



# Western Wayne News

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## Training expanding to help kids overcome trauma

*WWS inspires United Way to invest \$100K to help 4 other local school districts*

**By Millicent Martin Emery**

Many local students and their teachers already have been impacted by current or long-ago traumas they've experienced, even if they don't realize it.

Then the pandemic hit. Daily routines often changed, prompting stress. Fears - ranging from worries about freedoms being taken away to concerns about getting sick or having to navigate new technology - potentially added to that trauma for kids and adults.

Thus, when United Way of White-water Valley learned about training that one local school district is using to help its students overcome trauma to focus on learning, it decided to fund that opportunity to all interested public school districts in Wayne and Union counties.

Now, five local districts are collaborating as training is offered this summer and fall to their employees, potentially improving the lives of current and future students and the



Amy Abell

employees themselves.

It's the largest regional collaboration in Indiana with regard to Trust Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI) that the trainer has witnessed.

"Pre-pandemic, this was important, but now mid-pandemic, this is incredibly imperative we have this training," said Matthew Hicks, Northeastern Wayne superintendent, which is one of the districts that will offer the instruction starting this summer to its employees.

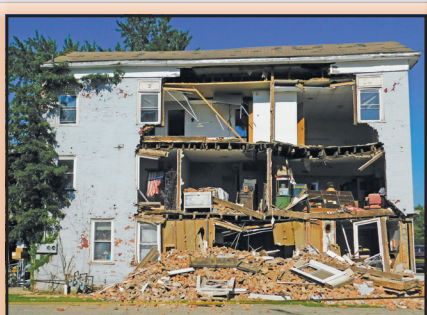
Hicks said the training is solidly researched as to how to mitigate the effects of trauma.

"It could be a tremendous game-changer," Hicks said.

Centerville-Abington Community Schools also is interested in the training's potential benefits, said Superintendent Mike McCoy.

"This is a great opportunity for our staff to gain information that will benefit every teacher and every student," McCoy said. "...The training will provide our staff with a new lens to view the experiences of our students and adapt what we are doing to meet their needs. We appreciate the United Way for allowing us to join and look forward to being a part of making all of Wayne County trauma informed."

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**Guiley signs college commitment for football**  
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## Spring is in full bloom in Wayne County



Colorful flowers are popping up around the Whitewater Valley, including these daffodils along Capitol Hill Road just off Indiana 1, and red tulips at Cambridge City Christian Church on Saturday morning. Steady weekend rains might have been taxing on the blooms, but could be beneficial if the saying that April showers bring May flowers is accurate. Photos by Millicent Martin Emery

## Actor becomes ambassador for Ambassador

*Richard Thomas joins Centerville nursing facility as partner*

**By Millicent Martin Emery**

John-Boy Walton had many caregiving responsibilities on "The Waltons," looking after his younger siblings and helping his parents at home during the Great Depression.

Now, the actor who played that iconic TV character will become a real-life caregiver in a big-picture way as a partner of a Centerville care facility.

Ambassador Healthcare LLC announced April 8 that Richard Thomas has joined President and CEO Doug



Richard Thomas

Cook as a partner of the nursing facility just west of Richmond on U.S. 40.

In addition to Thomas' new role, Ambassador announced several 2021 initiatives, including:

- \*Major improvements to facilities.
- \*Goal of a 20 percent increase in nursing staffing from current above-average levels.
- \*Contribution of \$100,000 toward nursing scholarships for Wayne County residents and other local charitable initiatives.
- \*Addition of ministry staff to assist residents and employees with their spiritual needs.
- \*Substantial improvement of food and beverage and activities in the facility.

### Star connection

Thomas, now 69, is continuing his extensive career in television, movies and theater while taking on this added

role in Wayne County healthcare.

Thomas will be a strategic partner, helping guide the overall goals and strategies of Ambassador Healthcare and to promote the organization, a news release noted.

Cook has been the managing member of the 137-bed acute care facility since March 2018.

In the news release, Thomas noted that he's been friends with Cook for more than 20 years, and that Cook recently bought a home in Centerville to be near Ambassador.

