



Reaching Dreams

A Monarch publication for the community,
people we support, and their families



FAMILIES *are* FOREVER

Residents of a Monarch
home create a sense of
belonging, friendship
and family

PAGE 12

STRAIGHT FROM **PEGGY**



Monarch is constantly growing and changing to meet the needs of the people we support statewide. In this issue of *Reaching Dreams*, you'll find updates on how we are continuing to lead the way by bringing more new service initiatives to life across North Carolina.

In May we observe Mental Health Month. I am proud of the efforts

Monarch is making to help people get the support they need. We will soon operate four new facility-based crisis programs, which will provide an alternative to sometimes-lengthy Emergency Department (ED) visits. See the story on Page 8. When someone goes to an ED, if the initial assessment calls for a hospital bed, this can take days to arrange. However, a facility-based crisis program offers immediate treatment. Although some people may require more intensive treatment, more than 70 percent of those served in a facility-based crisis program will stay approximately four days and then follow up with a community provider. Monarch is quite proud to be establishing the first child/adolescent facility-based crisis program in the state.

As of Jan. 1, Monarch also began providing Tenancy Support Teams in 10 counties. Our teams support people with mental illness who need help with housing issues, living skills and much more. Offered to individuals in the Transition to Community Living Initiative, these rehabilitation services help them connect with the community and live as independently as possible. Read more about how our Tenancy Support Teams are making a difference on Page 5.

ON THE COVER: *Meet the gentlemen of Lake Monroe, one of the homes Monarch operates in Union County. The residents (counterclockwise) Jimmy Wiesendanger, Lynn Gillis, Billy Williams, Rodney Nance, Joey Morgan and Wayne Lane have created a home and become like family. See story on Page 12.*

In another ambitious initiative, Monarch is working to become a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC), which would allow us to offer a more comprehensive array of services and improved delivery across the agency. With a grant from the federal government, North Carolina is creating a plan detailing the best way to implement this concept and Monarch successfully met the initial review criteria and has been identified to move forward in the process. See Page 7. Monarch staff members are working hard to assess our services and make adjustments so that when the state is ready, we will be ready!

Our General Assembly convened in April to conduct several weeks of business and to modify the state 2016-17 budget. One area that many families, people supported and staff are watching carefully is the development of a brand new waiver, called an 1115 waiver. This is a demonstration type of waiver, and has been developed to allow more flexibility for people in terms of issues such as individual budgets, new service definitions, loss of some current services, and changes in funding. To read more about this effort, visit <http://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2015/09/18/14305/>.

Finally, as a provider of integrated care (medical care and psychiatric care managed together), Monarch is pursuing national accreditation through The Joint Commission. Preparing will be a yearlong process, with a final visit next February. Accreditation will enhance our industry reputation, help us provide the highest level of care and position us to attract the most talented employees. Although this is a complex undertaking, we will achieve this prestigious accreditation together!

As always, feel free to call or email me at peggy.terhune@monarchnc.org. I am always interested in hearing from families and our communities.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Peggy S. Terhune". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Peggy S. Terhune, Ph.D.
Monarch President/CEO

Reaching Dreams is the official Monarch publication for the community, people we support, and their families.

Our Mission

We are committed to supporting, educating, and empowering people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, mental illness, and substance abuse challenges to choose and achieve what is important to them.

Our Vision

We will lead the way in the state to creatively support people with disabilities in growing toward their potential, reaching their dreams, and making their own informed choices about where they live, learn, work, play, and worship. Through partnerships and relationships with our community, we will offer a variety of innovative quality services and supports and will promote advocacy, awareness, education, training, employment, and residential opportunities.

A MAN WHO **BELIEVES** IN MIRACLES

William Arnold once lived in despair, but finds hope in recovery and dream to become a personal trainer

William “Blu” Arnold believes in miracles. He talks about them often. Born with spina bifida, Arnold has endured 32 serious surgeries since birth – more than the number of candles on his last birthday cake.

In addition to living with chronic pain, the 27-year-old lives with bipolar disorder, which once put him in a dark place. The death of his beloved grandfather in 2009 sent Arnold into isolation and even more darkness.

“My grandfather was the only man I could talk to who didn’t yell or demean me,” recalled Arnold. “I was depressed, felt hopeless and began thinking about suicide.”

Unable to find the right treatment, his feelings of despair worsened. One night he took some pills that could have killed him. After a week of hospitalization, his sister found Monarch in Gastonia and insisted he go.

