

## “I Am Meridian” Award Recipients

### Catherine Stauff

Position: Therapist, Ocala Outpatient

Supervisor: Jeremy Demos

**Criteria:** Hope, Empathy, Teamwork

Thanks to Catherine's clinical skills and quick rapport building, she has been able to identify several clients in unsafe situations and unveiled active abuse in the homes of her clients, leading to successful DCF interventions. Her quick thinking and decisive intervention led to a client in crisis receiving potentially lifesaving emergency medical assistance. She consistently goes above and beyond to help not only her clients but has been assisting the FACT team catch up on documentation, as well as helping a fellow employee receive care for their own personal situation. As a result of Catherine's assistance, the FACT team has been able to reach out to more clients, increasing their effectiveness and ability to provide services to those clients with severe and persistent mental health issues. Catherine has been a team player, volunteering to assist the FACT team by carrying their on-call phone providing valuable crisis intervention services during afterhours time to a client in crisis and connecting that client to vital crisis intervention resources.

# Marisha Peppers

Position: Nurse – OTP/MAT

Supervisor: Gade Duerksen

## **Criteria: Empathy, Teamwork**

Marisha demonstrates outstanding teamwork by demonstrating a willingness to support other departments when needed. Her proactive collaboration fosters a stronger, more unified workplace culture. Marisha's empathy is evident in the personal care she invests in each client through building genuine relationships that reflect care, trust, and integrity. When the FACT program was left without nursing support, Marisha stepped in to ensure clients received their critical monthly injections without interruption. Despite being the only MAT nurse in Ocala, she managed both roles seamlessly. Marisha met every challenge with compassion and professionalism, earning the trust and appreciation of clients and staff alike.

# Christy McBee

Position: VP, Community Wraparound Services-North

Supervisor: Alan Paulin

## **Criteria: Teamwork**

Christy exudes a positive can-do attitude for existing and new challenges contributing to team morale and overall agency performance. When needed filled in as FACT manager, absorbed IBHH Program (revision of protocols internally to meet OPTUM standards), specialty LSF and TCM care coordination, south. Christy monitors clinical best practices for populations served i.e. CBT, solution focused approaches, supportive therapy, strengths-based case management, Wellness Recovery Action Planning. Christy corroborated with other clinical vice presidents to order best practice material to support staff. Christy experience in applying these practices is critical in teaching other teams/setting standards. Christy also conducts Mental Health First Aid classes internally and externally. Christy remained proactive with team- based programs FIT(FIS), FACT Intermediate (LATTERS) and Forensics Multidisciplinary teams. FACT Intermediate maintained full census build teams (with limited turnover). Maintained focus on case management quality of care and census building, while maintaining quality of care leading to meet or exceeding state outcome goals. As an advanced SmartCare users Christy routinely assists coworkers (VP's) and managers to build their SMARTCARE knowledge, has built and guided the community teams based programs and is involved in community events representing Meridian including Lake City Chamber of Commerce.

# Judy Morales

Position: Certified Medical Assistant-Gainesville

Supervisor: Heather Faulk

**Criteria: Hope, Empathy, Accountability, Teamwork**

Judy shows support to all fellow co-workers. Judy is willing to help anyone if needed. Judy shows patience with all of our staff and patients. Judy comes in on time and stays late if needed. Judy never questions anything she is told. Judy is respectful, dedicated, and hardworking. Judy welcomed me with open arms, no questions. If I have a question, she is right there willing to jump in to help me out. When other staff is needing to be covered, she goes out of her way to help other staff out. She loves her job and helping her patients to make them feel comfortable.

