

# Focusing on Success



When Jonathan started at Wow! Zone in September 2022, he wasn't sure what to expect. Having struggled in past jobs without support, he was determined to find a position where he could thrive. With the help of MRCI's IPS Placement Services, he not only secured meaningful employment but also discovered a sense of confidence and belonging. Now part of MRCI's Extended Employment program, he continues to grow in his role as a Cleaner.

Jonathan takes great pride in his work, ensuring that bathrooms and parking lots are spotless, vacuuming every inch of the building, collecting garbage, dusting, shoveling snow, and setting up for events like holiday buffets. His dedication and reliability have made him a valued team member. "Jonathan is fun to work with and joke around with. I don't have to worry about him getting his stuff done because of his ability to focus," says his supervisor, Garrett Anfinson. Wow! Zone owner Pam DeMarce adds, "Jonathan is very pleasant and wonderful with customers. He loves what he does and is flexible when extra help is needed. We also bowl together on Tuesdays!"

MRCI Employment Coordinator, Becky Burnham, has also been impressed with Jonathan's growth. "I have only been working with Jonathan for a short period of time, but it's easy to see how valued of an employee he is. Jonathan is always in a great mood when I stop to check in with him, he has a great sense of humor, and he is very proud of his accomplishments which shine through in the work he does at Wow! Zone."

The journey hasn't been without challenges. "I have a history of leaving jobs that weren't a good fit and I was struggling with mental

health. But now, with therapy and my emotional support dogs, Tucker and Baby, I've found balance," Jonathan shares. Having someone check in on him has made a big difference, giving him the reassurance and guidance he lacked in previous roles.

Beyond his job, Jonathan has woven himself into the fabric of his community. His commitment to giving back is evident in his volunteer work at SMILES, where he was recently honored as the 2024 Volunteer of the Year. He enjoys spending time with peers at the Second Step Clubhouse in Mankato, where he finds connection and camaraderie. One of his proudest moments was making a heartfelt donation to the Mankato Lions Club for diabetic research, a cause close to his heart. Looking ahead, Jonathan dreams of becoming a Peer Support Specialist, using his experiences to guide others facing similar struggles.

With MRCI's support, Jonathan has built a stable career and a fulfilling life filled with purpose and connection. His hard work, dedication, and willingness to grow have helped him achieve personal and professional success, and he continues to make a positive impact in his workplace and community.



## About MRCI

MRCI provides genuine opportunities for people with disabilities and disadvantages at home, at work and in the community. To become an employment partner, or for more information, please call 507-386-5600.