



## MRSI receives another 3-year accreditation award from CARF

For the thirteenth consecutive time, Mountain Regional Services, Inc. has been awarded a three-year accreditation by CARF International. Surveyors spent three days last October reviewing every aspect of the organization including interviewing participants, direct support professionals, members of management, board members, guardians, and a variety of other stakeholders. While the survey was conducted virtually due to the ongoing pandemic, all involved felt the process was just as comprehensive and professional as previous surveys.

During the exit conference, surveyors noted MRSI was evaluated on 1,092 CARF standards and received just one recommendation and only a handful of consultative suggestions. CEO John Knopf was delighted with the outcome and gave credit to the many individuals who helped the organization prepare for the survey. "It's no surprise we received the highest award possible as every single employee remains committed to quality outcomes," said Knopf. "Special thanks must be given to the Director of Quality

Assurance and Accreditation, Melanie Mari, who orchestrated presurvey efforts and ensured the entire process went smoothly."

The official notification letter characterized the achievement as validation of MRSI's dedication and commitment to improving the quality of the lives of the persons served. It also noted that services, personnel and documentation clearly indicated an established pattern of conformance to CARF standards. The final report identified a litany of strengths observed during the survey including a long-tenured and professional board of directors and an executive leadership team that effectively addressed the challenges of the pandemic and funding reductions.

High marks were given for the organization's facilities which offer clean, neat and welcoming environments for participants and staff and where health and safety are an obvious priority. Surveyors noted MRSI enjoys an excellent reputation as a quality provider of services for individuals with developmental disabilities coupled with behavioral challenges and said stakeholders uniformly

praised the organization for its ability to work with individuals with whom other organizations may have struggled.

MRSI's three-year CARF accreditation will extend through November 30, 2024 and applies to the following programs and services: Community Employment Services - Employment Supports, Community Employment Services - Job Development, Community Housing, Community Integration, and Supported Living. Founded in 1966, CARF International is an independent, nonprofit organization focused on advancing quality of services for the best possible outcomes.

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(available on-line at [www.mrsi.org](http://www.mrsi.org))

## MRSI recognizes employee of the year, veteran staff



difficult undertaking due to the number of quality candidates, and this year was no exception. After careful consideration, the management team selected Claudia Echavarria as the 2021 recipient of the prestigious award.

Claudia, who was Employee of the Month earlier in the year, was recognized as a

standout employee who has worked successfully with some of the organization's most involved individuals during the 11-7 shift. Her caring demeanor, work ethic, and dedication to the partici-

pants she serves are just a few of the reasons she was selected.

The organization also recognized employees who amassed notable years of seniority. For 2021, CFO Cheyenne Wright was honored for 10 years of service, and DSP Supervisor Dantin Hart, Training Director Monyka Landry and DSP Supervisor Trixie Eastman were recognized for 15, 20 and 30 years of service respectively.

**W**hile traditional holiday celebrations were put on hold for yet another year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MRSI continued the tradition of recognizing the organization's top employee for the year as well as honoring individuals who reached milestone years of service. Choosing the Employee of the Year is always a



## Vocational accomplishments celebrated

**S**upported employment has long been an integral component of the many accredited services offered by MRSI. Under the direction of Employment Specialist/Supervisor Devian Kurete and those who assist him, participants interested in working have had great success gaining and maintaining community-based employment.

The tradition of recognizing those involved in the supported employment program continued this year with each individual receiving a beautiful plaque listing their employer as well as the length of time they've been employed.



## Vaccination clinics offered at MRSI

**T**hanks to the efforts of Uinta County Public Health and MRSI's Health Care Services Department, interested participants and staff members were able to conveniently access vaccinations for COVID-19 and influenza at the day habilitation center. Nurses from UCPH provided multiple opportunities for individuals to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as well as the booster when it became available. With the incredible transmissibility of the new Omicron variant, vaccinations continue to offer the best form of protection from the virus.

