



# Lantern

MARC, Inc.

Seeing People - Not Disabilities

Since 1952

## Mike Robinson Visits WJMJ

Mike Robinson, who is visually impaired and has worked as a receptionist at MARC, Inc. of Manchester for 15 years, was able to finally visit and tour his favorite local radio station, WJMJ (Jesus Mary Joseph), in July.

Mike has been listening to WJMJ every day for the past 3 years. This is one of his favorite radio stations to tune in to because he can feel the DJ's passion for what they do, just by listening to them on the air. When he got the opportunity to meet them in person, it was apparent that they have a passion for entertaining others and for their job. He was able to meet: Glenn Colligan (Mid-Day DJ), Father John P. Gatzak, and Program Director Steve Savino. His favorite program on WJMJ is the 'Rock n' Roll Revival' on Saturday nights run by Mark Andrews and



'American Standards by the Sea' run by Dick Robinson.

The station holds a special place in Mike's heart, "Listening to WJMJ keeps me entertained and inspired. The daily messages Father John preaches continue to inspire me and help me have a positive outlook on life". Mike practices this by letting his enthusiasm and positive attitude shine through every time he answers a phone call at MARC. Mike is the 'Voice of MARC' so when the station presented him the opportunity to do



a brief demo recording during his visit, he was eager to do so! He was able to record his most popular catchphrase, "Keep your feet on the ground and keep reaching for the stars".

A special thank you to Kerry Kelly (MARC Office Coordinator), Richard Quappe (MARC Senior Center Direct Support Staff), and Lauren Szabo (WJMJ Senior Administrative Assistant) for making Mike's dream of visiting the station a reality.



**MARC is Hiring!**

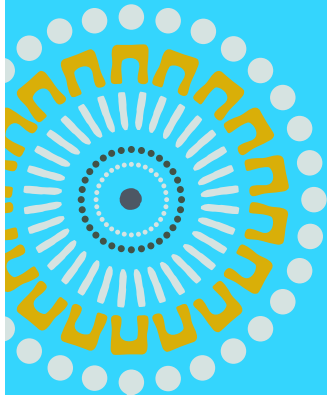
**Want to join the family?**

**Know someone who is a good fit for our mission?**

**Apply online at [www.marcct.org](http://www.marcct.org).**



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## A Message From the President & CEO



Hello Everyone,

As we enter the fall season and spend more time indoors, we are monitoring Flu and COVID cases to ensure the health and safety of MARC individuals and staff. Please follow the health guidelines recently issued to help reduce the

spread of illness. At this time, wearing a mask is optional. Winter is also right around the corner! Make sure to check the inclement weather notifications posted on WFSB Channel 3 and the Remind text system to stay updated on delays and closings.

The agency's most powerful strengths continue to be the dedication, work ethic, and compassion of our staff while providing exceptional services. The MARC family is a united force always working towards the best outcomes for our individuals and families served. This team has positioned us well to work on two initiatives that will innovate and expand our services in the near future. Our first project is a transformation plan for Employment services that will develop an intensive 16-week training program to transition individuals from group-supported employment (GSE) to independent-supported employment (ISE) services. We are currently in the process of working with a consultant to develop a curriculum to support this initiative and serve as a model for the rest of the State. Our second project is the development of a supportive housing initiative in partnership with The Metro Realty Group to develop 12-15 apartments in South Windsor to provide housing opportunities. The project has just received approval from the Town of South Windsor Planning & Zoning Commission and is scheduled for groundbreaking in the Fall of 2024.

The Supporting Transformation to Empower People (STEP) plan created by The Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS) was made possible through funding from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The plan provides financial incentives for providers to integrate into community-based settings that promote independence and freedom of choice. This plan will provide opportunities for department supported people to become more immersed into their communities and use their strengths, talents, and passions. Ultimately, the plan will allow people to make informed decisions about their job, home, and lives. To learn more about STEP, please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/DDS/STEP/STEP>.



*Kevin Zingler*



## National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Pictured below are just a few of the MARC individuals who recently secured new job positions! Chick-fil-A named Kristin Employee of the Month! We are so proud of all our employees. Continue to achieve great things!



## MARC Presents Manchester Cheesecake Company with the Inclusive Business Award

MARC, Inc. of Manchester presented Manchester Cheesecake Company with the 2023 Inclusive Business Award during National Disability Employment Awareness Month on Wednesday,



October 18th, 2023. Manchester Cheesecake Company promotes inclusivity, diversity, and values every employee's contributions in the workplace which is why MARC, Inc. chose to recognize them with this award.

Manchester Cheesecake Company employs two individuals supported by MARC. Their duties are prepping and cleaning cheesecake molds. A special thank you to Manchester Cheesecake Company Owner, Teresa Sharpe for providing our individuals with the opportunity to work out in the community and build their independence. Want to support MCC? Their cheesecakes are located at Rein's Deli in Vernon, CT and Bogner Quality Meats in Manchester, CT. Pre-order for the holidays and pick up at MARC on 11/10, 11/17, 11/20-11/22, too!

