

Marie Mills Center, Inc.



Gary Mah, ORA Employee of the Year Award 2026

Each year, the Oregon Resource Association (ORA) presents awards for various achievements to individuals and businesses nominated by agencies and individuals in Oregon.

This year's winner of the Employee of the Year Award is Gary Mah.



The criteria for winning this award includes successful employment, community involvement and creating a better life for one's self.

Gary enjoys working at the **Pelican Brewing Company** (Tillamook Location) in the packing unit. He has learned a tremendous amount about site sanitation, safety and teamwork in his 11 ½ years with the company. His primary duties are to keep the packaging belt filled with boxes but his attention to detail has him busy cleaning up surrounding areas, continually

picking up garbage or recycling and removing it from the packaging area. Gary is such a valued employee and **loves his job so much that he will randomly check in with Sean Hayden** (pictured), his supervisor, who will help him clock on for a shift that he was not scheduled for showing great natural supports; allowing Gary to help his team and prove his dedication. He would love to spend every day there if he could and the team is always happy to have him. Gary is very enthusiastic about his work, and he will clean up the front area by the restaurant if he has completed his tasks in the packaging area. Gary's hands are never idle, he is continually looking for ways to help his team without being asked or prompted.

Gary has learned to track his own time which has helped his employers with correcting his punch card when needed.

Gary enjoys spending some of his money on others. **Every year, at Christmas time, he buys toys to donate to families in his local area.**

After work, Gary loves to walk around town supporting local thrift shops in his search for record albums for his collection. This also gives Gary an opportunity to clean up the local environment. He gets pleasure from helping local store fronts and neighborhood houses by stopping and cleaning debris on his way home. He always packs extra gloves and likes to remove garbage from flowerbeds and disposing of it in the proper receptacles. He loves to keep downtown looking nice!



Employment Services Program—P&L Heating & Sheet Metal

Marie Mills Center nominated P&L Heating & Sheet Metal for “Private Employer of the Year” through the ORA program. While they were not chosen as this year’s recipient, we wanted to let you all know why we felt they deserved to be nominated.

P&L has provided employment opportunities for individuals working in conjunction with Marie Mills Center since 2015. Matt Zerngast fosters an inclusive environment for individuals with disabilities and provides accommodation for support agencies to provide job coaching behind the scenes. When another business he and his wife owned was sold, he requested that the two individual’s with disabilities who worked there, apply for a position with P & L. One of those individuals, **Justin Sparks, fit perfectly with the team and was hired. Matt is proud to employ individuals with disabilities helping to show the community their value and worth in the workplace.**

Matt is unbiased and very adaptive to his employees’ needs, treating all equally and fairly, even with difficult conversations. He respects his employees and sets reachable expectations. Believing in honesty and second chances, he is a very forgiving boss who believes in redemption and moving forward. He allows mistakes and the learning involved with those mistakes to prove oneself in the workplace; clearly understanding what it takes to instill integrity, ethics and other life skills necessary to maintain employment. Matt has empowered Justin to take pride in his work, especially the task of washing all of the company vans.

P&L hosts very inclusive social events for em-

ployees. They hold a Christmas dinner party and invite everyone to participate. They also offer other employee outings, to which Justin’s support personnel are always included without hesitation. Even though Justin only sees office staff for a short period of time, they leave him little holiday surprises. **Inclusive-ness is embedded in their values and it shows!** Matt and his staff provide the natural supports necessary to make this job successful as integrated employment.

A special Thank you to Matt and the rest of the P&L team for providing such a positive and successful employment opportunity!



