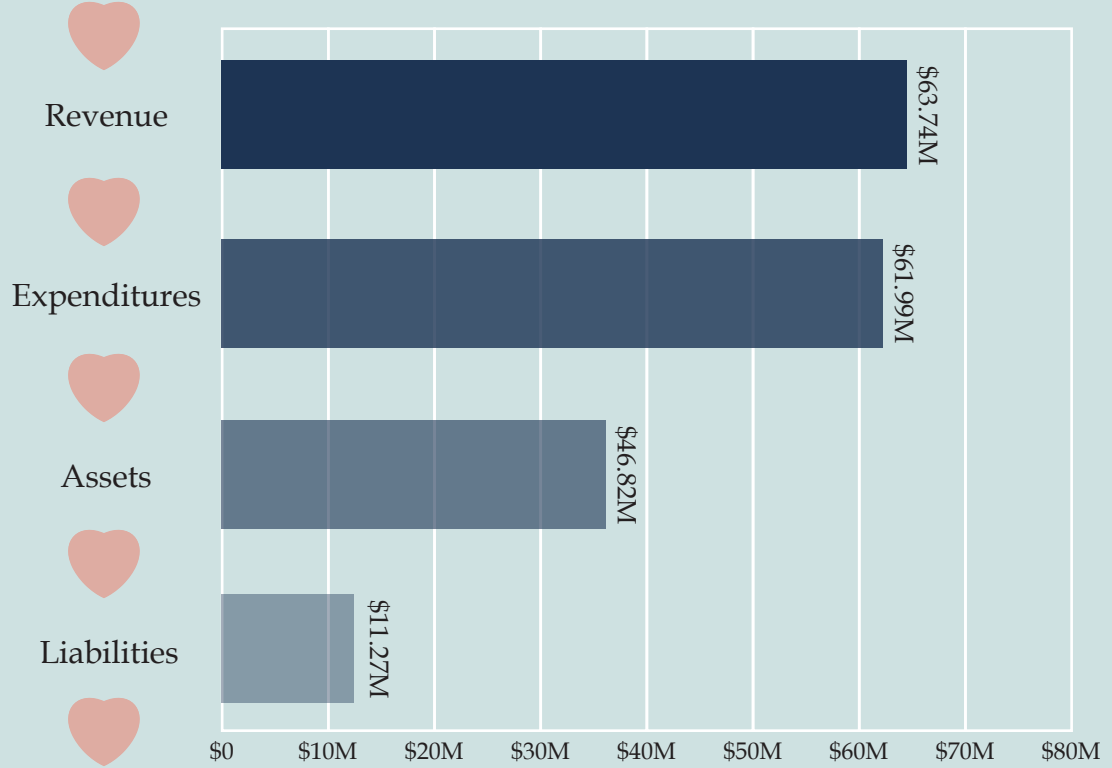
Lauren Cohn
President & CEO



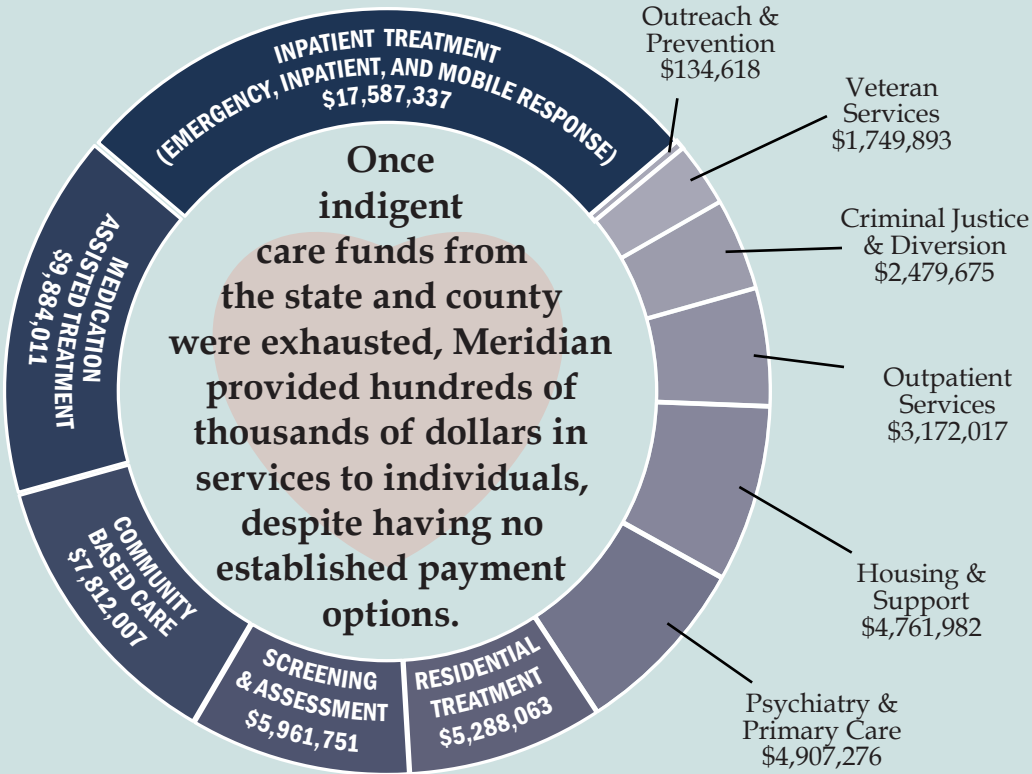
“At Meridian Healthcare, heart is our foundation—it beats through every act of hope, every moment of empathy, every choice rooted in accountability, every challenge met with resilience, and every success built on teamwork.”

Organizational Health

Behind the life-changing care our staff delivers to the community, Meridian's Board and Executive Team are constantly making strategic decisions to secure our financial sustainability. This leadership ensures we have the resources to continue creating transformative moments for our patients. The graph to the right illustrates this fiscal stability.



