

Spiritually Speaking
Father Thankachan Joseph



Jesus Needs a Donkey?

Western Christianity all over the world is celebrating Palm Sunday this week, with the blessing of the palms, as we enter Holy Week celebrations. Palm Sunday reminds us of the solemn entry of Lord Jesus into Jerusalem, the place of peace to establish peace and harmony. "The crowd who went in front of him and those who followed him were all shouting, 'Hosanna to the son of David! Come and save us from our pathetic and pitiful conditions'" (Mt. 21:9).

The etymological meaning of the Hebrew word "hoshi'a na" translates in Greek as "(h)osanna." In English it is known as "hosanna." The original biblical dictionaries of the scripture describe it as "Save!" It is viewed as a plea for help.

I am sure we have all gone through this sort of tough time, like the crowd who followed the Lord shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David," or like the disciples in the boat who cried out, "Master, don't you care that we are about to die?" (Mk. 4:38). When we face the troubled sea and storm, do we shout out like the people of His time shouted out? Let us say this little soothing and comforting prayer: "Hosanna to the son of David, Lord come to our rescue." Like Psalmists, together say, "Please Lord, please save us. Please, Lord, please give us success" (Psalm 118:25).

At the blessing of the palms on Sunday, the Gospel of Mathew chapter 21 begins with Jesus entering a village called Bethphage. What is the significance of this town? Bethphage means "house of unripe fruits." We can clearly see from the name that the souls in this town were suffering from deficiency: they are unripe. Jesus with compassion came not only to undo the power of that tree and replace it with the tree of redemption, namely, the Cross of Calvary, but also to raise souls from being unripe and unfit to being ripe and fit for the harvest.

When Jesus and His disciples neared Bethphage in Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of his disciples to untether the ass and a colt, "untie them and bring them here to me." The donkey represents humanity untied from sin, humanity tied to the Life of Jesus. We, the young and the old, are to tie to the tree of Calvary, the cross, for salvation. Someone may ask me why Jesus chose to travel on a donkey (and its colt) when all other pilgrims walk barefoot to Jerusalem. Palm Sunday reminds us of an important thing: unlike the other kings of the world, Jesus is coming on a mule. He shows us an example of humility, simplicity, ignorance, diffidence and docility. We cannot even think of any king who marches on a donkey.

Matthew's Gospel reading (21:1-11) starts on a triumphant note, the celebration of a victory parade. Parades and processions have always been part of worship in Jewish and Christian tradition, and they were the most normal way for people to acclaim the victories and triumphs of their heroes and heroines. When the parade is over, the heroes fade away and are forgotten, and Jesus, whom we acclaim in today's victory procession, will momentarily fade into His passion and death, but then He will rise again and live on. What is worth noting is the attitude of Jesus as He is about to enter the final phase of His life. He enters the city boldly, triumphantly, fearlessly, though He knows that He will meet His end there.

This Holy Week invites us to answer this question of the Lord: Can you be a donkey for me this Palm Sunday? Can you take me to the cities and towns shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David"? He asks each of us to humble ourselves from our own style of living to His style of life. To be a donkey for the Lord, what are all the things I need to leave aside? Lenten observances and practices invite every one of us to have an introspection of oneself and to get rid of those things that make us boastful, arrogant, non-caring. Scripture says, "The greater you are, the more humbly you should behave, and then you find favor with the Lord." (Sir 3:18). Then Hosanna will be accomplished in our lives too.

The Gazette Puzzle Pop

Sharpen your mind with our Gazette Puzzle Pop! Weekly math, word, and local trivia from our five towns—no internet or phones allowed. Answers in next week's edition—grab a pencil and show off!

Number Pattern Puzzle

Level - Moderate

Question: What's the next number in the sequence: 1, 4, 13, 34, 73, ___?

Wordplay Whiz

Level - Moderate

Question: I am a three-letter word that means a common animal. Add two letters to me, and I become a five-letter word that means a young version of that animal. What word am I?

Morrow County Trivia Challenge

Level - Easy

Question: In 1903, who homesteaded the land that would become Boardman, Oregon, spending 13 years irrigating it with his wife before later becoming Oregon's first state parks superintendent—a role that led to a scenic coastal corridor being named after him?

