



# ALLIANCE

**OPTIMUS PRIMARY:  
A NEW MISSION  
AT MAPLEWOOD**

**WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM  
POPULAR WITH EMPLOYERS**





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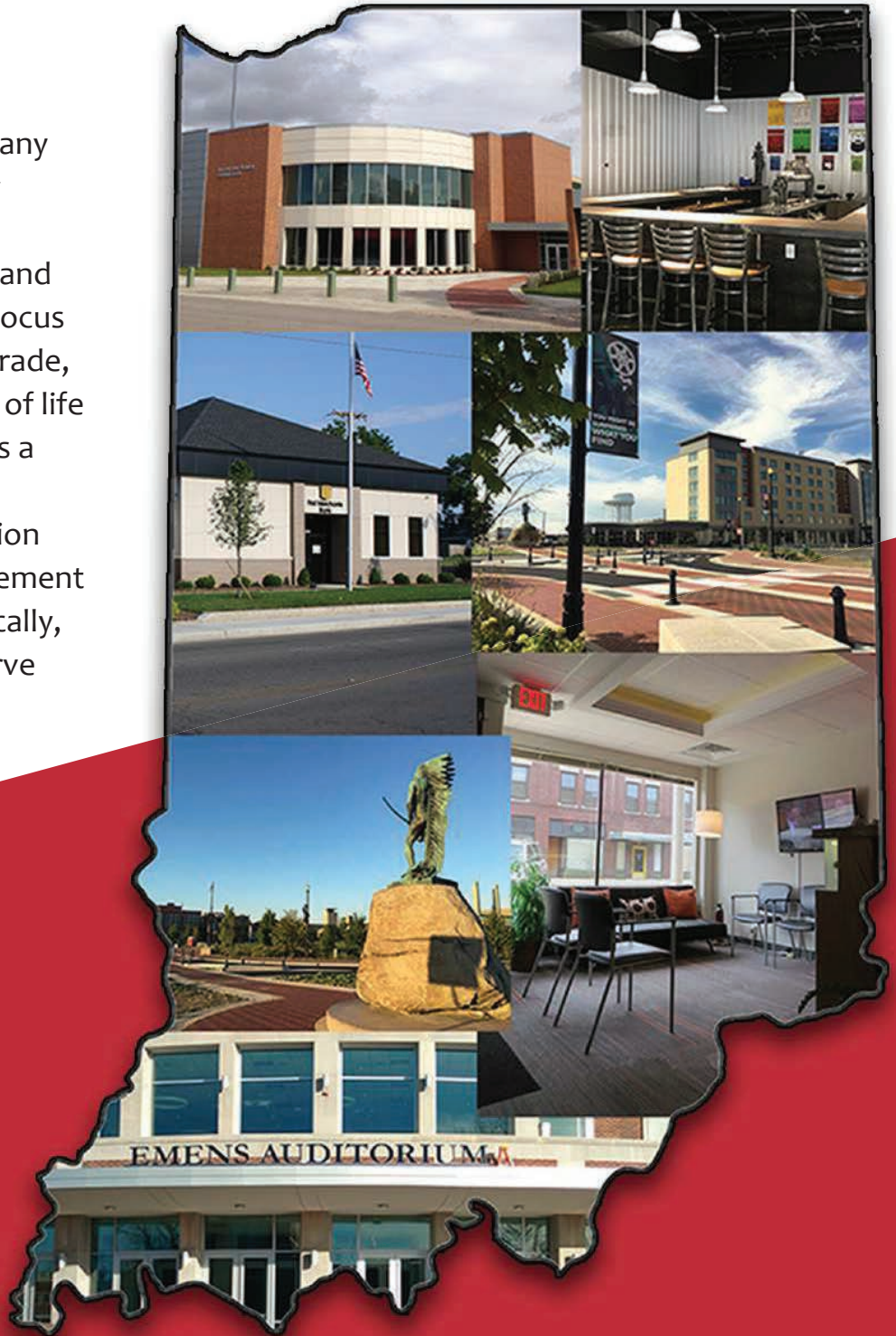


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# A WORD

Welcome back to the newest edition of Alliance magazine. We're proud to have resurrected this publication, which showcases a variety of interesting and diverse economic development efforts in our area. In this issue, we are focusing on some of the more non-traditional economic development initiatives found within our Vision 2021 Economic Development Plan.

This is where the narrative really gets interesting. The stories you're about to read don't have much to do with tax increment financing, shell buildings, or clawbacks. Rather, these articles reveal some very creative and thoughtful endeavors aimed at highlighting the very best our community has to offer – stories that go beneath the official and sometimes stuffy veneer of economic development and to the heart of community involvement and creative thinking.



## JAY JULIAN

Chief Economic Development Officer, President/CEO

Plus, the stories reflect diverse efforts to achieve our Vision 2021 goals, particularly those aimed at improving the overall health and well-being of our community, our county, and the East Central Indiana region.

Among these efforts is Optimus Primary, an initiative aimed at improving the overall health of Delaware County residents while offering an enthusiastic and interesting introduction of our community to rotating medical students and residents at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital. Funded by the Ball Brothers Foundation, Optimus Primary is a forward-thinking project that, thanks to the Ball Brothers Foundation's civic-minded generosity, proposes and helps underwrite a major boost in the health outcomes of area residents. At the same time, medical students and medical residents are enticed to consider Muncie a viable place to live and practice.

Synergy – a word that signals vibrant, productive cooperation in the economic development realm – is the name of the game with Optimus Primary. Drawing on the talents and input from an array of community, student, faculty, and administrator participants, Optimus Primary bridges the collective strength of so many talented individuals in achieving its ambitious and transformative goals.

Aside from the interesting Maplewood stories, Alliance queries four local business leaders about why they chose to remain in the area in which they were born, raised, and educated. Their answers are thought-provoking, insightful, and timely. I urge you to take a look.

There are a variety of other clever morsels in this magazine. Please, dig in and learn more about Muncie and Delaware County. We're working hard to make our community a place people will want to live and work. ♦



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20



28



6

Features

On the Cover

Fall foliage enshrouds Maplewood Guesthouse, former home of William C. Ball.

(Photo courtesy of Ball State Creative Services)

Inside

6 Optimus Primary and A New Mission at Maplewood Guesthouse

20 Homeward Found: Why Local Business Leaders Chose to Stay Local

28 A Cultural Asset: Minnetrista's Diverse Offerings





# *Optimus Primary Brings a* **New Mission to Maplewood**

**A** statewide study that revealed a stark statistical disparity in Delaware County triggered an innovative initiative that sounds like something out of a science fiction movie. Those who conceived this multi-faceted endeavor hope it's as transformative as the name suggests.

Optimus Primary, a program initiated by the Ball Brothers Foundation (BBF), the Indiana

University School of Medicine-Muncie, and IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital, and underwritten by a cluster of BBF grants, is aimed at balancing a major divergence between the county's high number of primary care doctors and a stunningly low assessment of health outcomes.

The 2016 study, conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University





*Photo courtesy Ball State Creative Services*

of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, indicated that Delaware County is ranked fourth out of Indiana’s 92 counties in per capita primary care doctors, but 87th in the health outcomes of residents.

(The term “health outcomes” refers to the impact of health care activities on people. Statistical references to health outcomes usually illustrate the overall effect healthcare

has, rather than the specific practices and procedures used.)

From that alarming disparity detailed in the study, Optimus Primary was born. And, though not a towering, shape-changing altruistic robot as its name might imply, the program could wind up helping to improve the health of residents while keeping highly-trained professional physicians inside the community.





Rotating medical students enjoy motel-like accommodations during their stay at Maplewood. Ensuite bathrooms and comfortable common areas make temporary lodging at Maplewood a good choice. Plus, students who stay here are treated to the best Muncie has to offer thanks to its central location.

That's something school of medicine officials and local economic development leaders hope to change. They look at the statistical disparity not as a negative for the community, but as an opportunity to improve a range of health problems while showcasing the community.