Community Investment



Serving as a vital safety net for North Central Florida and beyond, Meridian invests deeply in community wellness by aiding the marginalized in their most vulnerable moments. We believe that lifting up at-risk individuals strengthens society as a whole. To the left, you can view the primary initiatives through which we care for those most in need, benefiting us all.

Our Staff

Staff by Profession



Physicians
& APRNS
22



Nurses
75



Admin
155



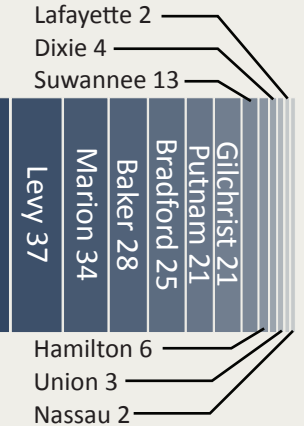
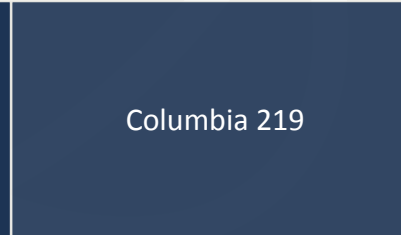
Clinical /
Program
421



Clinical /
Licensed
47

Total Staff = 720

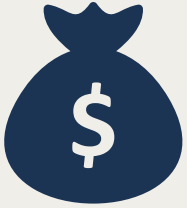
Positions by Location



Total Positions = 953

Workplace of Choice

Why People Join Meridian



Competitive Salaries



Generous Time-Off



Healthcare Options



Wellness Incentives



Advancement Opportunities



Tuition Reimbursement



Licensure Supervision

Why People Stay



The People



The Mission



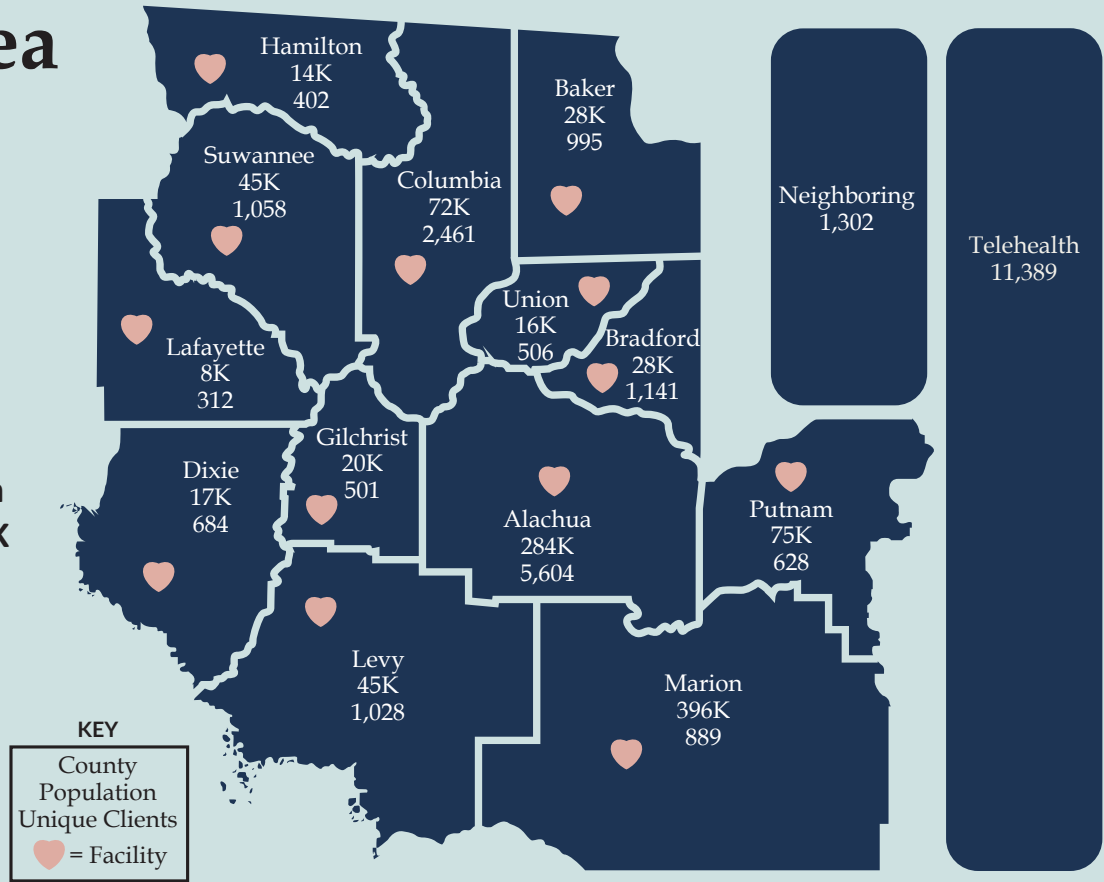
The Experience



The Perks