Answers from April 2nd edition

Math Challenge

- 1. 13
- 2. 26
- 3. 54

Wordplay Whiz

Answer: The word is few. Add "er" to get fewer—a small number shrinking even smaller. Sneaky, huh?

Trivia

Answer: Ralph S. Hamilton

Seniors Matter March/April Menu

April 1 - Chili Relleno, Refried Beans, Cinnamon, Rolls, Peaches



April 7 - Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Mixed Veggies, Dessert

April 14 - BBQ Chicken, Baked Beans Mac/Cheese, Cucumber Spears and Dessert

April 21 - Taco Soup, Chips, Salad and Dessert

April 28 - Stuffed Baked Potato Bar and Dessert

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Upcoming Events

Fisherman's Night - April 17th - Oysters and Catfish Dinner starting at 6pm Lodge at 8pm
Easter Egg Hunt - April 19th at the Fairgrounds. Photos with the Easter Bunny at 8:30 am. Easter Egg Hunt at 9am, Age Groups 0-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10+

Lodge Hours:

Wed 4pm to close with dinner at 6pm
Thurs 4pm to close (Lodge at 8pm)
Fri & Sat 4pm to close with dinner from 5pm to 8pm off the menu



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Members and their Guest



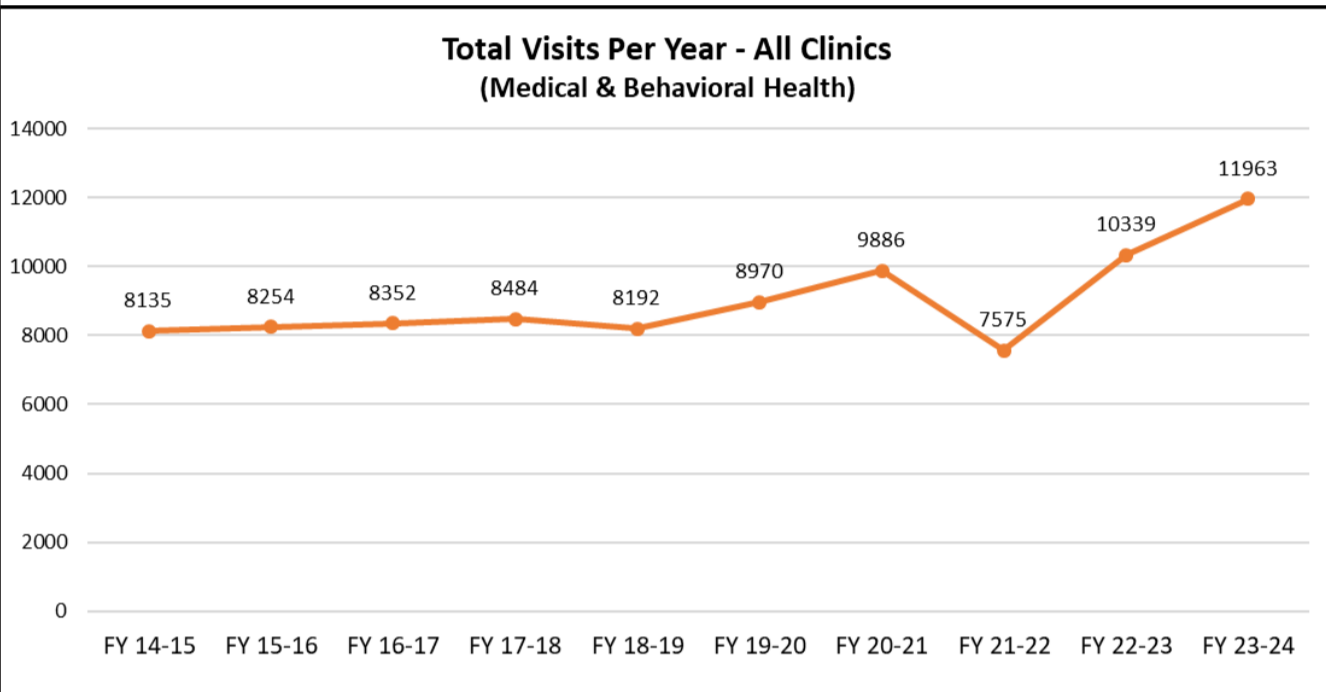
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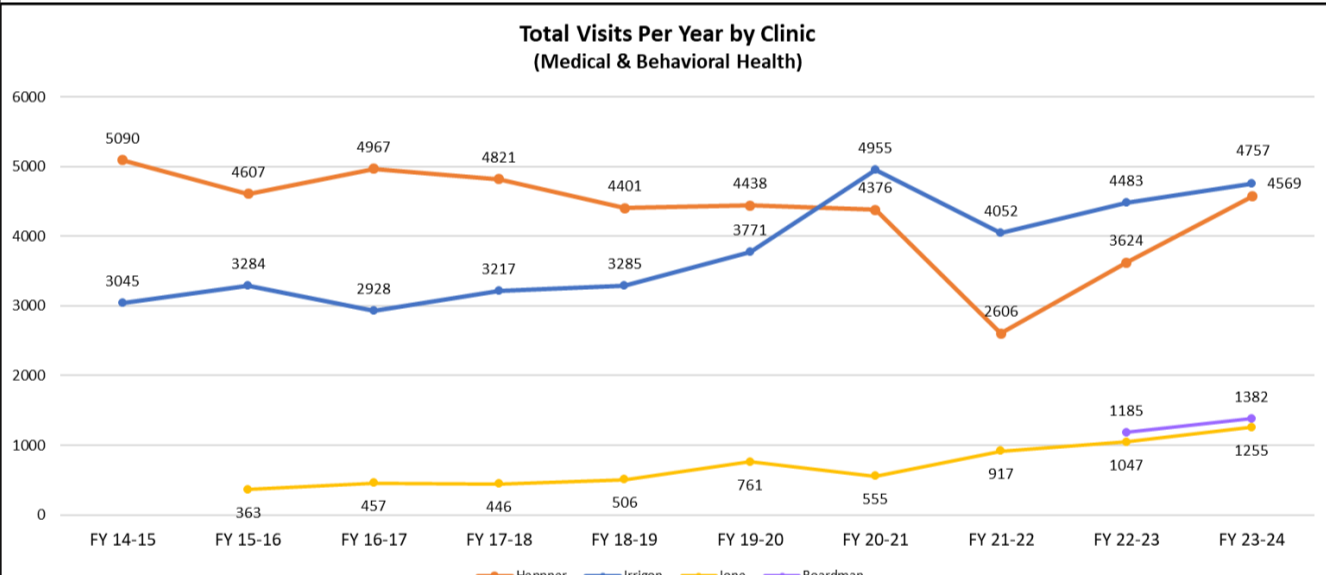
SUMMARY OF CLINIC PERFORMANCE