## Making Our Days Brighter



Thank you to Landtech Landscaping and The Andrew Ansaldi Company for making it possible for MARC's people served to enjoy playing basketball at the agency! Thank you to New England Blacktop Inc. for paving MARC's walking trail! Our people served and staff are enjoying it to the fullest. It's local businesses like you that help make our goals of keeping our people served active achievable.



## MARC's 2023 Wellness Fair

Our Wellness program hosts an annual Wellness Fair at MARC that is open to the entire agency. Tuesday, September 19th, multiple local vendors attended and educated over 200 people served and staff about how to live healthy lifestyles. The afternoon was filled with cornhole, basketball, and of course some Zumba instructed by Barbara Titus!

Thank you to our vendors: Life Family Chiropractic, ECHN, New Balance of South Windsor, Planet Fitness, ShopRite, UCONN Health, USI, VSP, and Delta Dental.





# 2023 ProjectSEARCH Graduation

On June 9, 2023, MARC, Inc. of Manchester celebrated the fourth graduating class of its Project SEARCH program at Goodwin University. The Commencement Speakers this year were Dan Noonan (Senior Vice President of Goodwin University & University of Bridgeport) and David Fichandler (Senior Director, Clinical Operations at Hartford Hospital).

The Project SEARCH program prepares MARC individuals for a future of employment, living independently, and being a part of the everyday workforce. Project SEARCH is a one year internship in the workplace that provides first hand job experience. This experience will ultimately increase an intern's work skills and abilities making them a competitive candidate in the employment process. Thank you to our tremendous partners and employers for

providing internship opportunities: Goodwin University (host site), Hartford Healthcare (host site), Lori's Gifts, ShopRite of East Hartford, and Walgreens of Glastonbury.

Our ten graduates went out in style, thanks to PeoplesBank of South Windsor! They hosted the Project SEARCH Graduation party at Sakura Garden Japanese Steakhouse in August! It was so nice for Chrissy Kiddy and Romika Odedra from PeoplesBank to join the graduates on this outing.

If you have a work opportunity that sounds like a good fit for one of MARC's talented individuals, please contact The Project SEARCH Coordinator, Randi Hewitt, at (860) 646-5718 ext. 282.



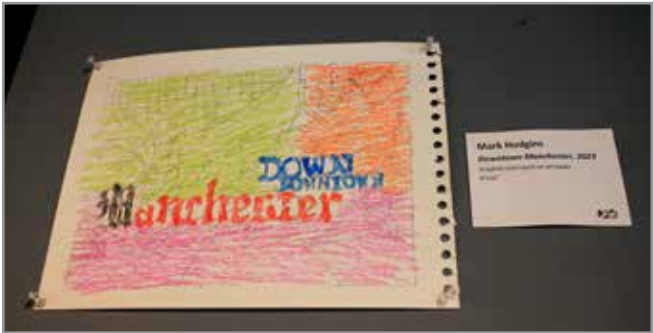
# MARC Celebrates Manchester's Bicentennial

Artwork created by MARC's people served was featured in the 'Expressions of Manchester' Art Exhibit at WORK\_SPACE in Downtown Manchester from 8/6 - 9/29. Based on the natural beauty of the City of Village Charm, the artwork shows that the town has a special place in their hearts. Our people served were able to express themselves creatively and share it with the community. This collaboration with WORK\_SPACE gave MARC's people served the opportunity to interact with different members of the community and advocate for the agency.

One of the MARC featured artists, Sally Provencher, was ecstatic when asked to participate in the exhibit. Sally is a natural when it comes to taking photos, painting, drawing, you name it! Specifically, her photography of Wickham Park was featured in the exhibit and was purchased by members of the community! It was at that moment Sally felt that her love for photography was recognized and genuinely appreciated by others. It's nerve wracking to put your art out for people to criticize but extremely validating when it is appreciated by others.

The idea for MARC's people served to share their artwork with the community stems from MARC Board Chair, Lynn Damon, "I believe it is very important that the people we serve at MARC, Inc. express themselves through the arts. Creating art builds their confidence and expresses their pride and joy. I know the community was inspired viewing this exhibit because I was!"

Thank you to the MARC DSO, Employment, and Senior Center staff for assisting the people served in creating their masterpieces. Thank you to WORK\_SPACE, Lynn Damon, the MARC Development department, the MARC Respite & Recreation department for the 'Photo Safaris', the MARC artists, and the Downtown Arts Mini-grant Committee for making our artists' dreams a reality.







## New MARC Residential Home

Thanks to a donation from one of our community partners, we were able to purchase and renovate a new home for MARC residents on Washington Street in Manchester! The cozy home was bought in the Spring of 2023 and renovations spanned over the course of four months. Three people served by MARC reside in the home: Anthony, Billy, and Kevin.

