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# Asking for Help Is Hard

John McEvoy has been a hard-working, physically active man most of his life, but on January 29, 2014, everything changed. "I lost everything I worked for my whole life – except my house and a 1997 Jeep."

Thirteen years ago, he had a fusion of his lower back. It was a long recovery, but things seemed to be going along fine. Then one weekend things changed. He felt this sharp pain like a knife being stuck into his lower back and down his left leg. He thought he had just pulled something or that it was just part of the normal soreness he had become accustomed to. But the pain wouldn't go away and finally he had to admit that something was really wrong.

His doctor eventually concluded that the only way to fix his new pain was to do another fusion. This second fusion was complicated, but ultimately was considered successful. At the time he says he felt lucky to have short-term disability through his employer, but this just lasted for six months and was only \$382 every two weeks. When his short-term disability ran out, he lost his job as there was no

way he could continue to do the physical labor that the work demanded.

After he realized that he would not be able to continue his work he said he became very embarrassed and scared. "I had no income then whatsoever. I had food stamps and was filing for disability, but that was a long process."

It took nearly 10 months to get approved for Social Security disability, but his payments didn't start until the beginning of 2015. There is a two-year waiting period to qualify for Medicare, so in the meantime the medical bills were piling up. He eventually got insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace, but it didn't cover all of his medical expenses.

One of the ways John has found some relief from his pain is through helping others by volunteering with the St. Vincent de Paul Society. It was at a meeting of the Society where John first learned about Brightpoint. He was connected to a family development case manager who helped him figure out what

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To hear John McEvoy, in his own words, visit [mybrightpoint.org](http://mybrightpoint.org) and watch the video.

# PRESIDENT'S POINTS



**Steve Hoffman**  
President/CEO

**Advocacy is an important aspect of our work here at Brightpoint.** It does not receive the attention that our other programs do, and it can sometimes be neglected because we're busy serving people. But issues that affect our communities can have a profound impact on the families we serve and our fight against poverty. Therefore, it is vitally important that we educate the policy-makers representing our communities at all levels about the issues that low-income families face, and fight for policies that will help them, not hurt them.

We have deliberately tried to increase our involvement in this area throughout the last few years, and further expansion of these efforts is an objective in our new strategic plan. In February, I got a chance to practice my advocacy efforts when I testified against an amendment to HB1340 at the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee hearing. The amendment, which would have allowed long-term payday loans with an interest rate of 180-percent APR, failed to pass committee.

At Brightpoint, we represent people who often have very little voice, or no voice at all. They do not have the resources to pay for a lobbyist, or make the trip to Indianapolis or Washington D.C., to testify. While our lawmakers and government administrators are highly skilled, educated people who want to do well for their constituents, they can only work within the confines of what they know and learn from others. It's important for organizations like ours, and our partners and supporters, to help educate others on the impact of policy decisions.

Brightpoint has been successful in joining our peers within our networks, but we know we can do more. We will continue to seek relationships with policy-makers and broaden our access to these individuals. We will be seeking support from our communities as well. **We ask you, the reader, to make your voice heard and to join us when the situation calls for it — to stand up for what's important — because together we cannot be ignored.** ♡

For a Brighter Future,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Hoffman".

Steve Hoffman, President/CEO





# Running Around as a Business Model

Running has been part of Jo Ann Bird's life for quite a while now. Her husband was a track and cross country coach for many years, and her son ran cross country and track in high school. Having family members who run led her to helping host 5K road races in the Columbia City area where she lives.

One thing that you see at nearly all running events is a T-shirt. The road races Jo Ann helped organize were no different. Each race she would have to find a company that would help design and make the shirts. This was not only expensive, but also time-consuming.

On a day off from her full-time job as a manager at a sporting goods store, Jo Ann saw that a small screen-printing business based in Huntington was for sale. After some negotiations with the owners, Jo Ann decided to purchase the company. In April 2005, "Running Around Screen Printing" was born.

