



# Working Together

December/January 2014

## MCUM's Beloved Director Retiring After 30 Years

Most of you are aware that long-time Executive Director Meri Reinhold will be leaving MCUM in early 2015. However, you may not know about what led her to the agency and some of the memorable experiences during her tenure. As her final year draws to a close, she reflected on these details.

Although Meri didn't know much about MCUM prior to her arrival in 1985, she was familiar with the agency having been a social work intern for Monroe County Group Foster Homes, which was located in the same building. She was also knowledgeable about MCUM's funding sources from her 12 years of work in the developmental disabilities field. As a workshop director in South Bend and vocational evaluator in Martinsville, she had the experience with large organizations and budgets that MCUM needed.

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## You Can Be a Part of Our Impact

Over the past 75 years, countless Monroe County residents in need have obtained the resources necessary to achieve self-sufficiency due to the generosity of caring community members like you. Please join us in a final anniversary celebration by making your contribution today. Here are some of the ways we have changed the lives of local families:

Of MCUM's childcare parents,



97%

saw improvement in their child's literacy and math skills



81%

said MCUM's program helped their financial situation

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## Holiday Giving Opportunities



Your family, congregation or club can take part in many special activities this time of year to make the season bright for Monroe County families in need, including:

- Organizing a toy drive to collect items needed for MCUM's childcare program
- Honoring a loved one with a donation to provide affordable childcare or basic needs assistance to a neighbor
- Collecting socks and underwear so adults and children can stay warm and clean this winter
- Making a contribution to the rent and utilities fund so a local family can stay in their home during the holidays.

For more information about how you can make a difference, visit [www.mcum.org](http://www.mcum.org) and click on "Holiday Giving Opportunities."

## Food Pantry Needs

MCUM welcomes donations of all non-expired, nonperishable foods for its Emergency Food Pantry, but currently there is a special need for:

- **Canned fruit**

The food pantry is running extremely low on canned fruit this month and needs to be replenished for the holidays!

## Cleaning Closet Needs

Cleaning and hygiene supplies can't be purchased with food stamps. The following items are in high demand:

- Women's underwear (size 8)
- Men's underwear (size 30 - 34)
- Spray cleaner
- Floor cleaner
- feminine hygiene products

## Childcare Needs

The Childcare Program needs all kinds of outdoor supplies, including:

- Baby dolls (preferably plastic)
- Dry erase markers (non-toxic)
- Construction paper
- White paper
- Glue
- Finger paint (washable)
- Tempera Paint (washable)

## Opp House Needs

Opportunity House can find new homes for your gently used items, with proceeds benefiting MCUM's programs. Please consider donating items such as:

- Paper and plastic bags
- Towels
- Pots and pans

MCUM also gladly accepts *paper grocery sacks* for the food pantry. Paper bags hold more than plastic and stand up nicely. Please ask for paper when you shop and bring them to MCUM to reuse.

## Volunteer Opportunities

For more information about these or other volunteer opportunities, visit [www.mcum.org](http://www.mcum.org), call (812) 339-3429, or email [help@mcum.org](mailto:help@mcum.org).

### Featured Volunteer Position

#### Spring Luncheon Volunteers:

MCUM will hold its annual Spring Luncheon in April 2015. Help plan the event of the year by participating in one of the committees: silent auction, live auction, theme & decor, program, or marketing & publicity. Want to help assist with day-of tasks like set-up, tear-down, or greeting guests? Contact Katie at [fundraising@mcum.org](mailto:fundraising@mcum.org) or (812) 339-3429 x18.

#### Maintenance Volunteers:

Volunteers are needed to perform basic maintenance tasks of any skill level, from changing light bulbs to basic carpentry. Work is usually performed between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Contact Meri at [mcum@mcum.org](mailto:mcum@mcum.org) or (812) 339-3429 x11.



#### Fresh Foods Coordinator:

MCUM seeks an energetic individual to coordinate fresh foods for its emergency services clients. This person will organize and manage the refrigerator, and coordinate pick ups from the food bank. Contact Cliff at [help@mcum.org](mailto:help@mcum.org).

#### Opportunity House Volunteers:

Opportunity House, a resale shop located at 907 W. 11th Street, is MCUM's important partner. Volunteers are needed to sort and price items and serve as cashiers. Call (812) 336-2443 for more information.

# MCUM's Beloved Director Retiring

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One of Meri's favorite things about her position is all that she has learned from staff, board members, volunteers, and students. "MCUM has a lot of richness in the people it interacts with," she said. She has also received great satisfaction from seeing the outcome of the efforts of the staff, who she describes as talented, hard-working, and generous. "They are dynamic people full of creative energy."