Marie Mills Foundation Update

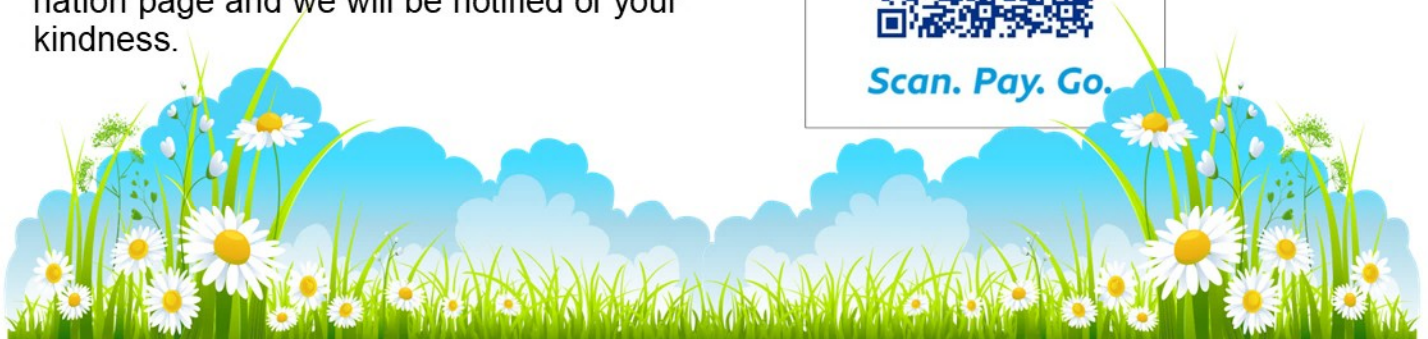
The **Marie Mills Foundation** diligently continues to build their funds to support the future needs of Marie Mills Center. If you would like more information about the Marie Mills Foundation please **contact Cindy Green at 503-842-2539 x 1400 or visit www.mariemillscenter.com**.

Also, by remembering the Foundation in your estate planning you can help assure the services provided to intellectually and developmentally disabled adults in Tillamook County continues. The Foundation and Marie Mills Center would like to express a heartfelt thank you to the following supporters: ***Albright & Kittell, Norma Anderson in honor of Carol Thompson and Memory of Tom Thompson, ARC of Tillamook County, Linda & Harry Backeberg in Memory of Jill Carter, Annie Benscheidt, Jack Benscheidt, James & Thanh Mai Tran Benscheidt, John & Megan Benscheidt, Kevin Benscheidt, Brian & Michele Bergeron, Bill Block Foundation, Boyd's Implement Service, LLC., David & Ingrid Brooks, Donald & Linnea Burden in Memory of Loretta Landolt, Barb Burdick in Memory of James W Burdick, Katy Cain in Memory of Jim Snyder, Sue & Jeff Carr in Memory of Jeffery Carr Jr., Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Tom & Annelle Connaughton, Steve & Linda Darling in Memory of Mollie Nuppenau, Mel Faughender, Ruth Fenk, Josephine Gayer in Honor of Charlotte Benscheidt, Bryan Gibson, Laurie Gienger, Drs. Constance & Randall Green, Nick Hahn,***

David & Cheryl Hantke, Tonya Hobbs in Memory of Tom Thompson, Linda Hofman, Phyllis Holmes, Brad & Donna Hubbard, Wanda Hurliman, Pat & Pearl Ireton, Brent & Laurie Jacobsen, Gladys Jacobsen in Memory of Beatrice Jacobsen & Eva Herzog, Kathy Jacobsen, JK Computer Consulting, Bob & Laurie Lamb in Honor of Ron Gienger, Ruth Lehman in Memory of Max Lehman, Jim Martin, Moose Lodge No. 1260, Nehalem Bay United Methodist Women, Carolee North, Richard & Pam Obrist, Bob Ouzounian, Percent Impact Foundation, R.H. Parker United Foundation, Carlo & Roger Raymond in Honor of Helen Benscheidt, Gloria Remington, Holly Rico in Memory of Joan Hurliman & Lloyd Schwend, Rob Trost Realty, Ron & Paulette Rush in Honor of Andy Dierking, Jack Salovon Jr., Sandlake Grange, SOAR 4, Inc., Pamela Spang in Memory of Cherrie Simmons, Jack Streeter, Damon Thomas, Carol Thompson in Memory of Tom Thompson, Tillamook Co. Transportation Dist., Tillamook Eagles Aerie #2144, Tillamook Estuary, Tillamook Rental Center, Linda Walker in Memory of Joan Trust, John Wassmer, Betty Waud, Waud's Funeral Home, Bob Weitman in Memory of Ron Gienger, Bob Wester in Memory of Dee Wester, Brian & Julie (Taksdal) White in Memory of James Taksdal, Dorothy Taksdal & Marcus A Balmer, Leigh Wilson in Honor of Helen Benscheidt, Mahlon & Pat Wirfs, Raymond & Joan Yost, Aaron Zimmerman.

