

Summer 2024



Dear MRCI Friends,

I am delighted to share with you MRCI's strategic vision and our exciting plans for the future. Our commitment to creating innovative and genuine opportunities for people with disabilities or disadvantages remains steadfast. Our mission is to create opportunities for people with disabilities or disadvantages at home, at work, and in the community. Our vision is to be a provider of excellence, proudly enhancing the lives of those we serve. These guiding principles drive everything we do, and we are focused on ensuring that our services not only meet but exceed the expectations of the individuals and communities we support.

We are committed to growing our Board of Directors, making it more diverse and representative of the communities we serve. We aim to add new board members and establish subcommittees focused on recruitment, legislative issues, and funding development. Additionally, we continue to re-evaluate programs to fit emerging needs. Increasing awareness about MRCI and securing new funding are key priorities. We will identify top donors, engage in strategic fundraising, and showcase the stories of those we serve through social media and other communications. Financial stability is crucial, and we will create and maintain a net-positive annual budget, ensure sound accounting practices, and increase our cash reserves through efficiencies and investments. We will continue to foster a diverse and inclusive workplace, offer competitive compensation, and develop a succession strategy for key positions to ensure leadership continuity.

At MRCI, we are committed to treating every person with respect and dignity, maintaining integrity and honesty, and delivering quality service that exceeds expectations. We believe in fostering a positive and collaborative environment where innovation thrives. Thank you for your continued support and trust in MRCI. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve.

Sincerely,

Casey Westhoff
Chief Executive Officer



*To provide innovative and genuine opportunities
for individuals with disabilities or disadvantages
at home, at work and in the community.*

www.MYMRCI.org
800.829.7110

Recent Mission Moments



CFSS will replace CSG and PCA starting in October 2024, allowing an increase in opportunities to meet the needs of individuals to remain living in their home and community.



MRCI was awarded \$25,000 from the Otto Bremer Trust for our Day Service Programs.



MRCI completed an Innovation Grant totaling \$413,232 for staff development and expansion of employment services in several underserved counties.



MRCI was awarded \$5,000 from Enterprise Holdings Foundation for celebrations with staff and clients.



The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities visited MRCI in May.



MRCI welcomes Jamie Bless to our Board of Directors!



The Consolidated Communications Fund within the Mankato Area Foundation awarded MRCI \$5,000 for transportation needs.



Our volunteers mean so much to our programs! Thank you to each and every one of them!



MRCI and Cathedral High School seniors joined forces for a fun activity day!

At MRCI Mission Moments happen every day – thanks to great clients, volunteers, families, staff, employers and donors!

Tina's Triumph

Christina, fondly known as "Tina," had been on a year-long, strenuous journey of job searching before she crossed paths with Hannah Dean, an Employment Specialist at MRCI in Mankato, MN. Tina's previous employment specialist had warned Hannah about Tina's tendency to back out of job interviews at the last minute. Tina was grappling with the challenge of following through with job opportunities.

Recognizing Tina's nervousness, Hannah decided to take a different approach. Instead of plunging straight into job searching, Hannah thought it would be beneficial to set up tours to different places. This strategy was aimed at easing Tina's anxiety and building her confidence.

They visited a few places, but it was the tour at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU) that became a turning point in Tina's journey. Tina was enamored with MSU. The vibrant student life and the welcoming manager, Nathan Vogel, left a lasting impression on her.

Motivated by her positive experience, Tina applied for a position at MSU. To her delight, she was offered a position! Tina has now been working in the MSU dining hall for three months and her enthusiasm for her job is evident. She says, "I love my job so much. I have made some friends and I love talking to the students. I really love getting chips and salsa on my break."

Tina's supervisor, Nathan Vogel, echoes her sentiments, "Everyone loves seeing Tina. We love her outgoing personality and her positive attitude. She brings a smile to all our faces and is an absolute joy to work with. We love having her on our team."

Reflecting on Tina's journey, Hannah states, "When I first started with Tina, I was told if she didn't get a job by the new year (2024) they would discontinue job searching. I'm happy we didn't give up because she is thriving!"

Tina's story is a testament to the power of patience, understanding, and innovative approaches in overcoming personal barriers. It's a shining example of MRCI's commitment to empowering individuals and celebrating their success.



www.mymrci.org

Creating Community

Community Day Service Specialist Leigh Hollenbeck and her group from MRCI have been dedicated volunteers at VEAP. Leigh shares insights into their rewarding experience and the strong bonds they've formed with the VEAP community.

What kind of organization is VEAP?

VEAP, the Twin Cities' largest food shelf, is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing social services and financial assistance to individuals, families, children, and seniors experiencing food insecurity, a high risk of eviction or homelessness, and financial crises.

How long have you and your group been volunteering at VEAP?

My group from MRCI and I have been volunteering at VEAP since June 2022. Our commitment to this cause has allowed us to form strong bonds with the VEAP community.

What do the staff and fellow volunteers at VEAP say about your group's efforts?

Nate Rust, the Food Operations; Sourcing Manager at VEAP, often praises our enthusiasm and hard work, stating, "Love the enthusiasm and hard work you guys are doing every week, preparing products for all the food pantry shoppers." Fellow volunteers, Sally L. and Diane E., appreciate the positive atmosphere we bring. Sally mentioned, "We love the hugs and the smiles...it's just fun to see everyone every week!" Diane added, "Whenever we see the group we can't help but smile."

What has been the most rewarding aspect of volunteering at VEAP for you personally?

One of the best things that has come out of volunteering at VEAP is that we have become a part of a whole community of volunteers. We work a set shift, every Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., and we often see the same members of the community volunteering right next to us. When we go to our station on Mondays, we can count on seeing Nate, Sue, Sally, Sis, Jean, Diane, and others. Many of these fellow volunteers know everyone in the group by name and will say "hi" and converse with each one individually. I love that sense of community and connection.



*It's what
people can do
that matters!
www.mrci.org*

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