



**DAMIEN
CENTER**

ONE HOME FOR HIV WELLNESS



For monthly client updates, head over to www.damien.org.

INTRODUCING COMMUNITY THURSDAYS AT THE DAMIEN CENTER

Community Thursdays officially launched on June 3rd and will continue the first and third Thursday of every month from 3–5p. Damien Center welcomes community members to come in on Community Thursdays to get a hot lunch, produce, and to connect with other community partners. Each community Thursday will host a variety of resources and community partners for all to connect with.

ALMOST4MINDS PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO CLIENTS

The Damien Center partners with Almost4Minds to help clients with transportation to and from the center. For more information on getting connected with Almost4Minds, clients can reach out to their Care Coordinator or Care Team.





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COVID-19 UPDATE

EFFECTIVE JUNE 7, 2021

The Marion County mask mandate ended on June 7. Therefore, Damien Center has lifted the mask requirements for all clients and guests who are fully vaccinated. For those who are not fully vaccinated, Damien Center requests that you continue to wear face masks in the building. The center asks all clients, staff, and volunteers to continue to maintain distancing and remain home if there are any signs of illness.

DINING OUT FOR LIFE 2021

JUNE 17, 2021

Each year, Damien Center partners with dozens of local arear restaurants, breweries, and bars to raise money during a one-day event of advocacy and fundraising. All funds raised by Dining Out for Life will directly impact the Damien Center. Dining Out for Life will be happening all day on **June 17, 2021**, make sure to mark your calendars! To get a full list of participating restaurants check out the event page on www.damien.org!



NEW PROGRAM UPDATE: HARM REDUCTION

What is Harm Reduction? Harm reduction includes a range of health, social services, and safe practices that apply to substance use.

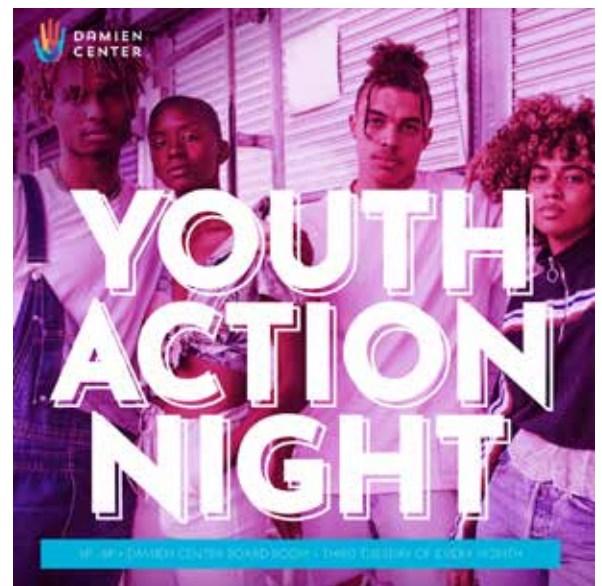
Harm reduction is an approach that aims to minimize the risks associated with behaviors people are unable or unwilling to stop engaging in. A common example of harm reduction in everyday life is the use of a seatbelt while riding or driving in a car. People who use drugs can use harm reduction practices to decrease the risks drugs pose to their lives and their bodies. Something as simple as an isopropyl alcohol pad can save a life by preventing infections associated with injection drug use.

Want to learn more about Harm Reduction? Scan the QR code here:



