

# The Mini Lantern

DECEMBER 2005

A publication of MARC, Inc. of Manchester, 376R West Middle Turnpike, Manchester, CT 06040

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## The Halloween Dance was Spooktacular!!!

*By: Regina Ricci*

Sponsored by the Board of Education and MARC, Inc., the Halloween Dance was held on October 28th at Illing Middle School. The dance was scheduled to begin at seven, but everyone was so excited about the event that people started arriving around six thirty.

The Halloween scene was set with lots of balloons, cob webs with spiders, skeletons, pumpkins, and even a giant pumpkin man. The Halloween spirit completely filled the air with approximately 275 guests in their costumes. We saw clowns, princesses, angels, a couple of ghost busters, witches, and Elvis.



The dance floor filled up with people as the sounds of "Thriller", the "Monster Mash", and other great dancing songs played. Spinning the tunes during the dance was our very own Mark Munafa who did a wonderful job of keeping the beat going.

Everyone enjoyed some pizza, cookies, and soft drinks to rejuvenate their dancing energy. After

which, everyone went back on the dance floor for a few more songs and then they began the parade of costumes. Four judges went around picking the best costumes in ten different categories: Scariest, Funniest, Prettiest, Most Horrendous, Cutest, Most Spectacular, Most Patriotic, Most Original, Most Extraordinary, and Best Overall Costumes. The winners each received a free movie ticket.



**MARC's Snow Day Policy & the 2006 Holiday Schedule**  
See Page 7

## Day of Caring: Bringing Together People of All Ages

By: Marion Porter

Friday, September 9th was the Annual United Way Day of Caring for the Senior Center. The event was held at Northwest Park in Manchester and ten volunteers from Hartford Steam Boiler Inspections and Insurance Company came to help out. They socialized with the seniors and helped with the operations of this fun-filled day.

The day got off to a festive start with a coffee and donut social where positive connections were made between the volunteers and the seniors. As a surprise for the seniors, many of their friends from New Seasons, Inc. came to share in the festivities of the day.



As a special treat, "Tails the Clown" came to entertain for a portion of the day. She regaled us with her unique brand of silly songs, comedy, magic and fabulous balloon animals. Her performance

was so enjoyable that everyone was begging for more when it was time for her to leave. Afterwards, the volunteers served an amazing picnic lunch of hamburgers, soda, potato chips, watermelon, assorted beverages, and ice cream.

Everyone was enthusiastic and full of energy when the disco music started playing. The party mood



continued with music, dancing and lots of socializing until it was time to go home.

The Annual Day of Caring was a tremendous hit. The seniors commented on how much they enjoyed the day, especially "Tails the Clown" and how much they are looking forward to next year's Day of Caring.

## Ready, Set, Action!!!

By: Katharyn French

Gabriel Acosta, Charlie Bean, Ron Berthiaume, Heidi Greenberg, Darrin Irvin, and Neil O'Connor, who all work at Bob's Discount Furniture were in a Bob's commercial to promote the National Down Syndrome Society Buddy Walk. Heidi even had a speaking line in it.

As a thanks for participating in the commercial, Bob Kaufman and Cathy Poulin gave them a catered lunch on September 28th. Each also received a wrist band, a certificate and a copy of the commercial as a remembrance of this extraordinary event. Heidi also received a Hershey bar as an extra special reward for doing such a wonderful job on her speaking part.



## **\*\*MARC, Inc. Snow Day Policy\*\***

1. Whenever the Town of Manchester's Board of Education announces a delayed school opening or closure due to inclement weather:
  - a. MARC, Inc. transportation routes do not operate.
  - b. MARC Senior Center is closed for the day.
  - c. MARC, Inc. is open to support people served through our Employment Department.
2. In the event the Governor of the State of Connecticut closes the state due to inclement weather, MARC, Inc. is closed.

