

Spring 2023

# Marie Mills Center, Inc.



We Build Abilities

## Returning to Normalcy

Like most everyone else, Marie Mills Center has had a wild ride over the last 3 years. While most of the world just “Closed” most of our services kept



right on going. Unlike other types of businesses, agencies that provide support and care for vulnerable individuals had to keep people healthy and safe. This posed many interesting dynamics to navigate. Providing those supports during covid really showed what a great group of people we have working here.

From figuring out how to get everyone’s needs met to thinking of creative ways to keep individuals engaged and involved in meaningful activities, our staff had to keep on their toes. All those things were done while we were in the middle of a staffing shortage. Many of our staff were working 60-80 hours per week, others were working at different sites to help out so

people could have a day off.

Now the world is heading back to whatever normal is going to be. We have been able to hire more staff (but we are still hiring). The Day Support Activity services have reopened and people are starting to resume their day activities. People who may not have worked during covid are starting back to work, are able to take their vacations, and utilize other community services again.



The pandemic brought about many changes in the way we all see things. So, when we talk about “Returning to Normalcy” we cannot just assume that things will be like they were. Hopefully

we can take the parts of the pandemic that made us all stronger and more resourceful, mix it with the good parts of how things used to be and come up with some great things to come.

## Staff Spotlight—Zac Dennis, Client Employment Services Coordinator

Zac Dennis has been with Marie Mills since 2016, starting out as a Smoker Crew Supervisor & occasionally drove the vans. In Dec 2017, he redirected his focus to being an Employment Coach. He has gained a lot of experience through the years and now chose to step up to be the coordinator for individuals choosing to explore Integrated Employment. He helps create new jobs, trains new coaches, coordinates, maintains and updates all files and paperwork while still support-



ing others as an Employment Coaches.

Zac is a family man and enjoys spending his off time with his daughter Anna and wife Amy. They enjoy baking together and taking trips to the beach. They enjoy gathering rocks and feeding wild birds. He loves passing time walking “Tug” around town or driving his canine buddy to different locations. He is also a Marine veteran having served four years for our country, including one deployment in Iraq.

## DSA Happenings

Our Day Support Activity program (DSA) felt like it was on a yoyo string for the last few years. Closing, reopening, closing again...Now reopening.

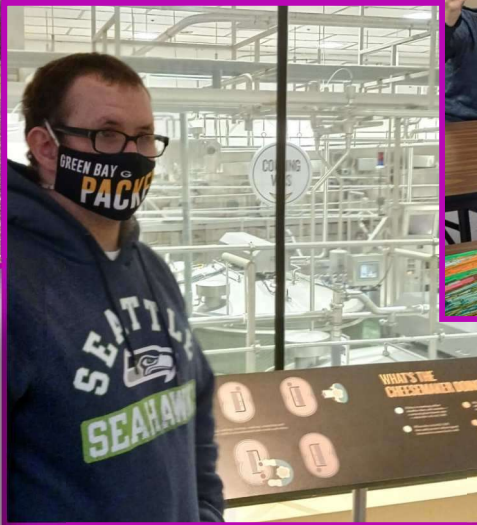
As this support service rebuilds, we are so happy to get to see the smiling faces of those we missed for so long. There are so many things going on it is hard to keep up with everything: outings to favorite places, visiting with friends, walks at the many great areas Tillamook County has to offer, as well as many other activities. We have missed old friends and are excited to meet new friends as this service continues to rebuild. Candy and Twinetta love to play Wii, espe-

cially Bowling and Dancing, while they are attending DSA.

Another favorite is outings to different locations in the community, such as the YMCA to join Zumba classes, play basketball, or walk the track.

Rugenia, Grant & Sandy especially love trips to the beach and walking on different trails around the county.

On days when people are attending DSA at our Front Street location, crafts are a favorite. Whatever it is people want to do, the DSA team tries to make those activities available, so people have a lot of choices.



## Marie Mills Foundation Update

The **Marie Mills Foundation** continues to work towards their goal of supporting future needs of Marie Mills Center. If you would like more information about the Marie Mills Foundation please **contact Cindy Green at 503-842-2539 x 1400 or visit [www.mariemillscenter.com](http://www.mariemillscenter.com)**. Also, by remembering the Foundation in your estate planning you can help assure the services provided to intellectually and developmentally disabled in Tillamook County continues. The Foundation and Marie Mills Center would like to express a heartfelt thank you to the following supporters: ***Vic Af-folter, Norman Anderson, ARC of Tillamook County in Honor of Ron Rush, Linda & Harry Backeberg, Bill Bennett in Memory of Dee Wester, Michael Benschmidt, Susan Boquist in Memory of Bub, Dolly & Steve Boquist, Katy Cain in Memory of Jim Snyder, Sue & Jeff Carr in Memory of Jeffery A. Carr Jr., Mel Faughender, Ruth & Rudy Fenk, Bryan Gibson, Judy & Hank Gollon in Memory of Lucy Krallik, Connie Green, Nick Hahn, Hampton Lumber Corporate, David & Cheryl Hantke, Ukiah Hawkins, Tanya Hobbs in Memory of Tom Thompson and for client Christmas, Phyllis Holmes in Honor of Ron Rush, Jennifer Hooley in Memory of Bub & Fay Simmons, Brad & Donna Hubbard, Hudson Insurance, Charles & Susan Hurliman, Wanda Hurli-***

