

were sequenced the same as her vocational duties, showing Marissa the proper order for which to complete tasks. At times, she will sign a question to Spitzer, who will respond with a signed answer. Marissa is working on vocalizing more, and though she doesn't yet form sentences, she can call to Spitzer if she is in another room. "When we started, we had a goal for Marissa to take care of a room and take care of it independently," says Spitzer. "She can do that now."

The daily strides Marissa is making in skills and confidence are apparent to her teachers and family. "Since Marissa has moved here, she has really blossomed," says Marissa's mom, Darena. "The care is wonderful, and Marissa loves her staff. There are opportunities to get out into the community—it is such a wonderful program."

Spitzer is at the vocational site to answer any and all questions, but her job is not to do the work for Marissa—who is passionate about doing her own work. Marissa asks if she can go to work, even on days when she is not scheduled to do so. "Marissa is eager to go out for work," says Spitzer. "She seems to really enjoy it. She loves to go places, meet people, and help serve."

While at Comfort Inn, Marissa often works with Executive Housekeeper Liz Kostecky. "The work Marissa does cuts down on our room time, and it is definitely a big help," says Kostecky. "She is very self-sufficient. She goes to work and does what she needs to."

At the end of their time together each Tuesday morning, Marissa waves or says 'bye' to Spitzer. Already the teen is preparing for her next vocational session ... and another opportunity to showcase her abilities, determination, and attention to detail.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The Power of Adaptive Art to Unlock Potential

I've visited my share of art galleries, standing with others in awe of the talent of one particular artist or another. But nothing compares to the sense of satisfaction I get when admiring the painting which now hangs in my office. It was created by an ACC student and given to me as a gift. Using paint, marbles and a shoebox to create this masterpiece, he gave me more than a beautiful gift of art. This individual kindly bestowed upon me a daily dose of inspiration.

Here at ACC, our students' medical, behavioral, sensory and/or intellectual disabilities don't dampen their enthusiasm for, or ability to, make an impact on the world around them. They embrace life with determination and hope, showing us each day that where there's a will, there's a way.

I have been serving as interim Chief Executive Officer of this life-changing organization since August 3. It's thrilling to see children, young adults and families affected by disabilities overcoming obstacles, learning skills for the future, and gaining greater independence.

The Anne Carlsen Center has always been close to my heart. For six years I served on the Center's Board of Trustees, most recently as vice chair. I previously oversaw the operations of the Center as a senior executive with Banner Health System, and its predecessor, Lutheran Health Systems, for 12 years—before ACC became independently owned in 2003. For the past eight years, I have served as the Founder and Managing Partner of Novus, LLC, a Fargo-based consulting company serving health-related and nonprofit organizations.

While my professional life has been greatly intertwined with the Anne Carlsen Center, so was much of my youth. As a teenager living in Jamestown, I spent many enjoyable hours volunteering at the Center, interacting with the students and becoming passionate about the mission and purpose of the organization.

Today, it's exciting to see the Center reach out, as it provides critical services and supports in a growing number of homes and communities across the state. While we develop and expand our Community Services, we continue to strengthen our Jamestown campus and the core of the organization.

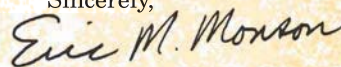
To empower and equip those we serve, we often utilize assistive technology and adaptive equipment. The Center, over time, has become a leader in implementing these critical tools, and in October, shared that expertise at the 28th Annual Closing the Gap Conference, an assistive technologies conference held in Minneapolis, Minn. Participants were eager to learn more about the "Accessing the Artist Within" project, created by Mark Coppin, ACC's Assistive Technology Director, which showcases how assistive technologies and adaptive equipment empower artists with disabilities.

"Accessing the Artist Within" was featured during the conference reception, and involved a demonstration in which six artists each wrapped a foam pattern around a drum, which was connected to a frame attached to his/her wheelchair. As paint was fed onto the roller, each artist moved along an enormous canvas, creating a wonderful, colorful work of art.

Roughly 500 people watched in awe, clapping enthusiastically. It was educational and fun, as participants learned about tools and techniques that open up a world of possibilities for artists with disabilities ... where the only limitation ... is one's imagination.

As the Anne Carlsen Center finds ways to help artists showcase their creativity, and equips many others to reach their full potential, we rely on your support. The thoughtfulness and generosity of friends like you is a special blessing this Christmas. Thank you for making a lifetime difference for the deserving individuals we serve.

Sincerely,



Eric Monson

Anne Carlsen Center Interim CEO