## **2006 Holiday Schedule**

The following days/dates MARC, Inc. will be closed

**Day After New Year's Day - Monday, January 2, 2006**

**Martin Luther King Day - Monday, January 16, 2006**

**Good Friday - Friday, April 14, 2006**

**Memorial Day - Monday, May 29, 2006**

**Day Before Independence Day - Monday, July 3, 2006**

**Independence Day - Tuesday, July 4, 2006**

**Labor Day - Monday, September 4, 2006**

**Thanksgiving Day - Thursday, November 23, 2006**

**Day After Thanksgiving - Friday, November 24, 2006**

**Christmas Day - Monday, December 25, 2006**

## **The 2006 MARC, Inc. Golf Tournament Date is Set!!!**



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**\*\*Thursday, August 17, 2006\*\***

**Reserve Your Foursome Today  
(860) 646-5718**



## Seniors Welcome Autumn with a Harvest Luncheon

By: Marion Porter

On October 13th, the MARC, Inc. Senior Center had a fabulous Harvest Luncheon sponsored by our very special volunteer, Norma Gentilcore, who comes in once a week to assist our seniors on the computers. Thanks to her, the seniors enjoyed a family-style meal of rotisserie chicken, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, stuffing, rolls, gravy, cake and an assortment of pies. All of us at the Senior Center greatly appreciate her generosity.

The "Silk City Four", a barbershop quartet formed by the members of the Silk City Chorus were so kind to volunteer their time to provide some entertainment. The group delighted the seniors with several songs and even had a few of our seniors come up and sing with them. Bill Regan, one of our seniors, was instrumental in having them come to perform with us. Bill is in a local church choir with some of the members of the Silk City Chorus and suggested that we contact them.

The Harvest Luncheon was a great day of food, fellowship, and entertainment. It was such an awesome day that all of us at the Senior Center hope to make this an annual event. Some of our seniors had a few things to say about the festivities:

**Justine Bagley** - "They [Silk City Four] were excellent and had a variety of songs."

**Bill Regan** - "I thought it was a good experience singing with the barbershop quartet and I really liked it."

**Sue Biglin** - "The whole meal was great! I really liked the chicken and the gravy."



## Charlie Raises Money for Special Olympics

By: Lori Stephenson

During the weeks before the Special Olympics Bowl-A-Thon which was held on October 15th, Charlie Bean collected money at Bob's Discount Furniture for this great cause. He went around the store with Janice Lesko and Tasha Montgomery, managers of the store, as well as with Judy LaGuardia, a sales associate, to

ask customers if they would donate money to help raise funds for Special Olympics. All together, Charlie raised \$680.00, the most he has ever raised for the Bowl-A-Thon.

Way to Go Charlie!!!

## Halloween Spirit Fills MARC, Inc.

By: Regina Ricci

As the day began on October 31st, you could see the MARC staff showing their Halloween spirit in their costumes. Some of the characters seen were clowns, bikers, a banana split, a grim reaper, and so many more.

In the afternoon, everyone all showed off their wears in a parade of costumes in front of a panel of judges. Afterwards everyone gathered in the break room for some cookies, witches brew (apple cider) and to hear the results of the contest.



# A Work Life Given To Others

*Hartford Courant Editorial - December 6, 2005*

MANCHESTER -- It's hard to comprehend how many lives Laurie Prytko has affected. The number is legion.

Since she began her tenure as executive director of MARC Inc. of Manchester 25 years ago, countless people with disabilities have been helped to build stable, productive lives.

When she retires Jan. 11, she will leave behind a career that transformed this agency and the people it has served.

Ms. Prytko first became involved in MARC 1954 as a 12-year-old, participating in a group for siblings of people with disabilities. Her sister, Patty, a teenager with mental retardation, was being bused to a sheltered workshop in Mansfield.

Soon after Ms. Prytko took over, MARC began expanding the ways it helped its clients. It opened bakeries and taught people skills they could use in the business community.

During her tenure, the organization grew from a small \$80,000 operation to one with a \$5.25 million budget. Twenty-five years ago, there were 20 employees working with 70 people. Now, 160 employees and hundreds of volunteers support 224 clients.

The organization moved from a narrow focus of sheltered workshops to training people for real jobs in more than 100 businesses. Many clients live in apartments or group homes.

Ms. Prytko's sister died in October 2000. But like many of the people who have come under MARC's care, she had a full life of work, independence and an expanded view of the world.

As might be expected, Ms. Prytko credits MARC's success to the people she works with and the Manchester community that has welcomed and supported her organization so much.

Others know that Ms. Prytko's vision and hard work took MARC far. People with disabilities emerged from sheltered environments to be participants in their communities, working, paying taxes and volunteering.

Thanks to her leadership, Manchester is a richer place.

*Courtesy of the Hartford Courant*

\*\*\*SOLD OUT\*\*\*  
Laurie Prytko's  
Retirement Party  
January 6, 2006

MARC, Inc. of Manchester  
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