"I've seen his passion for healthcare and the residents and staff of Ambassador Healthcare over the last several years," Thomas said. "... I'm very excited to join Ambassador Healthcare in their pursuit to become the best facility in the state of Indiana. I share Doug's true passion for healthcare and providing first-class care to our senior

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## Trauma (Continued from page 1)

### How training began and why

TBRI®, an attachment-based, trauma-informed approach designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children, was developed at Texas Christian University's Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development.

It was initially designed to help parents care for foster and adopted children who had obviously experienced trauma.

However, through the years, TBRI® has gained steam among those working with youth in various capacities, such as schools, Department of Child Services, courts, juvenile justice, law enforcement, doctors in their medical practices, community mental health organizations and victims of human trafficking. Educators have started seeing its potential benefits.

School employees will learn a lot of recent advances in neuroscience, which show how trauma affects the development of children's brains and bodies.

It will shift a traditional mindset about discipline, that every negative behavior is willful disobedience, into understanding that many of these are survival behaviors that are a result of fearful experiences, according to Amy Abell.

Abell is a school psychologist, TBRI® Mentor and owner of HopeAlight LLC who lives in the Greenwood, Indiana, area. She and her colleague, Jessie Hyde, former elementary principal and current

TBRI® Practitioner, will conduct the local training and provide ongoing consultation as each district works to implement TBRI® in their schools.

She describes TBRI® as a roadmap for building resiliency in students and adults, and helping students develop healthy relationships.

TBRI® helps kids and adults learn to manage their emotions and behaviors in a healthy way, she said.

Adults will learn strategies to help kids build resilience and correct their behavior in a way that doesn't activate a fear response, but instead teaches appropriate behaviors and maintains positive connections with adults.

The program acknowledges that students have had different levels of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that can affect their social and emotional development and impact their learning.

ACEs can include instability because of parental separation, divorce or incarceration of a family member; witnessing violence in the home; experiencing neglect or abuse; growing up in a family with mental health or substance abuse problems; or having a loved one attempt or die by suicide.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in six adults has experienced four or more types of ACEs, with 61 percent of adults having had at least one.

Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and

affect how the body responds to stress, and thus impacts how kids learn.

ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness and substance abuse in adulthood, the CDC says, and preventing them can lower risk for health issues, reduce risky behaviors such as smoking and heavy drinking, improve education and employment potential, and stop ACEs from being passed from one generation to the next.

### Connections and gratitude

Tamara Brinkman, president of the local United Way, said Western Wayne Schools' use of the training was being discussed at a couple of meetings of community leaders, gaining United Way's attention.

They referenced a Western Wayne News article about Western Wayne Elementary staff undergoing that training virtually in January and February plus ongoing support, thanks to a grant from the office of Kory George, Wayne County's chief probation officer.

One unique aspect: In addition to teachers, WWES included classroom aides and others who interact with children so all could better understand their behavior.

Lincoln Middle/High School has scheduled training in August before school starts.

After speaking more with Western Wayne Superintendent George Philhower and WWES Principal Jessica Neill, United Way's board de-

cided to fund the training for any local public school district interested. Nettle Creek, Northeastern, Centerville and Union County signed up.

Brinkman said ACEs are more prevalent than many people realize and there's science behind this program. The pandemic also is exacerbating difficult situations for lots of kids and families, she noted.

"Now more than ever, coming out of this, it's important to provide support to educators and all who work with kids," Brinkman said.

United Way's local efforts have focused in recent years on helping local residents overcome poverty.

Brinkman said TBRI® is important because it connects to many of the challenges Wayne County families face in trying to improve their lives. It aligns with the work the local United Way is doing to support programs that address early childhood education, youth success, economic mobility and access to health care.

Funding support is helping United Way address issues related to COVID, ranging from basic immediate social service needs to projects making a longer-term impact, such as TBRI®. Brinkman called the training a huge investment, costing just over \$100,000, and noted Western Wayne's use of the program was a catalyst for broader regional support.

Hicks said the training is a "wonderful gift" from the United Way and he appreciates the organization seeing the vision and value of that experience. He also credits Philhower for generously helping make connections between the districts and United Way and explaining the training's benefits.

