

Lead Story

Monarch Celebrates SECU Youth Crisis Center Open House with Partners and Community Members



Monarch celebrated the new SECU Youth Crisis Center and welcomed more than 180 people for the center's open house on Jan 31, 2018. Representatives from N.C. DHHS, Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, a large SECU delegation, state elected officials, parents, Red Rock Developments, Andujar Construction, the media and other community partners gathered to celebrate the grand opening. The SECU Youth Crisis Center, located at 1810 Back Creek Dr. in Charlotte is the first of its kind in the state.

"We're really looking forward to serving kids here as opposed to in the emergency room in order to get them the level of care they need, when they need it and make things a little easier on their families," said Daniel Brown, executive vice president/chief operating officer for behavioral health at Monarch.

Children and teens experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis and need 24/7 triage, assessment and stabilization in a secure, nurturing in-patient setting can now receive that quality care closer to home in the newly-constructed, 16-bed center. Youth in need of inpatient psychiatric assessment and treatment have been sent to Wake, Onslow, or New Hanover counties in the past because no such facility existed near Charlotte.

“I was involved in the very first conversation in Pinehurst about the dream of what we could possibly do with this and to see it come to fruition today is a thrill,” said Brown.

At the time of the open house, the center had already seen and started treating 15 children. In the coming weeks and months that number will grow and the positive outcomes will be felt by children and families across Mecklenburg County.

“So far we’ve been seeing kids who were in emergency departments day in and day out. Now we’re getting several referrals from Carolinas Healthcare System and we’ve been able to keep those children for several days and get them back into the care they needed,” said Teresa Gaskin, vice president of operations for crisis services.

Today, there are more than 26,000 children and adolescents in Mecklenburg County living with a mental illness, which can negatively impact family relationships, academic success, and overall self-esteem. Unfortunately, for some of them, that mental illness may reach a crisis point, where they are simply no longer able to navigate everyday life.

The member-funded State Employees’ Credit Union (SECU) Foundation provided a very generous one-time grant of \$750,000 along with capital support from the general assembly, several community partners and others who joined Monarch to help address the mental health needs of youth in the Charlotte area.

“This couldn’t be a better project for us to donate our money toward and work with Monarch to take care of our children. It’s important that we catch mental health issues as soon as possible. I know this through my own family experiences. Children are our future so we need to make sure they are well,” said Chip Lord, a member of the SECU advisory committee.

“Today was an outstanding example of collaboration and mission-driven service for a noble cause. The degree of partnership just shows what a community can do when we work together. We at Monarch are pleased to now offer such an important service to our youth,” said Jim Kelley, executive vice president and chief operating officer of long-term services and supports at Monarch.

Monarch officials anticipate the SECU Youth Crisis Center will have an annual capacity to serve 600 young people struggling with a mental health crisis.

Please call (844) 263-0050 or [click here](#) for admission criteria and more information.

Headlines

Kim Howard Reflects on Her Recovery Journey: “I’m in a good place.”



When we last spoke with Kim Howard, she was living in transitional housing in Charlotte.

Since then, she has moved into permanent housing, an apartment in South Charlotte.

“I love it! This is my safe haven,” Howard said of her apartment. She’s been living there for a year now.

Howard was rear-ended by a semi-truck on her way home from work in October 2014. She survived, but was left with a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Her ability to speak was severely impaired, she suffered memory loss and conversion disorder. Beyond her physical injuries,

Howard was faced with losing her job and her home, and was forced to stay in a homeless shelter.

“My overall life has improved very much now that I have permanent housing. I’m in a stable place. I don’t have to worry about looking over my shoulder or being in a shelter or not having anywhere to stay.”

The move to South Charlotte put her further away from her relatives, but she sees them even more now. Howard’s relative visit her more often and many times will pick her up so she can stay with them for visits as well. The light rail is a short walk from Howard’s new home, which she uses to visit her family and get to her appointments.

“[The light rail] is an awesome thing to have near me. Now that my foot is broken, I can’t venture up the street like I was doing, but the light rail is awesome. I can’t wait until it connects to the University area so I can visit my family there and they can just pick me up at the station.”

Howard had a fall in her kitchen a couple months back that broke a couple bones in her right foot and required surgery. She’s now in a walking boot, but isn’t letting that derail her progress.

