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A guide to navigating local health care, wellness, and beauty solutions.

BY Linda Margison / PHOTOGRAPHY BY Martin Boling



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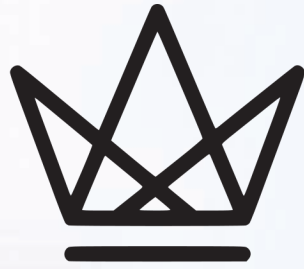
Hear Well to Live Well

Dr. Elizabeth Thompson opened Hickory Audiology because she has a desire for people to live their best life—and that starts with good hearing health. She explains how, in the early years of hearing loss, people frequently ask others to repeat themselves; at some point, they stop asking, go along with the crowd, and laugh when everyone else laughs. “Part of living your best life is hearing well and engaging in the conversation, being part of the joke and hearing the stories that your grandkids are telling,” Thompson says. “Hearing health gives you confidence in your ability to communicate with people.”

During initial visits, Thompson and Dr. Lisa Goerner conduct hearing tests to evaluate where hearing is at that moment. They then discuss a client’s hearing challenges and how they want it to be. For instance, Thompson will ask if the person likes to go to concerts, attend plays, or talk with friends and families. “We find out what sounds are most important to them,” she says, adding that those answers help tailor appropriate treatment options.

Thompson says evidence connects hearing loss and dementia, with hearing loss being the number one modifiable risk factor for dementia. By addressing hearing, a person can make a positive change in overall health. “Being able to communicate with those around you and being part of the conversation helps you live a better life,” she adds. “To hear is to understand, to understand is to perceive, and to perceive is to be present.”

Visit hickoryaudiology.com.



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Evergreen Village

Affordable Assisted Living

Having welcomed its first residents in 2018, Evergreen Village at Bloomington offers affordable options for all-inclusive assisted living. The three-story, 115-apartment community for people age 62 and older serves up to 183 seniors, providing food, utilities, nursing care, and shuttle services to doctors' appointments, activities, and community outings for one price, either privately paid or through Medicaid's assisted living waiver.

"The affordable financial piece is something that hasn't been in the Bloomington market, so seniors had to stay home or with family members or bring services into their apartment," says administrator Josh Dodds. "That works for some people, but there's a point when it doesn't anymore. We don't charge people for needing something a little extra one or two times a month. It's the same rate regardless of how many times you push your call light."

Residents at Evergreen Village live in private apartments with a kitchenette, spacious bathroom, and emergency alert system. They have access to around-the-clock personal assistance and help with medications from the certified nursing staff, as well as housekeeping, laundry, restaurant-style dining, barber and beauty shops, and social and recreational activities. They can also be part of the community's decision-making process by participating on the resident and food councils. "This allows people to continue to have more control over their lives," Dodds says. "We offer the security of knowing someone is available, but also give residents the independence to do as they please and come and go as they please." **For more information or to schedule a tour, call Lisa Payton at 812-336-2718.**



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Erica Garrett
Bloomington Resident
with husband LaRone

Monroe Hospital

Patient-Focused, Professional Care Is the Best Care

If not for Monroe Hospital's Dr. Matthew Parmenter, 38-year-old Erica Garrett says she would be learning to stand as an amputee rather than going on short walks, up and down stairs, and living her best life.

Garrett first met Parmenter, a podiatric surgeon board-certified in reconstructive lower leg and foot surgery, wound care, and hyperbaric medicine, after she sustained second- and third-degree burns on her feet during a family trip in Michigan. "When I got to Monroe Hospital, I was greeted by wonderful doctors and nurses, and they sent me to meet Dr. Parmenter. He healed my wounds and helped my feet get better," Garrett says.

Flash forward four years to Garrett having a severe leg infection after a kidney transplant. Doctors at a larger hospital told her that the only option was to have her left leg amputated below the knee, but she insisted on being sent to Dr. Parmenter. "If he decided that it needed to be amputated, then I would allow him to do it, because he's the only doctor I trust—he has my best interests at heart."