Meri has also enjoyed the many stories of how MCUM's assistance has served as a catalyst for change in its clients. She recalls receiving a letter from a woman MCUM helped 10 years before. She vowed that if she was ever in a better place she would do something to help, and enclosed a check. "The value of the emergency services program came full circle," Meri said. "The small amount we invested in helping her came back to us years later."

Meri has found the ability to obtain funding to maintain MCUM's high standards of service to be the most challenging part of her job. She has had to constantly think about the future and look for new donors. "It's a complex problem," she said. "It feels good when you figure out one part, but it's an ongoing process." However, she considers building the organization's endowment funds to be her greatest accomplishment. "Their value will be realized down the road and will allow us to continue serving these families that we know need us," she said.

Meri advises supporters that, regardless of who sits in her chair, MCUM's core values will still be there. She reminds them that there are many roads to arrive at the same destination. "You have to let whoever will be leading the charge have the freedom to do so," she said. "Business as usual should rarely be the ultimate goal."

After retiring, Meri plans to improve her art (she is a talented aspiring painter), spend quality time with her husband, and visit friends across the country. She would also like to reduce her material footprint by going through each room in her house and identifying things to donate to Opportunity House. We wish her the best of luck and know she will continue to make a difference in the community for many years to come.

## You Can Be a Part of Our Impact

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Your financial support is the foundation upon which we have built MCUM. Through your gifts, MCUM has touched the lives of thousands of people over the past 75 years. Together, we will continue to provide these same opportunities for thousands more. A gift of any size makes an important difference in the lives of MCUM's preschoolers and emergency services clients. Please make your tax-deductible donation online at [www.mcum.org/donate](http://www.mcum.org/donate) or by calling (812) 339-3429. Thank you for being part of MCUM's history!

## Thank You!

**This month, we would like to express our appreciation for...**

- Mitch Coggin and the Elders and Deacons at United Presbyterian Church for allowing us to present at their annual-joint meeting.
- Trinity Episcopal Church for dedicating their November 9 Forum hour to MCUM.
- Nicole Griffin for arranging a visit from the Yes! Club at Tri-North Middle School.
- Dr. Shahla Ray and her children Arianna, Roxanna, and Anthony for volunteering at our food pantry with the Yes! Club from Tri-North Middle School.
- Hannah Bolte, Statistical Consultant, and Stephanie Dickinson, Managing Director of the Indiana Statistical Consulting Center, Indiana University Department of Statistics for having their graduate students create an extremely detailed spreadsheet program to help us calculate meal costs for the childcare program.
- All of the service learners who worked with MCUM's students this semester. We hope the connections you made with the children have been as impacting for you as it has been for the children.
- MCUM teaching staff. Their hard work, dedication, and willingness to go above and beyond is appreciated. They are making connections with the students that will impact them for the rest of their lives.

## **Congregation Spotlight: United Presbyterian Church**

By Katie Broadfoot

This month, we are highlighting United Presbyterian Church, who has been involved with MCUM since 1988. Over the past 26 years, United Presbyterian has served as both a supporting and a member congregation. The congregation has donated more than \$7,000 in unrestricted gifts to MCUM and more than 10,000 pounds of food.

In the recent months, United Presbyterian Church (UPC) has made a huge increase in its food and household item donations. Interim pastor, Mitch Coggin, attributes the growth to moving the location of UPC's collection site. Like many of our wonderful supporting and member congregations, UPC has held a constant collection site, a red wagon, for several years. Only a few months ago, Coggin moved the wagon right outside of the sanctuary and was proud to report that while it used to take months to fill the wagon, it currently takes about two weeks. Great job! Additionally, UPC recently set up a hats, scarves, and mittens tree dedicated to MCUM. See the sidebar to learn more.

If you'd like more information about becoming a member or supporting congregation, please contact Katie Broadfoot at [fundraising@mcum.org](mailto:fundraising@mcum.org) or at 812-339-3429 x18. There are a lot of opportunities available for youth groups, interest groups, and circles – we're happy to work with you!

