**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Seven Nonprofits Each Awarded $10,000 as 2022 Arago Honors Recipients**

*Program of the Meridian Foundation celebrates innovation in Indy-area nonprofit community*

**Indianapolis –** December 12, 2022 — Indianapolis-based [Meridian Foundation](https://www.indymeridianfoundation.org/) announced today that seven nonprofits have been named 2022 Arago Honor recipients. The program awards $10,000 in unrestricted funds to nonprofits that demonstrate their innovative practices, large or small, are leading to significant community change.

Honorees for this year’s award include:

* **Be Nimble Foundation** for Melon Kitchens, a ghost kitchen for Black chefs, housed at 16 Tech’s AMP Marketplace. The two year-old training program, allows chefs to scale their enterprises through a delivery-only and take-out model supported by business resources and supplies, a shared commissary kitchen, and the technology infrastructure needed for growth.
* **Conner Prairie Museum, Inc**. for its deliberate and inclusive new Promised Land as Proving Ground (PLPG) exhibit addressing the origins of African American religious, foodway and ritual traditions. PLPG will cover more than 1,000 years of history from pre-colonial to present day and incorporate new stories alongside existing Prairietown narratives when its phased in opening is complete next year.
* **Joy’s House** for creating an End-of-Life Doula program that demonstrates a willingness to embrace an overlooked aspect of life - the dying process. The program focuses on how an individual wants to live during their end-of-life transition, offering additional support to family caregivers.
* **Latinas Welding Guild** empowers Latina women to be leaders in the welding industry. By providing barrier- free job training, job placement, ongoing career coaching, workplace consulting for industry employers and community welding education, the Guild offers inclusive wrap-around services for women competing in this traditionally male manufacturing field in central Indiana.
* **Meals on Wheels of Central Indiana** for creating the EMBRACE Cancer program that provides medically tailored meals (MTM) to vulnerable individuals recently diagnosed with cancer. In 2021 the national cancer survival rate was 57 percent. Clients in the EMBRACE Cancer program had a survival rate of 64 percent, an amazing seven percent higher.
* **Overdose Lifeline, Inc.** for its Naloxone Harm-Reduction Distribution strategy placing this opiate antidote in strategic Indiana locations, including nineteen repurposed vending machines in correctional facilities, hospitals, health care centers, and visible community locations. In 2021 Indiana reported 2,554 overdose deaths or an average of seven Hoosiers a day.
* **Patchwork Indy** is working with numerous community, faith and government agencies to increase the awareness and strength of resettled communities in our city. By building bridges between cultures, Patchwork Indy seeks to improve both affordable housing and leadership skills of immigrants influencing their new lives and homes

“The winners of this year’s Arago Honors award have implemented projects involving arts, entrepreneurship, education, food, health and well-being, housing, racial inequity, substance abuse prevention, and workforce development,” said Donna Oklak, founder of the Meridian Foundation. “They are creatively solving complex challenges in our community. We want to honor them for their resourcefulness and encourage them and all nonprofits to look for new solutions to change the lives of individuals, families, neighborhoods, and ultimately our city.”

For the first time the Meridian Foundation is using an innovation ranking system as it evaluates creative community solutions. The highest ranking, disruptive or creating significant long term advantage, is given to Be Nimble Foundation. Start-up (early concept for change) goes to both Patchwork Indy and Joy’s House. Incremental (to create moderate advantage) innovation is earned by Overdose Lifeline and Meals on Wheels. Catch-up (to reduce disadvantage) goes to Latina’s Welding Guild. Catch- Up innovation with potential to be disruptive is Conner Prairie Museum’s ranking.

This year marks the second anniversary of the Arago Honors awards. Unlike many grant programs, funds given through the Arago Honors are unrestricted, which allows the nonprofit organizations to use the award however they see fit, helping carry forward a new cycle of investment and innovation.

To learn more about the innovation selection criteria and last year’s eight nonprofit recipients, visit the Meridian Foundation’s [website](https://www.indymeridianfoundation.org/).

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***About the Meridian Foundation***

Founded in 2019, the Meridian Foundation aims to support, accelerate, and celebrate nonprofit innovation in Central Indiana. For more information about the Meridian Foundation or the Arago Honors program, visit [indymeridianfoundation.org](https://www.indymeridianfoundation.org/).

**Media Contact:**

Donna Oklak, ddoklak@yahoo.com

317 345-6563