Today, Arnold participates in Monarch’s outpatient therapy and medication management. He also receives Peer Support Services, which he said has made the biggest difference.

Five days a week, Arnold meets with Anthony Sumpter, a certified peer support specialist at Monarch. Sumpter picks him up from a local psychosocial rehabilitation (PSR) program Arnold now also attends. The two spend time talking, sharing their faith, having lunch or Arnold’s favorite, working out at a local gym – The Rock Fitness in Lincolnton.

The Rock is where Arnold and Sumpter spend most of their time. The gym’s tagline is an excerpt from Psalms 18:2, “The Lord is my rock.” It is a welcoming environment that emanates positivity and healthy living. Manager and Fitness Trainer Aric Torrence greets Arnold with a radiant smile and demeanor to match. The Rock is a place to build the body and the spirit, and finding it has been another one of those small miracles that Arnold talks about.



When Arnold told Sumpter he wanted to become a personal trainer, Sumpter didn’t degrade him, like others have done. He even found the perfect fitness center so Arnold could begin working out. Sumpter wants to encourage Arnold to pursue his dream.

As a peer support specialist, Sumpter has overcome his own significant life-altering experience. He struggled with a drug addiction, and has been in recovery for nearly 30 years. He

works to help others with mental illness, substance use and other life-affecting challenges. So he knows firsthand the importance of positive influence. Sumpter said a place like The Rock gives Arnold a stable routine, exposure to optimistic people, a healthier lifestyle and a way to relieve stress. Sumpter has helped to give Arnold something he hasn’t had in a long time – hope. But he takes no credit.

“What I have, I have received from others,” Sumpter explained. “Now, I share with those who need me. That is the reciprocity that helps transform lives. I’ve seen a difference in Blu. I am extremely proud of all that he has accomplished.”

Arnold said his life is, indeed, changing for the better. He continues to work out and has encouraged another participant of the PSR to join him. Arnold is coaching the young man a bit and hopes he can serve as a motivator.

Arnold said he wants to continue helping others. After all he has endured, his positive outlook and plan for the future are nothing short of miraculous. ●

By Natasha A. Suber, Vice President, Marketing and Communications

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Lisa Rosy enjoys using the iPad access now available in the computer lab at Monarch's Creative Arts and Community Center in Southern Pines.

MONARCH DAY PROGRAM RECEIVES GRANT FOR computer and teaching lab



Russell Zumwalt (left) and David Kling work on new computers during a recent class in the teaching lab made possible with generous support from several benefactors.

Monarch's Creative Arts and Community Center

(MCACC) in Southern Pines is now home to a computer and technology teaching lab. The lab features touch screen desktop computers, laptop computers, iPads, and a smart board and provides program participants with access to skill-building programs and internet-based opportunities for learning.

"People we support are able to use technology to explore areas of personal interest to them," said Rahnelle Rosado, program manager at MCACC. "The lab also enhances our other programming as well. With computer and iPad access,

participants can research recipes for our cooking classes or learn new techniques for our pottery classes."

Time in the computer lab is part of the weekly schedule of activities available to MCACC program participants. A class on using social media is also part of the schedule, and has fostered new connections between the people we support and their families and friends.

Generous support for the computer lab was provided by individual donors, Walmart in Aberdeen, and the John W. Roffe and Marjorie A. Roffe Endowment (for Moore County), a component fund of the North Carolina Community Foundation. ●

Monarch President and CEO appointed to second term on the N.C. Commission on Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services



Monarch's President and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Peggy Terhune has been appointed to a second consecutive term on the North Carolina Commission on Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services. Her term will expire on June 30, 2018.

The Commission of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services was created in 1973 as part of the Executive Organization Act. Its mission is to promote excellence in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programs for persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance use disorders in North Carolina. The Commission has the authority to adopt, amend and repeal rules to be used in the implementation of state and local mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse service programs.

Terhune has been CEO of Monarch and The Arc of Stanly County, Inc. since June 1995. Under her leadership, Monarch has moved toward evidence-based and best practice in all areas, successfully added services, enhanced community integration, improved customer satisfaction, reduced turnover and successfully developed programs to serve consumers with multiple disabilities.