Optimus Primary's multi-faceted approach includes providing greater access to primary care providers; infusing health, prevention and wellness into primary care; improving the overall health of the community; and retaining the best health care workers to practice locally.

The last item is where the story gets really interesting, and – whether organizers admit it or not – creative.

Dr. Derron Bishop directs the IU School of Medicine-Muncie, and Optimus Primary is a new instrument for this world-renowned neuroscientist from Canton, Ill. He takes special pride in the innovative program and its burgeoning use of Maplewood Guesthouse, former home of one of the five civic-minded Ball brothers.

Bishop and others hope that by providing rotating medical students with unique accommodations during their 30-day stints, they will, at most, find Muncie an attractive place to stay, to live and work, or at least

spread word of their positive experiences as unofficial community “ambassadors.”

“We knew we needed to make this an attractive place to train,” Bishop told Alliance. “We have students that move to different campuses and we want them to see different communities – see medicine practiced in different areas.”

Since the school is responsible for providing housing for rotating students, Bishop and others decided to repurpose a local historic home to house them.

Thus, Maplewood Guesthouse is taking on a new role helping underpin economic development efforts while offering rotating IU School of Medicine students a practical and memorable experience during their time here.

The Maplewood experiment draws on the strengths of not only the stately red-brick manor's old world luxury, but also input and oversight from students in Ball State University's Residential Property Management program. The students get hands-on experience as they manage the nine-room manor like a private apartment complex.

Maplewood, named for a nearby tree grove, was built in 1898 and was the home of William C. Ball and his wife, Emma, who lived there until their deaths in 1921 and 1942, respectively. Their only child, William H. Ball, also lived in the home. The home was



left to the Ball Brothers Foundation in Emma Ball's last will and testament. Maplewood remains that nonprofit philanthropic foundation's lone hard asset, currently under lease to Ball State.

The Georgian-style home features four levels, with second floor rooms serving as guest quarters for rotating students.

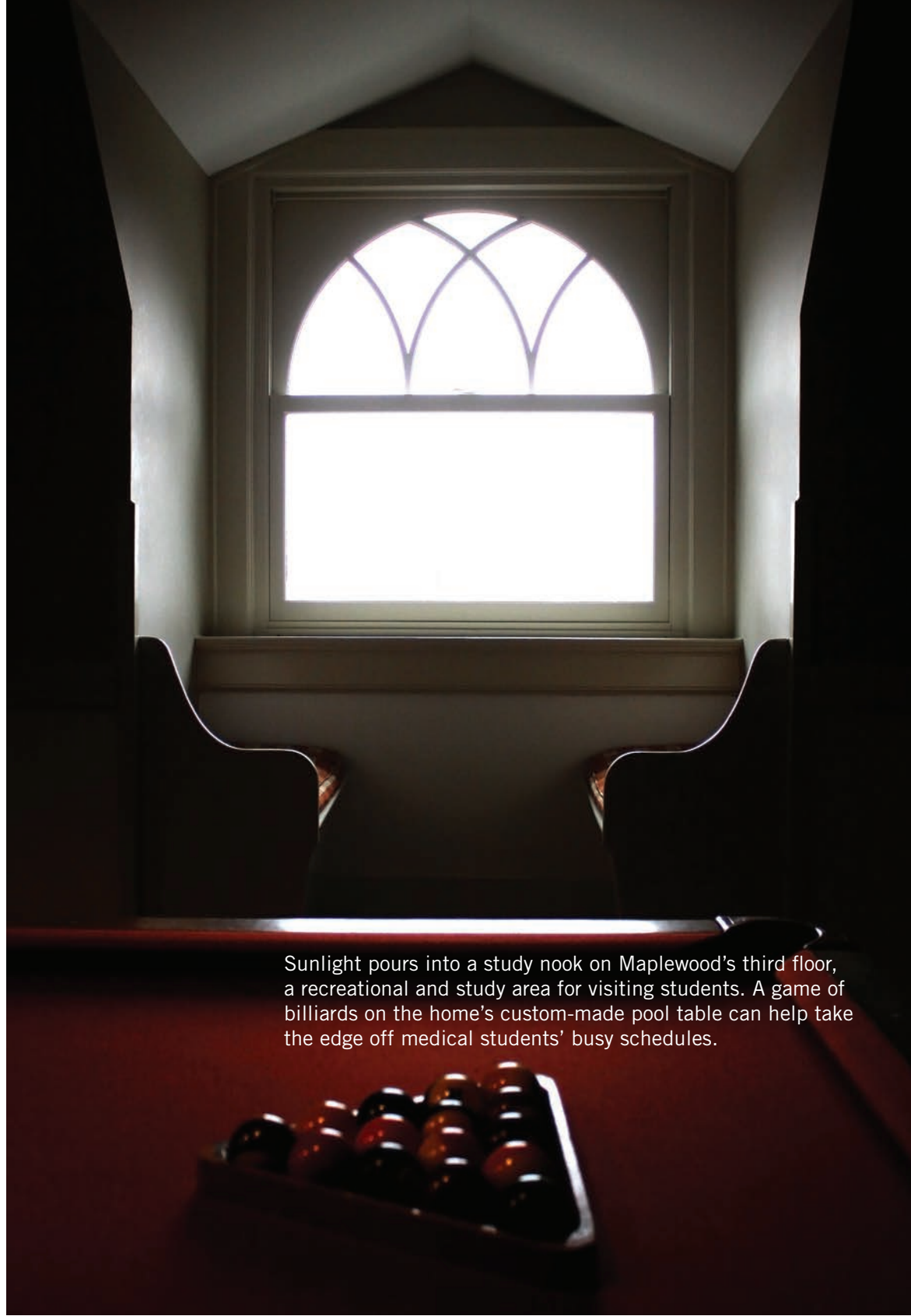
Two common areas and a communal kitchen offer students modern amenities, and each guest room has an ensuite private bathroom. Sunlight pours through the home's many large windows and a screened second floor balcony overlooking White River gives busy students respite from hectic schedules.

The structure sits in a lovely, wooded stretch adjacent to the river, alongside other Ball homes on Minnetrista Boulevard, a thousand walkable yards north of Muncie's reinvigorated downtown area.

## Changing Uses of Maplewood

Maplewood's new purpose is a major turnaround from the historic mansion's most recent use. The Ardagh Group was the last to lease Maplewood. They used it as a guest house where visiting company guests stayed. But when Ardagh, Muncie's last remaining glassmaker, pulled up stakes and moved to Fishers in late 2016, the lease was terminated.

Prior to the Maplewood property becoming avail-



Sunlight pours into a study nook on Maplewood's third floor, a recreational and study area for visiting students. A game of billiards on the home's custom-made pool table can help take the edge off medical students' busy schedules.

able, the IU School of Medicine-Muncie housed visiting students in Ball State student housings, trying their hand at property management. "But," Bishop chuckled, "we realized we weren't very good at that."

Muncie operates the second-largest physician training program in the state with IU School of Medicine-Muncie and the three IU Health Ball Memorial



Hospital residency programs. That's a lot of students coming and going, so they knew the housing issue wasn't going away. Meanwhile, Maplewood then forlornly vacant, wasn't doing anyone any good. So, when the Ball Brothers Foundation agreed to lease it to Ball State for housing medical students, Bishop and others knew they'd have something unique and interesting to offer students.

"These are people who come to Muncie who've never been here before," said Bishop, "and they sometimes have preconceived notions of what Muncie is."

Such notions aren't always a good thing. Bishop said uninformed students sometimes think Muncie is very rural – too rural – and has limited culture and recreation. By providing historic lodging near Muncie's bustling downtown area with easy access to the Cardinal and White River Greenways, Bishop hopes to show visiting students some of the best Delaware County has to offer.

"Each one of these visiting students can essentially be an ambassador for Muncie," he said. "So, if they come here and have a great experience – which we know they do – they leave and say, 'This is not what I thought it was. This is a great place!'"