# Teresa Edwards

Position: Talent Acquisition Specialist-Human Resources

Supervisor: Mya Porter

## **Criteria: Teamwork**

I am proud to nominate Teresa Edwards for the I Am Meridian Award. As my Senior Talent Acquisition team member, Teresa consistently demonstrates a deep understanding of the urgency and complexity of our day-to-day operations. Her proactive approach and commitment to excellence have made a significant impact on our team's efficiency and success. One of Teresa's most notable contributions has been the thoughtful revision and enhancement of our TA workbook. This tool is essential to our daily workflow, and thanks to Teresa's improvements, it now allows us to track open positions and onboarding candidates with greater accuracy, clarity, and ease. Her attention to detail ensures that our data is organized, up-to-date, and error-free—saving time and reducing the risk of miscommunication. Beyond her technical contributions, Teresa is a natural leader and mentor. She takes the initiative to train new team members, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle our onboarding processes from start to finish. Her training is thorough, consistent, and aligned with our guidelines, setting a strong foundation for new hires and reinforcing best practices across the team. Teresa's dedication, initiative, and collaborative spirit make her an invaluable asset to our department. She leads by example, supports her colleagues, and continuously looks for ways to improve our processes. Her contributions truly embody the spirit of a Meridian Rock Star. During a critical period earlier this year when our Talent Acquisition team was short-staffed, Teresa proactively stepped in to support operations by helping develop a tracking system that significantly improved how we monitor each candidate's onboarding progress. Her dedication to excellence was evident in the way she upheld high standards despite the increased workload, ensuring every candidate received a seamless and positive experience throughout the process.

## Cristin Ellis

Position: Care Coordinator

Supervisor: Rana Tallador

**Criteria: Hope, Empathy, Accountability**

Cristin Ellis is a very professional, knowledgeable and independent case manager, who works at the state hospital in Macclenny. Cristin multi-tasks her cases very well and opens multiple clients at a time and sees her clients monthly. She attends monthly treatment team meetings at the state hospital and works on discharge planning including locating placements for her clients. Cristin has a great working relationship with staff at the state hospital, who cannot say enough positive things about Cristin. Cristin has wonderful rapport with her clients who she tirelessly advocates for their needs. Cristin's contact hours are over 100 percent, and she is always concurrent with her documentation. She keeps her assessments and plans in compliance as well. When Cristin returned to work at Meridian, she worked tirelessly to get the cases at the state hospital back up to par and back into compliance as we were short staffed. Cristin is a great asset to Meridian and an awesome case manager we appreciate very much. Excellence- Cristin's compact hours are over 100 percent, and her concurrency is less than a day. Cristin's plans are in compliance. When she returned to Meridian, we were short on staff, and she got all cases up to date at the state hospital. Initiative- Cristin is a leader who takes initiative. She is organized and stays on top of things. Integrity- Cristin is ethical and professional. She always represents Meridian in a positive way.

# Shelley Stroud

Position: Program Manager-Recovery-Residential

Supervisor: Richard Anderson

## **Criteria: Hope, Empathy, Accountability, Resilience, Teamwork**

Shelley has been nominated many times in the past as she is an exceptional Meridian. This nomination period is no different. I would like to share why from not my perspective, but from actual parents' mouths that Shelley and her team have helped by showing HEART to their child and family unit as a whole. One mom Tanya shares ". They show tremendous care for these children; they are patient and compassionate. Mrs. Shelly has a great Team in the center. I am blessed to have met a few of them. Mrs. Shelley has been wonderful. She has always been there for me with any question I had or any concerns. She has always kept in communication with me. I find her to be extremely professional and extremely dedicated to the program and helping these children to walk a bright path. "Shelley models the HEART brand to her staff, and it continues to show in the nomination she received from another mom Tracy who shares "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...Thank you Recovery for all of the work you do to help kids that are going through the toughest times...Thank you Shelley...for helping kids and family work towards success. "As her supervisor, my words mean nothing compared to the words from the families that Shelley touches. Her staff say it better than I am able to at all. "Our Program manager at the Recovery Center shows her entire staff what it means to practice excellence. Her ability to lead her crew and advocate for her clients is extraordinary and without preservice ...to choose one example, would be difficult. Mrs. Shelley is constantly reaching out to the community to ensure the clients have options. "Shelley attends all events she is able and works with other departments to get what her clients need. Shelley is most definitely a Rock Star and continues to shine throughout our community, our company, and through the families that she touches each day. Shelley practices excellence each day as she fights for her staff, her clients, and families she works with. Shelley takes the time to get to know each family and works to build a plan that will enrich their family long after discharge. Shelley is a team player and shows HEART each day by modeling behaviors for her staff and networking within the community to ensure all clients have what they need for success. Shelley has big plans for the Recovery Center, and I look forward to seeing all the good she does in our communities.