*\*Member congregations are those in the faith community who, as an entity, have made an unrestricted financial gift to MCUM in the previous calendar year.*

## **Thank You, Pantry Donors**

MCUM depends on donations to make a difference for local households in crisis. Some of the groups and individuals who have recently contributed food, cleaning supplies, and/or hygiene products are listed here:

- Buskirk-Chumley Theater
- Daughters of Isabella
- Jef & Pam Davidson
- First Christian Church
- First Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Women
- First United Church
- Roger & Neva Gildersleeve
- Good Neighbors Home Extension Club
- Mary Hawkins
- Melvin Kem & Mary D. Hawkins
- Hoosier Courts Nursery School
- Opportunity House
- Basilla Jean Rogers
- Sigma Alpha Iota Alumnae Chapter
- St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church
- St. Charles Catholic School
- St. John the Apostle Catholic Church
- St. Paul United Methodist Church
- St. Thomas Lutheran Evangelical Church
- The Peoples State Bank
- Trudy Thompson
- Trinity Episcopal Church
- Unitarian Universalist Church
- United Presbyterian Church
- University Baptist Church
- Woodhaven Christian Church
- Work One

## *Christmas Mitten Tree Benefits MCUM Clients*

MCUM gives thanks to our friends at United Presbyterian Church for their generosity this holiday season. The member congregation came together this month to create a "mitten tree" - a Christmas tree decorated with donated mittens and hats in place of traditional ornaments.



Members of the congregation presented the donations to MCUM earlier this month. All items were brand new, as MCUM does not give out used winter accessories to clients. The Christmas tree donation included a total of four scarves, 36 gloves and mittens, and 40 hats.

Cold weather accessories help keep MCUM clients warm throughout the winter season. Many families who walk through our doors are in need of such essential items, which can be donated Monday - Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.



## Holiday Shopping at Opportunity House

'Tis the season for shopping! From family meals to ugly sweater parties, to preparing for Santa's annual visit, this is a busy (and expensive) time of year. There are cookies to bake, parties to attend, and gifts to make or buy. Luckily, Opportunity House is ready to meet all your needs this holiday season!

From 10 am to 3 pm Monday through Saturday, you can shop at Opportunity House, located at 907 W. 11th Street. We provide clothing, household décor, and other gently used items to low-income families at the most reasonable prices in town! Opportunity House has something for everyone – whether you're looking to provide new or nearly new gifts or for a quirky white elephant gift.

Flo Davis, who serves on the board of both MCUM and Opportunity House, suggests going to Opportunity House if you need an inexpensive decorative platter for a treat you've made for a party. When you're done, wash it and donate it back! You can also buy supplies like yarn, corks, mason jars, and ornaments for craft projects for much less than at other stores!

What kind of holiday/gift items does Opportunity House have?

- Toys, games & puzzles
- Holiday greeting cards (5 for €25!)
- Stockings, ornaments & Nativity sets
- Cookie tins & baking supplies
- Books
- Home décor
- And so much more!

You probably know that MCUM and Opportunity House are partners. MCUM gives Opportunity House vouchers to clients who need winter coats, clothes for work, or household appliances. What you may not know is that Opportunity House gives its proceeds to MCUM. That's right, when you donate or purchase items at Opportunity House you're directly supporting MCUM's important services. That is something worth celebrating this holiday season!

## Thank You, Volunteers

Volunteers make our programs possible. Thank you to all who shared their valuable time and talent with us recently!

- Alexander Ashkin
- Hannah Bailey
- Mackenzie Barrott
- Amanda Behnke
- Louise Blish
- Allison Bolde
- Savanna Bruski
- Lucia Calderon
- Yuval Caspi
- Nicolas Carter
- Greg Claretto
- Su Cowling
- Maggie Edens
- Robert Fowler
- Molly Glover
- Tom & Diane Gregory
- Margaret Hensley
- Larry & Nancy Jacobs
- Stephanie Keeshin
- Kelly Kreutz
- Andrew & Veronica Lenard
- Zoe Lewis
- Bryant, Darren, and Samantha Mehay
- Valerie Merriam
- Chris Meyer
- David Meyer & Martha Haines
- Chloe Mounayar
- Nina Ogrizovich
- Alex Peacock
- Carol Peterman
- Daniella Rao
- Allison Reiplinger
- Maya Rothenberg
- Nancy Russell
- Jordan Scheinberg
- Susie Trisler
- Erika Twer
- Lee Van Buskirk
- Bruna Lessa Voltani
- Evan Waldrop
- Justyce Weeden
- Avery White

## Make MCUM Part of Your Legacy

For 75 years, generous community members like you have rallied with MCUM to provide essential services like high-quality, affordable childcare and emergency assistance to Monroe County residents who need a helping hand. Your support has helped thousands of individuals get back on track to self-sufficiency.