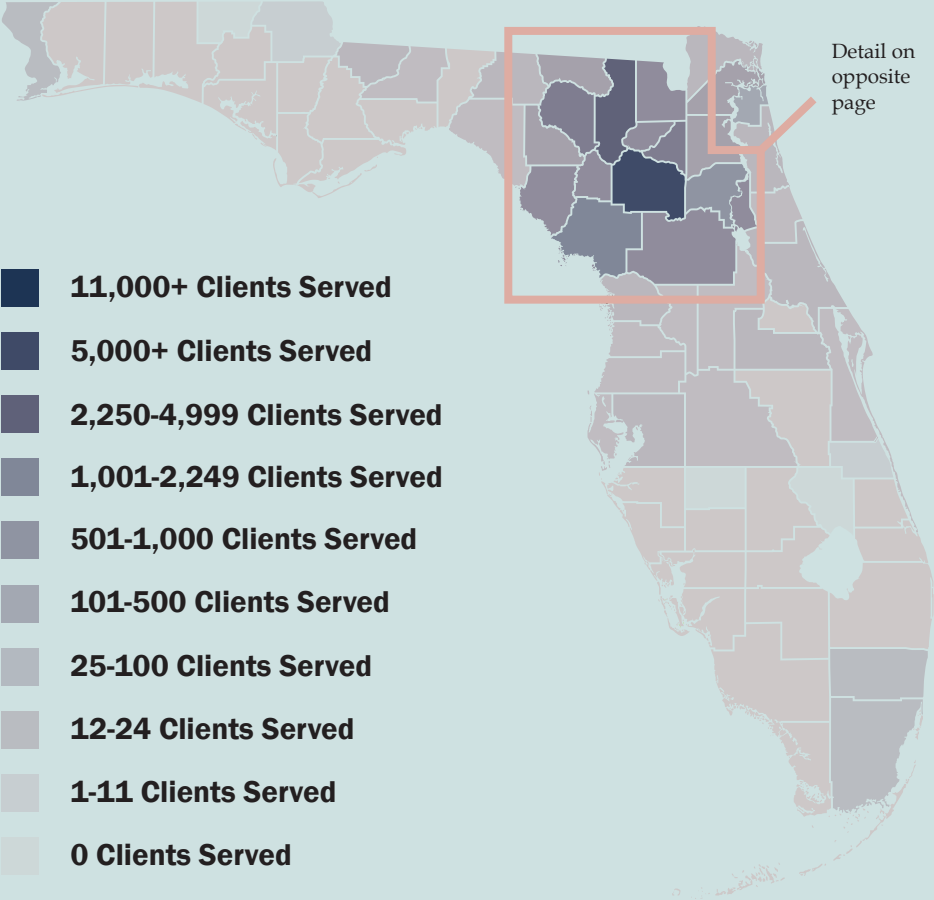
Service Area

Fiscal year 2025 was another milestone year for Meridian's impact on our communities. In all, we served 18,010 clients within our region. Most notably, the scope of our services expanded significantly **growing from around 534K to over 638K services provided**. This increase underscores our commitment to providing comprehensive wrap-around care for every individual we serve.



Service Reach

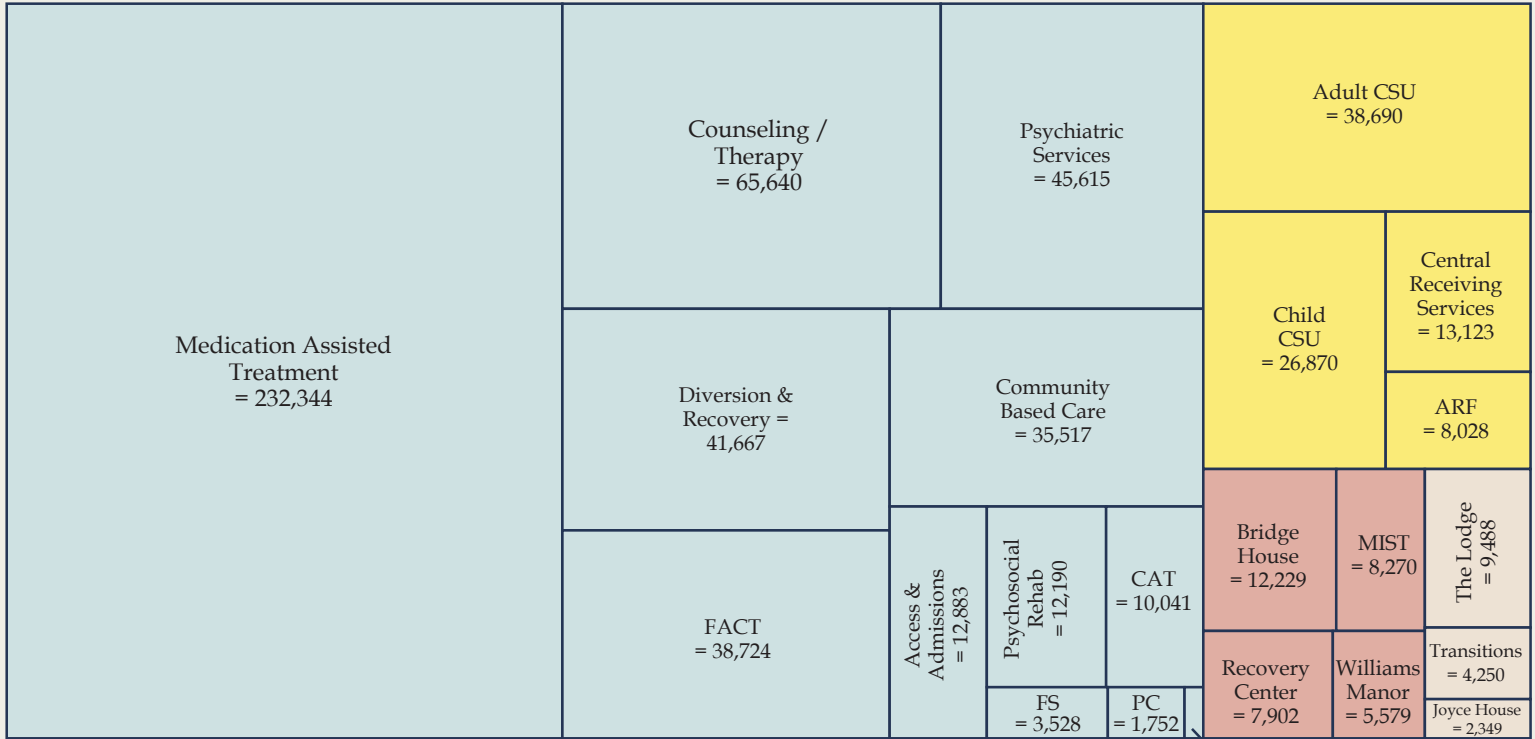
Meridian’s reputation continues to expand well beyond our established service area, reaching north into Georgia and south to the Keys—reinforcing our role as a regional leader in behavioral health. As the map illustrates, **Meridian served residents across 64 of Florida’s 67 counties**, demonstrating our dedication to making care available to all. Looking ahead, we remain focused on broadening our reach and strengthening our capacity to ensure anyone seeking help – whether in crisis or for ongoing support – can access the care they need, when they need it.