"The idea is, ultimately, that we will have physicians who train here and want to come back and live in our community," he continued. "But, if they don't, at least they'll be an ambassador for us and talk about their positive experiences here."



DR. DERRON BISHOP

## The Maplewood Experience

Joel Sampson spent most of February at Maplewood while he studied anesthesia in Muncie en route to becoming a specialist in pulmonary and critical care medicine. While the weather was typically cruel and limited his outdoor activities, Sampson said he still enjoyed his stay at Maplewood.

"Some people balk at smaller towns," Sampson told Alliance. "I've always enjoyed a smaller community hospital because it seems like there's good camaraderie. That feels different than what you have at a larger tertiary care center."

That "feel" is part of what Bishop's looking for – giving future medical professionals a well-rounded taste of Muncie as a vibrant, friendly, close-knit community – a potential place to put down roots, build a family and practice medicine.

Sampson, an Indy native, said he really values the Maplewood experience because he was able to establish himself and a solid work routine there. In previous rotations, he wasn't able to remain in his apartment, and instead was forced to pack up all his belongings each weekend and head home, only to return the following Monday and set up shop again. At Maplewood, he said he could "focus more on the rotation rather than being distracted by logistics."

Moreover, he was impressed by Maplewood's history and elegance, especially since he was expecting a "lower cost" housing option in Muncie. "I'd heard about this place from a classmate who stayed there,"

Sampson said. "Otherwise, I'd have thought it was a joke."

Bishop said students who are invited to Maplewood often do think the invitation is a prank. "Sure I'll be staying in a mansion!" laughed Bishop.

Yet, it is a real invitation and, for Sampson, a "pleasant surprise."

"I thought it was fantastic," he said.

"I thought the history

of the house was neat and the accommodations were great. It was nice to stay in a historic house built so long ago and imagine the people that lived there."

Indeed, Sampson's experience was a good one, as Bishop said most rotating students' experiences at Maplewood are. But, how effective was the experiment at selling this imminent physician on the community in general?

"I'm drawn to the historic element of the Ball family," he explained. "I'm also drawn to the low-cost living in Muncie. I interviewed for residency here and I ranked (the school) fairly high on the list because I'm an Indiana native and I enjoy living in Indiana. It's quiet and you can have more space."

"I'm proud of Indiana," Sampson, a Heritage Christian High School and Purdue University graduate, said. "It irritates me a little when I hear people talking about how they're eager to get out of the state."



JOEL SAMPSON







I guess that's their choice. But, it kind of irks me that it's almost popular to rag on Indiana and I think some of those people don't realize how great a place it is to live and work and raise a family."

Twenty-seven-year-old Huiam Mubarak largely echoed Sampson's sentiments. Alliance caught up with her as she was reestablishing herself at Maplewood following her first stay there in February. A native of New Britain, Conn., Mubarak returned to Muncie for a rotation in IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital's emergency department. Her goal is to become a neurologist and she plans to do her residency at the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, Ariz. In the meantime, however, she's enjoying her stay at Maplewood.

"The place is beautiful," said Mubarak of her Maplewood digs. "It's so convenient and it's so close to the hospital. David (Maplewood property manager David Martin) is so amazing. They treat you like family, so it's like a home away from home. It's been really nice to be here."

When asked if she'd consider staying in Muncie after she becomes a neurologist, Mubarak was enthusiastic about that possibility thanks to what she referred to as the "close-knit" nature of the community. "It's why I signed up to be a physician ... to be in places like this. The people are so nice. They are so welcoming and they want you to like the place. They want you to stick around. They appreciate everything you're doing. And that's huge because sometimes you don't get that feeling in larger areas. You feel like you're actually getting to know someone, instead of just faces and numbers passing by."

Bishop said he has an accumulation of anecdotes just like Sampson's and Mubarak's which illustrate sustained positive feedback from students who stayed at Maplewood. "This is gathering momentum," Bishop said. "There's developing inertia on both ends of this thing. Groups are working together in ways we never thought they would."

## BSU Immersive Learning Dovetails with Maplewood Experiment

The Maplewood project is certainly firing on all cylinders – and not just for students who temporarily reside there. Aside from providing memorable experiences for visiting students, the guest house furnishes an immersive learning experience for students

majoring in residential property management (RPM) in Ball State's Miller College of Business.

According to David Martin, Maplewood's full-time property manager, RPM students will be involved in several major renovations and upgrades, including a basement exercise area, security enhancements, and a modern update to the home's third floor recreation area.

Martin is regularly job shadowed by students, who observe his day-to-day responsibilities and routines. Students from other Ball State departments get involved, too.

For instance, a landscaping student may walk the grounds and submit a landscape design proposal that doubles as class work.

This very hands-on approach is valuable, according to Martin, who also likens Maplewood to a private apartment complex. "These are real-life scenarios," he said. "If a resident has a problem at 5 a.m., whoever's on duty that day will get a phone call about it. They will have to resolve the situation at that hour."

He said RPM students rotate in their weekly role as student property manager, often resolving not genuine crises, but situations made up as academic exercises.

"I really like learning about being in charge of a property," said Ronald Harrington, a graduate student assisting Professor Carla Earhart, who leads the property management class. A Muncie native who "always dreamed" of going inside the Ball homes, Harrington is working toward his master's degree in property management after earning a bachelor's degree in hospitality management. Upon completing his undergraduate work, he took five years off and worked in that industry. But, he returned to get his master's degree before



**The Ball Brothers**



settling into his desired career as a corporate trainer in property management for a large hotel or apartment complex chain.

The advent of Maplewood as a laboratory or simulation was, for him, a breakthrough moment that's deepened his enthusiasm for that kind of work. He said prior to the Optimus Primary program, most of the RPM work was classroom-based and didn't involve much hands-on learning. Now, however, having served as a student property manager at the guest house, he has gained practical experience, including caring for a heating system that runs on a boiler, water softeners, ice makers, and more.

"It's interesting here, though," Harrington laughed, "things run so smooth we normally have to fictionalize scenarios to train with." He said random car break-ins, vandalism, water damage and domestic violence issues are all scenarios instructors have fabricated so students have true-to-life situations to learn about and help resolve.

But, leaking faucets and burnt out light bulbs aren't all these young adults are working on. They're also formulating ways to better welcome and educate visiting medical students about Muncie and Delaware County.

Sitting around tables in Maplewood's large formal dining room, Earhart reviews class projects and gets



Professor Carla Earhart discusses ways to better welcome visiting medical students with students studying residential property management.

updates from students on various endeavors. A grant for an iPad that will let them track expenditures was discussed, along with a bevy of ideas regarding welcome baskets and various locally-made treats they could include. A Maplewood website is under construction as well as a resident handbook. While brainstorming ideas about how to make visiting students' stays more memorable, someone suggested installing a third floor dry erase board where visitors can briefly opine on what they like about Muncie – for all the others to see. RPM students would also like to modernize the third floor, but are unsure how to fund it.

Earhart and her students are constantly brainstorming new ideas on how to better educate Maplewood guests about the community and all it has to offer. To Earhart, it's a good step in an even better direction.

"I think the plan to showcase Muncie in a more favorable way to medical professionals is a great start," said Earhart of the Maplewood project. "If you get the right people here in high-paying positions – get them to not only work here, but live here – that just turns into so much more. They shop here. They need housing here. They need so many other things. So it's like the start of this magical formula. It's miraculous for us to be able to play a part in that." ♦





# INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT **Map**



*Photos courtesy of the  
Minnetrista Heritage Collection*



# Maplewood Guest House



A LARGE BLUFF on which Maplewood and the other Ball houses sit protected them from the great flood of 1913. “The Ball family had an excellent view of the surging river from their homes on Minnetrista Boulevard. Even though the bluff afforded protection for Ball homes, it must have been unsettling to watch the river rise. Many other people who lived within a mile or two of the river weren’t so lucky.” (A Look Back at a Powerful Flood – Minnetrista Gathering Place blog)

According to the Minnetrista Gathering Place website, the word “Minnetrista” means “a gathering place by the water,” and was the name of the original home built by Frank Clayton Ball in 1894, which burned in 1967. The Ball family created the word from the Sioux word “mna” which means “water” combined with the English word “tryst.” The Minnetrista Cultural Center was built on the same site in 1988.