With her years of experience being a screen-printing customer, Jo Ann knew immediately some of the things she wanted to get right with her own business. First and foremost, Jo Ann wanted to make sure Running Around Screen Printing was a fun and easy experience for her customers. It was also important that the apparel was delivered on time. And she wanted her product to be affordable no matter how small the order.

Initially, Jo Ann planned on keeping her operations small, but within two years she had doubled the annual sales of her company. At this point, she and her family decided to take the

leap and make Running Around Screen Printing her full-time job.

A business that started in her basement has since moved to a small building next to her house. Next, Jo Ann plans to move into a retail space in downtown Columbia City. But this growth has not come without challenges. Jo Ann has had to step back from the day-to-day and work on the big picture of running her business. This has been difficult because she enjoys designing and creating the shirts, but she knows the business is better off when she is focused on growing it.

Another challenge that Jo Ann faced was finding financing that met her needs. This is what led her to connect with Brightpoint for a small-business loan. Through the loan she received from the Brightpoint Development Fund, Jo Ann has been able to expand her operations by adding a mobile screen-printing shop. With a box truck, similar to a typical food truck, Running Around Screen Printing is now able to literally run around! Jo Ann can now take equipment and inventory to events anywhere and print apparel on demand.

After just more than a decade as a small-business owner, Jo Ann is still passionate about offering her customers the very best product she can. Every day she is inspired by being a small part of so many important life events for people and organizations. This inspiration fuels her growth. Jo Ann knows how to take an idea and run with it. And that seems to be paying off for Running Around Screen Printing. ♡

Brightpoint has been happy to help Running Around Screen Printing and many other businesses like it through our Small Business Loan Program. **If you have a business that you would like help getting started or taking to the next level, give us a call at (260) 423-3546, ext. 563.**



# HIP HIP Hooray!

“I received HIP 2.0 this year, and it has been very helpful to me. I now have a family doctor for the first time in my life. I am getting all of my medical exams and procedures done. I also have a dentist now, and have gotten my dentures. I can’t tell you how much of a difference it has made in my life to be able to smile again.” – Robert A.

The Covering Kids and Families of Northeast Indiana (CKF-NEIN) coalition recognized the first anniversary of HIP 2.0 on Feb. 22 with a celebration at Neighborhood Health Clinics in Fort Wayne. At the event, coalition partners spoke about the successes of the HIP 2.0 program in Allen county and statewide. The event also highlighted continued efforts by local agencies to help eligible low-income families enroll in this health-insurance option.

“HIP 2.0 is off to a great start,” says Joe Moser, Indiana Medicaid director. “It’s inspiring to see how communities around the state and organizations like Covering Kids and Families have embraced the program and helped their neighbors understand how enrolling in HIP 2.0 could help improve their health.”

In the last year since the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) was expanded through the approval of the “HIP 2.0” waiver, the program has grown to serve more than 356,000 Hoosiers. While HIP 2.0 has narrowed the coverage gap significantly, there are still many Hoosiers who could participate in this program, but have yet to be reached.

HIP is a state of Indiana health-insurance program for adults ages 19 to 64. The program pays for medical costs for its members, and can even provide vision and dental coverage. It also rewards individuals for taking better care of their health. Those who meet the following income levels may qualify for HIP:

- Individuals with annual incomes up to \$16,436.81
- Couples with annual incomes up to \$22,246.25
- A family of four with an annual income of \$33,865.13

In 2015, Covering Kids & Families of Northeast Indiana coalition partners Brightpoint, Neighborhood Health Clinics, and Volunteer Center of Fort Wayne helped 1,945 Allen County residents apply for HIP 2.0.

“Our licensed Indiana Navigators work with consumers to not only apply for HIP 2.0, but to also ensure that their applications are processed correctly, and help them understand how to maintain and utilize their insurance,” explains Amanda Chappell, local director of CKF-NEIN and program manager at Brightpoint. “Many of our consumers who are approved for HIP 2.0 will tell us that this is the first time they have had health coverage in their adult lives.”

Individuals can enroll in HIP 2.0 year-round and can receive assistance from a licensed Indiana Navigator through Brightpoint, Neighborhood Health Clinics, or the Volunteer Center.