Services Provided

Outpatient Services = 500,949
Acute Care Services = 86,711

Residential Treatment = 33,980
Supported Housing = 16,087



CAT = Community Action Team
MIST = Mother's Intensive Support Treatment

FACT = Florida Assertive Community Treatment
ARF = Addictions Receiving Facility

PC = Primary Care
FS = Family Services

IO = Intensive Outpatient = 550

Diagnoses Treated

Adults

Each ❤️ = 2%

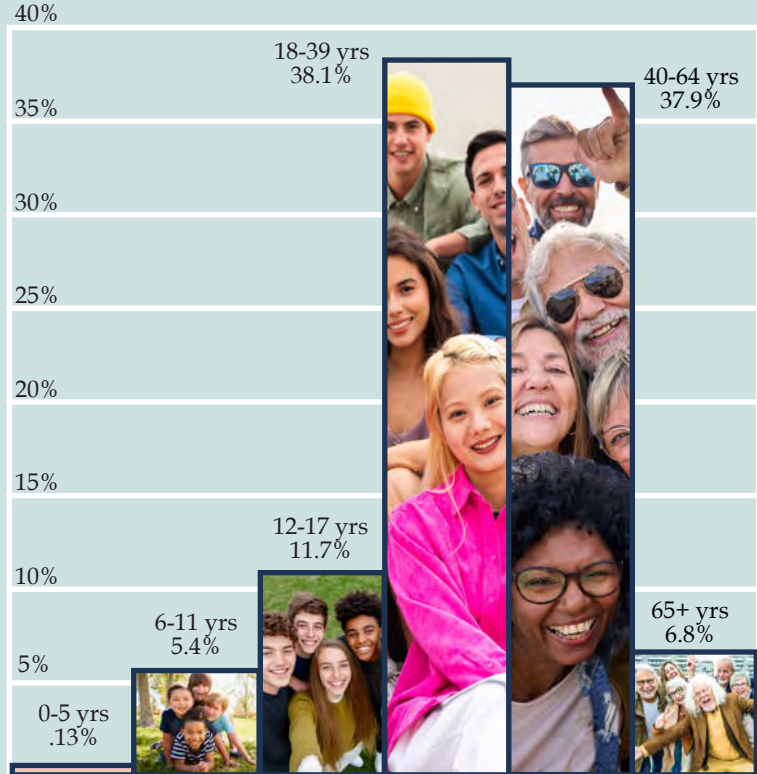
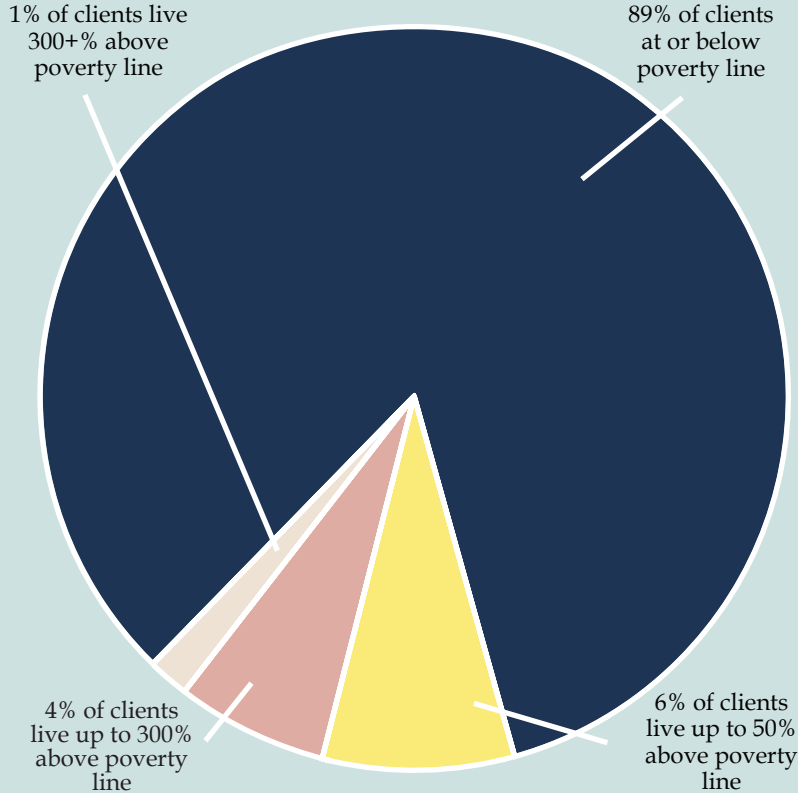
Children