She has worked with and advocated for people with disabilities for more than 40 years. She serves on multiple state and national boards, and is recognized for her innovative, clinically-sound progressive practices. ●

Retired Cardinal Innovations CEO Pamela Shipman joins Monarch as Executive Vice President and Chief Innovation and Strategy Officer



Pamela Shipman, retired chief executive officer at Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions, the state's largest Managed Care Organization, joined Monarch's

executive leadership team in February 2016. As Monarch's Executive Vice President and Chief Innovation and Strategy Officer, Shipman is responsible for the development, execution and sustainability of Monarch's strategic initiatives and will ensure any new planned initiatives, best practices, guidelines and protocols are consistent with Monarch's overall strategic direction.

A highly accomplished executive, Shipman was responsible for the re-engineering of Cardinal Innovations to become a highly successful public managed care organization which became the standard for North Carolina's Medicaid Reform for special populations.

Shipman effectively managed growth of Cardinal Innovations from five to 16 counties, resulting in an increase in general population from 750,000 to 2.4 million and more than doubling Medicaid covered lives from 125,000 to 350,000. During her tenure, revenue quadrupled from \$166 million in 2011 to \$650 million in 2015, even while the organization maintained operational and financial stability.

Throughout her professional career, she has been engaged in community healthcare services for people who depend on the public system for their care. Shipman led the initiative to design an at-risk Medicaid managed care waiver in partnership with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. She has served as a principle figure in the Medicaid healthcare debate in North Carolina, working with provider groups, legislators, state officials, advocacy organizations and others to develop a unique North Carolina-based Medicaid solution. ●



Monarch Trailblazers again support NAMIWalks NC and RAISE \$7,500

Pictured above: Monarch participants from NAMIWalks 2015 are all smiles. Monarch staff, people supported, families and friends join the NAMI North Carolina effort to show support, raise awareness and battle stigma associated with mental illness. This year Monarch served as Business Sponsor for the NAMIWalks NC 2016 event.

On Saturday, May 7, approximately 100 dedicated Monarch staff members and people supported, along with family members and friends – all decked out in bright orange – walked a two-mile course as part of this year’s NAMIWalks NC event held in Raleigh.

Monarch’s team, the Monarch Trailblazers, set a goal of \$7,500 of an overall goal of \$150,000 to support the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) North Carolina in its mission to foster awareness, education and advocacy for mental health issues.

“Monarch values the important work of NAMI North Carolina in educating, advocating and supporting people with mental illness and their families and friends,” said Monarch President/CEO Dr. Peggy Terhune. “I’m excited that Monarch, people we support, and staff can demonstrate our support for such an important initiative.”

In celebration of May as Mental Health Month, Monarch was the business sponsor and Monarch President/CEO Dr. Peggy Terhune served as Business Team Captain for NAMIWalks NC. Monarch also hosted several public mental health screenings and hosted showings of Healing Voices, a documentary that shares the real-life stories of people with mental illness and how they are working to live meaningful lives. The events were free to the public as a way to further educate the community about the importance of mental health. ●

Cone Health Foundation and Monarch tackle co-occurring disorders in Greensboro

Three-year grant totaling \$194,500 will help to identify treatment for people with co-occurring disorders

In Guilford County, approximately 33,000 individuals live with co-occurring disorders, which can include mental illness and substance use disorders. Further research indicates that as many as 50 percent of people with a severe mental illness also live with a co-occurring substance use disorder.

In an effort to identify a solution and to help people recover and live well, Monarch has received a three-year, \$194,500 grant from Cone Health Foundation in Greensboro to enhance treatment for individuals with co-occurring disorders. The Cone Health Foundation’s mission is to invest in the development and support of activities, programs and organizations that measurably improve the health of people in the Greensboro area.

The grant is part of the Co-Occurring Disorders Treatment Initiative developed by Cone Health Foundation to bring together leading community providers who will assess evidence-based practice models for treating co-occurring disorders and implement those models in greater Greensboro. Members of the initiative, including Monarch, will work collaboratively with the Foundation to increase community-wide capacity to treat co-occurring disorders.

For individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, simultaneous treatment provides continuity in care and supports sobriety, symptom management and increasing independence as recovery progresses and quality of life is enhanced. ●

May is Mental Health Month: Mental illnesses are common and treatable, and help is available.
Call us at **(866) 272-7826** or visit our web site
www.MonarchNC.org



Tenancy Support Teams help people supported gain independence

Monarch's new Tenancy Support Team program, implemented in January 2016, provides services to individuals participating in the Transition to Community Living Initiative (TCLI), helping them live as independently as possible.