The HIP 2.0 anniversary celebration was presented by the Covering Kids & Families of Northeast Indiana (CKF-NEIN) Coalition, including: Indiana 211, Anthem, Brightpoint, EACS, FWCS, HealthVisions of Fort Wayne, Managed Health Services (MHS), MDwise, Neighborhood Health Clinics, Parkview Health, and Volunteer Center of Fort Wayne. ♡



To schedule an appointment  
to see if you qualify for HIP,  
call 2-1-1 or visit  
[mybrightpoint.org/CKF](http://mybrightpoint.org/CKF).



# A Passion for Helping People



If you ask Mary Osheskie why she has been doing this work for so long, she has a simple answer: “I think it’s important.”

Her Head Start journey began in 1976 at the Northeast Ohio Community Action Commission, where she was a home visitor. She covered a rural area in Paulding, Williams,

and Defiance counties, and remembers doing a lot of driving.

Mary earned a bachelor’s degree in social studies from Manchester University. After receiving her degree, she got a job teaching seventh grade in Cedar Lake, Indiana, where she taught for two years. Then she went back to school and earned a master’s degree in secondary education from the University of Saint Francis. And then — she couldn’t find a job.

In 1975, she began serving as a substitute teacher in Paulding, Ohio, where she was living at the time. But the irregular schedule of being a substitute was difficult while she was also trying to care for her young children. That’s when she saw an ad for a home visitor at Head Start.

Initially, her job consisted of providing educational activities and socializations for children in their homes. Eventually, she was also providing healthy snacks. Later, the curriculum was changed to

emphasize more parent involvement in the child’s learning.

In the fall of 1987, she began as the parent involvement coordinator for Brightpoint (then CANI), and shortly after that, transitioned into a family advocate — the position that she now holds. She’s stationed at the Brightpoint Head Start in Kendallville, where she currently works with 35 families, offering them case-management services.

“Whether I’m working with the children or working with the families trying to improve the lives of the children and their families, it’s an important program,” says Mary, who also talks about the importance of reaching children when they’re young and giving them a message of hope. “If you can get this child to believe, ‘I can do it if I try,’ that’s important. You may not be the president of the United States, but if you are the best person you can be, what else can you be?”

Mary likes working with both children and their parents, but at this time in her life, she feels better suited for working with adults. She describes her role as a support person for parents. “I had a parent who got an audition for *The Voice*. She didn’t get past the first round, but she said, ‘I’m not giving up.’ I said, ‘Good, keep going.’” Mary considers this one of the most important roles she plays as a family advocate: to be an encourager. ▾

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Head Start

### WHAT IT IS

A comprehensive preschool program that provides education, health, nutrition and other social services for low-income children and families.

### WHO IT HELPS

Children 3-5 years old, including those with special needs, and their families who have incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Brightpoint Head Start centers are located in Allen, Noble, and Whitley counties.

### WHERE YOU CAN FIND HELP

Visit [mybrightpoint.org](http://mybrightpoint.org) to download an application or find a Head Start site near you. Call (260) 420-2833, or (800) 589-3506 for more information.



## MISSION MOMENT

**Melissa McClure**

*Homelessness Prevention Coordinator in Fort Wayne*

### LENGTH OF TIME AT BRIGHTPOINT

Almost 10 years

### MISSION MOMENT

Seeing a community help veterans



In 2012, Brightpoint received a Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grant to serve homeless veterans. I'd worked for Brightpoint for six years when we received this grant, but this was the first time I'd be working specifically with veterans.

Growing up in a family with several service members, I knew the importance of recognizing those currently serving and those who previously served in our armed forces. To work alongside veterans and to be able to give them a hand up when they are struggling is priceless. I'm honored to be able to give back to them whether it's just listening to their stories or being able to provide financial assistance to get them out of a rut. These veterans have taught me about survival, sacrifice, humility and appreciation for what you do have.

It's been rewarding to see how a community can pull together to help a veteran and how Brightpoint can play a major role in that. Though I love my job, my hope is someday soon there will be no more homeless veterans to serve because they will all have a place to call home. ♡



## SAVE THE DATE!

RECAP is an annual event where Brightpoint celebrates its past year. During the celebration, Brightpoint recognizes its business partners, volunteers, and clients for their accomplishments, a job well done, and commitment to giving our community a brighter future.

