

I Am Meridian – Award Recipients

Nominating Period: April 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024

The nomination narrative describes how the recipient's actions/accomplishments go above and beyond their normal job duties and responsibilities. The narrative also describes specific examples of how the recipient meets one or more of the criteria. (**Excellence, Innovation, Initiative, Integrity**).

(4 Recipients)

Raul Castro-Salazer

Nomination Criteria: Innovation

Supervisor: Donna Rowland

Raul came in and immediately met all care coordinators from other programs and found out what they offered. He then created a form that allows all programs to collaborate their efforts for the best client care.

His innovation to streamline care amongst all care coordinators is outstanding. Raul has gone above and beyond the call of duty for his teammates and clients. Raul has been instrumental in securing housing and services for several clients and continues to provide assistance wherever he can. Raul is always just a phone call away and even if he doesn't know how to help - he will find someone who can. Raul always comes to work with a smile on his face and care in his heart. He always does the right thing and continues to both walk the walk and talk the talk. During a situation with a particular client, a Spanish-speaker was needed to communicate. Raul stepped up and offered assistance with the call, and even followed up afterwards with the client without being asked to. Raul's infectious drive to help his community inspires daily.

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Christy McBee, VP Community Wraparound Services-North

Nomination Criteria: Excellence

Supervisor: Alan Paulin

Christy's teams were inclusive of newly funded Forensics Multi-disciplinary Team and FACT LATTERS team, Care Coordination and CMHC grant. Christy remained proactive to build teams, with limited applicant pool, bolster case management quality of care, and census building, while maintaining quality of care leading to meet or exceeding state outcome goals inclusive of state requirements for state hospital care coordination visits and follow up care. Additionally, Christy has been a standout SmartCare superuser, training and supporting staff and managers from numerous programs across Meridian. Including formal in-service training on SmartCare and related compliance issues.

Christy leads her teams to make extra efforts to ensure continuity of care during the step-down process into the community. Christy worked internally to ensure all CMHC National Outcome Measures (NOMS) were collected, and entered in the SPARS to reach grant goals of 1000 clients engaged/serviced. Christy provides important information/input and follow-up related to Care Coordination and Standards of Care Committee. Christy continued provided direct care to existing clients in her former role, to support MAT after transitioning to her Vice President position. And many more, I am hoping, wishing, crossing my fingers, and saying my prayers we have you for [at least] another 5 years!

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Letisha Francis, Manager, FMT Forensics -North

Nomination Criteria: Excellence, Integrity

Supervisor: Christy McBee

I feel like there are MANY that would agree with this nomination! Tish is a wealth of knowledge and support. Not only does Tish provide support to her direct staff, Tish meets monthly with the FMT teams in both Gainesville and Ocala to ensure that all procedures for all 3 teams run the same. Tish is also a huge support to the other managers on her team by providing support when their direct manager is not available. Tish jumps in and trains anyone needing a hand and is there whenever needed. Letisha makes sure that everyone feels welcome and works to provide an inclusive environment for all. Tish is an amazing manager and is always ahead of schedule with any needed information. She goes out of her way to find outside training that can benefit not only her team, but any teams at Meridian. If Tish knows it.....Tish shares it!!

Excellence - Letisha constantly seeks more knowledge and shares it readily. Tish makes sure that she understands all aspects of not only her job, but all of the components for her team. She is ready to train and provide guidance in a moment's notice. Tish makes sure that she and her staff are trained in evidence-based practice and that all documentations is properly completed in all systems. Tish ensures she and her team maintain a positive relationship with all courts and community partners so that they are able to come to her directly when there is a question or issue.

Integrity - Tish's integrity is beyond reproach. Tish makes sure to not only follow procedures but works to ensure all teams are following proper procedure as set forth in Meridian policy. Letisha always does the next right thing and if she waivers at all, she seeks guidance. Letisha completes all chart reviews and make sure that her team understand how important the next right thing is. Letisha models both excellence and integrity for not only her team, but her teammates and coworkers Meridian wide. She IS Meridian!

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Cindy Caldwell, Counselor III-Clinician MAT Services

Nomination Criteria: Excellence, Initiative, Innovation, Integrity

Supervisor: Michelle NesSmith

I am the Program Manager for Lake City, Live Oak and Chiefland MAT Services Clinics. Our department has been severely understaffed for quite some time. Approximately 3-Months ago, Cindy came in for an interview for a Counselor position in our Lake City clinic. Our interview took a couple of hours, as she is very easy to talk with and her enthusiastic passion for working with Opioid patients was clear and evident as she described her hopes in working in a clinic just like ours at Meridian to help people find recovery. Once I had Cindy onboard, she immediately hit the ground running! She asked me to be put on the group schedule first day. She then and now continues to facilitate such interactive and informative groups; the clients don't want to leave group session. Cindy immediately began calling clients into her office for individual sessions, as they waited to see our doctor and began building a rapport with them and updating charts. I have received 100% positive feedback from MAT Clients regarding Cindy's kindness, empathy and ability to guide them to more positive outcomes. As we know, every department has had a significant amount of GPRAs, Outcomes and FARs to correct. Even though Cindy had not been trained fully, she took it upon herself to learn the documents, what was required and ask questions if needed. Along with my other Clinicians, Cindy was equally responsible as my seasoned staffed for timely completions and meeting our deadlines and believe me... there were A LOT! Cindy continues busting out documentation updates, building strong therapeutic connections with our clients, the MAT staff adores her, and my prayers were answered to find a Clinician with great work ethic, sense of humor and just as much love as I have for our population that we serve... addictions. Meridian hit a home run with Cindy! I am amazed how far Cindy has come in just 3 short months! She is proactive in learning her duties, she is a breath of fresh air with her humor when we are all running around trying to complete the days workload, clients ask for her by name and group session numbers are up because of her fun way of learning, practicing and applying new skills. MAT Services and Meridian is blessed to have her as part of our team and family.

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Excellence: Cindy provides excellent patient care. Cindy truly cares about the patient and will go above and beyond providing a safe place to talk about hard things and assisting them with resources, so they have a chance of a successful recovery.

Innovation: Cindy creates new ways of learning positive coping skills through engaging and fun activities/therapy. The patients often times do not want to leave her sessions and ask to see her by name.

Initiative: From day 1 of employment in her role as a clinician, Cindy was and continues to be a self-starter and standing beside her coworkers to complete tasks. She tackles a job and asks questions if needed without being asked to do so.

Integrity: Cindy consistently demonstrates her commitment to honesty and the will to do what's right, even when no one is watching her. Her work ethic is amazing, and I have to make her go home in the afternoon. She always wants to stay and finish, "just one more thing."