Maplewood features Georgian Revival architecture, which utilizes symmetry, proportion, and balance. With a hat tip to the styles of ancient Greece and Rome, Georgian Revival employs restrained, minimal ornamentation and, according to Wikipedia, “It is eponymous for the first four British monarchs of the House of Hanover – George I, George II, George III, and George IV – who reigned in continuous succession from August 1714 to June 1830.”

According to Muncie historian Dick Cole, when the Ball Corporation opened Maplewood as an official company guest house in the 1970s, employees were allowed to lodge guests there. Cole said departments within the company could also make requests to hold departmental Christmas parties in the third floor recreation area, then referred to as a ball room. Known for their historic generosity, the Ball officials provided two fully-stocked bars at Maplewood for guests to enjoy, gratis. Commemorative Maplewood Ball jars were also offered as free souvenirs.

According to the Minnetrista Gathering Place Heritage Collection, Maplewood’s original main entrance was located to the east. Sometime after the house was built, a Palladian-type entrance was added on the Minnetrista boulevard side of the house. After Emma’s death, the house was used as office space by Ball Brothers Company, followed by uses as a fraternity house, apartments, and as a guest house.

William C. Ball, who built Maplewood, was the second of five Ball brothers. Born in 1852, he was responsible for closing out remaining Ball business affairs in Buffalo, N.Y. William moved to Muncie in 1897 and later served as a Ball company salesman and corporation secretary. An avid community supporter like his siblings, he sat on the boards of the Muncie and Portland Traction Company, Merchants National Bank, and Hillsdale College.

Maplewood is the only hard asset owned by the philanthropic Ball Brothers Foundation, which, in 1982, began leasing the guest house. Ball Corp. was the first lessee, followed by Ball-Foster Corp., Saint-Gobain, Verallia, and Ardagh, Muncie’s last glassmaker.

Part of the Minnetrista Boulevard Historic District, Maplewood is one of five Ball homes featured therein. In 1893, the Ball family purchased a stretch of land on the north side of White River between Wheeling and Granville pikes. Development in the area started around 1895 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.



Connecticut native Huaim Mubarak spent two rotations at Maplewood Guesthouse, one in February and another in April. “The place is beautiful,” said Mubarak of her Maplewood digs. “It’s so convenient and it’s so close to the hospital.”





# Study Shows Indiana Good at Retaining Physicians



Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

DELAWARE COUNTY certainly isn't alone in its efforts to keep locally-trained physicians and osteopaths in the community.

A November 2017 report in the online medical journal *statnews.com* used data from a 2017 Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) study to illuminate efforts in various states that encourage board-certified physicians to live and practice in the community where they received their education and training.

AAMC is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, established in 1876, that administers the Medical College Admission Test and provides related medical school application and residency placement services.

**According to that study, Indiana is one of America's top performers in terms of retaining active physicians who completed undergraduate and graduate medical studies in-state. The state consistently ranked in the top 10 in the annual study's physician retention assessment.**

**The study, which employed data collected in 2016, revealed that Indiana was performing nearly 10 points above the state median of 69 percent in terms of retaining physicians trained in-state.**

In Delaware County, where creative economic development officials and civic-minded nonprofits are devising their own efforts to retain IU School of Medicine-Muncie students and residents, the hope isn't limited to simply keeping physicians in-county.

The overarching goal is to improve the county's overall health outcomes ranking by offering better access to primary care for more residents, regardless of their income.

"Convince a 30-year-old doctor fresh out of her residency to stay put, after all, and she could easily wind up delivering four decades of care in a needy community," said *statnews.com* writers Rebecca Robbins and Talia Bronshtein.

The benefits of luring highly-educated professionals for long-term community-based commitment are obvious. But, the prospect of that professional delivering what could amount to years of quality care to lower income, more vulnerable residents is a greater good indeed.

Finding ways to entice young residents and active physicians to stay put has turned into a very real and creative endeavor. According to Robbins' and Bronshtein's report, some communities are thinking outside the box when it comes to getting doctors to put down roots.

Overtures to physicians include forgiving student

debt, while

some states, like Indiana, have also opened additional regional medical training facilities and medical schools. This allows interested students to start their medical educations closer to home, thus encouraging them to live and practice there.

Competing for active physicians against states with more desirable climates is another obstacle for so-called "fly-over" states like Indiana. Florida, Hawaii and California seem to have much more to offer, both in terms of climate and topography. But, Indiana and other states are finding ways to counter that, too.

They often battle back by recruiting physicians who already have local ties, playing to their sense of place, home, and family connections. By appealing to local roots and sentimental attachment to hometowns and family, communities like Muncie are developing strategies that use built-in attractions that don't necessarily rely on climate, things to do, etc.

For example, according to the *statnews.com* report, the Iowa Medical Society is currently building a database of American doctors who have a tie to that state. Their trove of localized physician data will serve as a recruiting tool they hope will improve their chances of pulling in – or pulling back – more trained professionals.

Locally, of course, IU School of Medicine-Muncie is offering rotating medical students a unique opportunity to reside for a month in one of the community's historic and beautiful Ball homes, the Maplewood Guesthouse, former home of William C. Ball.

According to Dr. Derron Bishop, who directs the Muncie medical school, use of the historic home is more practical than creative. "We didn't create anything," Bishop told Alliance. "All this was, literally, was taking what we have and putting it together. We didn't start this or that or build anything. No, we took what we had and just put it together.

"Our thing," Bishop continued, "was being able to offer something like this because it just rounds out the experience and sets us apart from everything across the state."

The experiment seems to be working, with several students reporting good experiences at Maplewood and with Muncie in general.

With all the states competing for the very same medical professionals, the drive to retain physicians is constantly developing. Delaware County officials are drawing on all their assets as they make their own play to keep physicians in the community long-term. ♦



# Local Employers Like Work Experience Program

RUSSELL KISCHUK'S MUNCIE-BASED ALLIANCE CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT (ACPM) has realized positive results from an ongoing program that pairs potential employees with local employers and assists both in developing long-term relationships.

Kischuk said he is currently running all of ACPM's new hires through Eastern Indiana Work Inc.'s Work Experience Program, which undertakes employee pre-screening at no cost to the participating employer. According to Kischuk, the program also pays new employees' salaries during a four-week employment integration process.

"If employers aren't satisfied with the work performance of a new hire," said Kischuk, "there is no obligation to continue the employment of that new hire."

That eliminates a lot of risk for employers, he said. Plus, in his estimation, the Work Experience Program "results in the form of new job creation." Kischuk said he initially got three employees through the program, but only one worked out. Construction demolition and remodeling isn't for everyone, of course. "I would like to see a higher ratio, but that's pretty good for hiring in this industry," he said.

For 34-year-old Chicago native David Ross, the program was responsible for his full-time job at ACPM. "It's a good program," Ross told Alliance. "I've benefitted

a lot from it. They gave me a job. They gave me money for gas to get to my job until I got my first paycheck. Plus, I got a voucher for work clothes."

Those are benefits he didn't get at his former job pouring concrete for a Hartford City company. Care for a dependent daughter meant he had to be home some days – a situation his former employer could not abide by. He's been a full-time worker with ACPM since January. Ross said he's currently trying to get his commercial driver's license – testing for which is being paid for by the Work Experience Program.

According to Denny Cochran, the vice president of employer engagement for Eastern Indiana Works, employers refer to the work experience program as the "Try Before You Buy".

"We take care of the (employee's) drug screen and background check," said Cochran. "Once the applicant gets enrolled at the Work One office, and they meet all the necessary criteria, the employer can choose to bring them on board, or not."

