



**For more information:**

Lisa Cownie  
Community Relations Manager  
MRCI  
M: (507) 594-8991  
[lcownie@mymrci.org](mailto:lcownie@mymrci.org)

**For Immediate Release**

## **It's My Party and I'll Smile If I Want To!**

*MRCI celebrates a year of breaking pandemic isolation for individuals with disabilities*

Minnesota – Lyle Folen is a social guy. For more than four decades, getting up every day and going to work at MRCI brought fulfillment and joy to his days. He got to earn some money, and most of all he got to see and interact with his friends and coworkers. In March 2020, his world got turned upside down. MRCI had to suspend programming for individuals like Lyle, who were not yet working in the community, yet still wanted meaningful experiences each day. With the doors closed, MRCI leadership knew that individuals with disabilities the pandemic isolation would be great. The team sat down to find a way to continue fulfilling its mission even with suspended in-person programming.

And Virtual Day Services were born.

Each day, individuals served by MRCI , like Lyle, will gather around the computer in their homes, group homes or wherever they spend their day and see their friends on the screen, interact with them through games, and learn a thing or two while they are at it.

“The excitement and participation in MRCI’s virtual day services has led us to continue the program long-term,” says CEO Brian Benshoof. “As MRCI continues to expand in-person service programs, we have an opportunity to open virtual services to even more people as a primary or add-on service.”

Join the celebration of the first year of virtual services and learn more about the program...where we’ve been, where we are, and where we are going!

“Happy Birthday!” Virtual Celebration

Thursday, June 24

3:30 – 4:30 pm

**For more information and to register** visit <https://www.mymrci.org/birthday>.

**About MRCI:** With a mission to provide innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals with disabilities/disadvantages at home, at work and in the community, MRCI has been providing services since 1953. Making the move to community-based services during the pandemic is just one example of MRCI's commitment to being relevant to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities will have choices for personal and professional development. Annually, MRCI serves more than 4,000 individuals.