On March 25, 2025, MCHD shared data on social media highlighting annual clinic visits. The post sparked significant interest among community members, prompting us to provide additional data here to offer a more detailed breakdown and further highlight the improvements at each clinic.

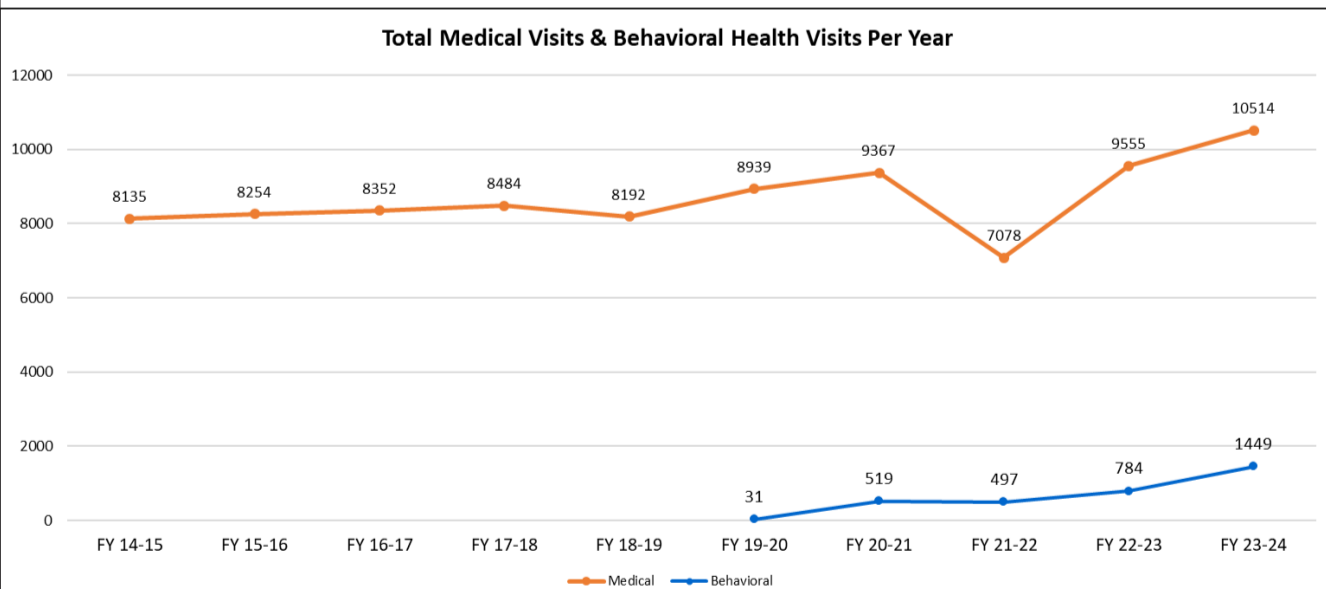
Total Visits Per Year – All Clinics shows the total number of medical provider and behavioral health consultant visits completed during the year as a combined total for all clinics.



