

## 2006 MARC Board of Directors

Travis Stice  
*President*

Bobby Hughes  
*Vice President*

Melvin "Red" Dunn  
*Secretary*

Joe Colvin  
*Treasurer*

### Board Members:

David Adams  
Ken Arnold  
Vicki Byars  
Greg Byrd  
Bradley Gibson  
Nyria Jackson  
Ray McKim  
J. Brian Martin  
Johnnie Qualls  
Devin Phiffer  
Keri St. John  
Spencer Sipko  
Joyce Sledge  
Medina Swan

Bob Rose  
*Executive Director*

## MARC HOSTS 46TH ANNUAL MEETING

On November 29, 2005, more than 70 people gathered in Mabee Hall of the Junior League of Midland building to attend MARC's 2005 Annual Meeting. Highlights of this year's meeting included a "State of the Arc" address by Travis Stice, president of the MARC board, election of the 2006 Board of Directors, introduction of new members of the board and recognition of outgoing board members, presentation of Educator of the Year, Community Cares, and Wade Whiteley Memorial awards, an audio/visual presentation, and keynote remarks by Midland's most active volunteer, **Joan Baskin**.

The 2006 Board of Directors include:

**OFFICERS:** *Travis Stice, President; Bobby Hughes, Vice President; Melvin "Red" Dunn, Secretary; Joe Colvin, Treasurer.*

**DIRECTORS:** *David Adams, Ken Arnold, Vicki Byars, Greg Byrd, Bradley Gibson, Nyria Jackson, Ray McKim, J. Brian Martin, Johnnie Qualls, Devin Phiffer, Keri St. John, Spencer Sipko, Joyce Sledge, Medina Swan*

In her remarks, Joan Baskin applauded the work of MARC and related comments from notable individuals whose lives began in low income socio-economic conditions who rose to greatness in their professions and the lessons they learned in "giving back" to one's community. She noted the names of Midland leaders who were on MARC's very first Advisory Board in 1959 who had the passion of MARC's leadership today. After listening to the "State of the Arc" and learning about the volunteers who have led MARC in its quest to meet its mission, Baskin said our organization has more than fulfilled the vision of the board of 1959.

In ending the Annual Meeting, President Stice invited attendees to visit the "Secret Santa" tree that held names of individuals in MARC's residential program who have no family involvement and who would not receive Christmas gifts. Many people who have not been involved with MARC before this event selected names of individuals for the purpose of purchasing gifts for them.

## WORTH WATCHING

"The Ringer," an upcoming Farrelly brothers film that uses humor to challenge destructive stereotypes of people with intellectual disabilities, opens in theaters nationwide on December 23, 2005. Hopefully, it comes to Midland. If not, perhaps you can catch it in another city.

"The Ringer" tells the story of Steve Barker, a young man who pretends to have an intellectual disability so he can compete in and "fix" a Special Olympics event. However, Barker's attitude changes as he develops friendships with several of the Special Olympics athletes. He learns, as will moviegoers, that people with intellectual disabilities are more like the rest of us than they are different. The

athletes in the film listen to music, play video games, watch the latest movies and work together toward athletic excellence—all while having fun.

Instead of tugging at the heartstrings, "The Ringer" uses the typical outrageous Farrelly brothers humor ("There's Something About Mary" and "Shallow Hal") to promote the message that just like everyone else, individuals with developmental disabilities are people first, each with their own interests, talents, abilities and personalities. The movie also features more than 150 people with intellectual disabilities in small parts and supporting roles.

# MARC

## WEBSITE UPDATED

As of January 1, 2006, MARC's website [www.arcmidlandtx.org](http://www.arcmidlandtx.org) will have new, updated information on it. It is our intent to post current events on the website on a monthly basis.

## LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS...

MARC is looking for a few volunteers to help in our Leisure Time Activities Program. If you have an interest in bowling, dining out, going to the movies, archery, manicures, or socializing at Pop Bottle, we need you! The December calendar is also full of holiday activities such as looking at Christmas lights, going to Robert Lee to see a farm rich in sparkly lights.

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## LEAVE A LEGACY™

The Planned Giving Council of the Permian Basin has been formed and recently launched a public awareness campaign on a program called **Leave a Legacy™**. The multi-media campaign was designed to inform area residents about the importance of including charitable gifts to nonprofit organizations in their estate plans. The campaign theme is "Make a Difference in the Lives that Follow."

**The Leave A Legacy™** program was initiated by the Permian Basin Area Foundation and the Permian Basin Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. MARC was one of the founding sponsors of the program.

## EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR

This year, the MARC Education Committee received a number of very fine [As an aside, many *On Your MARC* readers will remember Teresa from the nominations for its annual Educator of the Year award. In the end, the days of Opportunity Center Day Care where she worked as a caretaker of committee selected three teachers—two at the end of the special education toddlers and young children under the direction of Betty Jo Munn.]

