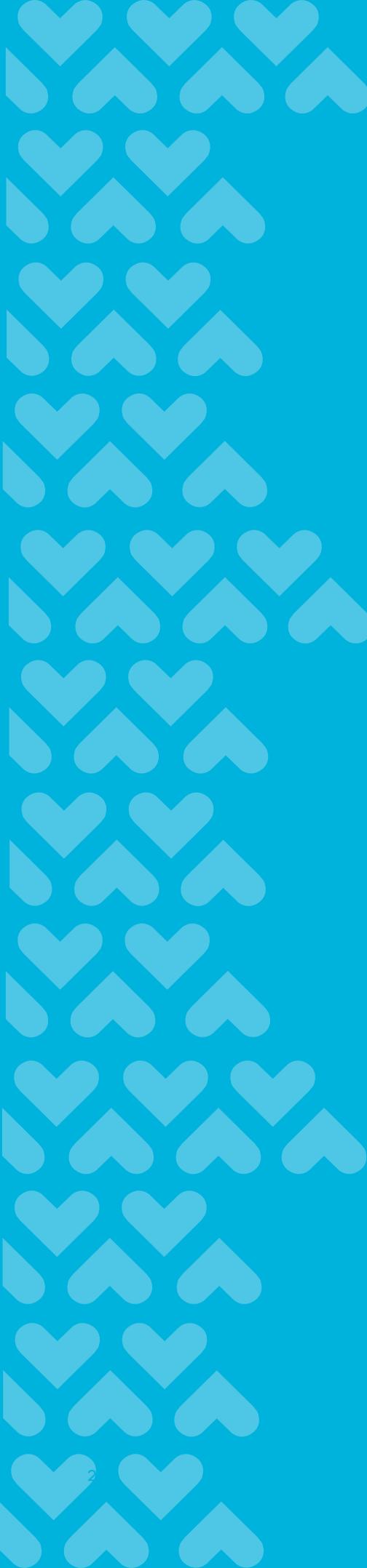


MYalliance

Report to the Community

MARCH • 2019

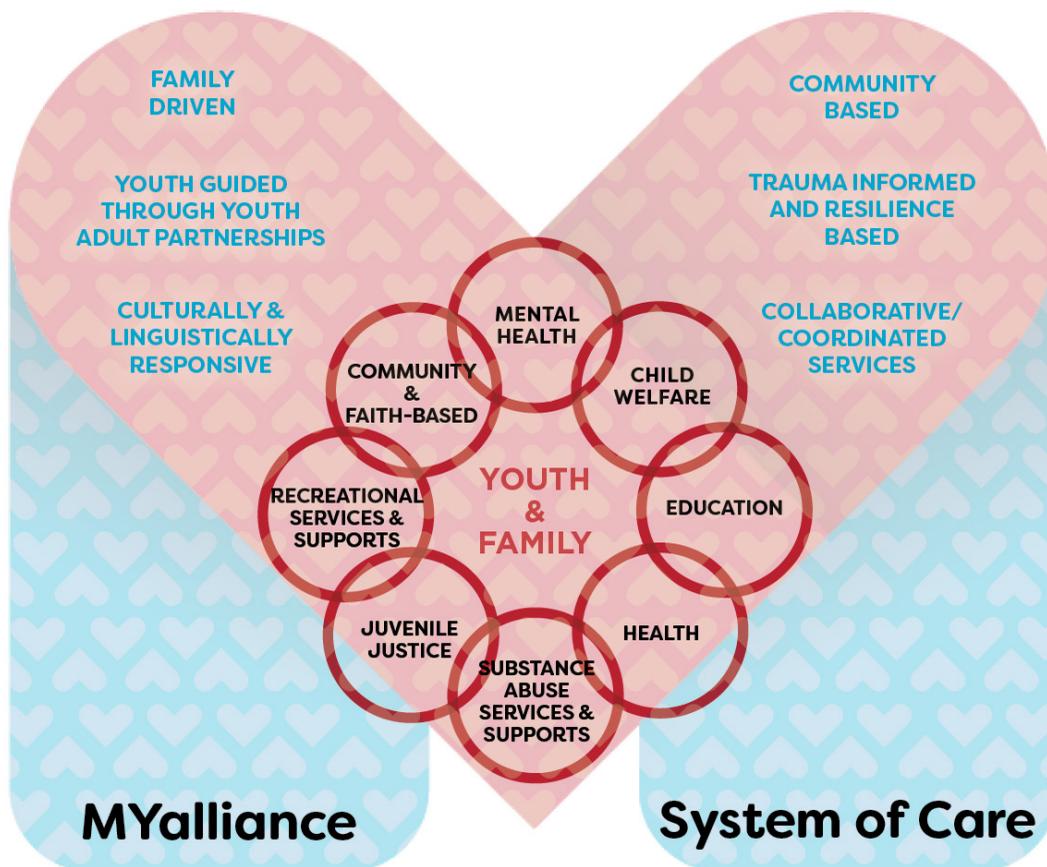


MYalliance, Muskegon County's System of Care (SOC), is a collaboration of youth, parents, schools, and agencies working together to lead positive systems change and improve services in the community.

Formed in October 2016 with support from a \$4 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, MYalliance is governed by a diverse cross-agency team, which includes youth and families served by the SOC.

MYalliance is successfully empowering and **engaging youth and families** to direct and guide system development and their own service delivery. It is effectively enhancing access to services through **intensive care coordination models, school-based services, and mobile response and stabilization services**. Youth receiving intensive care coordination services are experiencing improved outcomes in multiple domains.

www.myalliancesoc.org



Vision: Together with the community, MYalliance will meet needs and build upon the strengths of youth and families.

Mission: MYalliance meets youth and families where they are, focusing on building trusting relationships and using team approaches that foster self-reflection and meaningful change.

Population: MYalliance serves children and youth with complex needs as well as their families, including those with behavioral health concerns, histories of trauma, and/or involvement in systems (e.g., child welfare, foster care, juvenile justice, mental health, or special education).

Approach: MYalliance focuses on creating a coordinated network of effective services and supports, including prevention and early intervention, to prevent prolonged systems involvement and reduce the need for intensive services later in life.

System Development

Engaging Youth and Families

Youth, young adults, parents, and family members of children with complex needs are getting involved and taking on various leadership roles across MYalliance:

