

Saint Mary-of-the Woods, Hamilton Center form a new partnership in HCI Scholars Program

TRIBUNE-STAR STAFF REPORT

A new partnership between Hamilton Center and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College is expected to help address the need for more mental health professionals in the community.

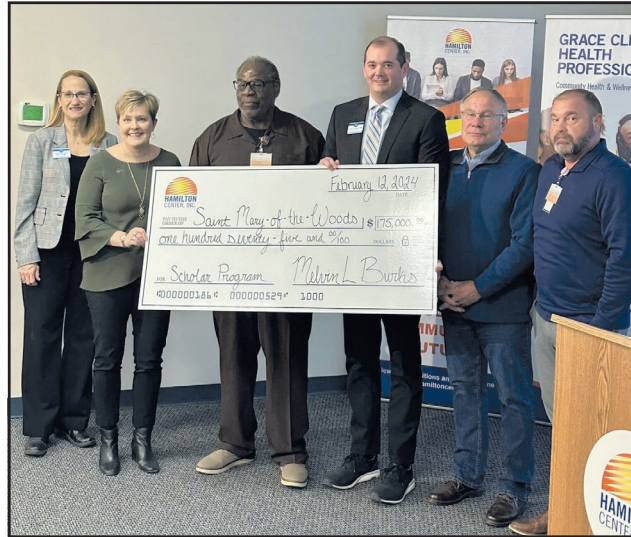
On Monday, Hamilton Center Inc. announced it will partner with the college through the newly established HCI Scholars Program.

The program will offer opportunities to Hamilton Center employees to enroll in the college's new master's degree in clinical mental health counseling and other master-level programs.

Also, undergraduate programs that qualify are the bachelor's degree in addictions counseling and the college's certificate in addictions counseling.

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the employment growth rate for mental health, substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors is expected to expand and grow by 18% by 2032, faster than average for all occupations.

The college "is perfectly positioned to offer our employees a top-notch education that will benefit our



Submitted photo

Hamilton Center and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College on Monday announced a new initiative expected to help address the need for more mental health professionals in the community. From left to right are Tracy Richardson, SMWC dean of division of arts and social sciences, Janet Clark, SMWC provost, Melvin L. Burks, Hamilton Center president and CEO, Brennan Randolph, SMWC interim president, Cary Sparks, Hamilton Center Foundation board treasurer and Mark Collins, Hamilton Center chief clinical officer.

consumers and the entire community," said Melvin L. Burks, president/CEO of Hamilton Center.

To help launch the program, a \$175,000 gift will be provided to SMWC through Hamilton Center from Hamilton Center Foundation Inc.

All HCI Scholars in a

counseling-related program will be placed at Hamilton Center for at least one placement (practicum and/or internship).

After graduation, all scholars will agree to at least two years of employment with Hamilton Center in Terre Haute or another Indiana

community.

"We are pleased to launch this much-needed program to address the high demand for mental health professionals," said Brennan Randolph, college interim president.

The curriculum for SMWC's new master's degree in clinical mental health counseling is designed to align with Indiana licensure requirements.

The course delivery will be hybrid with courses online, two brief residencies on campus and on-site training in the student's geographic area with completion in as little as two years.

According to Janet Clark, SMWC provost, HCI Scholars is for current Hamilton Center employees, who would receive a tuition discount and could also use other Hamilton Center employee benefits.

The goal is to make the program "really affordable," Clark said.

Other programs in the HCI Scholars program are the master's of business administration, the master's of leadership development, the master's of healthcare administration and the doctoral degree in global leadership, according to the college.