NEW PROGRAM UPDATE: YOUTH PROGRAMMING

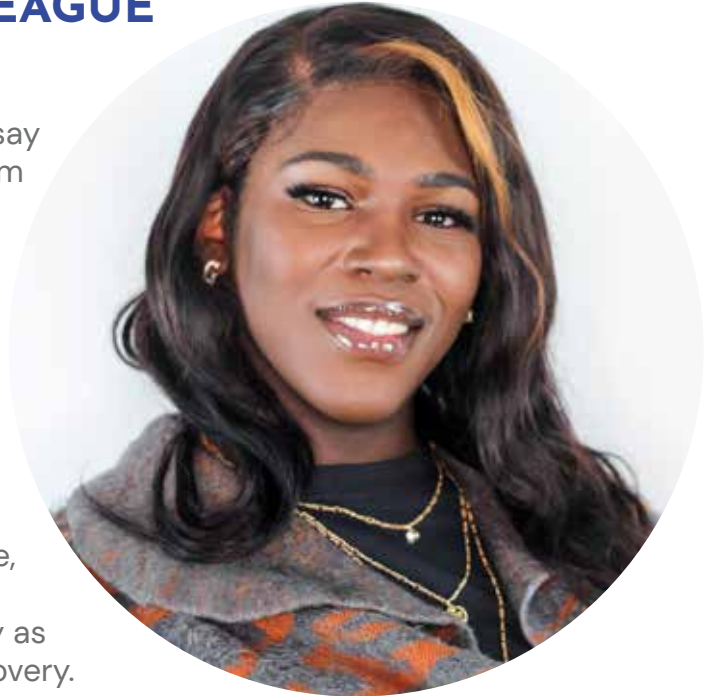
Damien Center invites all youth between the ages of 18 – 24 to attend Youth Action Night each month. Youth Action Night will feature free haircuts, food, and other resources. Youth do not need to sign up to attend Youth Action Night. Sign-up is required for haircuts and can be made through a Youth Housing team member. For any questions regarding Youth Action Night or other youth programming, please reach out to Jaime Reynolds (jreynolds@damien.org). Check out the Damien Center website for future Youth Action Night dates.



LOSING A FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE IN MEMORY OF KAYLA BACON

With great sadness and a heavy heart, we had to say goodbye to a part of our family – Kayla Bacon, Harm Reduction Specialist, who recently passed away.

Kayla joined the Damien Center’s Harm Reduction team and helped build the foundation for the program. Her passion for working with others was based on the belief that our work should focus on cultivating strengths in people as a direct route to success rather than a system built on cultural biases and swift judgement. Kayla’s drive to humanize, destigmatize, and empower those struggling was unmatched as she was able to pull inspiration from her own story as someone impacted by HIV and as a person in recovery. Kayla was a strong community advocate and had worked in harm reduction since 2019.



Kayla had a gift for helping others and her light lives on in everyone she impacted.

We mourn the loss of such an important person in our lives and in our community. We honor Kayla’s legacy by continuing her work and uplifting those who need it the most.

CLIENT ADVISORY BOARD FOURTH THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH

Client Advisory Board will be returning to in-person meetings starting on **June 24, 2021**. The meetings will be held in the board room at the Damien Center from 3–4p. Client Advisory Board is a space for clients to come and use their voice for the happenings in Damien. Clients who attend will receive a Kroger gift card for attending. Clients who wish to participate in Client Advisory Board can reach out to Annie Nelson (anelson@damien.org).

CLIENT APPRECIATION PICNIC AUGUST 25, 2021

Damien Center’s annual Client Appreciation picnic will be held on **August 25th from 1–3p at Garfield Park**. The picnic is an event for clients and their families. There will be food, music, and games (with prizes) for all to participate in.

Clients who are interested in joining in on the fun can sign up with their Care Coordinator or contact Annie Nelson (anelson@damien.org).



NEW STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout the pandemic, the Damien staff has had quite a few new additions to the team. We wanted to take the time out to introduce you to some of the new faces. See below to learn more about who they are and where they come from.



DyNishia Miller (she/hers)

DyNishia Miller is the new Diversity & Inclusion Officer at Damien Center. She is really looking forward to strengthening the current internal and external Diversity and Inclusion efforts, but also creating new efforts in order to deepen the impact and broaden the reach of the amazing services Damien Center provides. Some of DyNishia's favorite past times are reading, hanging out with friends, and trying different wines. She also considers herself a Law & Order SVU super fan and, of course, she's enjoyed the launch of Law & Order Organized Crime.



