

-S-T-I-T-C-H-E-S-

Vol. 50 No. 1

A newsletter of Patchwork Central, Inc.

Summer 2025

A YEAR FOR MILESTONES

ARTS & SMARTS

We've reached a remarkable milestone in Patchwork Central's children's program: Jane Vickers' 30th year as its leader. Jane began working at Patchwork in 1995, and a lot has changed in the world since then. Yet, "Miss Jane" has been here through it all, encouraging generations of children to be creative and to strive to be their best in life. Over a thousand children have spent time at Patchwork growing together and creating a caring community with Jane.

It all began in the early 1990's when Jane was working on a bachelor's degree in art at the University of Southern Indiana. She shared a printmaking class with a woman named Ruth Doyle. One day, Jane asked Ruth about her job, and Ruth (one of Patchwork's founders) described the art-based children's program at Patchwork that she was running.

The young Jane thought to herself, "That sounds, awesome! If I'd had something like that when I was a teen, I think I would have stayed out of trouble."

It remained an inspiration for Jane through graduate school when she earned an MFA at SIU Edwardsville. When she finished her degree and returned to her home in Evansville, Ruth's program remained on Jane's mind, so she decided to start her own arts ministry and outreach program in the basement of her church in a neighborhood near Patchwork's.

"I had a group of about 25 really creative, alternative kids," she describes it. "It was the early 90's. We did art shows and theater. We painted the entire basement black. I was having a great time, but I wasn't making any money, and I needed to be. I prayed that the Lord would show me what to do, and the next day Beth Stone called me. She'd been tasked to call by a search committee that was working to find Ruth Doyle's replacement."

Long story short, Jane was hired at Patchwork.

In reflecting on having felt it was God who called her to Patchwork, Jane said, "I'm glad it went that way because it's helped me over the years. With some of the families that we've worked with and the things they deal with, I've sometimes struggled with all their stories. It's good for me to go back to that initial answer to my prayer: 'This is where you need to be. Now you need to work on giving these things over to Me and not take it on yourself.' It has made such a big difference."

Overall, Jane reflects, "It has been a joy." She adds, "I feel like I've had to grow here because there's a whole lot more to running a kids program than doing art with kids. I came in pretty confident about doing art with kids."

Jane has shaped the Arts & Smarts program for 30 years, building an enriching after school environment that emphasizes artist-led, process-centered arts experiences where each finished work of art reflects the individuality and creativity of its creator. The program also emphasizes multi-generational relationships where a



group of children in grades 2-8, plus one or two younger siblings, plus several high school volunteers and some adult volunteers and staff all gather together to encourage and support one another.

Jane says, "Susan Fowler was just reminding me again that one of the best things about our program is the mixed group of ages and backgrounds. It sets up an environment where delightfully unexpected conversations and revelations happen. Friendships develop that way, and it's what it's about. Everyone being all around the table together. Seeing those developmental relationships. Experiencing kindness and friendship. Not just doing a project, but people getting to know each other—an 80-year-old man and a 5-year-old boy having a conversation."

Jane recognizes that there are multiple generations of people who have experienced the Arts & Smarts Program, and they all express how meaningful Patchwork is for their family. Jane says, "It encourages me that young people who grew up here, when they have their own children, feel like they want their children to grow up here as well. It's not just a compliment to me but to Patchwork."

Jane recognizes that the program is much bigger than she herself, saying, "The children's program turning 45 next year—it's a huge deal."

(Cont. on Pg. 2)

ARTS & SMARTS (CONTINUED)

Thoughts on Jane that were collected on Facebook:

Shelby: Jane knew me and my brother when we were little. We came to Patchwork for the kids program, and now my own children are involved!

Alissa: She's taught me more than I could ever explain, both in and out of Patchwork. I will always be grateful for the things she's taught me, whether I listened all the time or not. It has stuck with me, and she's been a true positive influence on my life and also my children's lives now as my kids go to Patchwork like I did and will be going like I did when they get old enough. Yeah she's pretty cool 🍷 I like her.



Cassie: I don't think words could begin to explain the impact she has had on my life. She was more than just a mentor to me as a kid, she was like family. She believed in me at times that I didn't believe in myself. She has always done everything in her power to get kids to see their strengths and passions and bring them out. When I was scared and felt weak, she saw a leader and helped to shape me into who I am today. I am deeply grateful for her and all of the other staff members of Patchwork Central for helping kids like me. Much love ❤️

Meagan: I learned a lot while taking Jane Vickers' jewelry class at USI. I am grateful for the time she connected me with doing field experience at Patchwork Central for my art education degree. I have now taught art for 8 years.