Philhower is pleased to see TBRI® roll out to other local schools, believing a larger group can find solutions to issues they might not find alone.

"It's such a big issue, and if we can learn together and have a common language and be able to respond together, it's better for our whole community," he said.

The more you learn about the research behind people's response to trauma, the more you think differently about

what you see, Philhower said.

"It increases the empathy you have for people you come across every day," Philhower said. "You see people as people who are learning and developing all the time."

If WWS hires any new staff, they will be able to join the local training group at WWS' expense.

"I can't imagine a better time for schools to focus on this type of initiative," Abell said.

### Insight from trainer

Abell likes the regional collaborative spirit of the eastern Indiana school districts and United Way sharing training sessions, saying she's seen those kinds of partnerships in other areas of the country but not so far in the Hoosier state.

She has been thrilled by the positive feedback she's received for her online training, with its effectiveness being rated the same as in-person sessions.

One advantage of the virtual component is that it allows adults to have privacy as they learn because a lot of them have experienced trauma in their own histories.

She's heard from a lot of participants who appreciated the opportunity to turn off the camera and collect themselves without having others watch during the harder parts, versus sitting next to colleagues while they process that information.

Abell said some teachers are forever changed personally after going through the training as they better understand how they've been impacted by their own histories, and it serves as a catalyst for their own healing journey.

"We can't lead children to a place where we've never been, and once we know how to regulate ourselves, we can teach them how to do that," she said.

She noted that Americans have undergone collective trauma during the pandemic, and even those adults who would tell her they'd had zero ACEs growing up now can say they've experienced one.

"I can't imagine the hundreds of adults and children who are going to be exposed to this information and what could come of it," Abell said. "I'm really excited."

## Mandate (Continued from page 26)

or people in the community," Plasterer said.

"So, I strongly encourage us without mandate to look in the mirror and think through, 'Is it really that much of an imposition to wear a mask to protect

everybody that I love ... my neighbors my friends my co-workers?'" Plasterer said. "I think it is not even close, the call is to continue to protect those around you by wearing a mask."



Supplied

## Library (Continued from page 16)

to give tips & tricks to running your own RPG game on April 14th and April 28th, starting at 3:30pm. These programs will be an introduction to any teens & tweens that haven't tried H.A.K. Club before and will lead to new Dungeons & Dragons and Savage Worlds games starting up next month.

For more information you

can contact me at the library at jtaylor@hagerstownlibrary.org or give me a call at the library.

We are hiring! We have a position open for a part-time library assistant with 25 scheduled hours per pay period and we are currently accepting resumes at the circulation desk in the library, or via email to

Director Brenda Campbell at: director@hagerstownlibrary.org.

Next month I am going to have so much to share, as we have some big plans in the works for our upcoming summer reading program. In the meantime though, come back and see us at the library! There is plenty to check out.

## Stormwater (Continued from page 7)

or who are willing to write a letter about their stormwater issues and their endorsement of the project should submit them to town clerk Trina McGuire. Those documents can be used in support of the grant and loan applications.

The preliminary grant application is due April 29 with the final application due June 25. The grant awards announce-

ment will be Aug. 12.

### In other business, council:

■ Authorized town Marshal Carey Martin to purchase five body cameras and the associated storage system, using Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT) funds.

Martin told the council that he anticipates the use of body

cameras soon will be mandated by the state and he wants to be prepared. He estimated the cost of the cameras and system at more than \$10,000.

■ Discussed Martin's recommendation that the off-road vehicle ordinance be revised to allow residents who are unable to register their golf carts with the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles to register them with

the town. The issue was tabled until May.

■ Discussed contracting with a new company to handle credit card and e-check payments for utility bills for the town.

McGuire offered information about three companies and their associated fees. Council approved McGuire's recommendation of Invoice

Cloud because it is compatible with the town's billing software and eventually could be used for paperless billing.

■ Agreed to lease a skid loader from New Holland in Richmond because each year of the lease the town would be supplied with a new one. Council also agreed to purchase the skid loader attachments the town needs.