

# RNI Chatter



## RICHLAND NEWHOPE INDUSTRIES, INC.

Volume 6 Issue 6

APRIL 2023

### Step into Spring Event held at Richland Mall

RNI, Inc. recently participated in Step into Spring which is a mall walking event to for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. The event was held on March 16th from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm. There was a great turn out! The RCBDD had several raffle prizes, one being a City Garden Gift Card! Everyone who registered at the walk got a raffle ticket and the first 100 participants received a sport drawstring bag. Take a look at a few photos from the event.

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### Happenings in March



## Community Connections meets at Element of Art Studio/Gallery

The Community Connections group met at Element of Art Studio/Gallery. There were 17 attendees and each person was able to paint a canvas bag as well as their name on a block of wood. A great was had by all, stated Jill Boyd, Personal and Social Services Manager at RNI, Inc. who attended the event. Take a look at the photos below of the attendees and the great works they created.



## RNI, Inc. and EOA were stops for Awareness Day

RNI, Inc. and Element of Art Studio/Gallery had the honor of participating as a stop in The Amazing Awareness Race hosted by Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities for members of Leadership Unlimited. LU participants were tasked with creating a mural of their ideal inclusive city focusing on connectivity, line erasure, and mobility. They also got to complete some of the jobs in our workshops. Thank you to all of the participants from the LU Class of 2023. Additional photos are found on page 3.



## RNI Bucks issued in the month of March



We would like to take a moment to THANK all of employees that received RNI BUCKS during the month of March:

**Maggie Dean, Tara Grove, Marilyn Kukowski, Heather Gibson, Shelly Schifer, Heather McLaughlin, Cindy Russell, Shannon Ruhl, Jessica Reinhart and Wenn Yockey** - Thank you for you all of your help with Awareness Day 2023!

**Doug Huff and Judy Greanya** - They have jumped in to help Jill and Veronica out a few times over the past couple of weeks.

**Jessica Reinhart** - She got a project out of my mailbox and folded all of the pamphlets we needed to take to the YMCA!

**Krista Grove** - For making sure an individual was safe and making management and the team aware of the situation while off on a personal day.

**Heather McLaughlin** - For helping Sharon Murray achieve her WIP Certification.

## April 2023 Employee Anniversaries

<b>Doug Huff</b>	<b>04/24/1998</b>	<b>25 Years</b>
<b>Penny Sunderland</b>	<b>04/01/2004</b>	<b>19 Years</b>
<b>Lori Barker</b>	<b>04/12/2010</b>	<b>13 Years</b>
<b>Robert Patton</b>	<b>04/06/2016</b>	<b>7 Years</b>
<b>Tom Clark</b>	<b>04/07/2016</b>	<b>7 Years</b>
<b>Melissa Cameron</b>	<b>04/21/2016</b>	<b>7 Years</b>
<b>Tara Grove</b>	<b>04/01/2019</b>	<b>4 Years</b>
<b>Bill Stephenson</b>	<b>04/02/2019</b>	<b>4 Years</b>
<b>Mike Middleton</b>	<b>04/17/2019</b>	<b>4 Years</b>
<b>JoAnn Winters</b>	<b>04/24/2019</b>	<b>4 Years</b>

*Congratulations*

*Doug and Penny*

THANK YOU for  
your years of  
service!

Element of Art



## Element of Art Studio/Gallery Updates

Element of Art is open to the public Monday-Friday 9am-4pm and Saturdays 10am-3pm. Classes with our contracted artists are currently in session. For sales orders or questions about our public programming reach out to us on social media, give us a call at 419.522.2965, or email [gyockey@rniinc.com](mailto:gyockey@rniinc.com).

**Join us for our recurring events in April:** Art Happens (April 14th and 29th from 2 - 4pm) and Studio Saturdays (every Saturday from 11a - 2pm)! Participants will meet each week in our studio space to connect and explore drawing techniques led by our Art Coordinator, Wenn Yockey. From stick figure drawing to more advanced techniques, all levels of drawing experience, age, and ability are welcome! Materials will be provided and space is limited to 10 participants.

## Additional Pictures from Awareness Day at RNI





***SAFETY starts with S, but begins with YOU...***



## ***RNI Safety TOPIC of the Month: Distracted Driving***

Distracted driving has become a deadly epidemic on our roads. While drivers texting behind the wheel tops what seems like an endless list of distractions, other risky actions include talking — whether it be on the phone or to others in the car, setting your navigation, adjusting what you're listening to, drinking coffee, applying makeup, and more. By driving distracted, you're robbing yourself of seconds that you may need to avoid a close call or deadly crash.

