

Achieving Goals and Finding Balance in the New Year



How many people have set more New Year's Resolutions this year? It's likely that most of us have set one or more goals to achieve in 2017.

By setting more realistic goals and not limiting yourself to the once-a-year, all-out assault on those finances, that mound of debt, the pledge to spend more time with loved ones, get more organized, become more punctual, or whatever resolve is made at the start of the year, you may find that the finish line isn't so far away after all.

Dr. Robert McHale, M.D., M.S., Monarch's medical director, suggests setting goals for 2017 that are healthy, well-rounded, and, most importantly, attainable.

"The springboard for balance is going into the new year with the idea that I've learned something from this past year and it has changed me. I'm going to use the good and bad as a learning opportunity," McHale shares.

Each New Year offers us a clean slate, and some time to reflect on the past — things that went well, and areas in which we'd like to improve. McHale says past failures are ways to learn about ourselves, which can aid us in shaping new, effective resolutions. A positive mindset gives us insight into the goals we want to make, and helps set ourselves up for success.

Another important part of making an attainable resolution is a good understanding of personal needs. Think about what makes you happy, and what gives you a sense of achievement, McHale says.

"Oftentimes, New Year's resolutions tend to be for others, but they should be personal goals instead,"

McHale says. “You’re setting yourself up for failure if your resolution is to make someone else content or happy.”

If you make a resolution to stop smoking but you’re only doing it for a spouse, it’s unlikely you’ll be successful, McHale says. Rather, choose a resolution of which you can take ownership. Once you’ve identified that resolution, McHale says, next comes the step of implementing a plan to achieve your goals. He suggests the 50-percent rule. For example, if you want to lose 50 pounds, give yourself six months to lose 25 pounds, then evaluate your progress after that time period.

By breaking down a goal, McHale says, you make it more realistic, and more attainable, increasing the odds for your success.

Happy New Year and best wishes in accomplishing all of your goals.

This time of year can be challenging for many people as the holidays end. If you know someone who is in need of support, please call Monarch at (866) 272-7826.

Holiday Partnership with INTEC Group Helps Hurricane Matthew Recovery Efforts in Smithfield



Ninety days doesn't seem like a long time for some but for many North Carolinians still feeling the effects of Hurricane Matthew, it has feels like a lifetime.

The hurricane produced raging flood waters and extraordinary winds that damaged homes to the point they were uninhabitable, and left some staff and the people we support displaced.

Last month, The INTEC Group, an architecture and interior design firm in Charlotte – also partnering with us to help develop our office brand standards – was in search of a holiday activity they could perform as a team that went above and beyond traditional Christmas gifts.

The group wanted their spirit of giving campaign to be synonymous with their company vision, and wanted to do something truly community focused. Working with Monarch's Senior Director of Philanthropy Laurie Weaver, the team decided the best way for the firm to provide support would be to replace several important household items that residents from Monarch's Buffalo Creek Apartments in Smithfield lost when flood waters reached their homes.

"Our vision as a company is to Enhance the Human Condition, focusing on our people, our clients and our community. Being able to support Monarch with our holiday outreach effort made this relationship even stronger. We look forward to future projects together and truly wish the Smithfield residents good health and happiness in the New Year!" said Director of Interiors, Barbara A. Briccotto, IIDA, LEED AP for INTEC Group.

Kandy John, the director of program operations, and Karen Williams, residential manager at Monarch's Buffalo Creek, both Monarch employees, diligently inventoried everything that needed to either be taken out or repaired in each apartment. The team used that list to compile what the greatest needs were, including items such as pots and pans, sheets and bedding, towels, etc.

INTEC Group gathered items over the course of several weeks, wrapped them, and the gifts were delivered to residents on Dec. 21, giving the residents a little something extra to look forward to as they return home in the coming weeks.

"This holiday project was the perfect fit for INTEC Group and Monarch. While everyone else has moved on and a lot of the world is no longer paying attention, some of the people we support are still struggling to get back on their feet. We are so grateful that the group approached us for this partnership. It really made the holidays a positive experience for our extended community still recovering from Hurricane Matthew," Weaver added.

Terrie Filer Is Building a Team Focused on “People First”



Knowing how to build and foster positive morale amongst a team of more than 25 professionals scattered across four cities in western North Carolina is an art form for Terrie Filer.

Filer’s more than 30 years of experience in the industry is the foundation she needs to lead a team. Although she has worked at Monarch for only two years serving as the Residential Team Lead, she has made extensive strides and built a cohesive team based on trust. And her approach is simple: she hosts a quarterly breakfast or lunch at her home and uses it as an open forum.

“Our team is so scattered and far away from the administrative ‘hub’ and this lunch and breakfast activity came about to show my team how much I appreciate them and to serve as a way to get to know them better. I cook all the food and take care of the planning – this day is all about them,” says Filer.