You can ensure that MCUM's programs have an impact for the next 75 years and beyond by making a gift to MCUM through your estate plan. Numerous giving options and tax incentives allow you to create a lasting legacy in a manner that suits you and benefits the community. Gifts of all sizes boost MCUM's capacity to serve local residents in need of support.

Making a bequest to MCUM is a simple, meaningful way to show your commitment to helping your neighbors in need. Below is sample language for your will or trust to guarantee MCUM's ability to put your gift to its best possible use.

*"I hereby leave [specific dollar amount/specific property/rest and remainder, etc.] of my estate to Monroe County United Ministries, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation in Bloomington, Indiana, to be used for the benefit of the organization in such a manner as the board of directors may elect."*

If you would like to find out more about the impact you can have, contact Katie at (812) 339-3429 x18 or fundraising@mcum.org.

# Announcements for Parents

## Important Dates

**Dec 11** Holiday Program (6:30 p.m.)

**Dec 17** Santa Visits (10:00 a.m.)

**Dec 23** Classroom Holiday Parties

**Dec 24** MCUM Closes at 1:30 p.m.

**Dec 25 - Jan 1** MCUM Closed

**Jan 19** MCUM Closed for MLK Day

## Join Us!

The Annual Holiday Program will be held on Thursday, December 11th at 6:30pm. The festivities will take place at Tri-North Middle School and include performances by all five classrooms. Arrive early to help MCUM staff set up for the event or enjoy some tasty refreshments!

## Spread the Word

Do you know families who may be interested in high-quality, affordable childcare for their young children? Send them our way! MCUM has spaces available for 2 and 2.5 year olds in the newly reopened Puffin classroom. Share your stories about how MCUM's program has contributed to your child's development and prepared him or her for success in school, and let interested parents/guardians know they can contact Traci at (812) 339-3429 x10 or [childcare@mcum.org](mailto:childcare@mcum.org) for more information. Thanks for your support!

### Childcare Staff

Childcare Director: Traci Mehay

Education Coordinator: Tina Burress

Cook: Denise Garrett

Assistant Cook: Derrick Mackie

# Childcare Classroom Information

## Puffins

### 2–2.5 year olds

Teacher: Sarah Norzinskey

Aide: Karen May

Winter has officially arrived at MCUM! This is the best time to talk to children about the changing weather and what they need to wear when it gets cold. We will talk also what fun things people can do in the wintertime.

Some of the activities that we will do as a class include singing holiday carols and favorite children's songs. The children will also have a Christmas program for their parents on December 11th, so we will be practicing for that as well. We encourage everyone to come to this special event that the children love and the parents will enjoy as well.

We will also be learning about different cultures and holidays, such as Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Some of the books we are going to read include "Biscuit's Hanukkah" and, "My First Kwanzaa."

The Puffins will be reading books about winter and Santa Claus for Christmas, which include, "Must Be Santa," "Ten Little Snowflakes," and "Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?" We will also be learning about animals that live in the snow from the book, "Baby Snow Animals."

The children will also continue learning their letters, numbers, colors, and shapes:

- The letters M, N, and O
- The numbers 9 & 10
- The color green
- The shape of the diamond

## Seahorses

### 2.5–3 year olds

Teacher: Jessica Mackie

Aide: Jessica Corbin

This month, the Seahorses will spend time learning about many different holidays and celebrations from all around our big world, including Mardi Gras, Cinco de Mayo, and the Chinese New Year. We will also spend time focusing on familiar winter celebrations such as Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Christmas.

The Seahorses will be busy making festive decorations to hang up around the classroom and some to take home to our families. As part of MCUM's celebration, we will be joining the other classes to sing for our families on stage at Tri-North in our holiday program on December 11th.

Each of us are familiar with how our own families celebrate the holidays, but what do other people do? Much of our time will be spent learning and sharing how each of our unique families enjoy their favorite holidays, as well as reading and listening to holiday stories and music. We would love for families to get involved, so please come in and share some of your favorite holiday traditions with us.

We will still be spending time with:

- The letters M, N, & O. We will also explore our surroundings for things that begin with these letters.
- The numbers 9 & 10. We will play number games and count.
- The color green. We will use green to color and paint.
- The shape of the diamond. We will trace, build, and find diamond-shaped objects.

# Childcare Classroom Information (continued)

## Penguins

3 year olds

Teacher: LaDawn Joyner

During the month of December, the Penguins will be learning about various holidays around the world. We will focus on the most commonly celebrated traditions during this time of year, including Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. We will read books such as “Hanukkah Lights, Hanukkah Nights,” “K is for Kwanzaa,” and “Merry Christmas from Biscuit.” We will also talk about other holidays such as Ramadan and the Chinese New Year.