But Parmenter didn't amputate her leg—he knew there was a better option. "She said she felt better receiving our care because we saved her in the past," recalls Parmenter. He arranged to have her transferred to Monroe Hospital, where he and his entire team saved her leg through a combination of antibiotic implants, hyperbaric medicine, xenografts with antibiotics and stem cells, and a healthy dose of personal care.

"It's our goal to salvage more extremities—because it affects the whole family and we do a good job here," he says. "It isn't always a big corporate hospital that gives you the best care."

Having her ability to walk restored, Garrett agrees with that. "I can enjoy time with my family, spend time with my animals—I have two dogs—and just enjoy daily life, things that we all take for granted that I cherish now," she says. "I wouldn't be able to do this if I had my foot amputated like the other doctors told me."

The experience helped her build lasting relationships with her providers. "Dr. Parmenter's an excellent guy," Garrett says. "I not only consider him as my doctor, but he's also my friend—I consider him family as well." **Visit monroehospital.com.**



(l-r) Innell Garrett, Erica Garrett, LaRone Garrett, Xenobia Garrett, and Avaughn Garrett. Photo by Anna Powell Denton

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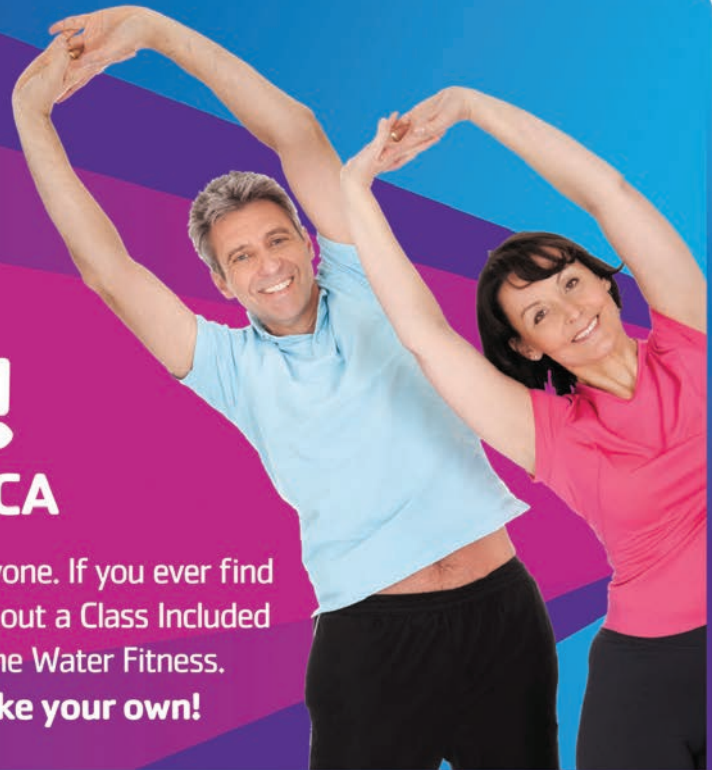


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MonroeCountyYMCA.org   

Monroe County YMCA

A Healthy Safe Haven to Escape Stress and Chaos

Focusing on the health of a person's spirit, mind, and body has become even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic, says Jason Winkle, YMCA of Monroe County CEO.

"The chaos, the stress, the anxiety, the alienation, the polarization that has accompanied this pandemic—it's overwhelming to people," he says, explaining that a June 2020 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 31% of respondents had experienced symptoms of anxiety and depression and 13% had started using or increased their use of substances to cope.

"We are in a time where stress and anxiety are real," Winkle adds. "We're all searching to find a safe haven and escape from that anxiety and chaos. That's what our staff is trying to create for people—a safe haven, a place where you can come and let the stresses of life go to the wayside."

Winkle says research points to an undeniable connection between the mind and the body. "Our physical health impacts our mental health, our mental health impacts our physical health," he says. "When you're healthy you're happier, more generous, more grateful."