The forum portion of the gathering has proven effective. Everyone has found a creative solution to a challenge they have faced at one point or another and has inspired creative ways of bring people together and come up with out of the box solutions they can implement with the people they support.

“Terrie’s staff has consistently said that she is fair, kind, and always willing to get in the trenches with them at the drop of a hat. Having a leader like her is powerful beyond measure and she truly embraces what Monarch is all about,” says Alyssa Soderlund, director of program operations.

Filer admits that leading by example trickles from the top down. She will never ask a staff person to do something she either hasn't already done, or wouldn't do. Her own past direct support experience helps her understand the challenges her staff face because she has been in their shoes.

"I am very hands on – might be up to my eyeballs with paperwork but my office door is never closed. If someone needs me – I stop what I am doing. I will have to work extra to get the paperwork done, but I will never turn anyone away," says Filer.

Filer's kind gesture to bring everyone together does more than unite her team. It gives her employees a voice and a safe and constructive environment to grow and learn. She hopes the appreciation and respect she gives her staff is in turn passed along to the people we support year round.

Monarch Peer Support Director Certified to Teach Others to Serve as Peer Support Specialist



Monarch Peer Support Director Brandon Tankersley is now certified to train certified peer support specialists in North Carolina, expanding the company's ability to develop qualified personnel to work in areas where there may be a shortage of these unique employees.

Peer support specialists are people living in recovery with mental illness and/or substance use disorder, who provide support to others who can benefit from their lived experiences. The N.C. Psychological Association views peer support as an important component to mental health and substance use recovery.

"A good peer support specialist has traveled a path similar to the person they serve and fosters hope for recovery by modeling that reality," Tankersley said.

Tankersley completed training earlier this year through the Cardinal Innovations Healthcare's peer support specialist facilitation curriculum and already has conducted his first 40-hour class. His new training and experience as a former public school teacher served him well, as all 11 of his students passed their state exam with a score 90 percent or above.

Teaching others also helps him keep his own skills sharp, Tankersley said. Research shows that peer learning activities have positive effects on both teacher and student, creating a team-building spirit, more supportive relationships, greater psychological well-being, communication skills, self-esteem, higher achievement and greater productivity.

Tankersley will conduct at least two NC Certified Peer Support Specialist trainings per year, with classes held in different locations in the state. He also will teach classes during the year at specific Monarch sites where certified peer support specialists are needed.

“If we need to hire at any site in North Carolina, Monarch has the option for me to personally train someone,” Tankersley said. “This will allow us to certify a person we support in the area to work as a peer support specialist in that particular catchment area.”

Individuals may qualify to become certified peer support specialists in North Carolina by meeting the following application criteria:

- Have a minimum of one year demonstrated recovery time from a significant mental health and/or substance use disorder at the date of application.
- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Have attended (face to face in a classroom setting only) and successfully completed a state-approved, 40-hour peer support specialist training curriculum and have submitted a valid certificate from that training.
- Have completed an additional 20 hours of training and have valid certificates verifying attendance and participation. These trainings should complement the type of service/program the person will serve.
- Have submitted two personal references according to state requirements.

For more information about Monarch’s peer support certification, contact Brandon Tankersley, director of peer services, at (513) 608-9584 or Brandon.Tankersley@MonarchNC.org.

Pictured: Brandon Tankersley presenting to an audience. Tankersley is now certified to train certified peer support specialists in North Carolina, expanding Monarch’s ability to develop qualified personnel to work in areas where there may be a shortage of these unique employees.

Monarch Hosts Several Community Mental Health Screenings



The stigma that surrounds mental illness often prevents people from seeking the help they need.

Last February, Monarch received a generous grant from the United Way of Stanly County to conduct free, confidential, anonymous mental health screenings within the local community. In addition to the screenings, the public events raise awareness and provide education.

Throughout 2016, Monarch therapists in Stanly County helped to screen more than 165 individuals at special screening events at the YMCA, Stanly County Community College, Pfeiffer University and other local churches and community events. Because early detection of mental illness is critical to successful recovery, Monarch's goal with these screenings was to help people understand symptoms they may be experiencing and what local resources are available to them.

"We want people to understand that while mental illness and substance use conditions are common, they are extremely treatable and individuals can go on to recover and lead full and productive lives," said Monarch's Senior Community Outreach Manager, Yesenia Mueller. "Too many people living with a mental health condition never seek or receive help due to stigma, lack of information, cost or lack of health insurance coverage."

Mueller said it's important that people schedule regular mental health checkups.

"Just as we check our blood pressure and get cancer screenings, it's a good idea to take periodic stock of our emotional well-being. One recent study said everyone should get their mental health checked as

often as they get a physical, and many doctors routinely screen for mental health, which typically include a series of questions about lifestyle, eating and drinking habits and mental wellness,” she explained.

But a mental health checkup doesn’t necessarily require a special trip to the doctor. In addition to some of the screenings companies like Monarch and others host, there are also online screening tools you can use. While conditions like depression are common—roughly 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental health condition, which are extremely treatable.

