



Community is not a place, it is an experience.

**Annual Report
2021**

Direct Services

One-on-one coaching to support life skill needs



Affordable Housing

Independent apartment living supported by direct services



Learning Opportunities

Group opportunities for educational, social, and skill-building enhancement



Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to share this annual report with you as we take a moment to reflect and celebrate the past year. Although 2021 continued to present challenges due to the COVID pandemic, we took all precautions to keep the people we serve healthy and safe while still supporting their choices in living their best life. I hope you enjoy the photos and stories of the past year.

We are extremely excited as we begin the new year, looking forward to growing our services and housing options throughout the Indianapolis community. With the development of Brunette Apartments in Lawrence and North End Apartment Community in Carmel, this year will be a time of substantial growth for the Village of Merici. Thank you for your support over the past year, especially through the capital campaign, making these two new housing developments a reality.

As we move into our 8th year of providing an innovative approach to supporting adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we invite you to keep in touch, watch the progress, and know that you played a role in transforming lives.

With thanks for your continued support,

Colleen Renie

Executive Director



Leadership

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AJ

My name is AJ Bolles. I've been living at the Village of Merici for almost 3 years now. This place was an opportunity to live independently and I took it. I love living at the Village because it provides different kinds of help.

The Village can assign either one or more coaches to you. I personally have two. The coaches have helped me with many things. One takes me to the grocery store and teaches me how to cook. The other takes me out on the town to either go to the theater, workout at the Y, or whatever else. The Village has recently provided and helped me with transportation to work. I've also met some fun and interesting people here. The staff has also helped with other topics, such as Covid safety and Nutrition.

Bottom line, the Village of Merici has been and still is a fun place to live and I am very happy here.



Lindsey

Lindsey is in her 5th year living at the Village of Merici. She couldn't be happier, and we couldn't be prouder of her as her parents. She has matured in so many ways.

Her independence has exceeded our expectations given her challenges. One of the most significant things for Lindsey and us has been her ability to make meaningful and lasting friendships at VOM. Friendships had always been a challenge when living at our home. We are thankful that she has been so blessed to have this opportunity to live her best life.

- Reflection by Carrie Hutnicke, Lindsey's mom

The Village of Merici provides an innovative approach to services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities focused on independent living.



David

I like everything about the Village of Merici. I hope to live on my own in the future. I like the people and working with my coach. I have learned to

budget my money better and to shop for items that I need. I do a lot of activities which is nice, especially the art classes and Knitting Club.

David's coach says that he is part of the leadership group in the Knitting Club. David shared, "I like being a role model!"



Ashley & Conan

For Ashley and Conan, the Village of Merici is the foundation of their love. They were married in the beautiful courtyard of Merici in the summer of

2016 and enjoy the freedom of independence as a married couple. Over the last year, they have gained confidence in the kitchen, learning about nutrition, and incorporating healthy choices into their lifestyle. Conan has focused on his cooking skills.

Both work in the local community and have made progress in self advocating techniques.



Making a Difference - Highlights of 2021

Formation of the Lawrence Advisory Council on Disabilities

In an effort to build awareness and inclusion within the community, the Village of Merici in partnership with the City of Lawrence, formed the Lawrence Advisory Council on Disabilities (LACD).

This group is comprised of many community leaders focusing on ongoing accessibility, employment, and social connections for those with disabilities. Through this initiative, Mayor Steve Collier proclaimed March 2021 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.



Carepool Transportation Project

A large percentage of adults with disabilities are not able to obtain a driver's license and must rely on others for all transportation needs, creating a huge barrier for integration into the community. It is difficult to purchase groceries, visit family and friends, or keep a job when constantly at the mercy of others for a ride.

In an effort to address this obstacle, the Village of Merici created a six-month pilot project to analyze this specific need. Through grant funding of several local supporters and partnership with Carepool, an app-based ride share program similar to Uber but specific to individuals with disabilities, this pilot was conducted the second half of the year.

