



Merakey's leadership team (Top Row): Nick Ormafiuire, Charity Bankston, Amanda Sykes (Bottom Row): Amanda Talley, Tytiona Holliday, Mark Thomas, Jr., Andrea Vinning

## HELPING FAMILIES AND CHANGING LIVES

*Merakey has become an incubator of solutions for autism.*

**THE INNOVATIVE BEE** Me Child Development Center housed within the Merakey Autism Center is a new model for families seeking day care in the Capital Region. This prototype child care center offers opportunities for children of all abilities and development levels to play and learn in a smart, service-focused environment that is unlike any other in the city.

This innovative solution is important to Shelley Hendrix—for whom The Merakey Shelley Hendrix Autism Center is named and consultant to Merakey Education and Autism Services—to also provide day care services for children exhibiting developmental delays, especially as they initially move through the diagnostic process. The integrative program at Bee Me accepts children of all abilities between three and five. There are no potty-training requirements and children have access to the therapy services on site, if needed.

“For me,” Hendrix says, “Bee Me is one of the most groundbreaking aspects of Merakey. Parents can now maintain sustainable employment and stay afloat financially while their children are well

cared for during the day, so family time stays family time after work.”

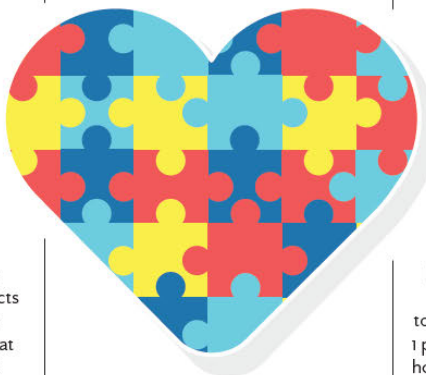
The Bee Me Center is one part of the solutions found at The Autism Center. The Merakey team is changing the landscape for autism in the state of Louisiana and improving opportunities for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Texas. Merakey has carved out a special niche within the autism community. Hendrix says the Baton Rouge location is quickly becoming

an incubator for solutions that may help assemble the pieces of the autism puzzle nationally.

“For families seeking integrated therapies and services designed to help their children with autism grow towards adult independence, Merakey employs professionals who are committed, with their heart and soul, to make that goal a reality,” says Director of Operations Charity Bankston, BCBA. In fact, the new name Merakey is derived from a Greek word meaning “to put your heart and soul into exceptional care and services.”

Merakey's programs are designed to improve independence for clients through age 21, including the Pathway to Promise transition program; therapeutic clinical services including applied behavior analysis, speech, and occupational therapy; educational services for those at risk of losing their traditional school placement; and the incorporation of telemedicine to enhance comprehensive health treatment.

The center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays, providing flexible hours for families.



9150 BEREFORD DR  
 BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70809  
 (225) 960-7689  
 WWW.MERAKEY.ORG