Foundation Donations Made Easy

If you are interested in donating to the Marie Mills Foundation, you can scan the QR code to the right and donate via PayPal, this link will take you directly to our donation page and we will be notified of your kindness.



MMCI's Annual Christmas Party is Always A Hit!

This event kicks off our Christmas Season and always brings more smiles than we can count.

Thank you to everyone who donates money, time and service to make this day a very special one for those individuals who make what we do special!



Maria Benedict, Nestucca House Manager



Maria Benedict is an all-around great employee. She jumps in when things need to get done, even if that means covering for other managers at other houses. She advocates for individuals to lead fulfilling lives. Welcomes a variety of individuals "in", whether

it be a resident who needs assistance or a staff who needs to vent. When she needs to convey information back to her supervisors she does such with privacy and dignity in mind.

Maria is the House Manager at our Nestucca House group home. She oversees the needs and care of 5 individuals ranging in age from 19

to 82. It's almost like a blended family home with people who cook and clean for you. I am sure you can imagine with that many people and that broad of an age range, there are things that arise that need quick attention. Maria can deescalate tensions rather well and quickly. On the other side of the home life she manages to maintain all of the individual's records, bills, and funds while maintaining an open and friendly atmosphere for her staff to work together to maintain happiness in the home.

Maria herself has a husband and four daughters that keep her on her toes as well. While already having a "full house" she has been more than willing to help out others in her family that need a little hand up when times are tough. Maria is an amazing individual and we could all learn a lot from her!

Marie Mills Center Van Drivers Recognized

The Tillamook County Developmental Disability Advisory Council Board Chair, Eddie Kelly, presented Awards of Appreciation to MMCI's Van Drivers for all their efforts in getting everyone where they need to go on



a daily basis. These individuals also do daily checks on the vehicles to ensure that everyone is transported safely. Marie Mills Center felt this was a nice tribute to individuals who generally fly under the radar and don't often get special recognition.

New Vehicle Purchased with Grant and Donation Funding

Our agency has been in need of a vehicle that could be used for out of town appointments that would provide all wheel drive for winter driving and be roomy enough for group home residents to be able to access the community. After a lot of research and discussion, a new Kia Telluride was purchased with funding from Soar 4, the Marie Mills Foundation and Marie Mills Center. Pictured here is Jeff Shearer, Board Member of Soar 4, presenting Marie Mills Center with a

sizeable donation.

Thank you to these Foundations and the support of so many other individuals who give their gifts to help support the individuals we server.



Upcoming Activities

WATCH FOR FLIERS

MMCI Picnic
July 18th

Halloween Party
October 31st

**Christmas Luncheon
with Santa**
December 11th



Marie Mills Center, Inc. Management Team

Cindy Green,
Executive Director

Holly Rico,
Vocational Program
Director

Barbara Armstrong,
Residential Program
Director

Paula Remington,
Office Manager/
Bookkeeper

Marie Mills Center, Inc. Board of Directors

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Cindy Green

We invite you to tour Marie Mills Center.
You will observe different aspects of our programs in action!
Call Cindy Green at (503)842-2539 x 1400 to arrange a time

Visit Us At:

www.mariemillscenter.com and find us on Facebook