Kennedy Buyer (she/hers)

Kennedy Buyer has been with Damien Center for the past year as the Employment Specialist under Public Allies. In July, she will transition on to full time with Damien Center as the Employment Specialist. She looks forward to working hard to provide employment opportunities to as many clients as she can. In her role, Kennedy hopes to eliminate barriers for clients looking for a job with the support of workshops, direct referrals, open office hours and more. In her past time, she enjoys binge watching TV shows such as Hell's Kitchen, Law and Order SVU, Law and Order Organized Crime, and This Is Us. She also loves playing with her tail-less cat named Bunny and getting outside as much as possible as she has lived here in Indianapolis less than a year. A couple of other fun facts about Kennedy are that she is originally from Tucson, Arizona, she is 6'2, her favorite beverage is coffee, and she loves dark chocolate.



Jeanette Whitehead (she/hers)

Jeanette Whitehead is the new Clinic Office Specialist in Damien Cares Clinic. Jeanette is originally from Cincinnati, and she enjoys baking, cake decorating, and working around her new home with her soon-to-be husband. She is looking forward to getting to know the clients and help anyway she can to make their experience with the clinic as pleasant as possible.

Eric Harris (he/him)

Eric Harris is a new HIV Prevention Specialist at Damien Center. Eric looks forward to having a fantastic career at the Damien Center. He is very excited to help towards the goals of the Damien Center. Eric is excited to be working with so many great people and getting to know the individuals Damien Center helps and notes that, "the Damien Center is a great place for help and resources." In his past time, Eric is normally out with his significant other or enjoying time home with his family. Eric loves to go dancing and exploring new foods. He loves playing with his dogs and taking them on walks when he can't get them out to the park.



Jeff Randolph (he/him)

Jeff Randolph is a new Linkage Administrative Specialist at Damien Center. Jeff grew up on a family farm south of Terre Haute where his family raised corn, beans, and livestock. He grew up driving tractors, hauling grains in semis, and showing livestock at the fair. He admits that "back in the day no one would have ever thought that a gay kid could do that." Jeff is refreshed to work in a workplace where people are friendly and seem to enjoy and embrace what they do. Jeff comes to work each day excited about meeting new people and experiencing what the day has to offer. In his past time, Jeff enjoys spending time with his partner and pets. He loves to work in his yard, travel, going to new restaurants, going to the gym, and hanging with his neighbors.



Jeremiah Welle (he/him)

Jeremiah Welle is the new Clinic Operations Manager at Damien Cares. Working at Damien Cares has truly been a rewarding experience to date. The passion and commitment of his peers encourages him to get up and do his best each day to serve clients and patients. While Jeremiah is not working you will find him on his bike exploring the city, hiking, or working in the yard. He has a passion for aviation and often looks for a quick weekend trip as an excuse to fly. At home you will find Jeremiah relaxing with his husband Anthony and their three Boston Terriers Mixer, Bailey, and Zoey.

Josiah Harrison-Benjamin (he/him)

Josiah Harrison-Benjamin is a new Housing Case Manager at Damien Center. Some fun facts about Josiah are he is a first generation American, was born with 12 fingers, and his mother picked his name out of a hat. When Josiah is not at work, he is playing video games, shooting photographs, and traveling to all the beautiful places that America has to offer! He is looking forward to being able to serve the clients and work diligently to effect policy on the state and national level to better assist Damien Center clients.



Manny Cornejo (he/him)

Manny Cornejo is a new Bilingual HIV/STD tester at Damien Center. He recently moved from California to Indianapolis and is a loving dog dad. Manny has 18 years of experience in the HIV field and is looking forward to creating trust and value in every experience within the community. He is hoping to create positive impact while empowering our fellow brothers and sisters.

*Have feedback about the client newsletter?
Email us directly at damien@damien.org or
join the Client Advisory Board to make your
voice heard!*

*For monthly client updates or to sign-up to
receive Damien Center emails, visit us online!*

www.damien.org