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UNDER ONE ROOF: The Life360 Resource Center in Monett fills over 100,000 square feet previously occupied by CoxHealth, which relocated its hospital last year.

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Finding New Purpose: Former Monett hospital is now a community resource center



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A resource center started last year by a Springfield-based nonprofit in a former hospital is bringing a new kind of care to the Monett community.

Life360 Resource Center launched in August 2021 and occupies roughly 110,000 square feet at 801 Lincoln Ave., the former campus of Cox Monett Hospital. CoxHealth moved within town in January of last year to a newly constructed \$42 million health care center, comprising a hospital and medical office building.

The health care provider donated its former building last year to 501(c)(3) nonprofit Life360 Community Services, the action arm of Life360 Church.

“For us, this facility wouldn’t be replicable,” said Jeremy Hahn, Life360 Community Services executive vice president, noting the resource center likely would have been impossible without CoxHealth’s donation. “We love the fact that this is right in the middle of neighborhoods of Monett. If you’re talking new construction, you’re probably talking outside of town. This puts us right where we need to be.”

Aside from Life360, nearly 20 nonprofits and small businesses aimed at aiding families lease space in the building, including the Barry County Health Department, Crowder College, Missouri Job Center and The Arc of the Ozarks. The resource center spans three floors and a basement in the former hospital and is about 50% occupied within its first 10 months of operation, Hahn said.

“Our vision is to create asset-based community development partnerships,” he said of Life360 Community Services. “This is right in line with that. Here we have this incredible asset for Monett, the old hospital, and we’re getting to utilize that by bringing services for the community and empowering individuals. We’re really excited about this.”

Hahn refers to the resource center as “a nonprofit mall,” noting clients can look for a job and get tax assistance, life coaching and family advocacy services all under one roof.

“You’re not chasing all over town,” he said. “All of these organizations work together.”

Life360 officials estimate over 300 people have received help at the center since its opening.

Space to fill

Tim Cederblom, Life360 Community Services executive coach, oversees the Monett operation. While some parts of the building have odd-shaped rooms that may make them difficult to fill, he said the intent is to eventually have the entire center occupied.

“Storage is always at a premium, so we can at least use it for that,” he said.

Organized in 2011, Life360 Community Services’ four core initiatives are to feed, house, educate and empower those in need. It has a \$17 million operating budget, according to officials.

Life360 has five employees working in Monett and currently occupies 1,000 square feet of office space in the building – an amount that will greatly expand when its 10,000-square-foot day care opens in September. While Life360 officials declined to disclose the nonprofit’s total investment in the resource center, Hahn said renovations to accommodate the day care will cost around \$300,000. The space formerly was a physician’s clinic with over 70 rooms, he said.

Renovations are up to the individual tenant, Hahn said, adding Life360 is willing to help nonprofits seek grants to help with expenses.

“Certainly, Life360 doesn’t have a blank check to write for everybody. We help these nonprofits by discounting rent,” he said, noting it leases space for \$5 per square foot.

Third-floor tenant Family Advocacy Solutions LLC was the first agency aside from Life360 to fill space at the center. Katy Velasquez is founder of the 4-year-old business which offers advocacy services such as parent education, CPR and first aid certification, substance screening and foster family training.

Family Advocacy Solutions, which also added a Neosho location earlier this year, relocated its Monett office in August 2021. Its new home in the resource center is 2,500 square feet, more than double its former 1,000-square-foot space on Dairy Street, Velasquez said.

“It was a huge upgrade for us,” she said, noting the office includes three visitation rooms, a dedicated drug testing space and a conference room.

Additionally, the expanded space allows Family Advocacy Solutions to provide food and clothing to foster families in need through an on-site resource closet, Velasquez said.

Finding inspiration

Hahn said the resource center draws inspiration from similar one-stop assistance concepts in Springfield. One of those, the O'Reilly Center for Hope, was opened in 2020 by Community Partnership of the Ozarks Inc. and offers services for the homeless and those looking for affordable housing and financial stability.

“We actually kind of modeled this after The Fairbanks,” Hahn said, referring to a separate community center in Grant Beach, where Life360 Community Services started its first campus and continues to be housed with other agencies such as Springfield Community Gardens and the Drew Lewis Foundation Inc., which supports families in poverty.

Aside from its day care, which will have capacity for 168 children, Cederblom said Life360 plans to open a second location of its Mocha Jo's Coffee Cafe LLC in the center by August. The nonprofit operates the other shop at 404 E. Broadway St. in Monett.

Officials say future goals at the center are to recruit a dentist and more financial services, such as a credit union.

Velasquez said the center is a vital resource for Monett, a relatively small city on the grow without an abundance of services to aid those in need. Monett's estimated population is nearly 9,700, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. That's up 9% from the 2010 census. The Census Bureau reports the city's poverty level at 17.8%.

“It's really nice for our clients to be able to come here and be easily connected to other resources that they need and for it to be done with dignity,” she said.

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