**DATE:** Wednesday, May 4, 2016

**TIME:** 8 a.m.

**LOCATION:** Ceruti's Summit Park Diamond Room

**RSVP:** Please RSVP by April 27

This event is by invitation. If you would like to attend, please contact Kristen Keuhl at [KristenKeuhl@mybrightpoint.org](mailto:KristenKeuhl@mybrightpoint.org).

## Building a Better Community



Every year Brightpoint forms an employee committee and conducts a United Way workplace campaign. This year the committee decided to

emphasize all the good that United Way does in the community by using the theme: "Building a Better Community." Brightpoint employees were invited to attend informational meetings that featured speakers from United Way and partner agencies. We are pleased to announce that our employees contributed nearly \$15,000 to help Build a Better Community!

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assistance was available to him, but he admits it was really hard for him to even ask for help.

“I know it is very difficult for a lot of people to ask for help — trust me — I’ve had to do it,” explained John. “It’s embarrassing a lot. You feel downgraded. So I understand why a lot of people do not do it. You are in such a vulnerable state of mind when everything you’ve worked for your whole life is gone. And you don’t know where you’re going to stay. And if you can’t stay, where are you going to go?”

John has not been able to do his volunteer work recently because of his continued health issues, but he is eager to get back to it. When people come to the St. Vincent de Paul Society for help, John helps them with food and other assistance, but

what he aims to give them is so much more. He wants to comfort them and let them know that he understands what they are going through.

“I personally believe that being a Vincentian is more than just giving bags of food out... it’s trying to talk to the people and let them know that I know what it feels like to do this. I know what it’s like to live on hot dogs and rice for a period of time. I know what it’s like answering the phone and it would be another bill collector and not knowing where to get help, where to turn. There are a lot of tears involved.”

John says he doesn’t know what he would have done without the help he received from Brightpoint and he encourages others to make the call to see if they too can be helped. ♡

## Brightpoint Scrapbook



1



2



3



5



4

1. Several of our Head Start sites participated in Read Across America Day — an annual motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. Here, students from our Head Start site at Hanna Creighton are enjoying a story.
2. All 14 Brightpoint JAG schools had students compete in seven events at the Career Development Competition (CDC) held on January 29 at the Ivy Tech South Campus in Fort Wayne. Pictured are JAG Students from Manchester High School.
3. Students from Dekalb High School took first place in the Entrepreneur event at the local CDC and are advancing to the state competition. Students pictured with certificates are: Logan Dewitt, Dakota Kneubuhler, and Jonas Urban. Also pictured are JAG Manager Rachel Bryant and Assistant Manager Jarrell Hunter.
4. Students from the JAG program at North Side High School worked on the annual Jeans for Teens drive in January and February as a service learning project. The students collected 664 pairs of jeans which were donated to the Fort Wayne Community Schools clothing bank and local shelters that serve homeless teens.
5. Linda Butler, Foster Grandparent at Brightpoint Head Start at Hanna Creighton, reads to a student during Read Across America Day.

Want more photos?  
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follow us on Twitter.

[facebook.com/mybrightpoint](https://facebook.com/mybrightpoint)  
[@MyBrightpoint](https://twitter.com/MyBrightpoint)

**Noble Hawk Golf Links**

**Thurs., June 9 at 1 p.m.**

# **BRIGHTPOINT GOLF OUTING 2016**

**Find out event details, pay, and register.**  
**[mybrightpoint.org/golf](http://mybrightpoint.org/golf)**

Questions? Please contact Kristen at (260) 423-3546,  
ext. 262, or email her at [kristenkeuhl@mybrightpoint.org](mailto:kristenkeuhl@mybrightpoint.org).

**Registration due by June 2.**

## **Take a Swing at Poverty!**

Enjoy a day on the  
golf course for a good  
cause! Join as a team,  
sponsor, or single  
player to support  
Brightpoint's mission.