The Tenancy Support Team is a rehabilitation effort to increase and restore an individual's ability to live successfully in the community by maintaining support, helping manage their illness and reestablishing community roles. Monarch currently offers Tenancy Support in 10 counties.

"This service provides individual support needed to help someone live independently," explained Vice President of Operations Christy Shaver, who oversees Residential, Employment and Community for Monarch's west region division. "Many of the individuals receiving this service have lived in adult care homes and in assisted living facilities for a large part of their lives. That lifestyle decreases opportunities to gain and keep the skills necessary to live independently, and with this service we are able to break down these barriers and help people find their abilities and, most importantly, their independence."

Three Monarch teams, with four members each, work to assist individuals with such tasks as obtaining additional funding sources for certain needs, budgeting, or identifying transportation options within the community. Each team can serve up to 48 individuals.

"In the short time Tenancy Support has been running, we have seen a lot of growth with the individuals our teams are supporting," said Team Leader Alyssa Soderlund. "People we support are excited to be in their own homes and feel empowered to live the life they want, and the Tenancy Support Team is invigorated to work alongside them and find teachable moments to help the people we support to achieve their dreams."

"The program will help people we support to optimize their capabilities," added Joey McKinney Jr., program director. "It is exciting to see what people are capable of when given a chance, and when they have supports in place. This is going to give people a much-improved sense of worth and confidence in their lives." ●

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Monarch works toward national Joint Commission accreditation

Monarch is seeking accreditation from the Joint Commission, a leading independent agency known for setting quality standards in health care across the United States.

By obtaining this national accreditation from the Joint Commission, Monarch will position itself as a recognized mental health and human services leader.

To achieve Joint Commission accreditation, Monarch must have certain Elements of Performance (EPs) in place for all of its sites and services. The organization has formed nine internal work teams, charged with reviewing specific procedures to determine what steps need to be taken to ensure that Monarch is compliant with each EP. Monarch will be eligible for its first on-site review after Feb. 1, 2017.

Some changes to systems, policies and processes will be necessary to meet Joint Commission standards, and employees across Monarch will participate in the readiness process.

“We’re putting in many hours of work, but this will make us better and will be worth it in the end,” said Director of Quality Management Caroline Fisher. “Everyone across Monarch can be proud, because we are all going to be part of achieving one of the most recognized honors in the health care industry.”

Among the benefits of Joint Commission accreditation are enhanced industry reputation, high safety standards, strong community confidence, a competitive edge in the marketplace, improved risk management, enhanced staff education and attraction of talented employees.

Founded in 1951, the non-profit Joint Commission evaluates and accredits nearly 21,000 U.S. health care organizations. It is the nation’s oldest and largest standard setting and accrediting body in health care.

Joint Commission accreditation can be earned by many types of health care organizations, including hospitals, doctor’s offices, nursing homes, office-based surgery centers, behavioral health treatment facilities and providers of home care services.

Monarch will continue to maintain national Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) accreditation. More information about the Joint Commission is available at www.JointCommission.org. ●



Stay informed about Monarch's services, news and updates by visiting

www.MonarchNC.org



JOYful Monarch Moments. 1- The ladies of one of Monarch's homes in Albemarle got dressed up and danced the night away during JOYPROM held last month in Concord. 2- Monarch hosted a western-themed Fun Day for people supported, staff and families at Moratoc Park in Williamston, N.C. and most dressed for the occasion. 3- Nearly a dozen University of Missouri students spent their spring break volunteering and spending time with the people we support at Monarch's Health Drive day program in New Bern.

Monarch pursues status as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

As Monarch positions itself as an industry leader in mental health care, the organization is pursuing status as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) in an effort to further provide services to people when they need it most.

Monarch is working to become a provider of comprehensive mental health and substance use services as defined by the federal government in accordance with legislation designed to improve access to treatment for all Americans.

In March of 2014, Congress passed the Protecting Access to Medicare Act, which included a demonstration program based on the Excellence in Mental Health Act. North Carolina is one of 24 states awarded a planning grant to develop and submit a CCBHC plan consistent with federal requirements. This October, eight of those states will be chosen to carry out their projects.

Monarch is assisting as North Carolina develops its plan for submission, as well as preparing internally to meet CCBHC standards, said Monarch's Vice President of Performance Management Kara Froberg. After completing an initial readiness assessment and letter of intent, Monarch successfully met the initial review criteria and has been identified to move forward in the process to become a CCBHC.