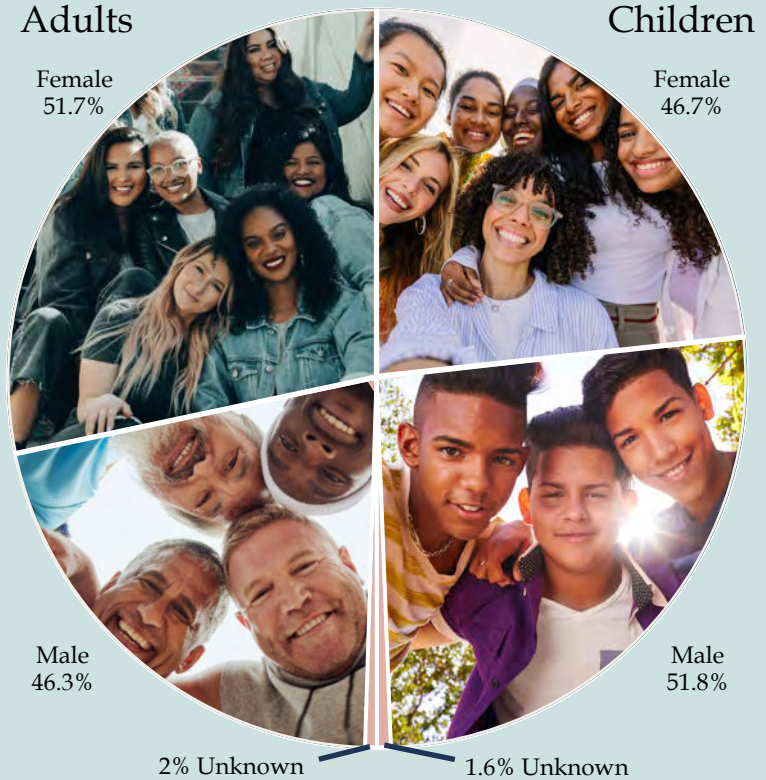
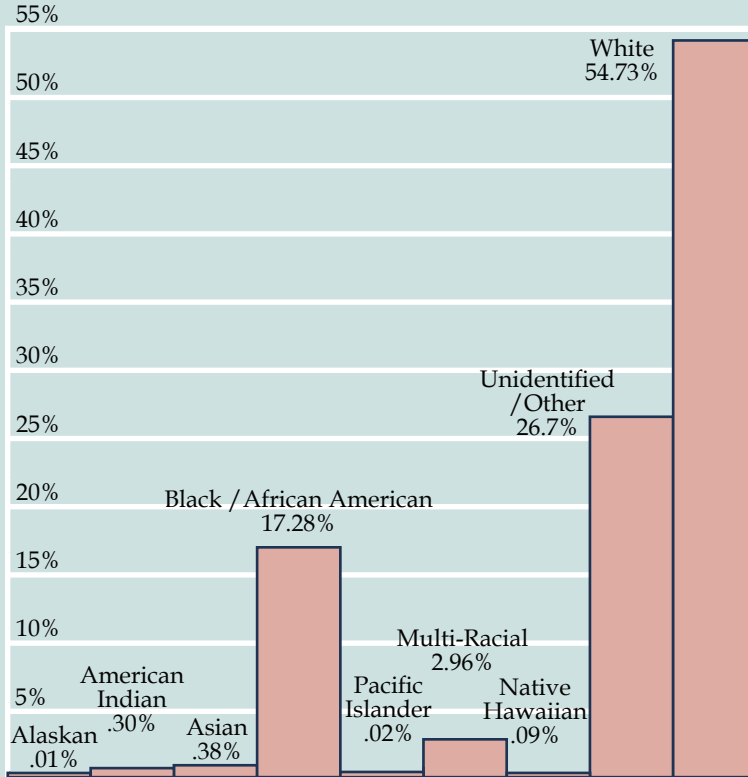
Note: percentages reflect co-occurring diagnoses and will not add up to 100%

+ Additional increments beyond graphic

Client Demographics - Income & Age



Client Demographics - Race & Gender



Client Outcomes

80.98%

of **adults** achieved better symptom management and improved daily functioning upon discharge.

82.03%

of **children** achieved better symptom management and improved daily functioning upon discharge.

“Helped me realize all the goals I want for myself.”

“They [the staff] care about me and really want the best for me.”

“Everyone treats me like I matter.”

Client Satisfaction

Enhancing Client Feedback Through Technology

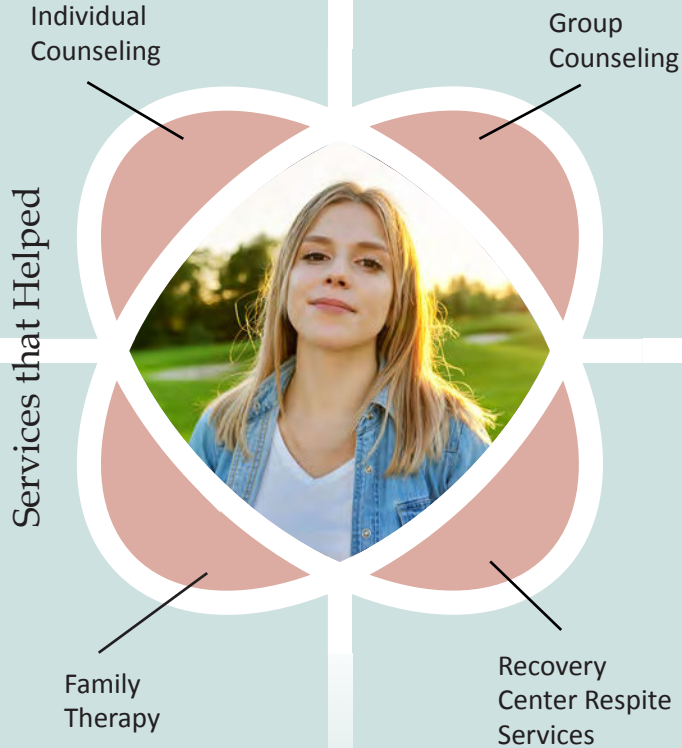
This year, Meridian implemented feedback kiosks across the organization to strengthen our client feedback collection process. These kiosks allow us to gather real-time insights from those we serve, ensuring that their voices directly inform our Quality Improvement initiatives. By leveraging this technology, we are better equipped to identify opportunities for improvement and deliver services that meet the evolving needs of our community.



Clients rated their overall satisfaction at 4.07 on a 5-point scale



Client Stories - A Thankful Parent



"I spoke with Shelley at recovery and was instantly impressed with the structure and home like environment offered to residents. I felt recovery was very similar to our family values.