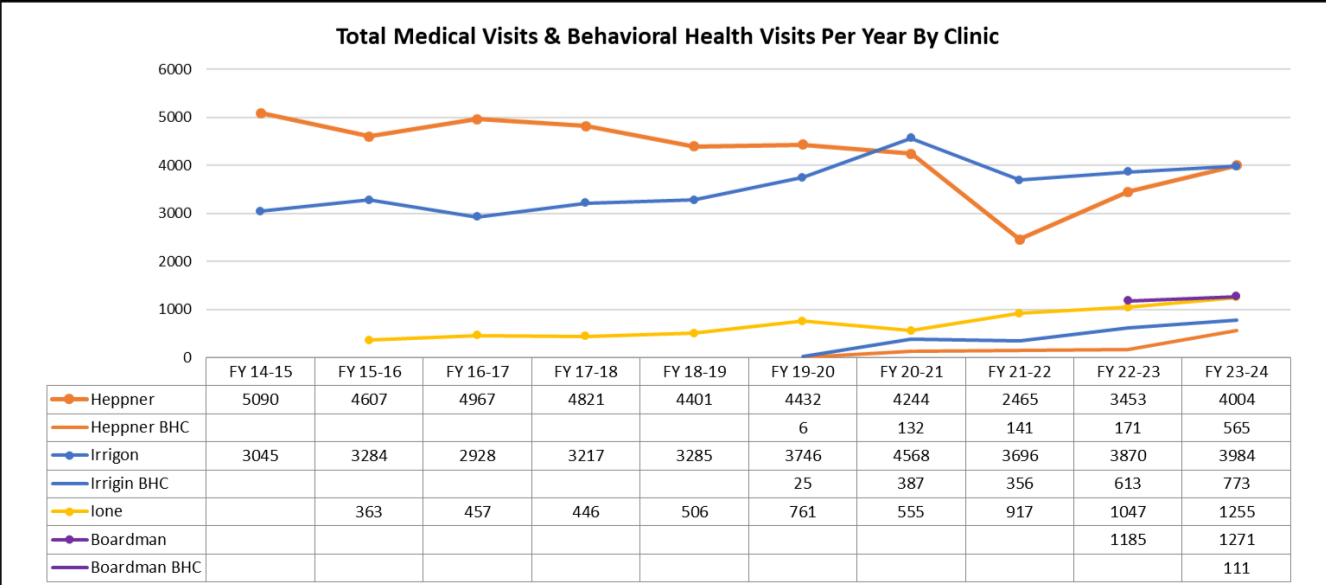
Total Visits Per Year by Clinic shows the total number of medical provider and behavioral health consultant visits completed during the year for each individual clinic.



Total Medical Visits & Behavioral Health Visits Per Year shows separately the total number of medical provider and behavioral health consultant visits completed during the year as a combined total for all clinics.



Total Medical Visits & Behavioral Visits Per Year By Clinic shows separately the total number of medical provider and behavioral health consultant visits completed during the year at each clinic with an accompanying data table.



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