Families

- In partnership with the Association for Children’s Mental Health, MYalliance hosts biannual one-day leadership camps for parents and families.
- Parent leaders from MYalliance presented at the Student Support Summit on parent engagement.
- The MYalliance Parent Advisory Council created a Facebook page and group for parents, identified training needs for parents, is working to address barriers like transportation and child care, and has representatives on the MYalliance Governance Team and other committees.
- Parent outreach specialists located within specific schools are developing parent leadership teams, funneling feedback to school administration, and implementing system changes by engaging parents in the school setting, addressing barriers, and connecting families to much-needed resources.
- Nearly 300 families and youth have attended MYalliance-sponsored family dinners and other social gatherings, such as bowling events, skating outings, and ice cream socials.



“The SOC process marries very different agencies for a common denominator—the child and family. We are now able to work together more effectively than ever before.”

—Paul Klimsza, principal of Reeths-Puffer Elementary

Youth and Young Adults

- BOOM Youth, the youth leadership team for MYalliance, has 12 active members who meet weekly to promote systems change, build youth-adult partnerships, and increase mental health awareness. They have a data-driven strategic plan and are organizing a ReCon (resilience conference) Youth Summit for May 31, 2019.
- Youth facilitated Let’s Talk education events about youth-adult partnerships for the MYalliance Governance Team.
- Youth leaders attended multiple youth empowerment events, including youth leadership camp; post-traumatic slave syndrome training; Kalamazoo Wraps System of Care Conference; and project management training.
- Youth mentors are working with students to lead focus groups, build leadership teams, and hold community-building activities, such as summer camps.