# Jessica Victor

Position: Counselor III – Access-Gainesville

Supervisor: Tina Harkness

## **Criteria: Resilience**

Jessica works above and beyond on a daily basis. She is quiet and unassuming but has a wealth of knowledge for our ACCESS program that others do not have. She is willing to train new staff, works overtime when needed, and will always go out of her way to assist our clients as they call in. She listens to the broken, guides those in need and ensures they get connected. Jessica serves in all areas of excellence. She shows initiative in all she does and is a true asset to Meridian! She knows the ACCESS process, follows through and even circles back to ensure all of her team has the skills they need to do their job and help her.

# Nesha Becker

Position: Care Coordinator-Gainesville

Supervisor: Rana Tallador

**Criteria: Hope, Empathy, Teamwork**

Nesha Becker is a LSF Children Care Coordinator in multiple counties. Nesha works very hard with children with severe and persistent mental health issues to try to get them the services they need. She works independently and is a quick learner and enjoys working with children and families. Nesha is well respected by Meridian staff and her clients and families. She has also been working with the LSF Child Welfare Care Coordination Client case load as well until someone fills the position as she is definitely a team player and does not mind helping out. Nesha is a wonderful care coordinator for Meridian, and we are happy to have her working with us. Initiative- Nesha takes initiative by stepping up to the plate and taking on responsibilities. She has been a quick learner in care coordination and been willing to take on doing other job responsibilities when asked. Integrity- Nesha takes pride in doing her job well. She always acts professionally and has a good work ethic. Nesha represents Meridian in a positive manner always. She has a good relationship with outside providers including LSF.

# Rana Tallador

Position: Program Manager-Care Coordination

Supervisor: Christy McBee

**Criteria: Hope, Empathy, Accountability, Resilience, Teamwork**

As I shared in the initial nomination: Rana is and continues to be the "Gold Star" when it comes to all things Care Coordination. Rana works tirelessly to ensure that all documents are written correctly and meet all audit standards. Rana takes a different approach with each of her staff to ensure they are getting quality guidance and support tailored to their needs and personality. Rana works in the field alongside her staff to empathetically provide hope and train each to be resilient when faced with their community-based jobs. As care coordination is not for the weak, Rana shows them that there are better days ahead, and that sometimes we can only do what we can do and that is perfectly ok because we just try again tomorrow until we succeed. When you look up the word Team Player – Rana's picture should be there smiling. Rana jumped in and continues to assist me in developing and training staff under multiple new programs that we continue to work to develop. She continuously helps me manage all of these new care coordinators who currently do not have a manager to turn to. This is not part of Rana's job... Rana does it because she wants to support her teammates and build a strong Meridian. Rana is the go-to when I am out or any other manager is out on our team. She is there to provide support and guidance to any of the Wraparound staff and that shows just how much of a team player Rana is. This may sound all fluffy, but I assure you...accountability is at the forefront of Rana's mind. Each person is trained and has the ability, Rana not only holds them accountable, but she also holds herself to the same standards and helps them see that they are each responsible for all of their actions. Rana helps them recognize the weaker pieces, correct their paths and grow. She is there to guide and models the behavior she wants to see in her staff. Rana is a TRUE ROCK STAR, and I am shouting from the roof top THANK YOU for being SO AMAZING Rana!

# Katie Cribbs

Position: Program Assistant for Access/Lake City

Supervisor: Tina Harkness

## **Criteria: Teamwork**

Katie has learned her role and gone above and beyond. No matter where Katie is needed, she will go. She recently drove to 12 counties to deliver ice cream for every area to show employee appreciation. She will help organize swag for our teams, and she also goes out of her way to ensure all new staff feel welcome. She recently assisted the new Disaster Recovery Team Lead with materials and processes. Katie is willing to lend a helping hand to any program in need. Katie shows up and shines! She completes tasks that have nothing to do with her role. Katie didn't have to drive to Palatka or Cross City, or Live Oak but she took on the task to ensure all of Meridian's employees felt special and recognized. She is kindhearted and compassionate with others. Katie is a good example of excellence in service and taking initiative to highlight others.

