

Meridian in Michigan and the Centene Foundation Announce \$1.1 Million Commitment to Alternatives For Girls - Dec. 05, 2023

Funding Will Provide Early Childhood Care and Career Development to Help Homeless Families Achieve Long-Term Stability

DETROIT, Dec. 5, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- [Meridian](#) in Michigan, a wholly owned subsidiary of [Centene Corporation](#) (NYSE: [CNC](#)) and a leading health insurer providing quality, affordable coverage to Michigan residents, and the [Centene Foundation](#), the philanthropic arm of Centene Corporation, announced today a \$1.1 million funding commitment to social services agency [Alternatives For Girls](#) (AFG). The commitment will address the unique needs of girls and young women experiencing homelessness in Detroit through the development and furnishing of a 3,400 square foot early childhood education center that will open as part of the Dr. Maya Angelou Village (DMAV) in summer 2024.

The center will provide affordable, high-quality early education to children from birth to three years of age. Operated by AFG, the center will also be accessible to the public. AFG is focused on providing homeless, high-risk girls and young women with support, resources and the opportunities necessary to maintain stable housing and become economically independent. To support working parents, services will be offered during both standard and non-traditional hours, including evenings and weekends.

"At Meridian, we are deeply committed to strong partnerships that serve the whole person," said Meridian's Vice President of Population Health & Clinical Operations, Jill Howard. "The early childhood education center will provide state licensed, high-quality on-site programming to ensure each child's mental and developmental needs are met, helping them toward early literacy and building good social skills. It will also save mothers from having to leave the shelter with their children, hop on a bus to an early childhood education center, then another bus to school or work, and do it all over at the end of the day. This project will change lives and break generational cycles by providing the resources families need to make positive choices in their lives."

According to the [Detroit Regional Chamber's Detroit Resident Voices Survey Report](#), 27% of Detroit area households face challenges finding or keeping a job due to childcare issues. The early childhood education center is an important part of the DMAV – a \$19.1 million, 45-unit, three-story supportive housing facility in northwest Detroit's Miller Grover neighborhood. Most shelter and housing resources do not usually provide on-site, early childhood education, which is often a financial burden to single-income families and those in low-income communities. The addition of this critical service will help children and families flourish and achieve equity.

"The advantages of high-quality early childhood education are well documented. We see the lack of early childhood care as an on-going obstacle to stability and success, and we are pleased to be able to partner with Meridian and the Centene Foundation to provide this opportunity for families. Early childhood programming promotes children's school readiness and healthy development. This center will promote family engagement through monthly parent education workshops, parent-child interactive literacy activities, and a parent advisory council. This is critical to improving health and educational outcomes for the children and their families," said Chief Operating Officer at AFG, Dr. Celia Thomas.

Through a holistic approach, the funding will support an array of services at the housing project that are person-centered, trauma-informed, and use a whole-family approach to promote culturally centered long-term safety, healing, and recovery for homeless families. The first-floor licensed early childhood education center will include three childcare rooms with all the supports necessary to improve social skills and set the stage for developing early literacy skills.

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.

About the Centene Foundation

The Centene Foundation (the "Foundation"), a private nonprofit focused on investing in economically challenged communities, is the philanthropic arm of Centene Corporation ("Centene"). The Foundation supports projects and initiatives strategically aligned with Centene's mission-driven culture and enhances the work Centene is doing to remove the barriers to wellness underserved and low-income populations face. The Foundation is committed to addressing social determinants of health and improving health equity in three distinct areas of focus: healthcare access, social services and education. To learn more, visit the Centene Foundation's [website](#).

About Alternatives for Girls

Founded in 1987 and located in Detroit, [Alternatives For Girls](#) provides support services for at-risk girls and young women experiencing homelessness and other risks avoid violence, early pregnancy, and exploitation. Through a myriad of services, including a transitional living program, AFG helps young women and girls explore and access the support, resources, and opportunities necessary to achieve their goals.

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