Members of Muskegon County's BOOM Youth

Infrastructure Highlights

- A total of 3,145 people attended cross-system workforce development trainings, which included Mental Health First Aid, Suicide Prevention, Crisis Response, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Resilience, secondary trauma, human trafficking, and SOC orientation trainings.
- Parents, youth, and young adults make up 20 percent of the MYalliance Governance Team, and the team now has more community representatives and also more racial and geographic diversity.
- A youth and family activities calendar is on the MYalliance website and is open to partners to post events and trainings.
- Individuals and local churches formed a faith-based collaboration to coordinate efforts between faith-based institutions, agencies, and schools. MYalliance dedicates staff time to this collaboration and outreach effort.
- Strategic initiatives across the community are integrating trauma-informed and resilience work, including the creation of a train-the-trainer network.
- MYalliance is a partner of the Community Gathering Initiative, which offers bimonthly spoken-word poetry gatherings on race and racism.

Increasing Access to Services

Intensive Care Coordination Approaches

Muskegon County is embracing a team approach to meeting youth and families' needs through Wraparound and the Transition to Independence Process.

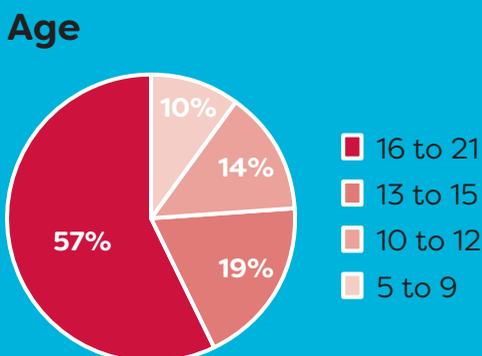
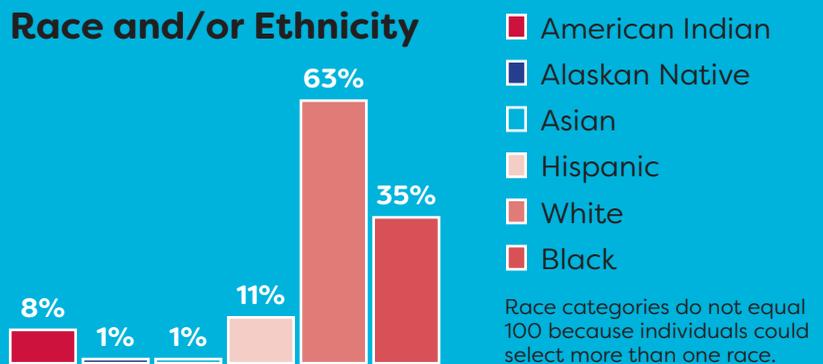
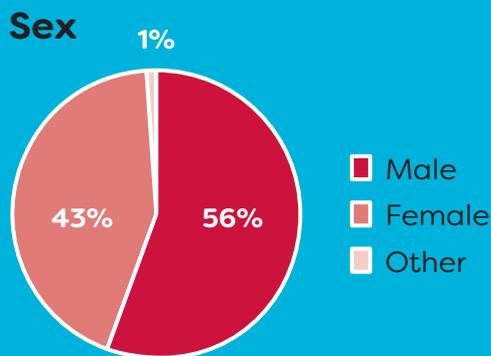
Wraparound

According to research, youth with complex needs often benefit from community-based Wraparound—an intensive care coordination model that involves the youth, their family, professionals, and natural supports to create a single plan based on their needs and goals. This model has proven very successful in improving youth functioning at home and in school and with avoiding costly out-of-home placements, such as residential treatment and psychiatric hospitalizations. The MYalliance SOC has more than doubled the number of youth who can receive Wraparound at one time from 30 to 80 youth.