The goal of the federal legislation is to achieve a more seamless transition for patients across the full spectrum of services, which has been part of Monarch's commitment since the agency began providing behavioral health services, Froberg said.

"Becoming a CCBHC would help us provide a comprehensive array of services, improve access to care for people who need it, and strengthen Monarch's position as an advanced provider and a relevant leader in the industry," Froberg said.

Overall, the Excellence in Mental Health Act will increase Americans' access to community mental health and substance use treatment while improving Medicaid reimbursement for these services. When fully implemented, the Excellence Act will infuse more than \$1 billion into the behavioral health system, making it the biggest federal investment in mental health and addiction services in generations.

"As we work across Monarch to develop a CCBHC model consistent with the federal requirements, we continue the same mission we have always had," Froberg said. "We want to pave the way in offering ease of access and excellence in service to the people who need us." ●



An Alternative Solution

Monarch partners with MCOs to operate four Facility Based Crisis programs throughout the state as effective alternatives to emergency departments

By Yesenia E. Mueller, Community Liaison at Monarch

In recent years, North Carolina has seen high emergency department (ED) admissions related to behavioral health issues, and a recent analysis by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) shows that wait times in EDs and crisis centers are rising.

To provide a solution for individuals and families who are experiencing mental health or substance use crises and to begin to reduce the burden placed on hospital emergency departments to treat these disorders, Monarch is partnering with four managed care organizations in North Carolina to open and operate four Facility Based Crisis (FBC) programs. FBCs are effective alternatives to EDs and provide 24-hour crisis, assessment and support services for individuals with acute mental illness or substance use disorders who are in need of short-term stabilization.

These FBCs align with the goal of the North Carolina Crisis Solutions Initiative to help improve access to mental health crisis services in communities across the state. This initiative also is aimed at assisting the NC DHHS – Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) in reducing unnecessary emergency department visits for mental health services that could be provided elsewhere.



Insets: Monarch helped to celebrate the groundbreaking for the Highland Avenue Center, a behavioral health and wellness center in Winston-Salem. The event was hosted by CenterPoint Human Services. Monarch will operate the new center's FBC and the behavioral health urgent care.

Monarch is building North Carolina's very first FBC program for children and adolescents in partnership with Cardinal Innovations. A proposed rendering (above) of the facility being built in Charlotte.

Monarch's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Behavioral Health Daniel Brown said, "These partnerships are an example of the way a community can work together to provide the necessary care for individuals with very complex needs."

Since 2011, Monarch has operated a FBC program in Lumberton, serving adults in the Eastpointe managed care region. This FBC is currently undergoing extensive renovations, and will expand from an 11-bed unit to accommodate five additional beds.

In Winston-Salem, CenterPoint Human Services is managing the construction of a brand new facility – the Highland Avenue Center. This health care complex will include the FBC program, a behavioral health urgent care, and a wellness center for other preventative and medical services will be offered by two large healthcare providers. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in April and the center is scheduled to open in January 2017. The facility is being constructed where longtime Forsyth Industrial Systems (FIS) day program, operated by Monarch, once stood (see story on Page 10).

Because the demand for mental health crisis services is statewide, no county is immune. In the eastern portion of the state, Alliance Behavioral Healthcare has chosen Monarch to operate a new FBC program in Wake County. The search is currently under way to identify the ideal location for this service within the Raleigh area.

Monarch will also have the privilege to operate North Carolina's very first FBC program for children and adolescents. In partnership with Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, the 16-bed facility in Charlotte will serve children and adolescents ages 6-17 with a mental illness, intellectual or developmental disability and/or substance use disorder who are experiencing a crisis. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) estimates that one in five children ages 13-18 will experience a serious mental illness.

The Charlotte FBC program will provide short-term assessment, stabilization and therapeutic interventions in an effort to prevent acute hospitalizations. The new building is estimated to be completed by December 2016. ●

MONARCH'S Studio 651

*features new, more community inclusive day program
for adults with disabilities*

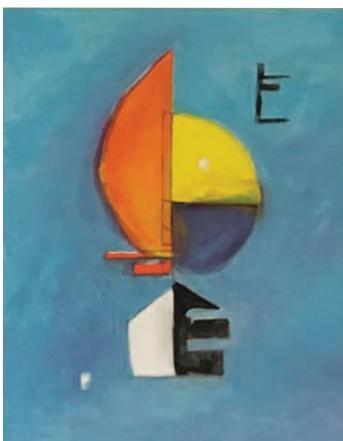
Studio 651 is bustling on this particular morning. Traci Smithson is painting a bird house, and Ghree Lockard is dabbing the finishing touches on a colorful butterfly painting. Down the hall, popular instructor Nelson Roberts, a developmental specialist, is animated as he shares current events with a class full of students.

