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Health Care Heroes: Health care provider, non-physician

Mitchell's Place

Mitchell's Place is more than a passion for Allen Meisler and his wife, Nancy.

It's personal.

After their young son, Mitchell, was diagnosed as autistic at the age of two, the Meislers discovered the critical lack of local treatment options.

"He was diagnosed 11 years ago and for the next five or six years, I was trying to find some services in the Birmingham area and the state and there were really none being offered," Meisler said. "There was nothing within the state of Alabama."

So after a couple more years of searching for options that weren't there, the couple took matters into their own hands.

Meisler, who is a real estate developer, built Mitchell's Place—a multidisciplinary center that offers several programs to autistic children up to the age of 16.

"Our core mission is to help children who are affected by autism reach their highest potential," he said.



Meisler

The center, with a budget of more than \$1 million a year, is staffed with a team of experts in education, psychology and other specialties that are beneficial for autistic children.

Mitchell's Place is home to an early learning center for young children that helps them get ready to attend school.

"We're getting them used to the social environment," Meisler said.

There is also a one-on-one program, known as Teach Me, where children are able to work with one instructor for several hours a day, as well as an after-school program for children between the ages of 8-16.

The early learning program alone serves 40 children in its 12-month program, and often has a waiting list of more than 30 children.

"We're overflowing with kids," he said.

"We could double the capacity and still not meet the need."

Even though the center charges for its

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Mitchell's Place



**HEALTH CARE PROVIDER
NON-PHYSICIAN**

Mitchell's Place

Top Executive: Allen Meisler

Organization: Multidisciplinary center for autistic children

services, it does operate a deficit. The difference is made up through fundraising and if that's not enough, from Meisler's own pocket.

Moving forward, Meisler said his goal is to secure more funding for the program, possibly teaming up with an educational institution or hospital to be able to expand the services it offers.

More than anything, it's Meisler's personal experiences that keep him going.

"I figured, if I could help my child, I might as well help others," he said.

— Ty West