

ONE DREAM,  
ONE TEAM



**MARC Community Resources  
Annual Meeting  
Thursday, October 17, 2024**

# ONE DREAM, ONE TEAM

Greetings!

It is my distinct honor to provide an update on the current state of MARC Community Resources. Over the past fiscal year, we undertook a comprehensive self-evaluation, carefully reviewing our programs, policies, and processes. This internal review was focused on identifying efficiencies that would fortify our foundation, positioning us for growth in both reach and impact. As part of this effort, we have developed a Master Plan. We collaborated with Tecton Architects to create a strategic road map for our building on Industrial Park Road. As shown on the adjacent page, this Master Plan has been thoughtfully designed to accommodate the space we will need to provide a wide range of services to participants and their families for decades to come, while aligning with the Department of Developmental Services' five-year plan.

Each department at MARC has embarked on new initiatives. Our Community Living department is expanding into Cheshire with a new 24-hour residential program, while the Independent Living department has extended its services into Hartford with a new Cluster program. Additionally, we are working with a developer to secure land in Middlesex County for a new apartment complex, where MARC will establish another Cluster program. For the first time in MARC's history, our Leisure and Recreation program is fully funded through September 2025, thanks to a unique DDS grant. Our Day and Employment Services have seen significant growth, with 15 new participants joining over the past several months, and expanding volunteer opportunities, work sites, and introducing exciting new curriculum activities. Of the 15 new program participants, two are part of our group-enhanced nursing program, which allows individuals with significant medical needs to participate in a day program.

To maintain the high quality of our services as we grow, we have established a Quality Improvement department. This team plays a crucial role across all of our services, programs, and administrative functions, ensuring we meet the rigorous standards required by our funders, enhancing communication, and maintaining comprehensive documentation. This department provides ongoing insights into the evolving needs of those we serve and helps guide our focus for the future.

Throughout this report, you will see the deliberate and strategic steps we have taken over the past year to position MARC Community Resources for continued success. We are excited to share our vision and the progress we have made towards achieving it. MARC is an exceptional organization, well-poised for future success as we continue to expand our ability to provide essential services to individuals and families. By building strong relationships with community members, partner organizations, and others who share our mission, we are fulfilling our commitment to making a lasting impact.

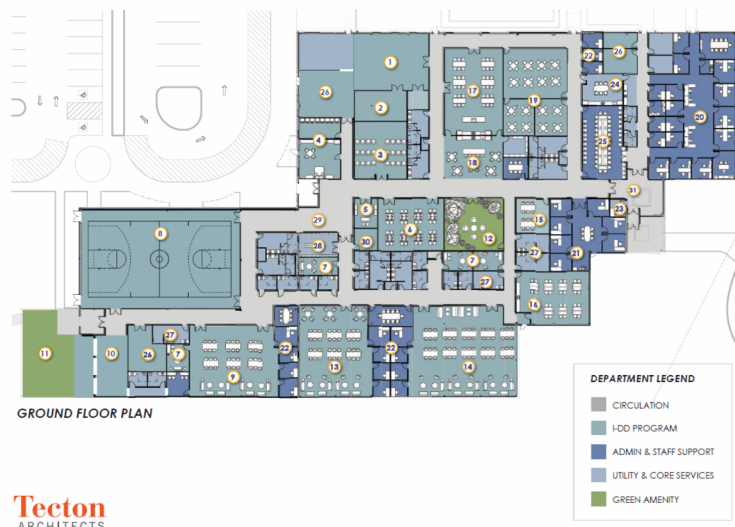
Respectfully,  
Melissa Davison-Wood, President/CEO





## MARC COMMUNITY RESOURCES TRANSFORMATIONAL MASTER PLAN

*Conceptual Floor Plan*



**Tecton**  
ARCHITECTS

## MARC COMMUNITY RESOURCES TRANSFORMATIONAL MASTER PLAN

*Conceptual Site Plan*



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# LIFE ENRICHMENT DAY SERVICES

MARC Community Resources offers a variety of day services through programs such as Life Enrichment, Vocational Development, and Employment Services. In late summer 2023, we introduced a new curriculum that is now utilized across all our day programs. This curriculum emphasizes life enrichment, vocational skills, independent living, leisure activities, and community resources. It provides staff with easy-to-use lessons they can incorporate into their work with the participants they support. By equipping our staff, who know these individuals best, with this resource, we aim to help them more effectively work toward each participant's personal goals.

## LIFE ENRICHMENT (DSO)

To better serve those in our programs and improve efficiency, we conducted an evaluation that led to restructuring our services. As part of this plan, we began treating DSO as one unified program rather than two separate day support options. Although we still maintain both Classic and Contemporary program spaces within our facility, the curriculum for these programs has become integrated. Program Managers have tailored this curriculum to align with seasonal themes and the interests of the individuals in the program.

Over the past year, the curriculum has evolved significantly, now focusing on the strengths of both staff and participants. For example, we have talented staff who excel in crafting, and they have started working with participants on art projects that reflect seasonal themes, helping to decorate the program spaces. Additionally, science has become a major focus in the Life Enrichment program. In the past, participants worked on independent experiments, but we have shifted to more group-based projects, which encourage social interaction and deeper engagement between staff and participants. We remain committed to developing meaningful programs that align with the unique needs and goals of each individual.



