

SCHOOLS/YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AND MERIDIAN CREATE A CULTURE OF BELONGING AS THEY CELEBRATE NATIONAL NO ONE EATS ALONE DAY - Mar. 03, 2023

DETROIT, March 3, 2023 [PRNewswire/](#) -- Building a culture of belonging makes schools and communities stronger. On Feb. 25, Meridian of Michigan and Faith Redemption Center/SW MI AGAPE Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Youth Department celebrated a positive prevention initiative designed to promote inclusion among school-age children in Detroit.

Representatives from Meridian hosted an event in honor of *No One Eats Alone@ Day*, created by the nonprofit [Beyond Differences](#)™. Youths ranging in age from 6-17 participated in activities designed to teach them about social isolation and the negative impact it can have on health and academic performance. Under the guidance of adult volunteers, children participated in several activities which promoted being kind to their peers, meeting new friends, eating lunch together and combating social isolation. The theme was "My Recipe for Empathy."

Several other youth organizations and schools have also signed up to participate in No One Eats Alone Day. In March, four Detroit Parks and Recreation centers as well as the Boys & Girls Club/Baseline Middle School in South Haven, MI, and the Boys & Girls Club/South Haven High School will hold events to teach kids the importance of being kind.

"At Meridian, we're committed to helping children lead healthier lives, and that includes educating and empowering youth to promote inclusion," said Patricia Graham, Plan President and CEO in Michigan. "We are proud to partner with Beyond Difference to celebrate *No One Eats Alone Day* and give students in Michigan the tools they need to remain focused on their health and social lives."

"This year's No One Eats Alone lesson plans get to the root of social isolation by teaching students about empathy to build connection and belonging," said Laura Talmus, co-founder and executive director of Beyond Differences. "Our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Teacher's Guide also includes *FIRE: Fostering Immigrant + Refugee Empowerment*, a featured curriculum from our National Teen Board of high school students who have first-hand experience with these struggles and created exercises and activities to promote acceptance and belonging for these communities."

Faith Redemption Center/SW MI AGAPE Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Youth Department joined thousands of community-based organizations and schools across the country that celebrated *No One Eats Alone Day*. The initiative reached more than 1 million students in all 50 states. Faith Redemption has been a community-based partner with Meridian for three years and regularly hosts community health fairs and other events.

*No One Eats Alone Day* is sponsored by the [Centene Charitable Foundation](#).

#### **About Meridian**

Meridian in Michigan provides government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex medical needs primarily through Medicaid (Meridian), Medicare Advantage and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans (Wellcare), Medicare-Medicaid Plans (MeridianComplete), and the Health Insurance Marketplace (Ambetter from Meridian). Meridian is a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a leading healthcare enterprise committed to helping people live healthier lives. For more information about Meridian, please visit [mimeridian.com](http://mimeridian.com).

#### **About Beyond Differences**

Nonprofit Beyond Differences' mission is to inspire students to end social isolation in middle schools and create a culture of belonging for everyone. Founded in 2010, Beyond Differences has created year-round programs to tackle a wide range of issues that lead to social isolation, including Know Your Classmates with lessons that focus on Stand Up for AAPI Youth, No One Eats Alone and Be Kind Online. All curriculum and activity kits are provided free for schools. Currently, more than 9,500 schools use Beyond Differences programs and materials. For more information, visit [nooneeatsalone.org](http://nooneeatsalone.org).

SOURCE Meridian of Michigan

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