Former Forsyth Industrial Systems (FIS) relocates to accommodate enhanced programming, transition

Whether it's music, photography, painting, crafts, dance, cooking, exercise, educational opportunities or another area of interest, this Monarch location – named after its address at 651 North Highland Avenue in Winston-Salem – offers an array of activities as a successful bridge between the community and the people Monarch supports.

Below: After 40 years, the building that housed FIS was demolished to make way for the Highland Avenue Center, an integrated, community behavioral health and wellness facility (see Page 8) operated by CenterPoint Human Services. Monarch's new day program - Studio 651 - is located directly across the street from the former FIS. Engaging participants in art, photography, computer animation and current events is part of the new experience at Studio 651.

Formerly known as Forsyth Industrial Systems (FIS), Studio 651 is the result of a historic transition. After serving the community since 1976, the FIS program has moved away from the familiar sheltered workshop model to a new, more community inclusive service plan which is being carried out in four locations in Forsyth County. Along with Studio 651, other sites are Reynolda Manor, Salisbury Ridge and the new Reynolda Village gift shop, which opened in May. New programming emphasizes volunteerism, creative and cultural arts, and identifying jobs for people with disabilities.





Above (left to right): Traci Smithson and Ghree Lockard enjoy a morning of painting at the new Studio 651 day program, formerly known as Forsyth Industrial Systems (FIS). Monarch has moved away from the sheltered workshop model to a new, more community inclusive service plan that now includes four locations in Forsyth.

Even before a controversy over people with disabilities earning less than minimum wage prompted a national review of sheltered workshop programs and resulted in legislation in some states, Monarch had already developed a plan to eliminate subminimum wage contracts and move toward alternative community-based programs such as Studio 651, according to Monarch Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Jim Kelley. Monarch is partnering with CenterPoint Human Services, one of North Carolina's managed care organizations, on the transition project.

"This transition places us in a better position to identify and offer new and engaging programs for the people we support," Kelley said. "They can become active and engaged in the community as they participate in cultural and educational activities, volunteer and receive support in finding meaningful, competitive employment."

In developing the new programming, Monarch sought input from people supported, their families, caregivers and community partners.

Although her daughter has been happy at FIS for 19 years and her family was pleased with the program as it was, Tamra Smithson hopes the change will elevate community awareness.

"Lots of people who do not have family who are developmentally disabled do not know about FIS and Monarch," Smithson said. "If you don't 'live in our world,' you are not aware."

Having been in place less than six months, the program is still a work in progress but is already offering expanded opportunities, said Julia Augustoni, a Monarch administrator who has overseen the project.

"Our plan is to get into the community and raise our profile to show what the people we serve are able to offer in the community," Augustoni said. "Making a significant programming change like this is a challenge, but it is the right thing to do. There are many, many things in this field that we are continuing to learn, and that helps us determine how we provide the best services. We have evolved a lot over the years, especially in terms of our place in the community and the expectations for the services we provide."

Instructors such as musician Nelson Roberts come in from the community to teach and engage, resulting in an environment of open community integration, Augustoni explained. Roberts leads classes at Studio 651 in music, current events and photography. Plans at the site also include opening space to the community for classes, art galleries and studios for local artists to rent.

"It is all about the people we are supporting," Augustoni said. "In this business, we experience lots of change, all the time, but in the end it is all about helping the people we support to be all they can be."

Tamra Smithson agrees: "I like the assurance that Traci is safe and being treated with respect and stays busy. As parents, we can always tell when our loved ones are happy, feeling good about themselves and appreciated for their unique skills." ●

By Jan Boone, staff writer at Monarch

FAMILIES *are* FOREVER

A Monarch group residence in Union County fosters feelings of belonging, friendship and family for residents



Clockwise: Rodney Nance, Wayne Lane, Joey Morgan, Jimmy Wiesendanger, Lynn Gillis and Billy Williams have become like brothers to foster a family environment at the Lake Monroe home. This framed portrait of the gentlemen is prominently displayed and can be seen when visitors enter their house.

If you stick around after dinner at Monarch's Lake Monroe home in Union County, Rodney Nance just might sing you a song. Nance, a resident at Lake Monroe, has three guitars stored carefully in his room. He loves music and is happy to share it.