The Penguins will also continue learning new letters, shapes, colors and numbers. This month will be focusing on:

- The letters M, N, and O
- The numbers 9 & 10
- The color green
- The shape of the diamond

For this holiday season, the Penguins will transform our classroom into a winter wonderland. We will make paper chains representing the different holidays (red, green, and black for Kwanzaa; blue and white for Hanukkah; and red, green, and white for Christmas). We will also have a felt Christmas tree that the Penguins can decorate using the ornaments and holiday art projects we will be making.

We will be ending out the month with a holiday party. Santa is coming to visit MCUM and he will bring all the students some goodies!

The Penguins want to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year!

## Otters

4 year olds

Teacher: Brittney Denton

Aide: Sarah Landrum

The Otters welcome the winter weather and snow flurries of December! This month, the Otters will be exploring different holidays from all over the world. We will compare and contrast the holidays that our classmates celebrate and the new ones that we want to learn more about.

The theme for this month is exploring. Throughout December, each student will create a suitcase and receive a passport that they will get stamped when they “visit” each different place. Each morning, the children will receive an airplane ticket for a specific country, and we will “fly” to our destination to learn about the special holidays the local people celebrate there. Some of the countries we will visit include Mexico, Israel, and Kenya.

The last week of December will focus on the winter holidays we celebrate in the United States, including Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. Because Hanukkah is from December 16-24th this year, we will be learning about this holiday and how it is celebrated the last week of the month. The Otters will be reading festive books and singing songs from each of the countries that we visit.

We will also be practicing a few songs for our holiday program on December 11th. Parents and family members can help students prepare for the big event by singing and practicing with their children at home.

## Dolphins

5–6 year olds

Teacher: Kim Clay

Aide: Vanessa Schultz

It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas! The month of December is an exciting and busy time of the year. It’s a time for decorating Christmas trees, sharing meals with families, and, of course, waiting for Santa Claus to arrive. This month, the Dolphins will spend time creating a festive mood in the classroom. We will decorate our Christmas tree, hang paper chains from the ceilings, and place candy canes in the windows. We will also write letters to Santa and make special ornaments and holiday crafts to send home.

This month is also the time to learn about the many holidays that are celebrated around the world. We will spend time learning about Christmas and see how others celebrate this holiday. We will discuss how we celebrate it and invite families to come in and share their stories.

We will have a Christmas party on December 23 before our long break and would like to invite parents to join us to hear the Dolphins perform special songs just for their families. We will also perform our favorite holiday songs at MCUM’s annual Holiday Program.

Christmas is not the only thing we will learn this month. We will still continue to:

- Learn new letters and sight words
- Practice spelling and writing our names
- Remember to use Conscious Discipline techniques



## Monroe County United Ministries

Non-Profit Organization  
US Postage Paid  
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Permit #186

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Member Agency

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**Save a tree!** Sign up to receive this newsletter online. Email [development@mcum.org](mailto:development@mcum.org), or call (812) 339-3429 x15 to make the switch.

### *Staff:*

Executive Director: Meri Reinhold  
 Development Associate: Katie Broadfoot  
 Development Associate: Megan Reece  
 Emergency Services Coordinator: Cliff Edens  
 Emergency Services Caseworker: Liz Lopez  
 Office Manager: Shannon Hampton  
 Childcare Director: Traci Mehay  
 Education Coordinator: Tina Burress

### *Hours of Operation:*

#### **Office**

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - noon and 1-4 p.m.

#### **Childcare**

Monday - Friday: 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

#### **Emergency Services**

Monday - Friday: 8 - 11:30\* a.m. and 1-3:30\* p.m.

\*On days of high demand for services, MCUM may stop taking applications earlier than posted hours.

## ***Opportunity House***

Opportunity House, located at 907 W. 11th Street, is a volunteer-run resale shop that raises funds to support MCUM's programs. Our **new store hours** are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Saturday, with donations accepted 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Call us at (812) 336-2443 or follow us on Facebook!

Donations of gently used items are always welcome, including: books, clothing, household items, collectibles, toys, and linens.

### **A Message from the Store Manager:**

Opportunity House is well stocked for your winter needs. In addition, we have great sales! We put out new items on a daily basis, so visit us often during our new hours!

We have lots of clothes for you and your family to stay warm this season - hats, scarves, gloves, and more! Come shop with us or spend a couple hours a week with our wonderful volunteers. Proceeds go to MCUM's valuable programs!

 Please recycle this newsletter  
or share it with a friend.