Our daughter was admitted to recovery and discharged after 60 days. I could not be more thankful to all of the staff at recovery. Shelley and Reva nurtured both our daughter and our family so that we could work towards a discharge plan that would be successful. Our daughter will continue to have struggles, but she has a better understanding of coping skills, regulation, structure, and responsibility, self care, and accountability. Thank you to all the staff who work behind the scenes because it takes a village to take care of these teens."

Client Stories - A Grateful Mom

“As a single mother, counseling has equipped me with practical and emotional tools I didn’t have before. I learned to understand my son’s reactions through the lens of trauma, anxiety, and sensory processing instead of interpreting them as challenging behaviors. I now set predictable routines, offer calm choices, and support him in using his coping strategies before emotions escalate. He still has challenges related to social understanding, sensory regulation, impulsiveness, and specific fears, but he now has tools to cope, and I know how to help him use them. I am sincerely grateful to Meridian Behavioral Health for their compassion, patience, and the meaningful role they have played in my son’s progress.”

Individual
Counseling

Family
Therapy

Services that Helped



Thank You to Our Donors

\$10,000 & Above

Queen of Peace
...Catholic Church
Dex Imaging
Assured Partners

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Eric Parker
Marco DiGiosia
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John G. Kuykendall
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Catherine Ipser
NEO Focus
...Entertainment
Ashley Barnes
Bryce & Tracy Burger
Richard T. Jones
First Federal Bank
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...LLC

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Constansha Rowe
...Endowment for
...Meridian
MidiCi The Neapolitan
...Pizza Company
GFL Environmental
Best Western Gateway
...Grand
Kendra Scott LLC
Jacqueline Sholom
Party And Event Rentals
Alachua County Sheriff's
...Office
AT&T
Mary Benedict

IQ Fiber
Barry Jacobson
Don & Karen Savoie
Sun Surgical Supply

\$100 to \$499

Pepine Property
...Management
Yoga Pod
Kika Silva Pla
...Planetarium at Santa
...Fe College
Diane M. Hogan
Jordan Mobley Band
North Florida Sewing
...Center
VZULIZE Band

... Continuance of Name

The following is a compilation of all donors who made gifts during the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

O2B Kids	Ironwood Golf Course	Dave & Buster's	Betty D. Jackson
Clay Electric	Elizabeth Mueller	...Gainesville	Kanapaha Botanical
...Cooperative, Inc.	Cole Barnett	Orlando Science	...Gardens
Damon Cole	Robert Norberg	...Center	Barbara Kerxton
David Evans	Escapology	Laura Watson	Patricia Knight
Sharon R. Parker	Tamara Ellis	David Hendryx	Michelle Lisk
Spurriers Restaurant	Carlos Gonzalez	Raffle Revenue	Debra Main
Robert Milner	Anna Lee	Maurice D. Levy	Irma Maxwell
Wild Adventures	Darcia Morse	Randall Mire	Christy McBee
Daniel & Brianna	Robert Murphy	Kris Pagenkopf	Stephen Pittman
...Martin	Alan Paulin	Annmarie Attaway	Leslie Roseman
Joni A. Perkins	Stuart S. Wegener	Pamela Burrow	Ann Shortelle
Naima Brown	Connie Stern	Crayola Experience	Frederick D. Smith
4R Restaurant	BARK	...Orlando	Helen Warren
...Group dba 4 Rivers	Sun Country Sports	Jayesh Desai	WonderWorks
...Smokehouse	...Center	Carol Dozier	Zoo Miami
Angela L. Choate	Ashley Brooks	Kate Fornshell	

If we have made a mistake in compiling this list, please do let joni_perkins@mbhci.org know.

Our Continued Thanks

\$99 & Below

Gator's Dockside
Butterfly World
Naeema Britton
Floral Expressions
...Florist
Splitz Bowling Center
...Of Gainesville
Valeria Gorden
Gabriel Bitton
Kiambe Tunsil
IL Pizziolas LLC.
Joanne Edde
Foxtail Coffee Co.
Raising Cane's Chicken
...Fingers

Suzanne Richardson
SheJeweled
Carlene Stangle
David Johnson
Richard Anderson
Chelsea Clark
Edith Richman
Blaze Pizza Fundraiser
Terri Crawford
Hannah Dolan
Jessica Evans
Kristopher Gibson
Jessica Glover
David Klaas
Opus Coffee
Charity Ricks

Shannon Rudolph
Samantha Sanz-
...Schiappucci
Jessica Tan
Marilyn Tubb
Johanna J. Van
...Rinsvelt
Wawa
Brian Wilson
Rhonda Kerth
Tanaka Gates
Jenni Hiers-Douglas
..Genoa Healthcare
Sara J. Mihlfeld
Lisa Munoz
Nothing Bundt Cake

EJ Soft
Mojo's BBQ
Dean Slone
Lauren M. Cohn
Claudia Cuadros
Madeline Hembree
Christy McBee
Kandra Albury
Jean Bey
Jovennie Fray
Kendra Siler-Marsiglio
Dominick Secor
Alice Barfield
Herb Brooks
Shawntell Brown
Chelsea Clark-Claus

Our Continued Thanks

Alexis Day
Jennifer Lewis
Prudence Tucker
Mimi Vasquez
Bailey Bradstreet
Manette Cheshareck
Ashley Levai
Carla Roberts
Cristina Hastings
Madison Ballman
Candra McFarland
Ashanti Armalin
Terri Faul
Monique Fleming
Annie Fritz
Carlina Maines

Saphronia Miller
Essence Morrow
Janie Munson
William Nice
Janaya Parker
Darlene Briggs
Chaise Brown
Maleishia Bennett
Gina Deracleo
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Kari Etters
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Charles Lawrence
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Shaunty Thomas
Community Bay
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Andrew Park