As the dinner dishes are put away and Nance plays, evening settles in and Lake Monroe takes on the hum of home. The ranch-style home managed by Monarch is like any other you've seen in any quaint American neighborhood. The yard is tidy and the inside neat and organized. Pictures of smiling faces and perfectly selected home décor adorn the walls throughout the house. The only difference between this house and others is the residents aren't related. They didn't even know each other before moving in.

Billy Williams, Joey Morgan, Wayne Lane, Lynn Gillis, Jimmy Wiesendanger and Nance call Lake Monroe home. Initially these gentlemen were strangers to each other but, over time, they have become like a second family – and they wouldn't have it any other way.

"They are a great bunch of guys," said Deborah Tillman, program manager at Lake Monroe, who admits they sometime even disagree like brothers. "It would not be the home it is without each of them."

It does not take long to figure out the things these men have in common – they love pizza and wings – and the interests that make them unique. While Nance is into music, Wayne Lane loves NASCAR.

"I've been to thirteen races and I've met Richard Petty and Bill Elliott," Lane said through a wide smile.

There are basketball and football fans among the group, and Billy Williams is the reigning Wii bowling champion.

"Lake Monroe is a perfect example of how important Monarch's residential programs are," said Jim Kelley, executive vice president and chief operating officer for Residential, Community and Employment. "Our goal is to give the people we support a strong, supportive home base from which to live their lives."

Between work at Union Diversified Industries, school at South Piedmont Community College (SPCC), church, volunteer initiatives and community activities, the gentlemen keep pretty busy schedules and have routines like everyone else.



Their Tuesday and Thursday afternoon Compass Education classes are part of the Adult Basic Skills program at SPCC. Compass Education uses the academic subjects of reading, writing and math to teach life skills to people with disabilities. Class activities may include using money values to learn math skills or reading using adaptive books, which make popular titles like "The Hunger Games" and classics like "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" accessible to all. Joey Morgan is in a class that incorporates technology by teaching lessons and activities on computers.



Please visit the Monarch YouTube channel to get a sneak peek at Rodney's performance.

The group from Lake Monroe is also very well-traveled.

"We try to take a beach trip at least once a year," said Deborah Tillman, "They love Myrtle Beach."

The group also visited Colonial Williamsburg a few years ago. That weeklong trip included visits to Busch Gardens and Water Country USA, along with a side trip to Norfolk, where they saw a replica of a pirate ship come in to dock. Other destinations have included Carowinds, Wet & Wild Emerald Point and the North Carolina mountains.

Often, the trips are discussed at their regular Wednesday night house meetings. While these meetings are a time when the group can discuss what is going on in the house and any concerns they may have, conversation often turns to where they might like to go next and what to do.

The trips are a high point in the year, as is the annual Joy Prom, a full-scale prom for individuals with disabilities. The Lake Monroe residents enjoy finding just the right tuxedo for an evening of dancing and fun. They want to look sharp.

What might matter most, however, is that they are doing all of these things together.

"These gentlemen have been through a lot, and have learned a lot. They respect each other, get along, and they love being at Lake Monroe," said Tillman.

Lake Monroe provides each of the men who live there with a safe, secure, supportive home where they can grow, learn and explore their interests. From this place, they remain connected to their families and make new friends through church and individual activities.

And as Billy, Joey, Wayne, Lynn, Jimmy and Rodney leave the house each day on their way to work or school or another adventure, they pass a small plaque placed right near the front door. It reminds the six men who call Lake Monroe home that "Families are forever." ●

By Laurie Weaver, Senior Director of Philanthropy at Monarch



Mr. Laverne Schultz, Rockingham

As the former owner of Sandhills Office Systems, Laverne Schultz has been a longtime business partner of Monarch, supporting the organization's administrative operations. As the father of a son with developmental disabilities, Schultz knows the power of the services Monarch provides. Over the years, Schultz has supported Monarch through personal gifts and through business sponsorships. Here, he shares more about why he continues to support Monarch and how a gift to Monarch helped him honor his son Ryan after he passed away.



WHY I SUPPORT MONARCH

Help the people we support live their dreams.
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How did you hear about Monarch?

I first encountered Monarch about 20 years ago, when my brother and I worked together servicing office equipment. One of Monarch's group homes had a copier of ours. We visited to take care of that equipment and met some of the people who lived there. That was the first time I realized what Monarch really did.

What moves you about Monarch?