Katy Drumm, human resources manager for Mursix, an auto component manufacturer in Yorktown, said her company has had similar positive experiences with the Work Experience Program.

"We've had a lot of success with that program," Drumm

told Alliance. "It's mutually beneficial for our company and the job candidates."

Mursix operates in a rather specialized field, one that has been increasingly difficult to staff with experienced employees. But, Drumm said the program allays some of the company's concerns about hiring inexperienced people.

Drumm added that the Work Experience Program is beneficial for Mursix because it introduces them to candidates that do not come from a manufacturing background. Even if the job at Mursix does not work out for the candidate, that person will still have the experience of being in a manufacturing setting. This program allows them to get through a transition such as coming from retail to manufacturing.

Drumm said Mursix has hired 10 employees through the Work Experience Program. "Our main focus is to continue increasing employability in our community while offering opportunities to local people," said Drumm. "We're a family-owned business and we like to engage the community as much as we can. Anytime the program is open and available, we'll be using it."

One such community member, 19-year-old Alexis Shores, was hired through the Work Experience Program in January. The wife and mother of one never dreamed she'd be a welder. But, that's exactly what she does for Mursix, making parts for smart cars.

Shores said she initially applied for work with Mursix directly. But, they sent her to Work Experience Program leaders, who paid for her pre-employment drug screen at Mursix, helped her set up a career portals, and assigned her a career counselor.

"He was really nice and talked to me about what I wanted to be," Shores explained.

She's worked at Mursix full-time since March, and the steady work and competitive wages have given her new freedoms. She and her family recently moved out of her mother's house and into their own place.

Shores said she's unsure what she'd be doing if she hadn't landed the Mursix job. "I worked retail and fast food," she said. "Before I came here I was manager at a Subway (restaurant). So, this is really different for me – but in a good way."

Cochran said funding for the program is currently depleted, forcing Eastern Indiana Works to stop accepting new employers into the Work Experience Program. He said funding is allotted through the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Funding decisions aren't announced until October. Until then, Cochran said his agency, at least as far as that program is concerned, is in a holding pattern. ◆



David Ross and Russell Kischuk



**Ball State University** is the one to watch.

**WE**

**FLY**



**“We have a moral obligation to enhance our commitment to Muncie—to our neighbors and to the next generation.**

**Simply put, Ball State and Muncie are better together.”**

Geoffrey S. Mearns  
President  
Ball State University



**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**



# HOMeward FOUND

## Who they are; what they do; what made them stay



David Heeter



Muncie Central HS  
Class of '79

**Age:** 57

**Company & Title:** President and CEO MutualFirst Financial, Inc., CEO of MutualBank (subsidiary)

**Length of Employment:** 40 years

**Hometown:** Muncie

**High School/Year Graduated:** Muncie Central HS, Class of '79

**Extracurricular Activities/Class Officer:** Class VP through junior year; football; cooperative office education (COE); DECA

**4-H, Scouting, FFA, Junior Achievement:** Taught Junior Achievement

**College Attended:** Ball State University

### You grew up in this area. Why did you decide to stay here?

*I think it's home for me, since I was born and raised here. My mom is from here. It was comfortable as much as anything. I had started working at the bank when I was 17, and I worked there through college. I moved to Warsaw with the bank. I got married up there and moved back three years later. We had one child here, then a second. Everything I needed was here.*

### Did you have a memorable teacher or mentor at local schools? If so, please explain what made them special and the impact they had on your life and career.

*My memorable teachers or mentors were my parents, who were both Muncie Community Schools teachers (Bob Heeter and Barbara Heeter). Dad was Muncie Southside's first head basketball coach back in 1963. He was Muncie Central's assistant coach 1957-62 and reserve team coach. Dad also served as middle school dean. Mom was a high school English teacher. They were special because part of how they raised me was with an eye toward education. They worked very hard to expose my sister and I to the entire community – diversity in race, diversity in economics, diversity in family. My mom taught remedial English (Muncie Central) so she worked with kids who needed more help. Dad was one of those people who was looked up to as a coach and he had an opportunity to influence me and other kids in a little different way than a standard classroom. They had an influence on me with high expectations. They were fair, logical and really had a big influence on who I am, how I work, what I think and what I do.*

### The quality of local schools is an important factor in any community. Please describe what makes Delaware County schools good enough for your family?

*My kids are 33 and 31, but I think each of our school systems have a great community behind them. I think we have a nice array of education options. I'm one who believes consolidation is important. At the same time, there is some attraction if someone wants a small school corporation, they can get it. They can get a high degree of diversity in education in multiple school districts here. I think that's really a strong appeal – the high quality of education available here. It's getting harder and harder to deliver that. More consolidation may be needed.*

### In terms of recreation, what are the best local attractions for you, your family and your coworkers or employees?

*I think for me it starts with the university. You've got everything*

*from the arts to athletics to a high degree of quality facilities that are utilized by the public. White River and Prairie Creek Reservoir and the Greenway are all incredible resources in the community. My wife and I both play golf and we have lots of golfing choices.*

### In your opinion, what makes Muncie-Delaware County a great place to live, work, and raise a family?

*I think the most important thing is – despite some of the challenges, there are a lot of caring and considerate people in the community. It think that shows in volunteerism and philanthropy. I think the pace is something that appeals to me also. If I forget to lock my car, I don't freak out. I don't really think about that. I think the fact that it takes 15 minutes to get across town is pretty good, relative to a much larger community on a day to day basis. The pace here is really good. The proximity is good. We're not too far away from anything. I think Ball State is just a huge compliment to this community. We have an excellent hospital. If you took those two institutions out of the community, we'd be Richmond or Marion or Anderson. We have a really nice, big, strong teaching hospital. I think logic tells you if you have the resources to attract and create an experience that's like a larger city, it can really enhance the experience. Minnetrista, the Muncie Children's Museum ... these are things communities our size don't typically have.*

### Rapid Fire Personality Quiz

Early Bird or Night Owl

Star Wars or Star Trek

Asking Questions or Answering Questions

Dogs or Cats

Spicy or Mild

Paper Books or Kindle-type device

In exercise, Go Hard and Go Home or Take It Easy and Socialize

Strictly Punctual or Fashionably Late

Weight-Lifting or Cardio

Carnivore or Vegetarian/Vegan

Beach or Mountains

Caffeine-Free or Can't Live Without It

Smart Phone Junky or Laughing Luddite

Fossil Fuels Forever or Green, Renewable Energy

Tan or Pale





## Jeff Bird, M.D.



Ball Memorial Hospital



Muncie Northside HS  
Class of '77

**Age:** 59

**Company & Title:** President, IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital;  
President, IU Health East Central Region

**Length of Employment:** 9.5 years at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital

**Hometown:** Muncie

**High School/Year Graduated:** Muncie Northside HS, Class of '77

**Extracurricular Activities/Class Officer:** Football, basketball, baseball,  
class president, National Honor Society

**College Attended:** DePauw University

### You grew up in this area. Why did you decide to stay here?

*I just had a deep seated love of Muncie instilled in me by my parents and grandparents. We're a sixth generation Muncie family. As opportunities arose when looking for a career, I don't know that I ever really thought about living any place else. It's always been my lifelong dream to practice medicine and raise a family in the place where I grew up – a place that was so good to and supportive of me. My wife is from Munster. We worked at the same place, and finished medical school together. We looked at residency positions across the Midwest. Coming back to Ball was right thing for me to do. Upon graduation, her parents and sister lived in Lake County. Looked for Muncie and corridor and Lake County. She begrudgingly came along with me. My heart was always tugged to come back and stay at home.*

### Did you have a memorable teacher or mentor at local schools? If so, please explain what made them special and the impact they had on your life and career.

