WINTER **2021**

Enjoying the day out at the arboretum.

MRCI THE CONNECTOR

Through MRCI programs and services we are striving for true community integration for those we serve at home, at work and in the community: Genuine Opportunities. I am happy to report - we are thriving!

This past year we have exceeded our expectations. We are proud of the many individuals who are working in our communities. Additionally, we have other highlights such as:

- Launching a revolutionary community-based day service program filled with meaningful experiences, selected by our participants.
- Our virtual programming, which started in the middle of the pandemic to help break the isolation for those we serve, celebrated its first birthday and MRCI renewed its commitment to continuing this program for all we serve, even those participating in other programs.
- We have amazing staff and one of our own staff, Mohammed Abdulkadir, was awarded an Outstanding Refugee Award by Gov. Tim Walz. He earned this for helping other refugees find employment.
- In looking forward, our team said "yes" to expanding our consultant services across the state to families in 2022. We are eager to support more families decisions to self-direct their care at home.

As we end the year reflecting back, we also look forward to a bright future! Thank you for your continued support and please continue to be involved in our mission. You matter.

Sincerely,

Brian Benshoof

Brian Benshoof, CEO
MRCI

John Hunter gets his dream job at Hy-Vee.

MRCI proud to receive an award in innovation from MOHR.

To provide innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals with disabilities or disadvantages at home, at work and in the community.

www.MyMRCI.org
800.829.7110

Building a Partnership, Building a Future

Taylor Corporation and MRCI Work Together

Trevor is one MRCI client currently working at Taylor Corporation.

"Taylor Corporation is one of those places I can place a client and know they will be treated with respect each day. They are patient. They are kind. They accommodate in any way they possibly can. Clients feel welcome from the second they walk in the door on their first day. Truly, they go above and beyond to give our clients these opportunities," says Erin Connell, employment specialist with MRCI.

In turn, MRCI gives Taylor Corporation an opportunity to expand their workforce and fill much needed positions during a workforce crunch.

"They are working as hand packagers and can work on multiple projects including gluing items, working with sticky notes, paper projects, putting invitations together, putting gift cards into boxes, etc.," explains MRCI employment specialist Hailey Hoppe. "Once a project is finished, they will put it into a box and send it over to the shipping side where a few individuals from MRCI work and will verify the amount that is in each box and then tape up the box to get it ready for shipping. For example, they work on a lot of Amazon and Shutterfly projects."

MRCI and Taylor Corporation have a history together, but a new relationship started taking shape in June of 2021. A relationship looking toward a shared future, not the past.

"We used to have clients go there and work on crews, and we had some work brought into our workshop for clients to do in house," explains Hailey. "But with our new focus on community and clients working for a competitive wage, we had to look at things differently. We had a meeting with Taylor Corporation to discuss what positions they had open that would work for many individuals that were interested in going back to work there. We discussed job coaching and job tryouts, and in July we had our first job tryout there. Through July, August, September and October we have a total of 12 people working between Precision Press, Card Fulfillment Services, The Occasions Group, and Corporate Graphics. Taylor and MRCI would like to continue the partnership and grow together. Taylor would like to keep this partnership long term and eventually bring on more individuals. It's an exciting time!"

Trevor Kontak is one MRCI client currently working at Taylor Corporation.

"I like working at Taylor Corporation because the hours are desirable and I like the variety of work. The managers and coworkers are very helpful and are always there to help me. I feel like I am a part of the team and the work I do is important," says Trevor.

To see how MRCI can help with your workforce needs,please visit www.mymrci.org.

MRCI clients take a break from working to meet up for lunch together.

The Lunch Bunch

MRCI Employment Coordinator Kris Simpson loves seeing those she serves successful in their jobs. But as they all got hired at various spots around Fairmont, she realized they were missing one thing: their connection to each other. She thought about what she does when she wants to reconnect with old friends, she asks them to lunch. So that is what Kris set out to do for those she serves.

The response was overwhelming! Kris had her first Lunch Bunch gathering in early November and 19 people attended. MRCI employment partner Pizza Ranch hosted the group who say they can't wait for the next one!

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MRCI adds extra sparkle

The Kiwanis Club in Mankato puts up a light display that attracts thousands from throughout the region. It takes hundreds of volunteers to pull it off and this year MRCI helped!

MRCI volunteers helped Kiwanis get ready for the season by sorting through the thousands of lights and preparing them for the big show! We don't know which will shine brighter...the smiles of those who are so proud to help or the lights adorning the park!

If you have a need for volunteers, please let us know! As we integrate those we serve into the community, we are looking for meaningful, volunteer experiences. To request a group of volunteers, please visit www.mymrci.org.

MRCI volunteers help light up Mankato.

Photo credit: Facebook/Kiwanis Holiday Lights

It's what people can do that matters!
www.mymrci.org

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