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Gold Level



Silver Level



Bronze Level



Supporters



Patrons



Our Community Partners



Gainesville Police Department



Alachua County Sheriff's Office

Co-responder
Services



PARTNERSHIP FOR
STRONG
FAMILIES



GRACE



American
Red Cross



Community
Services

Alachua County School Board
Columbia County School Board
Baker County School Board
Dixie County School Board
Gilchrist County School Board

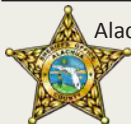
Levy County School Board
Bradford County School Board
Union County School Board
Suwannee County School Board
Lafayette County School Board

Hamilton County School Board
Marion County School Board
Putnam County School Board

CAT, MRT, &
Outpatient Services



Criminal Justice
Diversion and
Recovery
Services



Alachua County Sheriff's Office



Bradford County Sheriff's Office



Suwannee County Sheriff's Office

Dixie County Sheriff's Office



Medication Assisted
Treatment Expansion

Employee Awards

Leadership Award



Jennifer Barber
Director -
Administrator of
Central Receiving
Services

Direct Care Employee of the Year



Pamela Smith
Clinician

Administrative Employee of the Year



Elizabeth Harvey
Lead Data Analyst
- State Reporting

Support Employee of the Year



Phyllis Cook
Customer Service
Specialist

Heart, Life, Community Award

Gainesville Opportunity Center Brett and Margie

The Meridian Heart, Life, Community Award recognizes the difference makers bringing heart and purpose to all they do in support of behavioral healthcare. This year we proudly recognize The Gainesville Opportunity Center, represented by Brett Buell, Development Director, and Margie Foster, Executive Director.

The Gainesville Opportunity Center (GOC) is a vital community partner, empowering individuals through the Clubhouse Model, which supports individuals on their recovery journey. Through its person-centered approaches, GOC empowers members by fostering socialization, work readiness, personal growth and self-sufficiency.

We thank GOC for their partnership, advocacy, and support as we work together to strengthen our community.



Our CEO, Lauren Cohn, with Margie and Brett.

Central Receiving

In January, Meridian Healthcare opened the Central Receiving Facility (CRF) in Gainesville to revolutionize how mental health and substance use crises are managed across North Central Florida. Open 24/7 for both adults and children, the center provides a single, streamlined access point for emergency evaluation and stabilization. This \$2.5 million expansion was achieved through a funding collaboration between Meridian, Alachua County, and the City of Gainesville, with ongoing operations secured by substantial investments from the American Rescue Plan and state legislative appropriations managed by LSF Health Systems.

Designed to divert individuals from jails and emergency rooms, the facility features specialized infrastructure such as a dedicated law enforcement bay, private screening rooms, and separate waiting areas. This layout supports both voluntary walk-ins and first responder drop-offs, ensuring a compassionate and efficient environment for care. By reducing the burden on traditional emergency services, the CRF acts as a critical safety net, providing timely, coordinated treatment for the community.

MIST Program Expansion

Through a funding award of \$953,526 from LSF Health Systems, Meridian expanded its residential treatment capacity for pregnant and postpartum mothers struggling with opioid use. This expansion provides a more comfortable and supportive environment for mothers and their children.

The Mothers Intensive Supportive Treatment (MIST) program, located at the Sid Martin Bridge House in Gainesville, offers a comprehensive approach to recovery for pregnant and parenting women. A key feature of MIST is allowing infants to remain with their mothers, fostering essential early bonding while enabling mothers to participate fully in treatment and maintain sobriety during nursing.

The program's mission is to empower women to become self-sufficient, responsible parents and build a brighter future for their families. Participants typically reside in the program for 6–12 months, after which they transition to less intensive care. Treatment plans are individualized to meet the unique needs of each mother and child, ensuring holistic support throughout recovery.

This initiative has a profound impact—strengthening families, supporting sustained recovery, and creating healthier futures for both mothers and their children.



Excellence in Action

Officer Reeves of the Gainesville Police Department and Allison Lawrence, Meridian Co-Responder Clinician, were recognized by 97.3 The Sky through its Sky Valor Honors initiative, which celebrates North Central Florida's first responders for their commitment to community safety.

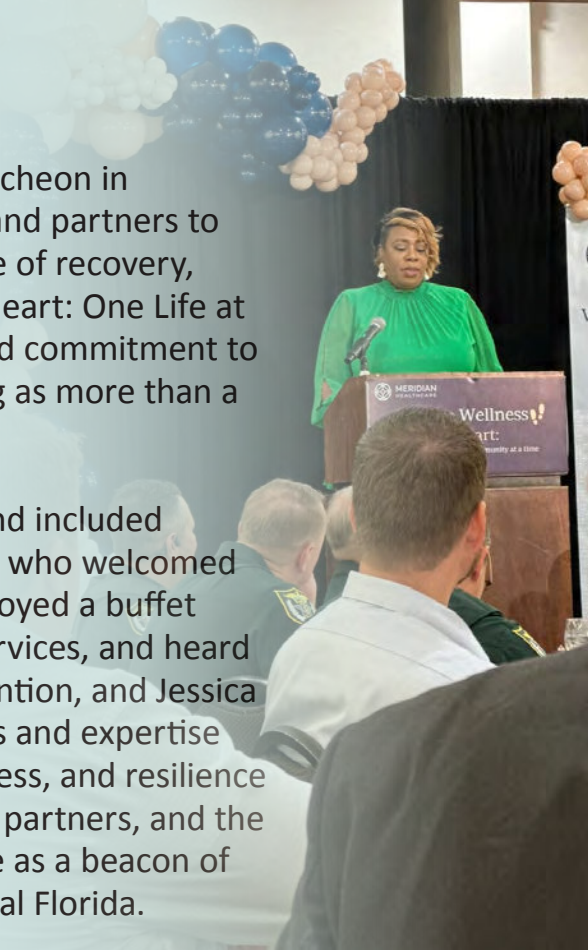
Working as ride-along partners, they intervene in crisis where mental health challenges are central, providing compassionate and effective responses.

