



Celebrating Disability Awareness Month



photo courtesy of Uinta County Herald

Continuing a tradition that began decades ago, the City of Evanston officially recognized March as Disability Awareness Month during a proclamation event at City Hall. Mayor Kent Williams welcomed members of the disability community to the council chamber for the official ceremony. Individuals from provider organizations, Uinta County School District #1, Disability-IN, and others gathered with the mayor as he signed the proclamation.

The nationwide campaign seeks to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with disabilities in all facets of community life and highlighting barriers they still sometimes face in connecting to the communities in which they live. The proclamation challenged citizens to look beyond a person's particular disability and focus instead upon their diverse and varied contribution to the community with the goal of promoting positive perceptions of people with disabilities.

CARF survey scheduled

MRSI received notice from CARF International that an accreditation site survey will be conducted some time during September or October. Exact dates for the three-day survey should be forthcoming in August.

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, CARF will conduct a Digitally Enabled Site Survey or DESS using Microsoft Teams video conferencing. This will be the thirteenth survey for MRSI with all previous surveys resulting in a three-year accreditation which is the highest possible outcome.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Stepping back in time at historic Piedmont
- Riding Pinecreek on a powder day
- Experiencing Fossil Butte and Jurassic Quest

(available on-line at www.mrsi.org)

Stepping back in time at historic Piedmont

Road tripping to the ghost town of Piedmont, Wyoming has become a popular activity for participants and staff members during the summer months. Most travelers make a day of it starting with a stop at the TA Travel Center near Bridger Valley where they pick up lunch before heading to the iconic kilns and the historic town for a picnic and an afternoon of exploring the past.

Settled in 1867 to provide ties for the Union Pacific Railroad during construction of the transcontinental railroad, the wood and water refueling station had approximately twenty homes, a mercantile establishment and four saloons. A decade later, a number of kilns were constructed to produce charcoal for smelting operations in Utah.



While only a handful of dilapidated buildings remain, a visit to the remote site is a history lesson on the challenges faced by residents of the old west. Whether it's the lore of Butch Cassidy who frequented the area, learning about the pio-

neer ranch families who founded the town with names familiar to many, or the history of the railroad, a visit to Piedmont remains a favorite activity and one that keeps people coming back year after year.



Riding Pinecreek Resort

Participant David S. hasn't been snowboarding since he was a kid when he had the opportunity to explore the slopes of world-famous Snowbird at the top of Utah's Little Cottonwood Canyon. Ever since that exciting day he has harbored a desire to get back on a board and experience the freedom of sliding down a mountainside.

Thanks to direct support professional Devian Kurete's willingness to spend a workday giving a snowboard lesson and a committed savings effort by David, the dream came to fruition last February when the two ventured 60 miles north of Evanston to Pinecreek Resort. Blessed with a powder day and an abundance of gentle runs, the two enjoyed a safe and spectacular day in the great outdoors. For David, the trip was the culmination of months of planning and perhaps the start of a new ritual during the long Wyoming winters. Based on their smiles when they returned, they had a wonderful time Riding the Pine!

Employee of the Month

Wayne Dotson received Employee of the Month honors for January. Wayne joined the organization in May 2020 and serves as a direct support professional in the residential habilitation program. He was recognized by peers for his excellent work ethic, willingness to go wherever he is needed, and tendency to take limited time off. Wayne also received kudos for his ability to work effectively with challenging individuals.



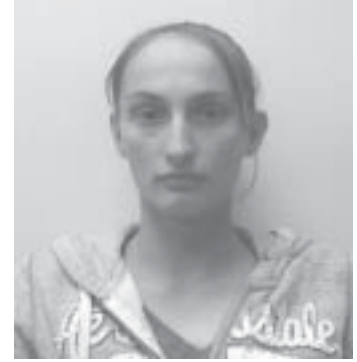
Francisco Alvarez was named Employee of the Month for February. Francisco serves as a direct support professional in the day habilitation program and has been with the company since May 2020. Francisco is an extremely affable individual who is totally committed to providing exceptional services. He carefully follows plans of care and always ensures participants have everything they need to be successful.



Ricky Carrigan earned the Employee of the Month award for March. Ricky's tenure with MRSI began in January 2020 working as a direct support professional in the residential habilitation program on the 11-7 shift. He is widely recognized as a hard worker who is very attentive and always willing to learn. He has worked successfully with a number of MRSI's most challenging participants and treats each individual with dignity and respect.



Michelle Bartels was recognized as Employee of the Month for April. Michelle launched her career with MRSI in March 2013 working as a direct support professional. Five years later she was promoted to a health care assistant where she provides an array of supports to participants in need of health care services. She is an extremely efficient employee who ensures participants get the care they need in a timely manner.



Jennifer Dunning received the Employee of the Month award for May. Jennifer joined the organization in January 2020 and works as a direct support professional in the residential habilitation department. Her attendance record is exceptional and she is willing to change positions when needed. She is a great mentor to new staff and always willing to take the time to share best practices with others.



Alexis Andrews was named Employee of the Month for June. Alexis serves as a direct support professional in the day habilitation program and has been with the company since July 2020. She is a self-starter who is willing to help anyone and go wherever she is needed. She is an extremely creative and motivated individual with a wonderful demeanor and excellent rapport with fellow staff members and participants.



Winning the war on COVID

by John Knopf, CEO

As we approach the midpoint of the summer season, life in general is beginning to feel a bit less stressful as the pandemic appears to have eased, at least in southwest Wyoming. Participants and staff have once again engaged in community activities utilizing safe protocols including masking and social distancing.

Unfortunately, emergence of the new Delta variant and a reluctance by a majority of Wyoming's residents to embrace vaccinations means another

destructive wave of the pandemic may soon be upon us. To date, MRSI has been extremely fortunate to not have lost any partici-

There is a path out of this scenario, one that involves little effort other than getting a vaccination, which is free of charge ...

pants or staff members to the virus. That could change if our region mirrors what is now occurring in the southern portion of our

country. It's hard to image a return to what we have all endured during the past year, but that very well could be reality if the situation worsens.

There is a path out of this scenario, one that involves little effort other than getting a vaccination, which is free of charge, and implementing simple preventive measures like masking. Sadly, the politicization of the pandemic has resulted in too many individuals ignoring the threat. I sincerely hope we can come together and win the war on COVID.

Visiting Fossil Butte National Monument and Jurassic Quest

Earlier this summer, participants and staff visited several unique venues to learn more about the fossil record. The first adventure consisted of a trip to one of the more remote desti-

nations in the west. Located about 90 miles from Evanston, Fossil Butte National Monument is renowned for holding some of the best preserved fossils found anywhere in the world. Known as America's Aquarium in Stone, the monument is home to fossilized fish, plants, reptiles, birds and mammals and provides visitors with an informative overview of ancient life in a subtropical landscape.

A second trip saw interested individuals travel to Salt Lake City to partake in the drive-thru version of Jurassic Quest. The interactive event enabled guests to navigate through a stunning array of life-like animatronic dinosaurs displayed in realistic scenes. The experience was enhanced by an informative digital audio tour, complete with roaring and moving dinosaurs, all from the comfort and safety of their vehicles.



Complimented by a visit to their favorite restaurant's drive-thru, participants greatly enjoyed some of the first out-of-town trips since the pandemic began and are looking forward to a return to normalcy and more great adventures.