## Employee of the Month

**Claudia Echavarria** received Employee of the Month honors for July. Claudia launched her career with MRSI in September 2019 and serves as a direct support professional in the community housing program on the 11-7 shift. She was an overwhelming favorite for the honor based on her willingness to do virtually anything that is asked of her. She is a self-motivated individual and dedicated to ensuring participants get what they need and want.



**Patricia Cote** was recognized as Employee of the Month for October. Patricia works as a direct support professional in the community housing program and has been with the organization since February 2021. She received the prestigious award based on her attention to detail and extremely positive attitude. In addition, she is always willing to work additional shifts and is well respected and liked by participants.



**Mary Dunning** was named Employee of the Month for August. Mary joined MRSI in 2007 working for a number of years before relocating. She returned in February 2021 and worked as a direct support professional in the community housing program before transitioning to an assistant in health care services. She was recognized for her mature and professional demeanor, attention to detail, and unwavering support for each participant she serves.



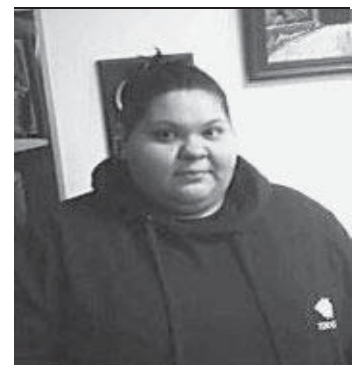
**Ed Coots** received the Employee of the Month award for November. Ed has worked for the company on numerous occasions beginning in 2008. His most recent employment began in June of this year, and he currently serves as a direct support professional in the adult day services program. He was recognized for his outstanding work with challenging individuals as well as his willingness to work extra shifts when needed.



**Kashton Butler** earned Employee of the Month honors for September. Kashton serves as a direct support professional in the adult day services program and joined the organization in February 2021. She received the award for her enthusiastic attitude and ability to motivate participants to venture into the community on a regular basis. She consistently monitors the cleanliness of group rooms and willingly orchestrates craft activities.



**Cia Delgado** was named Employee of the Month for December. Cia has worked for the organization several times, her most recent beginning in August 2021. She currently serves as a direct support professional in the adult day services program where she is known as a reliable and dedicated employee. She is also extremely accommodating which enables her to work successfully with all participants.



## Maximizing community outings during challenging times

Accessing community-based events during the second year of the pandemic proved extremely challenging, but with careful planning,



participants and staff members were able to safely enjoy a wide variety of enjoyable activities.

The Uinta County Fair was a welcome distraction to the dog days of summer with carnival rides, music and festival food. Evanston's Cowboy Days provided an opportunity to experience simulated bull riding, ride a quarter horse in the arena, and watch a professional rodeo. Participants also made the annual trip to Boondocks amusement park in Utah, listened to Paul Revere's Raiders at the DARE concert, and manned the MRSI float or marched in the Disability: IN employment month parade.



Late summer and fall were also punctuated with picnics and barbecues, numerous day trips, and outings to the Bear River State Park to observe the newly acquired white bison.

## DSP nominated for statewide award



exceptional services to MRSI participants, Shannon has proven herself a worthy candidate.

Shannon's nomination letter described her as an extremely organized individual who has a passion for everything she does. She strives for each participant to succeed and constantly advocates for them to be their own voice. It was also noted that she is an excellent mentor to new employees ensuring they are properly trained and always willing to provide valuable advice.

This year's award ceremony was held in Casper with the winner coming from local provider IReach2. Recognizing excellence in DSP service provision has become a major focus for WCSP members as well as provider organizations around the nation.

DSP supervisor Shannon Pierce was MRSI's nominee for the 2021 Wyoming Community Service Providers Direct Support Professional of the Year award. With nearly two decades of providing

## SAVF provides education on relationships

Representatives from Uinta County Sexual Assault and Family Violence Task Force recently presented information to MRSI participants on the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to develop better connections.

The activity focused on a number of topics including defining put-downs versus respect, anger versus communication, guilt versus responsibility, control versus equality, obsession versus a comfortable pace, and isolation versus trust. During the well attended seminar, the group discussed experiences from their own lives and conducted role playing scenarios providing insight on how to respond when someone's well-being may be in jeopardy.