The renovations include: entire flooring replaced to meet accessibility needs, an accessible bathroom to meet the needs for someone who utilizes a wheelchair and requires hands on assist for all, installation of a ceiling transfer system for a wheelchair, ramp at the front of the house, and two ramps inside the house. There are also many new features including: a brand new deck, a cleared out flat backyard, and spacious bedrooms decorated to each resident's liking. These renovations have benefited the residents because the home was once not a fully accessible home and is now modified to each resident's needs.

Anthony, Billy, and Kevin have lived together for 10 years and this is their best home yet! The three men love being together and are enjoying their new welcoming and walkable neighborhood. Thank you again to our generous community partner for making this possible!



## 2023 MARC Ambassadors

The three current MARC Ambassadors: Hugh, Marie, and Tom have been representing the agency for four years. To be a MARC Ambassador means that you have the privilege of advocating for the agency at special events, being a liaison between people served, staff, and administration, the opportunity to boost self-confidence, become more outspoken, meet new people, and help shape the future of MARC, Inc. of Manchester.



MARC Office Coordinator, Kerry Kelly, helps schedule meetings and appearances for the ambassadors. She has been running the program since 2021 and is honored to be a part of it, "I feel lucky to be the Ambassador Liaison. The Ambassador program is a great opportunity for individuals to make MARC a better organization. It was a privilege to work with Hugh, Marie, and Tom". Thank you to Hugh, Marie, and Tom for serving and being outstanding advocates for the agency. A new group of ambassadors will be initiated soon!

## Giving Back

The ASL club at our agency, 'The MARC Stars', wanted to support the ARC of Maui by sending them a comforting ECard during the difficult time of the rampant wildfires. Club member, Jodie Arel, wrote a heartfelt letter to read in the ECard video. The MARC Stars and the entire agency encourage Maui to 'Stay Strong!'.



MARC individual, Jesse, collects soda cans for redemption. As part of his individualized plan, the redemption money goes towards his beverages and recreation activities. If you would like to contribute, please rinse and discard your soda cans in the collection boxes in DSO with Work, Senior Center, and Shannon's Place departments.



As mentioned in the previous Issue, MARC individual, Darien, collects soda tabs for the Shriners Hospital in Massachusetts. You can help Darien raise funds that go to the patient's families who

need help with transportation to and from Shriners Hospital by donating your soda can tabs to Tracy Watt in the DSO with Work department.



MARC's DSO with Work department is hosting a Winter Coat Fest Drive until 12/11/23. Please consider donating your old coats to help us grow our donation to MACC Charities. MARC collects your old coats, sends them off to Swiss Cleaners, then delivers them to MACC Charities in Manchester. Coat drop off is at the MARC main entrance of 151 and 161 Sheldon Road, as well as the DSO with Work area. Any contribution is greatly appreciated!



## MARC's 2023 Summer Concert Series

MARC kicked off its 12th Annual Summer Concert Series on Tuesday, July 11th, 2023. The three week event consisted of three free outdoor concerts on the MARC lawn between 151 and 161 Sheldon Road. Bands Mass-Conn-Fusion (7/11), Anthem Reggae Band (7/19), and BackstagePass (7/26) put on incredible performances each week on the Bill Carroll Memorial Stage. Local food trucks: Bear's Smokehouse Barbecue, Bobby T's Hotdogs, Brazilian Gula Grill, and Square Peg Pizzeria were in attendance at the concerts and donated 12% of their profit to MARC.

Thanks to Pratt & Whitney's generous underwriting, MARC was able to raise \$17,000 with sponsorships, t-shirt sales, the food give back, and donations! Thank you to all of our sponsors, bands, food trucks, attendees, and volunteers for your continued support. With your help, we're able to continue to provide the highest quality services to the individuals we support. We're already looking forward to next year!



## MARC's 24th Annual Charity Golf Tournament

MARC held their 24th Annual Charity Golf Tournament on Thursday, September 21st at Manchester Country Club. Approximately 110 golfers participated and were lucky enough to enjoy a day of perfect weather out on the beautiful course. MARC raised a total of \$59,150.00 at this year's tournament! Thanks to our golfers and sponsors, we are able to continue our efforts of enhancing opportunities and inclusion of people with disabilities throughout our community.



The 21st Century Tolland Fund generously donated a foursome to the 2024 Donny Marshall Charity Classic for the tournament raffle. We sold 53 of the 100 boxes and had visually impaired MARC receptionist, Mike Robinson, select the winner. Mike then called the winner and delivered the great news! Congratulations to Ross Burton on winning the foursome at the 2024 Donny Marshall Charity Classic at Foxwoods Resort & Casino! Thank you to everyone who took a shot on this exclusive prize.

Thank you to Manchester Country Club, our sponsors, golfers, and volunteers for making this event a success. We can't wait to 'par-tee' next year with you in 2024!



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# Rockin' Bowl-a-thon

Team up and throw some strikes to help raise funds!  
Bowlers will enjoy two hours of bowling, awards, and  
pizza. Proceeds will benefit people with developmental  
disabilities to live, work, and enjoy their communities.

More Information Coming Soon  
via [www.marct.org/bowl-a-thon](http://www.marct.org/bowl-a-thon)