***man, Pat & Pearl Ireton, Gladys Jacobsen in Honor of Ron Rush, Betsy Johnson in Hornor of Ron's retirement, Tim Josi, Sharon Kaszycki, Jason Kehr & Max Lehman, Pat Kehr in Memory of Tom Waud, Debbie Kelly, Kimmel's Hardware, Tara Kottre in Memory of Harold and Honor of Jackie Kottre, Bob & Laurie Lamb in Memory of Tom Waud, Sharon Lighthill in Memory of Mollie Nuppenau, Jim Martin, Mike Fitzsimonds Insurance, Moose Lodge No. 1260, Ed & Wilma Myers, Nelson Road Veterinary Clinic, Carolee North, Roberta Olson in Memory of Bub & Fay Simmons, Bob Ouzounian, Pastega Family Foundation, Bethel Phillips in Memory of Bub & Fay Simmons, Port Storage, Bill Pratt in Memory of James Pratt, R.H. Parker United Foundation, Carlo & Roger Raymond, Walt & Marilyn Riggerink, Rob Trust Realty, Dick & Leanne Spence, Carol & John Steele in Memory of Jill Carter, Joann Stillman in Memory of Dorothy Taksdal, Carol Thompson in Memory of Tom Thompson and Honor of Helen Benschmidt & Ron Rush, Tillamook Anglers, Tillamook Veterinary Hospital, Marla & Greg Tipton, Joan Trusty, Betty Waud in Memory of Tom Waud, Waud's Funeral Home, Bryan White & Julie Taksdal in Memory of Marcus Balmer, Matt & Shiela Zerngast***

## Foundation Donations Made Easy

If you are interested in donating to the Marie Mills Foundation we have made it really simple. If you have a PayPal account and a smart phone or tablet, this link will take you directly to our donation page and we will be notified of your kindness.



## A Visit From Santa

Again this year Santa came to visit as individuals drove or walked through and received a gift. We appreciate all the effort that our staff put into the event as well as the donations from the community that make this possible!



## Participant Spot Light—Gabe Welch

Gabriel Welch has been in the MMCI Supported Living program where he has lived on his own with support from Marie Mills Center staff since 2003. He loves living in his own apartment and visiting his local community. He is well known by many people because of his great personality.



Gabe has worked on the janitorial crew for Marie Mills Center since 2013. He recently started working for Tillamook Family Counseling Center part time, cleaning some of their offices.

Connie Chitwood has worked with Gabe for many years and she says “Gabe always has a positive attitude and is a joy to work with.”

He enjoys going on several vacations with Making Magic Tours over the years. This year he is going to go to the NW Pro Wrestling and OMSI trip in April, the Wildlife Safari trip in May and the Oregon Jamboree in August.

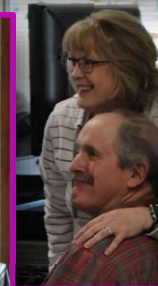
Gabe loves to sing and play his guitar in his free time.



## Ron's Retirement Party—After 43 Years

Our Executive Director, Ron Rush, retired after 43 years of dedication to Marie Mills Center and those we serve. Ron was given a fond farewell by many individuals affected over the years, staff former and current, Board Members past and present, friends and family all gathered to wish Ron the best on the next big adventure of his

life. Ron's dedication to ensuring the longevity of Marie Mills Center will live on for many years to come.



# Upcoming Events

**MMCI Picnic  
To Be Announced**

**December 2023  
Christmas Luncheon with  
Santa  
To Be Announced**



## **Marie Mills Center, Inc. Management Team**

Cindy Green,  
Executive Director

Holly Rico,  
Vocational Program  
Director

Barbara Armstrong,  
Residential Program  
Director

Rene Straessle,  
Office Manager

## **Marie Mills Center, Inc. Board of Directors**

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Patsy Weber  
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Linda Beyer  
Kim Lyon  
Valerie Hill  
Erin Skaar  
Jim Huffman  
Linda Walker  
Luke Stahle

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Ron Gienger  
Jerry Bristow  
Darryl Carter  
Linda Walker  
Cindy Green  
Bob Weitman

We invite you to tour Marie Mills Center.  
You will observe individuals at work and see our programs in action!  
Call Cindy Green at (503)842-2539 x 1400 to arrange a time  
Visit Us At:  
[www.mariemillscenter.com](http://www.mariemillscenter.com) or find us on Facebook