“I’m getting physical therapy right now and just taking it day-by-day. I’ll be able to walk back up to the light rail in a couple months or so.” Howard is relying on the coping skills she’s learned through her recovery process with Monarch to get through this new challenge, as well as something she’s experienced before: the winter blues.

“I get depressed this time of year, but I’m in a good place. I have so many coping skills and things I can do to get my mind off it. I can use white noise, I can take shorter walks, even if it’s just to the mailbox so I can breathe in fresh air and let out sighs of relief.”

Yoga is another skill Howard has been using, although she has altered some of her moves to accommodate her foot during the healing process.

“I do it at home by myself, I have a mat and everything. I go on YouTube and I use the videos there. I can’t do the lotus, but I can do a lot of stretches which are good for me.”

Howard continues her treatment at Monarch and is staying focused on her short-term and long-term goals, from losing 15 pounds to starting her own business one day and eventually owning a home.

“I have small goals that lead to big goals. I have a goal of owning a home, so I’m starting to work on getting back to work first and other things to help me even if it’s going to school. I have to start small to get to the bigger picture. It gives me something to look forward to, something to wake up to, something to fight for. You never know what can happen, but I know one thing, I’m happy right now.”

Vocational Options of Hoke County Partners With Local Businesses to Promote Inclusion and Artwork



Vocational Opportunities of Hoke County (VOHC) is no stranger to art of various media.

[Last year](#), VOHC saw a wider audience that put the creativity of the people we support on display throughout the community. Now, Monarch Creative Arts Specialist Joy Dorety and Community Engagement Team Leader Bruce Hurst are taking it a step further.

“Businesses in the area are going to allow Monarch to have a table at their locations and allow us to sell and market the art [the people we support] are doing,” said Dorety. “They aren’t charging us anything, they don’t want anything, they are just allowing the people we support to go and sell their artwork.”

People and businesses around Hoke County continue to welcome the people we support and their artwork with open arms. This time around it’s also an opportunity for the people supported to network and potentially gain employment.

“Some of the business owners may have jobs that they may be able to offer the people we support,” said Dorety.



The fourth-generation owners of Home Food Market in Raeford have already commissioned art from VOHC as they prepare for the centennial celebration.

“We brought people we support to meet the owners at Home Food Market and the owners really had a great interaction with them. The people we support and the owners are both excited about this,” said Hurst.

“They’ve personally invited us to be part of the centennial. We’re going to try to create a papier-mâché piece that emphasizes their history of fresh meat and fish, so we may make a cow and a huge fish,” said Dorety. “There are a lot of opportunities.”

Some of the pieces on sale will also include handbags, rugs, pillows, smaller furry animals and paintings. The hope is that the attention from the artwork will also translate into foot traffic for the businesses.

Art will be on display at the locations below starting this month. The team at VOHC hopes to grow this list as the partnership progresses. For more information, you can contact Joy Dorety at (910) 975-7227 or Joy.Dorety@monarchnc.org.

Home Food Market, Inc.

117 N. Main St.
Raeford, NC 28376.
910-875-3375

NAPA Auto Parts

130 N Main St.
Raeford, NC 28376
(910) 875-4414

Inside Monarch

Support Inclusion Saturday is Around the Corner



Monarch has officially kicked-off its Support Inclusion Saturday 2018 campaign, compiling a registry of businesses and community partners that promote and foster inclusive hiring practices or programming around the state.

Last year, we had over 33 organizations with 61 physical locations join our campaign. This year's campaign will be celebrated on Saturday, March 24, 2018.

In observance of National Developmental Disabilities Month, Monarch has invited businesses and organizations across North Carolina to join the grassroots campaign. Approximately 11 percent of persons with I/DD are unemployed in the U.S., despite their willingness and ability to work in the community. Not to mention, only one-third of persons with a disability are employed vs. people without a disability according to [The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS).

Support Inclusion Saturday starts a dialogue and champions the organizations who are already doing something to change those statistics. The initiative celebrates stories like Kiara Camp, David Dillard, and Alex Baker, and the companies that provide inclusion opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the state of North Carolina.

