

# Wheeler receives grant to support 'Walk with Me' program, which serves LGBTQIA+ families

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PLAINVILLE – Wheeler received a \$5,000 grant from the Bristol Brass General Grant Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation to support its “Walk With Me” program, which "provides parent/caregiver services for LGBTQIA+ families."

Sabrina Trocci, president and CEO of Wheeler Clinic, said the "Walk With Me" program is a "specialized outpatient treatment track for LGBTQIA+ identifying people of all ages who are seeking therapeutic and/or peer support to address their specific needs."

"The Walk With Me track is designed to create a safe, affirming, and inclusive array of services for LGBTQIA+ people and their loved ones where they can be validated, explore their identities, reduce feelings of isolation, strengthen their support system, and develop skills to cope with stress and stigma," said Trocci. "With an emphasis on treating the whole person, this track includes a dedicated team of behavioral health, medical, and peer support staff to provide robust wrap-around services that are tailored to meet the needs of each unique patient, wherever they are on their journey."

The check from the Main Street Community Foundation was presented on Aug. 31.

Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation, said that the Foundation is happy to support the “Walk With Me” program.

“It has identified a critical void in the community for serving and supporting an at-risk population,” she said. “From our perspective, the LGBT identifying population is facing a trend of negative health outcome sand hopefully this program will provide the proper help to improve those outcomes.”

Trocci said she is “very grateful” to the Main Street Community Foundation for their support of this program.

“We started this program a year ago at one of our locations in Plainville,” she said. “When it first started, it was for adolescents to young adults. We soon decided that there was a need to bring it to all of our other sites and expand to all ages. We were being overwhelmed with referrals.”

Trocci said the grant will be used to support the work of a peer support specialist for the program. In addition, it will allow the program to expand the services provided as part of the program.



(L to R) Kate Kerchaert, director of grants & programs, Main Street Community Foundation; Katie Singh, LCSW, site director, Wheeler Family Health & Wellness Center, Plainville; Susan Sadecki, MBA, president and chief executive officer, Main Street Community Foundation; and also from Wheeler, Sabrina Trocchi, PhD, MPA, president and chief executive officer, Kimberly Pepice, LPC, director of behavioral health, and Brittany Diorio, LCSW, senior integrated healthcare clinician. -Photo submitted by Wheeler Clinic

The "Walk With Me" program will now be able to "provide parents and caregivers with guidance and strategies to navigate their child's and family's journey."

The grant will also enable the program to help to "identify and inform youth, parents, and caregivers of existing online and other community resources."

Furthermore, it will serve to "connect parents and caregivers with available community resources and opportunities, including linkages to needed health services when identified."

The expanded program will also "encourage intra-and inter-family support networks" and "broaden community outreach and education."

For information about Wheeler Clinic's "Walk With Me" program, call 888-793-3500 or 860-793-3500, or visit [wheelerhealth.org/walkwithme](http://wheelerhealth.org/walkwithme).

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