*All my elementary and middle school and great majority of my high school teachers. It would be completely unfair to say one teacher influenced me more than another. I was blessed to have consistently excellent, caring teachers from elementary school through high school. I was a first generation college matriculant. My grandparents and parents were so supportive of me and they encouraged me to reach my academic potential and pushed me to go to college. I did have a mentor, however. The most influential person for me, other than my family, was the late Dr. Arnold "Larry" Carter. Larry and his wife, Toni, who still lives in Muncie, moved into the home next door to where I grew up on Petty Road. Larry had just finished medical training. He was the very first family medicine resident in state of Indiana in 1969. My parents and Larry and Toni became friends. Larry was like the big brother I never had. He had a tremendous influence on me to select medicine as a career path. We were the closest of friends. Larry was a tremendous role model and mentor for me.*

### The quality of local schools is an important factor in any community. Please describe what makes Delaware County schools good enough for your family?

*Once we decided that I was going to set up practice in Muncie, we made an intentional decision to buy a house in the Muncie city limits so my children could go to Muncie Community Schools. My experience in MCS and the neighborhood has been nothing but positive. We've been so happy with Mitchell Elementary School, Northside Middle School and Muncie Central schools. When I think about Delaware County schools, I wanted my children to get the flavor of a city public school system, but I would have been equally pleased to send my kids to any school in Delaware County. I am completely confident they would have gotten a great education at any of them. We are blessed to have multiple very strong school systems.*

### In terms of recreation, what are the best local attractions for you, your family and your coworkers or employees?

*I'm an avid cyclist. There's nothing greater than having the greenways nearby. I've used the greenway hundreds, if not thousands of times. I truly believe the greenway is a godsend for*

*east central Indiana and Delaware County. We also love Prairie Creek Reservoir. We have a pontoon on that lake. In fact, my family has had three decades of pontoon boats on Prairie Creek. We love to go out there after work. I want to be first person on the lake May 1 and last person off on Oct. 31. We love it through three seasons. It is a tremendous recreational advantage for area residents. I also like to canoe. I think White River is a very underappreciated recreational resource. I'm also enthusiastic about Rails to Trails efforts. I'm new to the concept of Blue Ways, but I'm interested in Blue Ways and how to use the White River as a recreational Blue Way. Our family also loves Ball State. I'm a big sports fan. We enjoy all the Division 1 sports activities and all the other incredible arts and cultural things associated with Ball State. We also love the symphony, Muncie Civic Theatre, and I think our YMCA system is as good as any. There are also great plans to utilize green space in Delaware County for the betterment of quality of place and quality of life for residents.*

### In your opinion, what makes Muncie-Delaware County a great place to live, work, and raise a family?

*There are some unique things here and it starts with people. I think we have a great sense of community here. There is a great sense of helping others. People are just really genuinely nice and caring. So I think it starts right there – that's what makes it a place I want to live and spend my effort. It is uniquely wonderful with its strong philanthropic base. Muncie would be a very different place without the Ball family legacy and that support. I think that's one of the great things that is helping make Muncie a great, attractive place. We have great leaders. I'm energized by the single-mindedness among community leaders to make Muncie the best place it can be. There is so much more cooperation now. Also Muncie is one of most affordable places you could ever choose to live. And Ball State University is a major part of the foundation of what makes Muncie so great. Also, it's really easy to get around and I really enjoy that, too.*

### Rapid Fire Personality Quiz

Early Bird or Night Owl

Star Wars or Star Trek

Asking Questions or Answering Questions

Dogs or Cats

Spicy or Mild

Paper Books or Kindle-type device

In exercise, Go Hard and Go Home or Take It Easy and Socialize

Strictly Punctual or Fashionably Late

Weight-Lifting or Cardio

Carnivore or Vegetarian/Vegan

Beach or Mountains

Caffeine-Free or Can't Live Without It

Smart Phone Junky or Laughing Luddite

Fossil Fuels Forever or Green, Renewable Energy

Tan or Pale

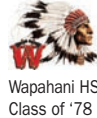


# HOMeward FOUND

Who they are; what they do; what made them stay



Magi Kirkpatrick Sikora



**Age:** 58

**Company & Title:** Estep-Doctor & Co. (accounting); Certified Public Accountant; partner and one of six owners

**Length of Employment:** 23 years

**Hometown:** Selma

**High School/Year Graduated:** Wapahani HS, Class of '78

**Extracurricular Activities/Class Officer:** Drama, speech, track, 4-H

**College Attended:** Ball State University

## You grew up in this area. Why did you decide to stay here?

*My late husband and I are both from Selma. I've always felt like Muncie was a smaller town with a good, local university, which meant the town had a lot more benefits. Plus, we have lots of family here. This is a good community to raise our children in.*

## Did you have a memorable teacher or mentor at local schools? If so, please explain what made them special and the impact they had on your life and career.

*Mrs. Jay at Wapahani High School was a gym teacher who kind of guided me through some difficult teen years. When I went to Ball State, my father passed away unexpectedly the summer of my sophomore year. I was a non-traditional student taking classes. There was a teacher, James Schmutte, a professor in accounting department, who helped me. I almost quit college. He was the one that convinced me to stay and guided me through that difficult time. He told me if I quit, there was a good possibility I wouldn't return. His guidance kept me going. I'll always be grateful for the time and interest he took in me.*

## The quality of local schools is an important factor in any community. Please describe what makes Delaware County schools good enough for your family?

*We actually chose to live in the city. We chose for our kids to go to Muncie Community Schools because of the opportunities provided to our children there. My daughter is very academic while my son is more sports oriented. Muncie Community Schools provided opportunities for both of them. The schools actually have molded my kids into they are today. My daughter took chemistry classes and it really changed the course of her life. She used to fall asleep in that class. But, she was getting straight A's. Her teacher came in with college chemistry problems and handed her a sheet of them every day. She would work through it. One day, when she couldn't figure it out, she asked him for help. He smiled and said, "I finally did it. I finally stumped you!"*

*She went to Ball State and then on to medical school. She's now at Riley Children's Hospital finishing up a fellowship. There are so many good things going on in the Muncie Community Schools' classrooms. But, as I thought back at my kids' experiences at Muncie schools, they excelled – both of them. My son also went to Ball State. He's now in the ministry, working at Southport Community Church. He plays bass in church, too. Those kids are doing really well because of all the opportunities Muncie schools gave them. The teachers and administrators at local schools were a very positive experience for us.*

## In terms of recreation, what are the best local attractions for you, your family and your coworkers or employees?

*There are lots of things to do in Delaware County. We enjoy the Cardinal Greenway. I go to the Emens Auditorium artists series. You get a lot of different cultural experiences. Ball State provides a lot to the community – not only Emens, but the planetarium, the Owsley Museum, and more. We also enjoy the theater, so we will go to Ball State and see their stuff. The reservoir is a hidden thing, I think. People don't really know it's out there. It's a safe place to go after work for some relaxation. I think more and more people are starting to use it. I do think Delaware County has a lot of hidden opportunities. We take things for granted, but I think we have a lot to offer.*

## In your opinion, what makes Muncie-Delaware County a great place to live, work, and raise a family?

*It was a smaller city and me and my kids had paper routes. We probably wouldn't have allowed that in a bigger town. We considered living in Indianapolis when the kids were younger. At that time, spending 750 hours per year on the road, driving back and forth to Muncie just wasn't an option. We weighed that against spending time with our families. We decided we were not going to be able to get those memories back later on. So we decided to just stay here. I just feel like this is the best place to live, work, and raise our family, and I think it was good for our family.*