Committee chair, **Keri St. John**, made the following presentations:

**Lisa Etheredge** and **Teresa Jackson** are teacher and assistant, respectively, of MISD's Life College post secondary program. The two of them have 12 students who have graduated from high school with their "class" at age 18 and then re-enrolled in the Life College course to complete their education.

Life College is a course that helps students learn life skills, find jobs or training stations in the community. They also engage in community-based instruction such as going to the laundromat, grocery store and the bank to conduct banking business. The class' "home base" is MISD's Ropes Course building behind Washington Elementary but they are seldom there. Lisa and Teresa are always in the community with students at work or learning a job skill and both working to find other jobs or following up on the students in their workplaces. The two teachers are working with Midland College in an attempt to relocate this program to the MC campus where their students would be involved with their peers who do not have disabilities.

At the other end of the special education program, **Julie Guess** has been a teacher in West Early Childhood Center's Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) for two years. During that time, she has had a profound and positive impact on the preschool experiences for the children assigned to her class.

Julie has a thorough understanding of the strengths and needs of each child, and is adept at imbedding activities from each child's IEP into the routine activities of the day.

As soon as Julie feels a child is ready for experiences in a regular classroom, she works with a teacher on how to best include that student. Julie always takes the time to help the regular education teacher understand the needs of the child and better understand the child's disability thereby ensuring the children are having positive and successful experiences in the regular classroom.

Julie Guess teaches exceptional children. She is, herself, an exceptional teacher.

## COMMUNITY CARES AWARD

This year, one outstanding Midland program was nominated and received MARC's *Community Cares* award.

The members of **First Christian Church**, headed by **Tom Jones** and **Anne Schwiening**, started a respite program for children who have disabilities and their siblings called SHARE (Sharing Hands A Respite Service). One night each month, parents who have children with disabilities get a night out for four hours without their children at no cost to the families. All the workers are volunteers from the church or the community. When parents pick up their children, there are always baked goods and gift certificates for the families to take home.

Not only have the volunteers, most of whom are church members, taken care of children once a month, but they have also helped at least one family

financially when a child was hospitalized and the parents could not work and purchased a stroller for a child with special needs who is in the care of his grandparents.

Traci Hopper, a single mom who has a daughter with Down syndrome said, "I cannot say enough about First Christian Church except "Thanks!!!" They have welcomed families into their lives with open arms. They are not afraid to ask, "What do you need?" and then go out of their way to help. The SHARE program has brought a community together that might never have crossed paths. SHARE is a great inspiration for all."

MARC presented a framed poem written by a mother who uses the SHARE program which expresses all the families' feelings about the church, its members and volunteers.

## "SEE YOU AROUND..."

MARC is not "losing" four board members. They're going to continue working as volunteers on committees—just not on MARC's board in 2006.

**Mike Morgan** is one of MARC's most treasured volunteers. He has been "on and off" the board for a number of years, taking his "bylaws stated" one-year hiatus and returning when asked. Mike is an integral part of MARC, being the developer and ongoing advocate of our infamous hunting program. He is also an advocate for a man who has no family and lives in MARC's residential program. He and his wife, Fran, love to "help with bingo" and occasionally want to host a spaghetti supper for some of our consumers. MARC looks to Mike for legal advice and he is always willing to listen to parents' questions who have children with mental retardation.

**Shannon Rydell** is no stranger to MARC. She

has been involved with us since her family needed some help with their son, Sam. Shannon has served on MARC's board two different times, did, in fact, work for MARC for a short time, and now finds her new job does not permit much time to attend lunch Board meetings. Active as a volunteer for many years, we don't expect to see less of Shannon—just in a different capacity.

**Linda Powell** has been a good friend of Shannon Rydell's for several years and she knew about MARC through Shannon. Linda is one of those Midlanders who are known as "shakers and movers" in the community. She knows absolutely everyone! A member of MARC's Development Committee, she readily accepted the position of co-chairing MARC's fundraiser, **Boys' Toys & Barbeque**. Her prior fundraising experience and connections in our community helped put MARC's proceeds "over the top" for a first-time event. Linda has found that she has "spread

herself too thin" and, while wanting to continue to be on our Development Committee, she would like a "respite" from Board membership.

**Adelita Carrasco** has an "all consuming" job in MISD's Human Resources Department. She had been part of MARC's Personnel Committee for several years when she became a board member. She has helped shape MARC's personnel policies and oversaw other personnel matters in a way that can only be done by individuals who have expertise in human resources. She, too, will remain as a committee volunteer.

We will miss the leadership of these four people, but they promise they won't be far away, and we look forward to a time when they can and want to return to MARC's board. President Stice presented each of them a desk clock engraved with MARC's logo symbolizing the time each of them has given to MARC.