Their professionalism and persistence in tracking information and coordinating interventions helped prevent a potential serious threat to the community – an extraordinary example of service and collaboration.

Steps to Wellness 2024

Meridian Healthcare hosted its 8th Annual Steps to Wellness Luncheon in September 2024, bringing together staff, community members, and partners to celebrate National Recovery Month and highlight the importance of recovery, prevention, and coordinated care. The event's theme, "It Takes Heart: One Life at a Time, One Community at a Time," reflected Meridian's renewed commitment to transforming communities from the inside out and its rebranding as more than a crisis center—a true community resource.

The event featured David Snyder as the Master of Ceremonies and included opening remarks from Jeff Feller, Chair of the Board of Directors, who welcomed guests and introduced the new CEO, Lauren Cohn. Attendees enjoyed a buffet lunch, participated in a virtual silent auction supporting client services, and heard inspiring presentations from Madeline Adkins, Manager of Prevention, and Jessica Johnson Glover, author and mental health advocate. Their stories and expertise underscored the power of education, raising community awareness, and resilience in the journey to wellness. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, partners, and the community, Steps to Wellness 2024 strengthened Meridian's role as a beacon of hope and support for individuals and families across North Central Florida.



Miles for Meridian

6th Annual Miles for Meridian 5K: It Takes HEART—Run for the Love of Community and Mental Wellness

In February 2025, Meridian Healthcare hosted its 6th annual Miles for Meridian 5K run/walk at Tioga Town Center, uniting participants of all ages to champion mental health and celebrate recovery. This year's theme, "It Takes HEART: Run for the Love of Community and Mental Wellness," inspired runners, walkers, and supporters to come together in support of Meridian's mission to empower individuals facing mental health and substance use challenges.

The event featured a scenic 3.1-mile route, commemorative T-shirts for all participants, and custom medals for the first 100 registrants. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, vendors, and volunteers, the Miles for Meridian 5K continues to strengthen our community—one step, one life, and one heart at a time.



Food Fest

In May 2025, Meridian Healthcare hosted its inaugural Food Fest, a vibrant community event in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month. Held on campus, Food Fest brought together over 600 guests to enjoy a curated selection of local food trucks and vendors, live music, fun activities, giveaways, and a dedicated kids' zone. The event also featured free health screenings—including depression and anxiety checks—and a blood drive, all designed to support wellness and reduce stigma around mental health.

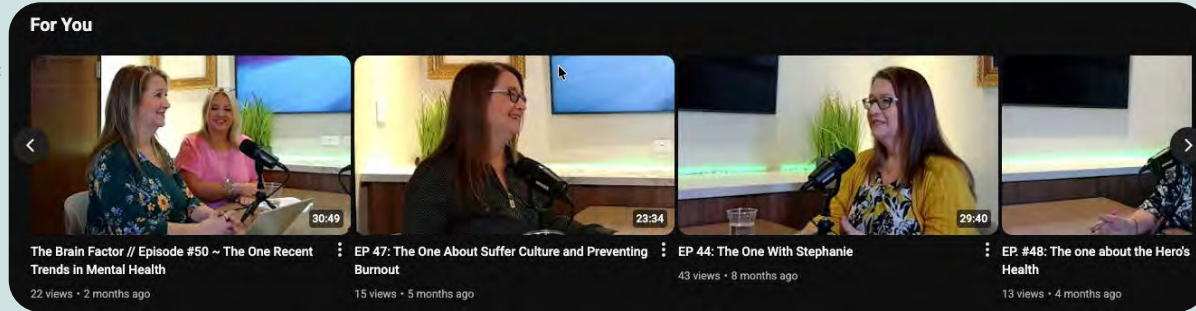
Food Fest was more than a celebration of good food; it was a rally for community, connection, and support. The event's success was made possible by generous sponsors, volunteers, and the enthusiastic participation of the community. By raising awareness, providing resources, and fostering a welcoming environment, Meridian's Food Fest exemplified the organization's commitment to transforming lives and strengthening the bonds that hold our communities together.



Brain Factor Podcast

The Brain Factor Podcast, powered by Meridian Healthcare, is a lighthearted and informal show hosted by Joy Riddle and Laura Holley. Each 30-minute episode features engaging conversations and occasional guests, exploring how everyday people build resilience using evidence-based techniques that increase protective factors. Listeners will discover practical tips, real-life stories, and expert insights on topics like optimism, movement, coping skills, and more—all designed to help you thrive. Episodes drop monthly on the second Wednesday and are available on a variety of platforms, making it easy to tune in for inspiration and laughter, whether you're at home, at work, or on the go. Join Joy and Laura as they unpack the science of resilience and share strategies you can use to strengthen your own well-being and foster wellness in your community.

Link to
YouTube Channel:



Available on:



A Look Ahead

American Red Cross



American
Red Cross

Meridian was awarded \$601,253 in funding by American Red Cross for Disaster Recovery services related to Hurricanes Helene and Milton. This funding will allow us to provide longer term recovery services to those impacted by 2024 hurricanes. This funding was awarded for the period beginning October 1, 2025.

Youth Short Term Residential Treatment Facility



HEALTH
SYSTEMS

Meridian was awarded \$971,038 in funding by LSF Health Systems to implement and operate an 8 bed children's Short Term Residential Treatment Facility. The program will operate out of the Gainesville Acute Care building and will serve child and adolescent clients needing inpatient services beyond Crisis Stabilization Units and diverted from SIPP placement.

We restore and build community with life-changing care.

There's more to Meridian.



Scan QR Code to Donate:



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The Brain Factor Podcast:



Meridian Healthcare is funded in great part by the following partners:



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