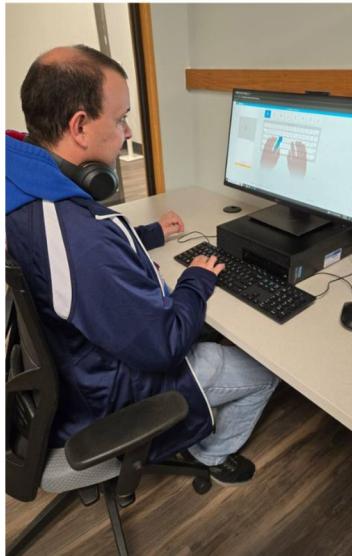
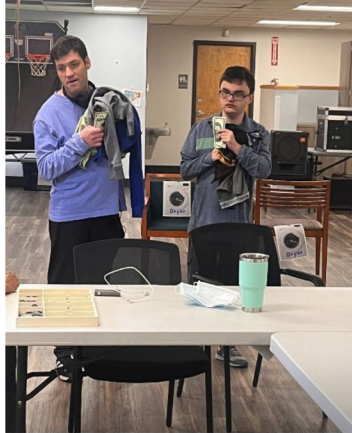


# EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

## VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a result of the restructuring of MARC's programs, a new Vocational Development Program was introduced. This program offers participants in both vocational training and day support programs, the opportunity to engage in activities such as dance therapy, yoga, and art classes. The program emphasizes key areas of personal and professional development, including:

- Punctuality and attendance
- Dress and hygiene
- Getting along with coworkers
- Organizing and maintaining a tidy workspace
- Workplace safety and communication
- Computer skills
- Resume writing and interview preparation
- Volunteering in the community
- Job-specific skills
- Emotional regulation
- Job searching and applications
- Mock interviews
- Self-advocacy
- Personal space
- Positive social interactions with peers and co-workers
- Money management and math skills
- Budgeting



This comprehensive approach equips participants with the skills necessary to succeed both in the workplace and in their daily lives.

# LIFE ENRICHMENT DAY SERVICES

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

MARC Employment Services helps participants develop the skills they need to achieve their employment goals. Our programs include Transition, Group Supported Employment, Individual Supported Employment, and Individualized Vocational Services.

Through the Group Supported Employment Program, participants continue to work on paid contracts at various locations, including three Shop Rite stores, South Congregational Church, and Holy Apostles College. They have also begun volunteering at community sites such as Valley Shore Animal Hospital, Middlesex Habitat for Humanity Restore, Goodwill, Lutz Children's Museum, and Hungerford Nature Center. We continue to build community connections to create more work and volunteer opportunities for those in the program.

Over the past year, several participants in our programs have expressed interest in pursuing independent employment. Many have transitioned to our Individual Supported Employment Program or applied for jobs outside of MARC, where they receive support. We are proud of the growth these participants have achieved and excited to see them apply the transferable skills they've developed to secure employment.



## PROJECT SEARCH

In June 2024, our second class of interns graduated from Project SEARCH. Six of these interns have secured competitive employment, and the seventh is actively interviewing, with promising job opportunities on the horizon. Each year, we collaborate with new departments at Middlesex Hospital to provide valuable work experiences for our interns. This past year, they worked in areas such as Pharmacy, Rehab/Physical Therapy, Environmental Services, and Central Sterile.

We continue to challenge the limits of what our interns can achieve and are thrilled that one intern became a Registered Pharmacy Technician, while another earned CPR certification. We couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments!



# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



Over the past year, MARC established the Department of Quality Improvement to ensure the integrity and excellence of our services. With numerous program branches and a diverse population of participants served, this department has become a crucial part of MARC's administrative structure. It plays a key role in implementing DDS rules and regulations, serving as a primary contact for families, and ensuring that MARC staff have the necessary resources and information.

The Department of Quality Improvement is staffed by its director and four full-time case coordinators, who serve as the main point of contact for the teams supporting participants at MARC and their DDS counterparts. Their daily responsibilities include preparing required reports, spending time with participants to understand their needs better, coordinating services with program managers, and maintaining MARC's extensive records system. The department has also streamlined the referral process, allowing us to welcome more participants into our programs, further expanding MARC's reach and community impact.

As we enter our second year, the Department of Quality Improvement aims to enhance data collection processes, continue reviewing records for accuracy and thoroughness, and partners closely with families and teams to ensure the best outcomes for their loved ones.



MARC's Quality Improvement Team

It is MARC's mission to empower people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) to make their own life choices and aid in the fulfillment of their dreams through employment, housing, social and community involvement, and advocacy.

At MARC we envision that all people with disabilities become integral and celebrated members of the community.

We take every opportunity to support others in our community. When we participate in Middlesex Health's "What the Duck" initiative, we support cancer patients in our community.



To vote for MARC's duck, scan this code.