## ST. JOHN RECEIVES WADE WHITELEY MEMORIAL AWARD

Because of her active role in MARC's Education Committee and its goal to encourage inclusion of children with special needs in regular education classes, **Keri St. John** was selected by the president of MARC's board to receive this year's Wade Whiteley Memorial Award. Keri began her career in special education as a young teacher at Henderson Elementary. It was during her "teacher" years that MARC approached her to "help" with a kids summer day camp. She thought MARC staff member, Betty Jo Munn, was the "leader" and she was the "helper." Much to her surprise, Betty Jo informed her that it was the other way around! After all, Keri was the one with the expertise.

From her start as a special education teacher, Keri followed her good friend, Molly McLean, as MISD's Inclusion Coordinator. After a couple of years of working with general education and special education teachers on inclusionary practices, Keri left MISD and went to Bynum School to become that organization's executive director. Keri soon left the private school for children with

disabilities and returned to MISD, this time in special education administration and worked until this school year as a Special Education Supervisor. In that position, she also was able to assist both regular and special education teachers to include children with special needs in their school lives.

Today, Keri runs a family business and volunteers for MARC—the volunteer job she has held for numerous years—beginning with that infamous summer kids camp! Keri has been a member of MARC's Education Committee for at least six years—maybe longer and now serves as its chairman. She is a current board member, having begun her term of service in July, 2003.

Keri has a genuine and sincere passion for children with disabilities, and she guides the Education Committee in selecting topics and speakers for parent programs to assist the families of those children. She has a vision for the work of our Education Committee that won't be met in the short term, so we're looking for her leadership for many years to come.

## TALL CITY SELF ADVOCATES

The Tall City Self Advocates recently elected new officers for the year 2006. Following is their new list of officers:

**MEDINA SWAN – President**

**REGGIE MORRIS – Vice President**

**VICKY ANDERSON – Treasurer**

**CHARLOTTE KILCREASE – Secretary**

As president of Self Advocates, Medina will also be a member of the MARC Board of Directors. Congratulations to the new leaders of this organization.

## WHO'S NEW?

At its Annual Meeting on November 29, 2005, MARC elected its 2006 Board of Directors. New to the Board this year are Nyria Jackson, Spencer Sipko and Joyce Sledge.

**Nyria Jackson** is the mother of two sons, Eric (age 9) and Joaquin (age 6). Joaquin has autism. Since attending the Inclusion Works conference in 2005, Nyria became a member of MARC's Education Committee to help further MARC's mission to ensure children are included in the wholeness of their school experiences. Nyria is an attorney and is married to Glenn who is an attorney with the U.S. Attorney's office. In her words, Nyria "wants to be part of MARC's board so that I can continue to learn how to be an advocate for my son and all people with disabilities, particularly as it relates to providing measures that will permit them to live independently and as a part of our community. MARC has been a wonderful resource to my family and I hope to be able to contribute to its important mission."

**Spencer Sipko** was born, raised and educated in New Mexico. He worked for Safeway Stores from 1969 until 1987 when he became employed by Standard Sales. In his position of manager at Midland's Wadley Street Safeway, he employed some of the people who use MARC services. For many years, Spencer has been a volunteer in MARC's ancillary services program and enjoys most taking a group to Lubbock to see Texas Tech basketball and football games. Spencer is married to JoAnn who teaches school at Rusk Elementary. Spencer says, "I love the 'can do' attitude of the MARC citizens. Every time I am associated with them, they inspire me. I hope being on the Board I can make a difference in some way."

**Joyce Sledge** has been a part of MARC's family for several years. As sometimes happens in the lives of nonprofits, occasionally an "angel" appears in their midst. That's how Joyce came to MARC. At first, she wanted to "give" gifts to those who live in MARC's group homes. When she discovered MARC had a hunting program and did, in fact, go hunting on a ranch near Brownwood that adjoins their own ranch, she headed to straight to her husband's office to tell him about it. In coming years, the Sledges offered MARC the opportunity to go hunting and fishing on their ranch in Mills County. Her next volunteer work was MARC's Ancillary Services Committee. There she learned about Opportunity Park among other things.

More recently, Joyce joined MARC's Development Committee and when the committee decided to host a fundraising event, it was Joyce who came up with the winning idea. **Boys' Toys & Barbeque** was also her recommended title of the event. Because her husband, Gene, is involved in restoring classic cars, the committee decided that MARC's event would be a classic and luxury car show combined with a dance, dinner and a Big Boys' Toys silent auction. The first time event was extraordinarily successful. Now, she says she has another idea! Can't wait to hear what it is!

Joyce and her family have lived in Midland since 1964. She and Gene have two sons and four grandchildren. She says, "We have always supported community endeavors that give aid to others since Midland has been so good to us."