Transition to Independence Process (TIP)

The TIP model is an evidence-supported practice that focuses on youth engagement, future planning, and skill building through a person-centered approach. TIP emphasizes youth voice and choice and supports their transition into adulthood.

As of December 31, 2018, **MYalliance** has served 146 youth and young adults through Wraparound or the Transition to Independence Process model.



Prior to MYalliance
40% of youth had a meaningful improvement in their functioning at the time they exited services.

With MYalliance
64% of youth showed meaningful improvement.

Success Story

A Family Thriving with Wraparound

A third-grade student moved into a foster care home in the Reeths-Puffer School District, which has committed to MYalliance's Wraparound process. The Wraparound team built relationships through the SOC and was able to effectively convene the involved agencies to support the child and family. Now, the child experiences fewer issues, requires little school supervision, and maintains appropriate peer relationships and communication with adults.



50%

of youth showed increased confidence in their ability to handle daily life after six months of service.



81%

of youth and young adults who had attempted suicide prior to entering services had no suicide attempts prior to any reassessments.

Reasons for Referral

Youth and young adults are often referred because of multiple challenges.





Based on experiences in other communities, this intensive, team-based approach saves money. In 2017, Wraparound Milwaukee system of care was **ten times less expensive** than psychiatric hospitalization and costs less than many other treatment approaches.



Source: Wraparound Milwaukee Annual Report 2017.



69%

of parents and caregivers in MYalliance reported **less strain** in their family's functioning after six months of services.



59%

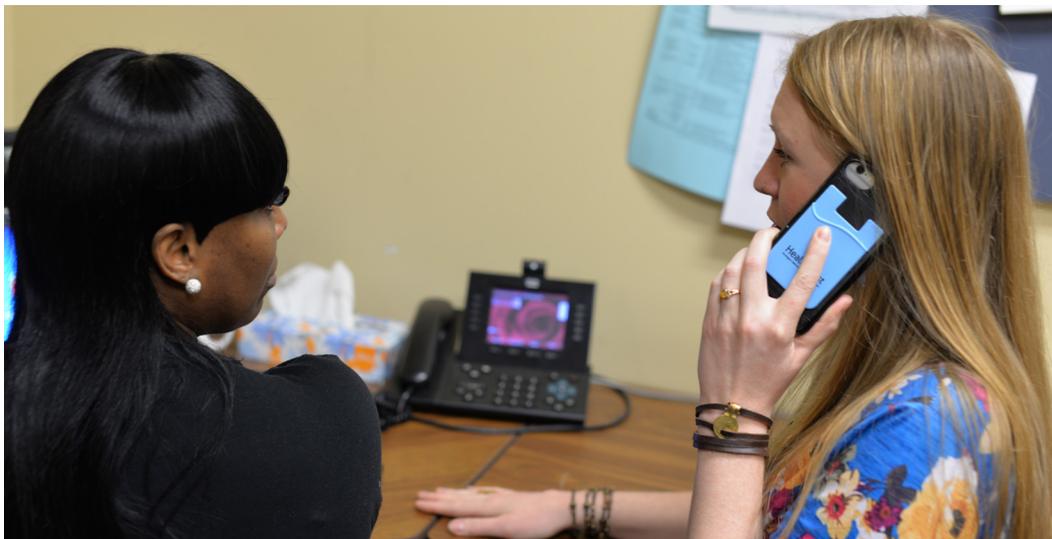
of students in MYalliance reported **fewer school absences** after six months of services.

Mobile Response and Stabilization Services

Muskegon County is developing a cross-system, county-wide mobile crisis response system to better meet the needs of youth and families. Under this model, youth and families can call one phone number (231-722-HELP) and receive a mobile response to their home or location of choice. Responders work with the family to assess their needs and strengths, and develop a plan to address needs through stabilization services or a referral to community services and supports. HealthWest is piloting this approach and working with community partners to expand capacity to deliver this service across the county.