If you know of any businesses or partners who should be part of the registry this year, share the campaign website and encourage them sign up. It's free!

Monarch staff, people we support and the public are invited and encouraged to shop or support the more than 50 brands, organizations and businesses that will be featured on the campaign registry this year.

Visit www.InclusionSaturday.org to learn more

MyMonarch: New Company Intranet Launching Later this Month

The screenshot displays the MyMonarch intranet interface. At the top, there is a banner with a collage of photos of Monarch staff and a central logo that reads "Monarch CELEBRATING 60 Years". Below the banner is a navigation bar with icons for "Company Directory", "Maintenance Ticket", "IT Helpdesk Ticket", and "Monarch Films". The main content area is divided into sections: "News & Announcements" featuring a "FLU ALERT" and a news item about a youth-focused mental health center; "Peggy's Monday Memo" featuring a photo of Peggy John and a text snippet; and "Employee Spotlight" featuring a photo of Melissa Freeman and a text snippet.

During the last week of February, my.monarchnc.org will have a completely new look! Monarch's first-ever Intranet, named MyMonarch, will launch with a completely new navigation that is integrated with Sharepoint.

An Intranet is a secure, enterprise network website that companies and its respective departments design and use to communicate exclusively with staff. This new site in no way eliminates or should minimize interpersonal department communication, but will allow users to navigate and find common documents and company news easily on their desktop, mobile phone or tablet and reduce the reliance of email.

The new MyMonarch will feature:

- A **Quicklinks** drop-down menu for users to find the list of links they're accustomed to seeing in the previous my.monarchnc.org page
- A **Departments** drop-down, where you can access administrative department news and announcements, and frequently used documents/files for those departments
- A **Newsroom** page that features Monarch In the News, a Facebook feed, and all of the companies' brand logos and templates
- **About Us** – At-a-Glance materials, services, and referral resources
- **Maintenance Ticket** icon
- **IT Helpdesk Ticket** icon
- Company-wide **News & Announcements**
- **Peggy's Monday Memo**
- Monthly **Employee Spotlight**

Be sure to watch this [demo video](#) to get acquainted with the changes before the new site deploys. If you have any questions about the new MyMonarch, please email pr@monarchnc.org.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Melissa Freeman has been an administrative assistant at Monarch's Robeson outpatient office for four years. She is also a certified nursing assistant.

What does a typical workday look like for you?

A typical work day is mostly busy. There is never a dull moment. First, I prepare charts for the day, then I work with people we support. I check on prior authorizations for medications and scan notes into charts, work on billing and a lot more because I am cross-trained to work on both the clinical and administrative side.



What is the most important aspect of your role, and why?

The most important part of my role is knowing that I have so many people we support that call me and depend on me to help with their needs. I try my best to achieve at that.

What has been your most rewarding, or proudest moment, while working here?

The proudest moment was when I made employee of the month. I knew then I was being acknowledged for all my hard work.

What do you enjoy when you aren't working?

When I am not working, I take care of my two kids. I have a 16-year-old boy and a 5-year-old girl. For the last few months I have been focusing on the well-being of my son who has epilepsy and I have been taking care of him since July. His seizures can get bad, so it's been a rollercoaster for me juggling work and kids. My husband and I have been married for eight years. He loves basketball so we attend a lot of charitable basketball events.

What movie or song best describes you?

The movie that describes me is [*Love and Basketball*](#) because it describes the relationship between my husband and me. In the movie, they always cared about each other then they move on with their lives. They get back together and get married. It also describes me because I have always been a fighter for the things that I want in life!

MONARCH IN THE NEWS

WBTV/WECT - [Monarch opens North Carolina's first youth crisis center](#)

WCNC - [New youth crisis center treats kids with mental illness](#)

Spectrum News - [North Carolina held a ribbon cutting for its FIRST mental health youth crisis center](#)

WCNC - [Mother Shines Spotlight On School Bus Bullying With Social Media Post](#)

The Observer News Enterprise - [SECU Members Help Celebrate Opening of SECU Youth Crisis Center in Charlotte](#)

WRAL - [SECU Members Help Celebrate Opening of SECU Youth Crisis Center in Charlotte](#)

WFAE - [First Mental Health Crisis Center for Kids Opens In Charlotte](#)