# Dennis Holt

Position: Customer Service Specialist

Supervisor: Sheremah DeJesus

**Criteria: Hope, Empathy, Teamwork**

Dennis is an outstanding team member and vital to the Trenton office as a Customer Service Specialist, he ensures that everyone (clients and staff) that enters through our door is treated fairly with dignity regardless of their walk of life. He never gives the impression to clients that help is not reachable, and they took the right steps by seeking us for service. Dennis demonstrates amazing team work not only with Mrs. Keshia but with the other departments also located in Trenton. He is always a helping hand for the building rather it be saving the office from a spider or helping with office tasks.

# Matthew Byal

Position: Hospital Bridge Peer Specialist-Gainesville

Supervisor: Thea Baglino

## **Criteria: Teamwork**

My nomination is Matthew Byal Gainesville FT Hospital Bridge peer. Matthew Byal is our Hospital Bridge peer in Alachua. He helps everyone on his team, without hesitation. Matthew is very supportive, witty, caring and someone you can count on even if it's a big or small task. He comes in everyday with a smile and is always happy!! He has made the office feel like home with decor. In the absence of staff, he will take over their responsibility, make sure, all areas are covered so clients are still being cared for. He is very professional and knows rules and regulations very well. He takes pride in his work and has been a great asset to our morale and program. Matthew goes way beyond the call of duty.

# Alyssa Johnston

Position: Hospital Bridge Peer Specialist-Lake City

Supervisor: Thea Baglino

## **Criteria: Teamwork**

Alyssa is our peer in the Columbia County Hospital Bridge program. Alyssa has been a great team player and helps everyone on her team, without hesitation, she trains everyone (being new) she has caught on very quickly. The Staff knows they can depend on her. Alyssa is very supportive, witty, caring and someone you can count on even if it is a big or small task. In the absence of staff, she will take over their responsibility, make sure all areas are covered so clients are still being cared for. She is very professional and knows ow rules and regulations very well. She takes pride in his work. She goes way beyond the call of duty, and our team appreciates her very much because of her hard work and dedication, making forms and spreadsheets to help everyone succeed each day.

# Ashton Waters

Position: Bookkeeper

Supervisor: Jeremy Hood

**Criteria: Accountability, Resilience, Teamwork**

I am proud to nominate Ashton Waters for the “I Am Meridian” Award. As our Accounts Payable Clerk, she exemplifies the very best of Meridian’s values, especially Resilience, Accountability, and Teamwork. Despite working with limited tools and resources, she consistently processes hundreds of invoices and payments each month with remarkable accuracy and efficiency. Her ability to stay organized and focused under pressure is nothing short of extraordinary. She is often the first point of contact for staff across departments who are urgently seeking payments or checks, and she handles these interactions with grace, patience, and professionalism, even when the demands are high and the timelines tight. Her resilience shines through in her calm demeanor and steady performance, no matter how chaotic the day may be. She never lets the pressure rattle her, and she always finds a way to get the job done. Her accountability is evident in her meticulous attention to detail and her commitment to ensuring that every payment is processed correctly and on time. And her teamwork is reflected in her willingness to support others, share knowledge, and collaborate to improve our processes, even when her own plate is full. She is truly a Rock Star, and I believe she deserves to be recognized at the next level for her unwavering dedication and the positive impact she has on our team and organization. When a critical issue arose with our local utility account, she didn’t wait for direction or pass the problem along. Instead, she took it upon herself to drive, using her own vehicle, to the utility provider’s office to resolve the matter in person. Her proactive approach ensured that our services remained uninterrupted and that the issue was handled swiftly and professionally. This is just one example of the initiative she shows daily. She consistently finds ways to solve problems, improve processes, and support our team, even while managing a high volume of invoices and payment requests with limited resources. Her actions reflect a deep commitment to the success of our department and the organization as a whole.