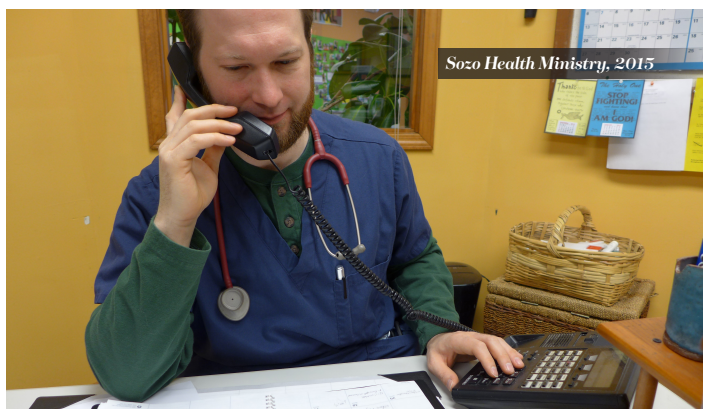
Carole: Jane is a great mentor to so many. We are blessed to have her and Patchwork in our lives!!! ■



SOZO HEALTH MINISTRY

2015

- January 5: The Sozo Health Ministry begins. “Sozo” is a Greek word meaning “to save” and “to heal.” Health services are provided on Monday mornings. One of Patchwork’s regulars has been waiting (impatiently) to be its very first Sozo client. John meets with him first thing on the first day and agrees to help him address some ongoing health issues.
- Area health professionals begin to see this new service and realize that it might help some of their tougher patients. In one example, after John accompanied a patient to an appointment, the doctor was impressed with the advocacy John provided and asked if John could work with another patient the doctor sees regularly.
- March: Mary Damm, RN, becomes the first volunteer. She recently retired from ECHO Health. Ten years later, she continues to volunteer with Sozo.
- Doctors begin to give Sozo clients second chances that they wouldn’t have given otherwise because they know that John and Mary will help patients keep their appointments and follow through where needed.
- November: Sozo’s first client gets new dentures! It’s a red-letter day in his life. His old ones had been glued together for years. Everyone involved agrees that the man could not have gotten through all the required steps without John’s advocacy and support.
- November: An early Sozo client is the first to “graduate” to no longer needing Sozo support. He has gone from being homeless and unable to keep doctors because he literally won’t stop punching them to getting in to see specialists who are able to diagnose him, begin treatment, and get him into rehab and later nursing home care.



2016

- In addition to basic nursing care and advocacy, John also offers spiritual counsel and healing. In one case, the client talked with John at length about her health issues. She had physical issues, mental health issues, relationship issues, and spiritual issues. All of these issues were interconnected. John gave nursing advice, offered bandages for a wound and cold medicine for her sniffles. But he also provided pastoral care, prayed with her, and performed an anointing, an ancient spiritual healing ritual.
- A man getting food from Patchwork’s food pantry feels fine and says he’s never had a problem with his blood pressure, but he agrees to get his blood pressure checked. Based on the reading and some additional details, Patchwork staff call an ambulance. It turns out that the man was walking around with a complete blockage of one of his coronary arteries but had no idea.

2017

- John is trained on the use of naloxone (Narcan) and Patchwork begins to stock Narcan in case someone overdoses on an opioid at Patchwork.
- December: After nearly three years, the man who made himself the very first Sozo client has made much progress on addressing a variety of chronic health concerns. One morning, John arrives to take the man to an appointment and discovers a large police presence in the area. The man has been arrested for a violent crime. Ultimately, he is convicted and sent to prison. It is not the way that John ever would have hoped for this case to go. The experience underlines one of the foundational parts of the Sozo Health Ministry: that everyone, everyone, is deserving of health care.

2018

- April: Sozo begins a partnership with Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library to provide “First Fridays with Patchwork.” Once a month, Sozo staff set up a table at EVPL’s Central Library where they answer questions and take blood pressures. First Fridays with Patchwork continue today and now reaches an average of 20-25 people every month.
- USI Nursing students join some First Fridays with Patchwork as an outreach and learning opportunity and organize a health fair at Patchwork.

(Cont. on Pg. 4)

SOZO HEALTH MINISTRY (CONTINUED)

2019

- Sozo continues to provide services at Patchwork on Monday mornings and continues to take a limited number of clients to appointments by request. Existing partnerships continue.

2020

- March: The COVID Pandemic strikes. All Patchwork services are briefly shut down but are then reworked and restarted with new precautions. Sozo is able to provide services that our clients could not otherwise obtain including blood pressure checks, basic nursing care, transportation to appointments, and spiritual and emotional support.
- July: Due to changes in their schedules because so much has been shut down, now either Mary or John is available every morning, Monday-Thursday to meet with people in the shade of the tree in Patchwork's front lawn.