My son Ryan had developmental disabilities. While we didn't use Monarch services, I know from experience how important those services are. People with disabilities get pushed aside. Monarch treats people with respect and gives them the tools they need to live full lives and to move forward and feel good about themselves.

Why do you support Monarch?

As a business owner, you get asked to support a lot of organizations, and as much as we'd like to, we can't give to everything. I sit down each year and really think about who I want to support. You have to ask, "Where do I see results?" With Monarch, I see results. I know how much the work you do means to the people you support and their families. It's important work.

What motivates you to stay involved?

In so many of the people I see at Monarch, I see Ryan. If I wanted to do anything to honor him after he passed away, I know he would say, "Give some other people an opportunity." I've always been impressed with Monarch and the work that goes on. Seeing that, and knowing that this is something that Ryan would want me to do, keeps me connected.

In your opinion, what is the most important work that Monarch does?

Before we had Ryan, I was compassionate and empathetic toward people with disabilities, but I didn't really understand it. After he was born and throughout his life, I learned how important it is to recognize people as people first, not as a disability. Monarch does that every day – recognizes people as people.



Schultz (left) pictured with his son late Ryan and Ryan's grandfather Ed Culer (far right). Inset: Ryan Schultz.

What can you share with other members of the Monarch family regarding your experience donating?

I've been very blessed in my life. If you are in a position to plant some seeds for other people to have a dream, you should do so. I'm in that position and it is time for me to share my blessings. I would encourage others to do the same.

What would you say to other Monarch friends who are considering supporting the organization through advocacy, volunteerism or financial support?

I would encourage someone to look, really look, at what Monarch does. If you want to have an immediate, life-changing effect on people's lives, Monarch is the place for that. If you're in a position to help, Monarch should be a priority. These programs truly touch lives for people that may not otherwise have opportunities. The return on your investment is the joy in knowing you're giving to something good that is really making a difference. ●

As told to Laurie Weaver, Senior Director of Philanthropy at Monarch.



Annual Dreams Take Flight golf tournament raises money to benefit Monarch programs

A Monarch tradition returned with the organization's eighth annual Dreams Take Flight Golf Tournament held in April at Tillery Tradition Country Club in Mt. Gilead.

The tournament raises approximately \$55,000 each year. Laurie Weaver, Monarch's senior director of philanthropy, now coordinates this fundraiser and a second tournament held in New Bern in September. The proceeds benefit the programs Monarch provides for the people it supports with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illness and substance use disorders.

"This is our premier fundraising event," Weaver said. "It is a time for the community and families of the people we support to come together."

The tournament is also a chance for Weaver and others to share the mission of Monarch, how the funds are used from the tournament and to thank participants and volunteers for their support.

The fundraiser started as a small community event, but has grown in the past few years. "Every year, we have a full field of 120 golfers," Weaver added.

The tournament also has enjoyed longtime support from corporate sponsors and local businesses. First Citizens Bank returned this year as the tournament's title sponsor.

"We have a number of longtime sponsors who support this event, and we are so grateful," Weaver said. "This ongoing support is a big part of our tournament every year."

Monarch will again host its golf tournament in New Bern on Thursday, Sept. 8. ●



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We would like to thank sponsors and participants for their tremendous support and for
Helping Dreams Take Flight

THANK YOU

<p>Title</p> 	<p>Gold</p>  	
<p>Silver</p>     	<p>Awards Ceremony</p> <p><i>Independent Insurance Sales Agent</i> Shelly Morgan</p>	<p>Driving Range</p>   
<p>Putting Contest</p>  <p>STANDARD OFFICE EQUIPMENT ALBEMARLE, NC</p>	<p>Hors d'oeuvres</p>  	<p>Longest Drive</p> <p>JEFF IRVIN, CONCORD PROPERTIES INC.</p> 

<p>Beverage Cart</p>  <p>A Member of the Tokio Marine Group</p> 	  	<p>Closest to Pin</p>  <p>ESTATE PLANNING BUSINESS LAW COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE</p>  
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The Council on Quality and Leadership

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Monarch proudly supports Mental Health Month.

This Mental Health Month, we want to help break down the discrimination and stigma surrounding mental illness. We believe mental health is important to address all year, but highlighting this topic during May helps to raise awareness of the 1 in 5 Americans who will be affected by a mental health condition in their lifetime and those who work to improve the lives of people who are impacted by mental illness. Let's start talking more about mental health so people can get the support they need.

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