## Rapid Fire Personality Quiz

Early Bird or Night Owl

Star Wars or Star Trek

Asking Questions or Answering Questions

Dogs or Cats

Spicy or Mild

Paper Books or Kindle-type device

In exercise, Go Hard and Go Home or Take It Easy and Socialize

Strictly Punctual or Fashionably Late

Weight-Lifting or Cardio

Carnivore or Vegetarian/Vegan

Beach or Mountains

Caffeine-Free or Can't Live Without It

Smart Phone Junky or Laughing Luddite

Fossil Fuels Forever or Green, Renewable Energy

Tan or Pale





## Eric Jones



**Age:** 37

**Company & Title:** Co-owner of Elm Street Brewing; global sales director, VBG Group

**Hometown:** Yorktown

**High School/Year Graduated:** Wapahani HS, Class of '99

**Extracurricular Activities/Class Officer:** Cross country and track, drama club

**College Attended:** Ball State University

### You grew up in this area. Why did you decide to stay here?

The biggest part, for us, was that my wife and I also grew up here. She has nursing degree. We moved away and were living in Rochester, Minn., a town that has made the list of the top 10 best places to live in U.S. But, it was a big drive to come back and visit when our daughter was born nine years ago. So we started looking at opportunities to come back to this community. We decided to come back because it's a good place to start a family. From a schools standpoint, from a community values standpoint and a value of our dollars standpoint, we couldn't find anything better. It's one of the most affordable places to live. There are top-tier type amenities in Muncie and other cities, like Indy, Chicago, and Cincinnati aren't too far away. Muncie is well-positioned to get taste of big city life or stay in Muncie and enjoy what we have here. One of my favorite developments is the town's heavy investment in the pedestrian trails network. We use it often and we run into entire families out there. Living in Yorktown, we thought we'd be disconnected from the larger trails network. But, now we're part of that network. I ride my bike from my Yorktown neighborhood to work in Muncie.

### Did you have a memorable teacher or mentor at local schools? If so, please explain what made them special and the impact they had on your life and career.

I had more than one great teacher from Wapahani. The most memorable one was during my senior year – Paul Hoyt, a government and economics teacher. He had lots of sayings. One stuck with me since day one. Mr. Hoyt said, 'Marry an asset, not a liability.' So, I met wife back in high school. That little saying of Mr. Hoyt's set in with me and we've been together ever since. That was the best bit: find a good mate and stick it out. I was also lucky to have Brian Dudley. He taught business classes with a focus on accounting. He had local business leaders come in and speak to classes. Steve Kern came and talked about starting C.S. Kern. That really stoked my early interest in business. Dudley talked a lot of about the struggles, and day-to-day things those business people dealt with, and he let us know that it's normal to have ups and downs. That time with Brian Dudley, I feel, was really, really important.

### The quality of local schools is an important factor in any community. Please describe what makes Delaware County schools good enough for your family?

I don't think I can do Yorktown schools justice. They have been just fantastic. My kids have both had really exceptional experiences there. My daughter is a high-ability kid and she was able to get into a program there and grow and learn – a program she was exposed to at a young age. My son is really a good kid, very smart. But, he definitely went in with some sensory and learning challenges. His kindergarten teacher has shown him so much love, taken him under her wing. She has taken him from being behind in class to testing out ahead of the curve in his age group. We were nervous about him starting school, so we went to parents' night with our kids. On a whim, my son wound up speaking to his kindergarten teacher. She took an extra hour out of her night to show him the classroom. She let him play. They did some

activities together. It was a saving grace for him in getting him ingratiated in the school. We are so appreciative of their hands on approach and their handling of the students.

### In terms of recreation, what are the best local attractions for you, your family and your coworkers or employees?

We're pretty active people. We really appreciate what Muncie and Delaware County are doing to develop the trails and park system. Our favorite recreation activity is attending the various sporting events at Ball State. We have a great time at all those. I'm on the board of directors for Muncie Civic Theatre. Our daughter has been in 15 different productions there. Our most active form of recreation has been supporting those shows and the theater. We also helped restore the building. As a family, we spend time at various Elm Street events including trivia night, live music events, and more.

### In your opinion, what makes Muncie-Delaware County a great place to live, work, and raise a family?

I think you would be hard pressed to find the same mix of affordability, opportunities for your children, and lots of nearby attractions in or out of town. It's a community that is situated well geographically. There is a great, overall sense of community. And it's tight-knit type of community. If you grow up here or move here, you'll find a community that's willing to accept you and integrate you. Other places might have lots of things going on. But, I think people overlook that, while Muncie has its challenges, there are also lots of the same ingredients that make other places so attractive to people. Let's make this a place great, instead of moving to some place that's already hit its peak. Be a part of building what's coming next. All the things are in place for Muncie to really rebound. It has a top-notch university and a great downtown. It's difficult to find another community that has as many people engaged in trying to make it a better place.

### Rapid Fire Personality Quiz

Early Bird or Night Owl

Star Wars or Star Trek

Asking Questions or Answering Questions

Dogs or Cats

Spicy or Mild

Paper Books or Kindle-type device

In exercise, Go Hard and Go Home or Take It Easy and Socialize

Strictly Punctual or Fashionably Late

Weight-Lifting or Cardio

Carnivore or Vegitarian/Vegan

Beach or Mountains

Caffeine-Free or Can't Live Without It

Smart Phone Junky or Laughing Luddite

Fossil Fuels Forever or Green, Renewable Energy

Tan or Pale



# ASSET

## A Growing, Vibrant Micro Business Climate



Eugene and Michelle Boyd of Boyd's Pottery in Muncie pose with their wares at last fall's YART (Yard Sale for Art) event. Eugene, a retired GM employee, learned pottery at Cornerstone Center for the Arts and opened his own business, Boyd's Pottery, located 2701 N. Buckles St. The couple bought an adjacent home and turned it into Eugene's pottery studio and a retail space that features other locally made products and handmade arts and crafts. Eugene specializes in functional pottery, a hobby he said he's very passionate about. He used to work out of his garage, but bought the house next door when it went on the market, adding yet another small business to the community's growing roster.



Retired Ball State professor Nancy Carlson sells headware through her business, Homegrown Hats, and gives the proceeds to local charities. Carlson was photographed at one of Muncie's YART events, which offers local artists a chance to market their homemade goods at an outdoor venue.

A sampling of some other local art offered at a YART event.





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RADIO  
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YOU





# ASSET

Natural Beauty by  
Chance and Design



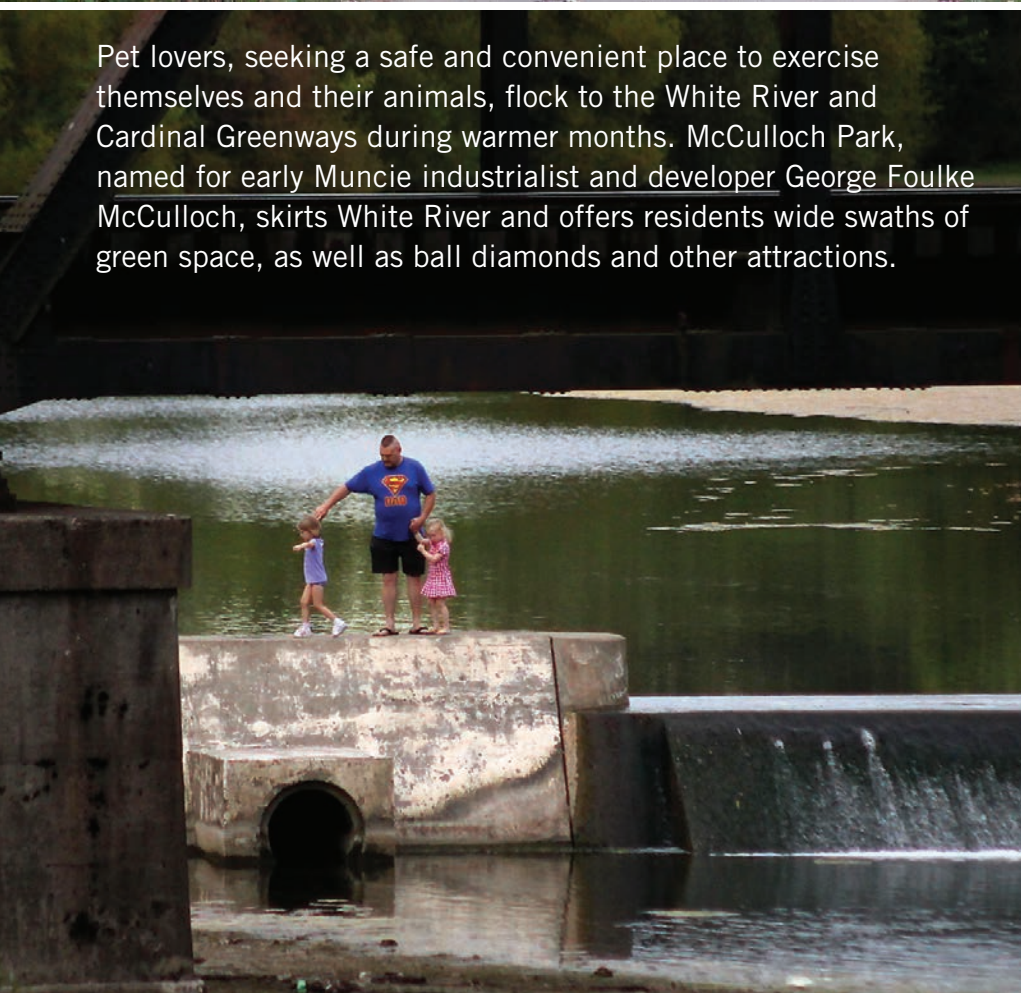
**N**ot many cities are blessed with the kind of natural beauty Muncie has in its White River corridor, which winds through both Delaware County and Muncie on its way southward. The adjacent White River Greenway and nearby Cardinal Greenway give residents who use the paved, multi-use paths a refreshing glimpse of wildlife amid picturesque views.