2021

- While accommodating COVID safety guidelines, John and Mary work with several Patchwork regulars who have had strokes and need support in following up with health care providers so they can heal.
- August: After nearly six years of efforts, Patchwork receives significant funding that allows us to pay John for his Health Minister position in addition to his Co-Executive Director position. This means that John can be present every morning that Patchwork is open to the public and can expand the number of appointments he can take people to outside of those hours.
- Sozo becomes a placement for Family Medicine Residents from the Deaconess Family Medicine Residency program. Residents visit for a day to provide health services to our guests and to learn from our guests about their lives and the barriers to care that they experience.

2022

- January: Katie Loehrlein joins Sozo as the Associate Health Minister. Katie has a background in complementary and alternative medicine. Katie makes several health supplies for our clients, including moisturizing balm, sleep balm, elderberry gummies (for immune system support), warming oil, and pain cream. She also does chair yoga classes for staff and volunteers.
- Patchwork is positioned to be a testing site for the Vanderburgh County Health Department during both a syphilis and a hepatitis A outbreak in our area.
- We add foot care to services provided. Katie offers Epsom salt foot soaks with follow-up balm treatment, while nurse practitioner Jane Kratochvil provides more advanced foot care.
- John is involved in a variety of community initiatives including joining Black Nurses of Evansville, participating in Mental Health Matters events, presenting to USI nurse practitioner students, participating in the Black Barbershop event, and helping to provide first aid at River City Pride.
- In this first full year of Sozo's expanded services with two staff members who are meeting with clients at least four days a week, the number of individual health encounters Sozo provides increases by almost 10 times the number served the previous year.



Sozo Health Ministry, 2021

2023

- One of our regular morning guests was taken to the hospital just after Christmas and the situation was very serious. Hospital staff told him he'd need to name someone to be his medical power of attorney, and the only people he could think of that he knew and trusted were "John and Amy from Patchwork." John agreed to be his medical power of attorney. Unfortunately, John had to fulfill this duty soon after, and the man passed away. It was an honor to be so trusted.
- Continuing collaborations include EVPL Central for "First Fridays with Patchwork" and the Deaconess Family Medicine Residency Program. New collaborations include Matthew 25 HIV/AIDS Ministry, Evansville Recovery Alliance, Oak Street Clinic, AIDS Resource Group, and others.
- Evansville Recovery Alliance and the AIDS Resource Group convene a working group to spread awareness, information, and practices related to "Harm Reduction," a philosophy of reducing death, systemic violence, and other negative outcomes related to illicit substance use. Sozo Health Ministry was invited to be one of the participating programs/organizations. John has been working to spread the word about "Harm Reduction" and incorporating the philosophy into the work of the Health Ministry (much of which we were already doing).
- There are many individual stories of Sozo being able to connect individuals to the care they specifically need. Here are two:
 - There was a woman at Patchwork during our Neighborhood Hospitality time. She was having severe symptoms of opioid withdrawal. She said that she is a suboxone patient, but her suboxone had been stolen. She had been without it for several days and would not be able to get her prescription refilled for a few more days. Patchwork staff and volunteers talked with her and supported her decision to call an ambulance and take her to the hospital to treat her opioid withdrawal, which many people don't know can be a life-threatening condition. (Cont. on Pg. 5)

SOZO HEALTH MINISTRY (CONTINUED)

2023 (continued)

– On a morning when we had a Deaconess Family Medicine Resident with us, a man started having a severe grand mal seizure. The resident said, “I haven’t been through my Emergency Medicine rotation yet.” So Nurse John and the Emergency Medical personnel who responded to the 911 call walked the doctor through the process of responding to this kind of seizure. The man was taken to the hospital for further care. We were not only able to facilitate an emergency medical response for the patient, but to provide an educational experience for a young doctor!

2024

• June: Jill Miller becomes the Associate Health Minister after Katie resigns. Jill brings a wealth of experience in social work and does much to help clients get housed and get connected with other community services as a way toward better health.

2025

- John joins a local coalition of individuals and organizations working toward establishing a Syringe Service Program in Evansville. The group includes city council members, the Vanderburgh County Health Department, Evansville Recovery Alliance, and many others.
- June: Veltri Taylor becomes the Associate Health Minister after Jill resigns. As a retired hospital chaplain, a congregational minister, and the coordinator of outreach ministries at her church, Veltri has much experience in ministering to people experiencing illness and in need of resources.
- The Sozo Health Ministry staff are available every morning that Patchwork is open to the public. They also spend a significant amount of time every week accompanying clients to various appointments and advocating for their care.
- Numbers served continue to increase as our capacity increases and as our staff gains experience in the best ways to help our clients receive the health services that they need and deserve. At this point, we’ve seen a lot, learned a lot, gained a variety of community connections, and John usually has a pretty good idea where to start calling if there’s something new we discover. ■