Creation of the Quillo Connect App

The Village of Merici, in collaboration with the City of Indianapolis Parks Department, Quillo and several other like-minded organizations, developed virtual and technology assisted activities for smartphones, tablets and computers to help combat the extreme social isolation brought on by the pandemic. This project was funded through the Community Connections for People with Disabilities (CCPWD) grant, offered by the Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), in partnership with the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). This Community Development Block Grant was made available through supplemental Coronavirus funds authorized under the CARES Act.

The Quillo Connect app is free to users and provides a wide variety of online sessions, videos, and ways to socialize and connect via the internet.



Music Therapy Expands (Again)

As part of the Health & Community Matters Program at the Village of Merici, the music therapy sessions are a huge hit and enjoyed by many. Having increased the number of weekly sessions from one to two a year ago, the program is slated to expand again this year to keep up with demand.

Music therapy provides so many tremendous benefits to participants. As a multi-sensory activity, music incorporates visual, auditory, movement and tactile systems. Documented advantages are extensive, with each person able to participate and relate at their own level. With gratitude to ongoing community support underwriting this vital program.



We Believe in Capabilities.



Sean

Celebrating 10 Years of Employment

Sean began working at the Kroger in Nora in March of 2012. This March he will celebrate his 10th year working at Kroger and he is very proud of this accomplishment. He is a Utility Clerk and his job responsibilities include bagging, bringing in the carts, emptying the trash and recycling containers, and occasionally cleaning the restrooms. You will mostly see Sean outside bringing in the carts which is his favorite part of the job. He takes pride in making sure there are carts available for the customers. He likes working at Kroger because he has made good friends with his co-workers and has gotten to know many of the regular customers who shop there. Sean says he would rather work than stay home all the time.



Congratulations, Sean!



Our thanks to everyone who supported the Build the Village Campaign in 2021.

Through your support, the renovation of our second building will become a reality, creating thirty-eight affordable apartments for adults with disabilities.

A huge thank you to Dan and Betsy Brunette for incentivizing this campaign through your generous dollar-for-dollar match which ran from mid-June through the end of September.

What Are Direct Support Services?

For those with intellectual or developmental disabilities, achieving independence as an adult, can be a struggle, or viewed as an impossible dream. Village of Merici focuses on the potential in every person we serve and believes in what is possible to achieve.

Our coaches work one-on-one with each person to support them in life's essential activities. This process takes on many forms and at various levels – helping someone get out of bed, making a grocery list, transportation to work, understanding finances, healthy eating, personal grooming, social and relationship skills, self-advocacy, and many other basic needs motivated by a more independent lifestyle. Helping people build and gain confidence, to think beyond themselves, to engage in their community.

2021 Numbers:

Number of individuals that received direct support: **86**

Number of one-on-one, direct support hours: **47,692**

Number of miles driven by coaches in support of individuals throughout Indianapolis: **52,322**

Number of miles driven by our amazing volunteers through the Merici City Rides transportation program: **2,608**

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We have carefully reviewed this listing. If we have made an error, please give us a call. (317) 929-9408 Thank you.



In the Works for 2022

Carmel – Here We Come!

North End Apartments

In partnership with Old Town Companies, the Village of Merici is part of a new integrated community currently underway in Carmel, Indiana. This beautiful, walkable 28-acre community will include single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, office space, a farm-to-table restaurant and community pool.



A portion of this community will include North End Apartments, a place to live that seeks to unify neighbors from different walks of life. As Carmel's first apartment housing community that integrates a dedicated portion of apartments for residents with intellectual or developmental disabilities, true community integration is possible. The Village of Merici will provide support services and learning opportunities for those seeking independent living within this larger community.

With completion slated for 2023, the Village of Merici looks forward to being a part of the Carmel community.

Renovation Begins!

Brunette Apartments

Renovation of the second location on Lawton Loop will consume all of 2022. This amazing renovation project will transform a vacant, historic building into 38 new ADA-compliant apartments for adults with disabilities seeking an affordable alternative for independent living.

Project completion is anticipated for the spring of 2023.



You can follow the progress of both expansion projects through our social media avenues.

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Village of Merici

5707 Lawton Loop East Drive
OFC 22
Indianapolis IN 46216

[villageofmerici.org](https://www.villageofmerici.org)
Phone: 317.292.9408
Email: colleenrenie@villageofmerici.org