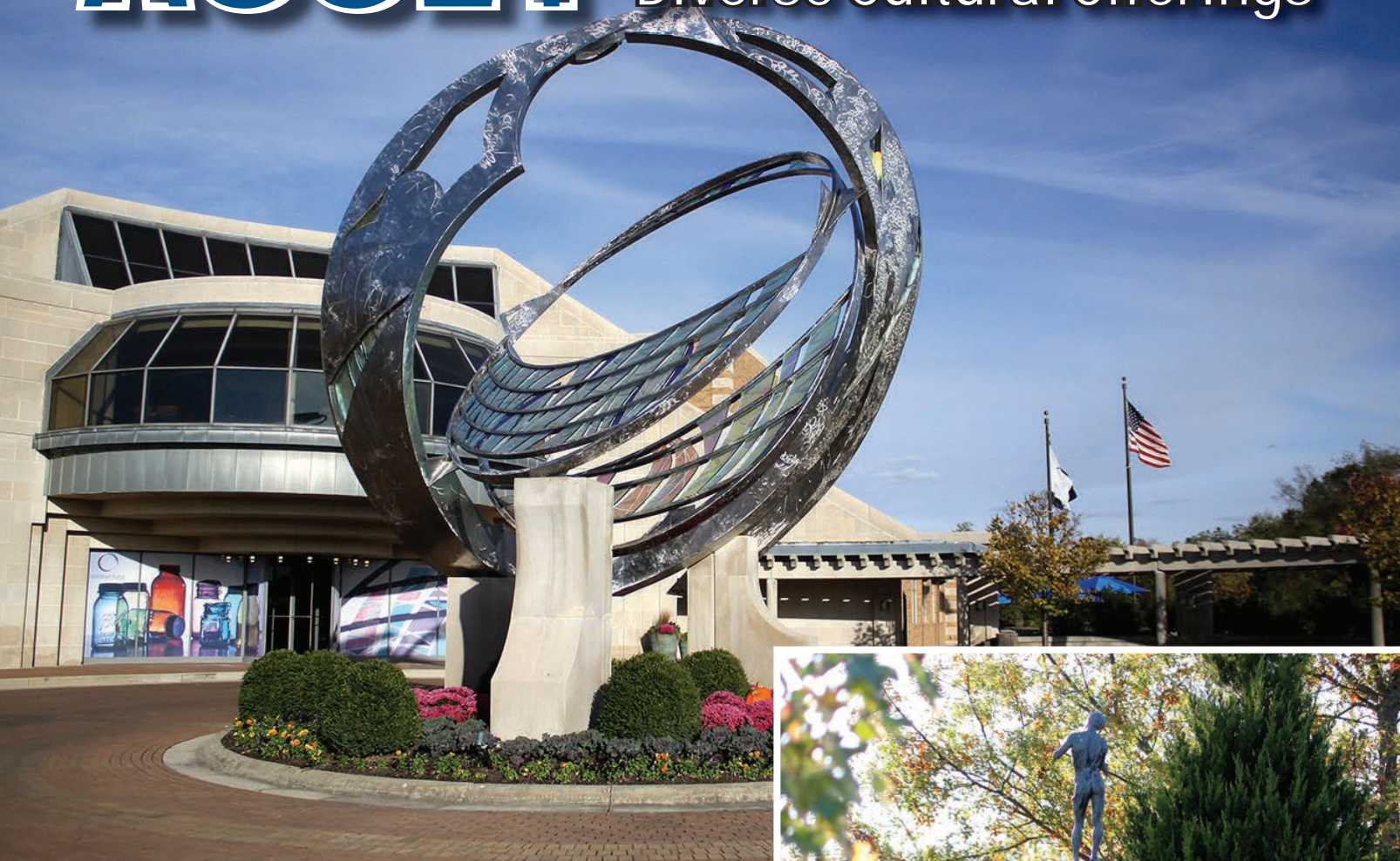
Pet lovers, seeking a safe and convenient place to exercise themselves and their animals, flock to the White River and Cardinal Greenways during warmer months. McCulloch Park, named for early Muncie industrialist and developer George Foulke McCulloch, skirts White River and offers residents wide swaths of green space, as well as ball diamonds and other attractions.





# ASSET

## Diverse Cultural Offerings



Anchoring the Minnetrista Boulevard Historic District is the Minnetrista Gathering Place, home to exhibits and programs that feature nature, local history, gardens, and art. The 40-acre area is the former site of the Frank Ball home, which burned in 1967. Minnetrista hosts museum and art exhibits, themed gardens, and other Ball homes like Oakhurst. The district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.







# STEP OUT AND BE INSPIRED – WE CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN.

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# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



## VISION 2021

### 5-YEAR ECONOMIC PLAN

1

#### Enrich Quality of Life

- Population Growth and Diversity
- Community Well-Being
- Transit Options

2

#### Enhance Quality of Place

- Community Revitalization
- Recreational and Cultural Trail Systems
- Public Art Programs
- Housing Options
- Downtown Development

3

#### Expand and Retain Existing Business

- Economic Growth and Retention
- Alternative Energy
- Pro-Business Environment

4

#### Create a Culture of Education

- Kindergarten Readiness
- Education and Community Growth
- Community Health and Wellness Education
- High School and Post-Secondary Attainment
- Shared Apprenticeship Training

5

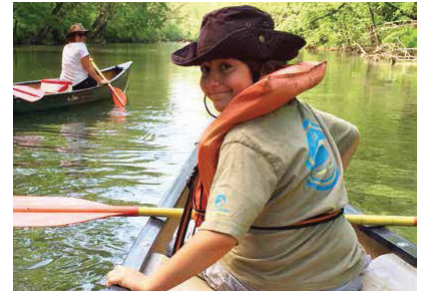
#### Prepare the Community for the Future

- Expansion of High-Quality Internet Access
- Alignment of Vision 2021 with Other Plans
- Economic Development and Environments
- Attractions and Assets in East Central Indiana
- Infrastructure-Ready Sites

6

#### Encourage Job Growth in Targeted Sectors

- Workforce Development
- Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
- Business Information Clearinghouse







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Ball Memorial Hospital

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**Bridge Loans** – Use up to 90% of the equity in your current home towards the purchase of your new home!

**Government Lending** – FHA, VA, USDA

**Local Leadership, Operations and Servicing** – Our team represents decades of combined experience, ready to open doors for you!



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