Other SOC communities that have implemented Mobile Response and Stabilization services have seen drastic reductions in emergency room usage, juvenile justice recidivism, and out-of-home placements. Muskegon County is working with national experts—Dr. Linda Henderson-Smith, director of children and trauma informed services at the National Council for Behavioral Health, and Bruce Kamradt, former director of Wraparound Milwaukee—to inform the development of this model.

If your youth or young adult is facing a mental health crisis, contact the Mobile Response and Stabilization Team at 231-722-HELP.



“The additional services that MYalliance has been able to provide to Montague Area Public Schools has ensured that the district is prepared to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all our students and their families.”

—Jeffrey Johnson, superintendent of Montague Public Schools

School-based Services

MYalliance is building on the strength of existing school-based programs, including the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Pathways to Potential and Hackley Community Care's Teen Health Centers.

MYalliance added HealthWest clinicians and parent outreach specialists at five local schools, and it enhanced access to youth peer support specialists and Wraparound services. School-based teams were added to:

- Reeths-Puffer Elementary and Intermediate Schools (2017)
- Muskegon Heights Academy (2017)
- Orchard View's Cardinal Elementary (2017)
- Montague schools (2018)
- Holton schools (2018)
- Muskegon schools (Coming Fall 2019)
- Oakridge schools (Coming Fall 2019)



At **Muskegon Heights Academy:**

- Over 140 parents have participated in MYalliance activities, trainings, and focus groups across the district. These events serve as opportunities for clinicians to build relationships with parents and connect them to mental health services, if needed.
- Parent leadership teams helped lead a conversation to foster understanding of the school's dress code policy and connected parents to resources for school uniforms. Additionally, they worked with other parents to discuss school security; now, parent volunteers monitor youth as they come to and from school.
- A student focus group led to the development of a youth leadership council.



“Student mental health plays a substantial role in academic achievement. When we can wrap resources from the school, family, and community agencies around a student, interventions are better implemented and outcomes improve. For the community of Holton, access to interventions can be challenging. By having an onsite clinician and parent liaison, we are seeing supports implemented every day. The stronger our mental health support network is, the better we can reduce long-term mental health issues and help kids reach their full potential.”

—Adam Bayne, superintendent of Holton Public Schools

At **Orchard View's Cardinal Elementary:**

- MYalliance partnered with Arbor Circle to offer the Strengthening Families Program, a parent education series for Orchard View Schools, resulting in the highest retention rate ever in the county and rave reviews from parents. The strong turnout was due, in part, to the trusting relationships formed between parents and the parent outreach specialist.
- Pathways to Potential partnered with Michigan State University Extension to offer nutrition classes in the school and with a local church to provide mentors for students.
- Fifth-grade students implemented a contract for fourth-grade students to support them in being good leaders and are developing a youth leadership team.
- The addition of school supports led to fewer disciplinary referrals and more support service referrals.

“Adding MYalliance has brought resources directly to our students and their families. Our team is invested in the community, is busy building relationships with the parents and students, and is supporting staff to help level the playing field. I am thankful for this collaboration and look forward to growing stronger together to serve our community even better in the future.”

—**Rané Garcia, superintendent of Muskegon Heights Public School Academy**

At **Reeths-Puffer Elementary and Intermediate Schools:**

- The parent outreach specialist is bridging a communication divide between parents and school administrators, which is improving relationships and building trust. The front-office staff now focus on ensuring a welcoming environment to late and struggling students, while the parent outreach specialist checks in with those who are tardy, creating an opportunity to connect with these students and their families.
- Due to the increased staff capacity and understanding of children's needs, the Child Study Team process is returning, bringing school support services and teachers together to evaluate and design interventions for students with learning, health, and/or behavioral difficulties.



“Every school building in Muskegon County needs a team like this.”

—**Heather MacDonald, assistant principal of Cardinal Elementary**

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