Winkle acknowledges that simply walking into the YMCA for the first time can cause its own anxiety. That's why a wellness coach will walk new members around, show and demonstrate equipment, explain rules of the organization and how to navigate the building, and answer questions about personal training and group exercise classes. The fitness professional will also



(l-r) Ivan Martindale, Kellie Thurman, and Marta Hamilton work up a sweat during a TRX circuit training class instructed by Kristy Nicola (standing) at the Northwest Y. Photo by Martin Boling

introduce them to other members, which Winkle says is one of the most important aspects of the YMCA.

"Our members are a really important part of making people feel welcome," he says, explaining that members look out for one another and check in when someone is absent. "Members come here not only for the fitness and wellness, but for the community and for their friendships. It's important to get people plugged in with other folks and build those relationships. Our staff is critical in making those connections."

With two indoor facilities, the Y helps members of all ages focus on their mental and physical fitness even when winter weather doesn't cooperate. "We serve an entire lifespan of needs," Winkle says. "The Y is so important because it builds community by really supporting and focusing on healthy living, youth development, and social responsibility." **Visit monroecountyyymca.org.**

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Vibrant Life

Healthy Sex Life, Healthy You

Imagine forgetting to water a houseplant that eventually shrivels and loses its luxurious texture. If someone comes along with a big drink of water, that plant rejuvenates. That's how Dr. Clark Brittain, with Vibrant Life, explains what happens when a menopausal woman goes without proper hormones. "All of a sudden you get rejuvenated with the proper dose of hormones and all of those tissues come to life again," he says.

Brittain explains that patients receiving hormone pellet treatment often remark that their friends notice how good they look. "They have a bounce in their step and a better outlook and they feel better with better mental focus and energy," he says, adding that targeting intimate health issues positively impacts many other areas. "A healthy sex life boosts your immune system, lowers your risk for cardiac disease, resurrects and maintains relationships, keeps your entire body healthy, and, when you think about it, you even burn up some calories when you're having sex—so there's an athletic component to it."

Using bio-identical hormone pellets, soundwave therapy, platelet-rich plasma infusions, and other treatments, Vibrant Life addresses erectile dysfunction and erection duration, size, and sensitivity, as well as women's menopausal symptoms like intercourse pain, improving orgasms, function of the vagina, and more. "In relationships where one person is interested and the other isn't, we can improve that," Brittain says. "Patients come in and say, 'You saved my marriage.' It's really important to keep that spark going to keep the relationship solid." **For information, visit drbrittain.com.**



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Bell Trace

'Feeling Good Means Feeling Connected'

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Bell Trace Senior Living community has continued to provide a variety of activities and programs—like exercise classes, Tai Chi, art, social hour, movies, lectures, laughter yoga, balance class, and line dancing—to help residents feel connected, stay active, and remain social.

“The more people engage, the better they feel,” says Barbara Carroll, director of residential marketing. “Living in a senior community can have a positive impact on a person’s ability to socialize and engage. That’s especially important when COVID-19 has impacted how people engage with their churches, families, and other groups that were a constant in their lives before the pandemic.”

Carroll says residents normally enjoy attending performances, lectures, and sporting events at Indiana University, as part of their active lifestyle, but participating in the community in that way changed during the pandemic. Carroll says the challenge was finding a way to continue helping residents stay engaged, while also being safe.

“It was impossible to replace the joy and excitement of attending a live event,” she says. “However, modern technology allowed us to visit museums and zoos all around the world via Zoom and to see classic performances on YouTube. We got to cheer on our favorite teams as we watched tournament games from years gone by.”

Carroll adds that the same technology has helped residents stay connected to family and friends, which is important to

maintaining good spirits. Using Zoom and FaceTime is a new experience for many of Bell Trace’s residents, but they have adapted and been able to continue being a part of the outside world while staying safe at home. The staff, armed with iPads, made this possible by spending lots of time with residents to help them connect with family members all over the world. The same technology and techniques have been used for medical appointments.

Carroll says connecting to virtual experiences online, participating in exercise groups and mall walking, and learning new things can also help people stay active and engaged. “Feeling good means feeling connected,” she says. “Looking forward to activities can make all of us feel happy.” **To learn more, visit belltrace.com.**



Residents of Bell Trace Senior Living community take part in an exercise class.
Photo by Martin Boling