*"Every Duck can Flock Together"*

# LEISURE & RECREATION PROGRAM

In the fall of 2023, MARC Community Resources received funding from DDS through a groundbreaking grant for Enhanced Community Engagement. For the first time in over 30 years, MARC's Leisure & Recreation Program is fully funded. This milestone has significantly boosted the program's mission of promoting inclusion and helping participants become valued members of their community.

The funding has opened the door to new experiences, including attending shows at venues like the Ivoryton, Goodspeed, and Bushnell Theaters. It also covers costs for activities such as bowling, mini golf, movies, corn mazes, visits to Mystic Aquarium and museums, and improved seating at events like Disney on Ice, Cirque Du Soleil, and sporting events featuring the CT Sun, Yard Goats, and Hartford Wolfpack.

The Enhanced Community Engagement grant has enhanced new programs and improved existing ones. Participants in the Walking Club now track their steps with pedometers, and members of the Garden Club have been equipped with personalized gardening bags filled with essential tools. Most importantly, the grant has made it possible for those who could not otherwise afford these activities to participate.

At its core, this program continues to provide leisure services to those with I/DD, focusing on "teachable moments" that emphasize communication, safety, socialization, independence, and friendship-building. When Sal says, "It feels like we are on vacation," Kristina shares, "Today has been a good day," Brittany expresses, "Thank you for taking me out today," or Sarah remarks, "I'm happy," these heartfelt reflections highlight the ongoing successes of MARC's Leisure & Recreation Program.

A heartfelt thank you to  
DDS for this invaluable  
support and for helping  
us embark on this  
exciting new chapter!





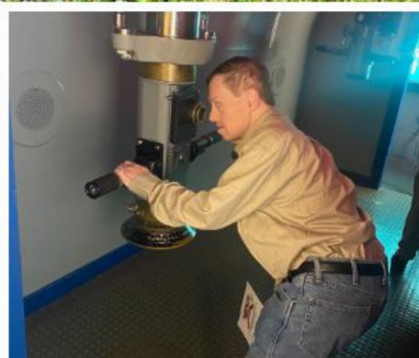
# COMMUNITY LIVING



As with all of MARC's programs, improvements have been made to meet the needs of everyone in our residential programs while fostering programmatic growth. We are excited to announce our expansion into Cheshire in FY24/25 with a new 24-hour residential program.

As the individuals in our residential programs age, we inevitably face the sorrow of loss. Recently, our MARC family mourned the loss of Caren Christofferson, Roland Ritcher, and Ralph Lil. Their absence is deeply felt by their housemates and staff.

Our house managers remain dedicated to enriching the lives of those in their care, through fun community outings, birthday celebrations, or gatherings where all the houses come together for activities. At MARC, we are a family and everyone is treated with the same sense of belonging and care. One family recently expressed their gratitude for staff who have been a "constant advocate" for their loved one. Another expressed how grateful she was for the smooth transition her daughter experienced moving into one of MARC's group homes, saying, "I love seeing her so happy."





# IN-HOME SUPPORTS



Exciting developments have been happening within MARC's In-Home Supports (IHS) program. Like other programs at MARC, IHS has experienced changes that have led to its growth. Previously part of Residential Services, IHS is now its own department.

In 2023, MARC was awarded a Cluster Housing Program in Hartford and has been collaborating with WinnDevelopment and DDS to identify and place individuals with I/DD in apartments the Hartford area. Additionally, MARC is in the early stages of developing Cluster Housing in Middlesex County. We look forward to working with a developer to expand our Cluster Housing options.

As always, our dedicated staff continues to support individuals with I/DD in their homes, helping them stay connected to their communities. From grocery shopping to dining out with friends and enjoying community outings, MARC staff ensure that individuals in the IHS program can live independently with dignity and respect.



# MARC COMMUNITY RESOURCES BY THE NUMBERS



## **293 DONORS**

Support from all of our donors, including businesses providing 100 gifts in-kind and the donation of professional services, helped to make it possible to fund unfunded and underfunded programs.



## **29 SPONSORS + 30 VOLUNTEERS = SUCCESS**

Thanks to the \$41,500 sponsorships provided by local businesses, we raised more than \$61,300 during our annual fundraiser. This incredible achievement wouldn't have been possible without the amazing support from our community. We are truly grateful to the volunteers who dedicated their time to help plan and execute our Denim & Diamonds event to the generous individuals who donated their hard-earned money.



## **GRANTS**

Grants from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Inc., and Community Health Network of CT Foundation helped to fund MARC's Recreation Program and bridge the funding gap.



## **\$216,796 TOTAL SUPPORT**

Without the philanthropic support of our generous donors, grantors, and community partners, MARC could not fulfill its mission of serving individuals with developmental disabilities. We are grateful for the unwavering support of these individuals and groups who help us make a difference in the lives of others. Their donations enable us to provide crucial services and programs. We thank them for their dedication to our cause and for helping us positively impact our community.

# DONOR SUPPORT

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*MARC Community Resources, LTD is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering people with intellectual developmental disabilities (I/DD) to make their own life choices and aid in the fulfillment of their dreams.*



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