

Thank you for supporting MOKA this November!



November is National Diabetes Month!

MOKA has committed to targeting diabetes prevention because of the number of individuals at risk, along with the health care costs and employee time associated with diabetes management. With the backing of a two-year, \$40,000 grant from The Wege Foundation, MOKA employees had the time and resources to develop a formal program for residential homes in four counties.

In honor of National Diabetes Month we wanted to share Keli's success story with you!

Meet Keli,

When Keli started on her health journey to reverse prediabetes, she weighed over 200 pounds, felt fatigued when she walked, and often felt hungry even after meals. She showed signs of prediabetes for years, confirmed by A1c levels, and had complex health issues along with challenges interacting with others.

Thanks to regular exercise and dietary changes, Keli's blood sugar is within the high normal range. She has lost over 40 pounds since December 2019, buying in to a healthier lifestyle and maintaining it. She's also improved her relationships with staff members and her housemates.

Keli's health transformation has been so impressive it's made the Belmont Woods team responsible for motivating her a little envious – and also proud. "Seeing someone lose 43 pounds and you're gaining 2 to 5, you start to think 'I need someone to follow me to do these things,'" says Home Supervisor Everlyne Biboko.

Keli is a shining example of the benefits of early intervention and prevention of diabetes. Improving health care outcomes of individuals in MOKA's residential homes has been a priority for a few years, says DeeAnn Hands, MOKA's Clinical Care Coordinator, noting that individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD) diagnosis are underserved by medical professionals due to their complex health care needs.

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Belmont Woods' residential employees did their own research and education and started to implement interventions on their own. "I feel like in a lot of ways, I was more supportive of their efforts than leading their efforts," DeeAnn says. The staff members changed the home's menu, replacing carbohydrates with healthier fruits, vegetables, and protein. The dietary changes benefitted all the home's residents, but Keli's entire personality has changed.

As Home Supervisor, Everlyne worked hard to find a primary care physician to address Keli's multiple health concerns, including prediabetes. The home's employees talked Keli through the changes to her diet and engaged her when she was bored. They encouraged her on the treadmill, accompanied her on walks and hikes, and joined her in dance parties. "For me, I go for walks with her or dance with her," says Amy Wheaton, Residential Support Staff. "If you dance with her, that builds that relationship with her."

Keli used to dislike exercise, but now she has a consistent workout routine and walks on the treadmill twice a day. "She watches all the Disney movies while she is on the treadmill, so it's kind of fun for her," says Shameka Tims-Mosley, Residential Support Staff. The Belmont Woods team rallied behind Keli with support and encouragement. The employees acted as cheerleaders, praising her for her weight loss and boosting her self-confidence. She has seen the fruits of her lifestyle changes in the form of new clothes and increased energy.

Along with her health, Keli's relational skills have come a long way. Keli now eats with other individuals, has a roommate, and wants to help employees around the home. Everlyne gives a lot of credit to the Belmont Woods' employees for their consistency, resiliency, and empathy. They treat Keli like family and show her love and compassion. Each employee has worked to build a relationship with Keli and shown flexibility in how they communicate and interact with her. It is the basis for Keli's success.

[Donate today and help individuals like Keli!](#)



**Walk through our Kent ABA Autism Program
with our new virtual tour!**

Are you looking for more information about our ABA Autism Program in Kent County? Are you curious about our space? Check out our brand new virtual tour below.



*Join Us for the
Waterfall Trail Open House*

We're excited to announce the opening of our new home, Waterfall Trail. **Wednesday, November 10th**, we will be hosting an open house for those interested in touring the home.

[Click Here for Virtual Tour](#)

Feeding
America WM
Recognizes
MOKA as one
of TOP 5
Volunteer
Organizations
in 2020 Annual
Report



Join us at **5346 Rishow Dr. SW Wyoming MI 49509** with street parking available.

To reduce crowds, we will be offering two times to attend the open house at **4:00pm-4:45pm** or **5:00pm-5:45pm**. No RSVP necessary.

We ask that you wear a mask to help protect the safety of everyone attending the open house. If you are unable to attend, we will have a virtual tour of the home on our website after the open house.

Should you have any questions or if you are interested in volunteering at the open house, please contact Samantha Brigham, Executive Assistant to the Foundation at sbrigham@moka.org or (800) 644-2434 ext. 670.



Follow us on Facebook for updates on our Giving Tuesday campaign to support MOKA's ABA Autism Program on November 30, 2021



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