SOZO HEALTH MINISTRY NUMBERS SERVED OVER ITS 10-YEAR HISTORY:

- **Total health encounters: 8566**
- **Blood pressure readings: 2749**
- **Health supplies provided: 4426**
- **Transportation to appointments: 847**
- **Emergency Situations Identified: 94**



BIKE SHOP

This June marked ten years that Pete Emery has been the coordinator of Patchwork’s Bike Shop. Back in 2015, the bike shop had been silent for three years, so Pete was starting fresh. He took stock of the space, recruited some volunteers, and started working on bikes. Things have been going strong ever since!

Over the years, we’ve sent well over 1500 refurbished bikes onto the roads with new owners. We’ve also done thousands of repairs to people’s existing bikes. All of this has been accomplished with countless hours contributed by a small team of volunteers.

Currently our bike shop has a crew of five: Pete, Paul, Paul, Jeff, and Jim. They’re at Patchwork working in the Bike Shop on Tuesdays and Thursdays from around 9 am to 11:45 am. For the first hour they accept bikes in need of simple repairs: a new tube, an adjustment to the brakes, an adjustment to the chain. In addition to these repairs, the volunteers spend their time checking over donated bikes and repairing and adjusting them so they’re ready for Patchwork to give out to new owners.

“It’s also a community service,” Pete says, explaining that every bike that comes into the shop, whether it’s to be refurbished or repaired, leaves completely roadworthy, making all of us safer because we’re sharing the road with functional bikes. He added that the Bike Shop recently received a donation of front and back reflectors from Scheller’s Fitness and Bikes, so all bikes leave the shop with a complete set of them. Thanks to another donation, all refurbished bikes that we distribute to new owners come with a bike lock and front and rear lights.

(Cont. on Pg. 6)

BIKE SHOP (CONTINUED)

In the last ten years, we have witnessed the immense need for inexpensive and reliable transportation in Evansville. For people getting a new start for whatever reason, a bike can mean access to jobs, medical treatment, other appointments, or staying on track with the legal system. Meanwhile, a broken-down bike can get in the way of all this progress, so quick and reliable repairs are desperately needed. So much hope depends on a simple bicycle.

Of course there are some great stories we've heard through the years. There's the guy who got a bike from us and rode it all the way to Florida—yes, the state of Florida. He took several months to get there and worked here and there the entire way.



There's also the guy who got a bike a few years ago. Jeff remembers being a little dubious when the man brought his recently acquired bike back for some repairs, but they completed them. Off and on for months, Jeff noticed the man and the bike on First Avenue near Ivy Tech. Jeff wondered if the two were connected and recently found out that the man had graduated with an Ivy Tech degree.

There are the days when we have just the right bikes to give to the right people, like one recent day when a tall man was happy to get the small BMX-style bike that he was hoping for. That same day, a woman described her ideal bike, which just so happened to meet the description of the last refurbished bike available to take: a single-speed cruiser that Pete was afraid no one would want.

"Some days are very rewarding," Pete says. ■



E-NEWSLETTER

MORE STORIES! MORE PHOTOS! MORE NEWS!

Sign up for our bi-weekly e-newsletter!
You will receive email updates highlighting the most recent happenings at Patchwork.
Simply visit our website, www.Patchwork.org, and click the "join our mailing list" link!



BEQUESTS

The next time you update your will, please consider adding Patchwork Central, Inc. as a beneficiary. As a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization, Patchwork is eligible to receive donations from bequests. Any size of gift makes a big difference in providing for our programming and contributing to our long-term stability.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Every Sunday at 5:15 pm, the Patchwork Community meets for worship both in person at Patchwork and virtually on the Patchwork Central Worship Facebook page. You are welcome to join us!

Please be generous as you consider sending your cash contribution in the envelopes provided for your convenience. Your generosity will help us to continue the Patchwork tradition of providing these many creative programs.

DONATE HERE!



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MISSION STATEMENT

Patchwork Central creates community, honors personal dignity, empowers people, and encourages spiritual and social growth through its programs and hospitality, its opportunities for learning, its creative atmosphere and cultivation of the arts, and its work toward reconciliation and a more peaceful and just world.



PATCHWORK CENTRAL STAFF

John & Amy Rich | Co-Executive Directors
Shawn Craddock | Hospitality Coordinator
Jane Case Vickers | Director of Arts & Education Programs

Molly Fahrlander | Program Assistant
Bill Hemminger | Food Pantry Coordinator
Pete Emery | Bike Shop Coordinator
Veltri Taylor | Associate Health Minister



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