In 2020, **distracted driving** killed 3,142 people. Young drivers seem more prone to using their phones while driving. According to NHTSA research from 2017, drivers 16 to 24 years old have been observed using handheld electronic devices while driving at higher rates than older drivers have since 2007. But make no mistake: It isn't just young people who are driving distracted, since drivers in other age groups don't lag far behind.

### **Drive Responsibly**

April, which is national Distracted Driving Awareness Month, is a good time to regroup and take responsibility for the choices we make when we're on the road. Follow these safety tips for a safe ride every time:

- Need to send a text? Pull over and park your car in a safe location. Only then is it safe to send or read a text.
- Designate your passenger as your "designated texter." Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.

**Do not scroll through apps, including social media, while driving. Cell phone use can be habit-forming. Struggling to not text and drive? Put the cell phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of the vehicle until you arrive at your destination.**

### **The Consequences**

During a portion of Distracted Driving Awareness Month, from April 4 through 11, you may see increased law enforcement on the roadways as part of the national paid media campaign **U Drive. U Text. U Pay.** This campaign reminds drivers of the deadly dangers and the legal consequences – including fines – of texting behind the wheel. Also, on April 7 state highway safety offices and law enforcement agencies across the country will take part in Connect to Disconnect, a 4-hour national distracted driving enforcement and awareness initiative. The goals: to demonstrate a nationwide commitment to enforcing texting laws in a fair and equitable way, and to reduce traffic crashes caused by distracted drivers, ultimately preventing injuries and deaths associated with cell phone use and texting while driving.

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Visit us on the Web at [rniinc.com](http://rniinc.com)

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**RNI, Inc. Team: Let's increase our presence on social media and increase our LIKES on Facebook. LIKE or FOLLOW or SHARE us on Facebook to invite your friends to LIKE us too. UPDATED 04/07/23; we are at:**

**City Garden Café** is at 463 LIKES, can we get to 500 LIKES, 37 LIKES to go ??

**Element of Art Studio/Gallery** is at 1,872 LIKES, can we get 2000 FOLLOWS, 128 FOLLOWS to go ??

**Richland Newhope Industries** is at 1,979 LIKES, can we get to 2000 LIKES, 21 LIKES to go ??

**Trillium Event Center** is at 926 FOLLOWS, can we get to 1000 FOLLOWS, 74 FOLLOWS to go ??

Help us increase our social media exposure by liking and sharing our four (4) Facebook pages. City Garden Café, Element of Art Studio/Gallery, Trillium Event Center and Richland Newhope Industries, Inc!



## April Board Member Spotlight: Merris Welge

The April Board Member Spotlight is Merris Welge. After graduating from Bucyrus High School without any career path in mind, Merris attended Tiffin University and received a 2-year education in Accounting & Business Administration. A local Bucyrus bank just happened to be looking for an employee, and as they say - the rest is history!

Joining the Second National Bank (SNB) in the bookkeeping department, advancing to teller, assistant cashier and then to cashier & Vice President. During his employment at SNB, he attended various banking schools, including the National Association of Bank Auditors & Controllers and the Central States School of Banking, both held at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Each school was 2 weeks a year, lasting for 3 years each. Also, during his employment at SNB he was a loan officer, oversaw personnel, worked with various advertising media, and worked in the transition from mechanical to electronic banking. He was a member of the Bucyrus Jaycees, and a founding member & President of the Young Y's Men Club, said to be the first integrated Y's Men Club in the state. Merris was also president of the local Chapter of N.A.B.A.C. Merris left banking for short time, joining with 3 friends to start & manage a plastic injection molding & extrusion business. An unsuccessful short time venture, so back to banking.



Merris joined the First National Bank (FNB) of Mansfield, managing numerous branches as Assistant Vice President and managing the Installment Loan Department. As Vice President, plus working as a business lender and a real estate loan lender, he was also in charge of Compliance, i.e. complying with Federal Regulations. During his employment Merris attended various banking schools, including the National Commercial Lending School and the National Compliance School, both at the Oklahoma University. During his employment at FNB, he volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, serving on the Board of Directors. He joined the Sertoma Club & continued that membership for 35 years and was a member & served as president of the local chapter of National Association of Credit Managers.

After several mergers & name changes, Merris retired from Society Bank, just at it was merging into KeyBank. Since retiring, Merris has volunteered with SCORE, serving as Chapter Chair 3 times & is currently Office Manager. Merris serves on several Chamber of Commerce committees, was a long-time member of Sertoma, served on the Board of Directors at Third Street Clinic, and is honored to be on the Board, and serve RNI as Treasurer. He and his wife Jean reside in Ontario & recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They have 4 adult children, all living in Ohio. They enjoy traveling, having traveled in all 50 states, and most of the Canadian Provinces. Merris enjoys his bartending at Chamber of Commerce events, and occasionally serves Jack (RNI, Inc. Board President).