Because Monarch physicians, therapists and other experts know how essential mental health is to overall physical health and well-being, they support education awareness and aim to help families and others who may be reluctant to ask for help or don’t know where to find it. Monarch is available to provide support and education to those in need.

With the support of the United Way of Stanly County, and other community partners, Monarch will continue to host mental health screenings in Stanly County through Spring 2017. For more information, including upcoming screening dates, please contact Yesenia Mueller, senior community outreach manager, at Yesenia.Mueller@Monarchnc.org or (906) 282-4301.

Pictured: Yesenia Mueller, senior community outreach manager, sharing information during one of the screenings hosted at Stanly Community College.

Monarch Board, Staff Raises Thousands and Shows Support Following Hurricane Matthew



Richale Reed, a Monarch therapist in Lumberton, launched a hug campaign following Hurricane Matthew to show compassion and support to strangers and friends alike in the community where she works. She wanted to make direct contact with people who were suffering.

The day after the hurricane, Monarch therapist Leigh Daughtridge, answered the call for licensed clinicians to volunteer to provide counseling for people who had been evacuated from their homes in Tarboro. While there, she heard stories of fear, frustration and loss from people who were facing extreme challenges in the wake of flooding, wind and rain damage and long-term water and power outages.

While many chose to give of their time and talents, others shared resources through Monarch's emergency fundraising campaign. The campaign to provide short-term financial assistance for the people we support and Monarch staff affected raised more \$15,755. More than half of the donations made to the campaign came from Monarch staff members and board members across North Carolina. Individual Monarch donors and corporate partners also contributed.

Monarch's Executive Leadership Team and Board of Directors also felt it important to pay regular wages to staff members who were unable to work either because of site closures or personal losses. Programs in Robeson, Columbus, Bladen and Johnston counties were closed for services and suffered significant

damage as a result of the storm. Overall revenue losses and unexpected expenses to Monarch totaled more than \$150,000.

Though it has been three months since the hurricane, many still struggle to recover. Immediately following the hurricane, Monarch leadership in Eastern North Carolina remained in communication with Red Cross Emergency Services, local hospitals, FEMA and other local resources to ensure that staff and the people we support receive the care they needed. As a leading behavioral health provider, Monarch understands the long-term impact this type of traumatic event can have on a community. Though the flood waters have receded, as displaced residents return to the area, as clean up and recovery continue and as FEMA assistance subsides, the need for mental health services and substance use disorder services that Monarch provides will continue to be critical.

“I am grateful and overwhelmed by the generosity of our board and our staff,” said Dr. Peggy Terhune. “You quickly answered the call for an extraordinary need. Whether you helped physically, emotionally, financially, or through prayer, I am very appreciative for what you have done and what you continue to do. Thank you! I am humbled to be your leader.”

Pictured: Richale Reed (in pink), a Monarch behavioral health therapist in Lumberton, spent an afternoon giving hugs to those impacted by Hurricane Matthew.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Meet Antwain Hamilton

Antwain Hamilton, support coordinator at Stanly Industrial Services (SIS) in Albemarle, has worked at Monarch for approximately 14 years. An avid lover of football, Hamilton uses his experience on the field to mentor, foster togetherness and team building among the participants who attend SIS. His unique and effective approach to his role at Monarch, his hard work and commitment to the people we support earned him the 2015 Direct Support Professional of the Year award presented by the Arc of North Carolina. One of his nominators wrote: "Hamilton has dedicated his life to the people who receive services at Monarch, and he has a heart of gold. It shows in all he does here.

What does a typical workday look like for you?

I come to work every morning and handle any type of staffing issue that may come up. Once staffing is in place I go to the work floor with the staff and the guys we support to begin our day. If a parent calls I take time and listen to what they need and try my best to take care of their needs as well as the people we support. I assist with helping staff and the people we support with any activity we have planned for that day. I encourage the guys to participate in our activities that we have planned for them. If problems occur with staff or the people we support I sit and listen to what the issue is and we solve the problem together. I attend many types of meetings for the people we support and I advocate for each person.

What is the most important aspect of your role, and why?

The most important aspect of my role is being involved with the people we support. I feel this way because the company would not be here if it was not for them and my attention should be on what is best for them and advocating for them in any way possible.

What has been your most rewarding, or proudest moment, while working here?

My most rewarding moment at Monarch is being selected for the Direct Support Staff of the Year award. Another rewarding moment occurs almost every day when I come to work and see each individual achieve goals that were set for them and seeing how proud they are to accomplish them.

What do enjoy when you aren't working?

I enjoy spending time with family and watching football.

What movie or song best describes you?

["Remember the Titans,"](#) which features actor Denzel Washington.

MONARCH IN THE NEWS

[Stanly News & Press - Santa, Help These Guys out with their wish lists](#)

[Journeys Magazine of Cabarrus County Conversations on Mental Health](#)

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