MICHIGAN WORKS! Southwest
Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo & St. Joseph Counties

1601 S. Burdick St, Kalamazoo, MI 49001
michiganworkssouthwest.org

Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART)
Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2026

CALL TO ORDER: DART Co-Chair John Fiore called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007.

Members Present:

Jami Dykstra (MRC)
Carrie Headworth (VES)[V]
Kym Hollars (Goodwill)[V]
Ramona Lumpkin (Rec Ins)[V]
John Fiore (MRS)
Katie McCuen (KRESA)
Michelle Miller-Adams (Upjohn)[V]
Hilary Smigiel (MRC)
Linzee Studzinski (MRC)

[V] Virtual

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
The DART meeting agenda for March 16, 2026, was postponed until the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
The DART meeting minutes of September 16, 2025, were postponed until the next meeting.

INTRODUCTIONS
All attendees present in person and online introduced themselves.

PROGRAM
Jami Dykstra, Hilary Smigiel, and Linzee Studzinski from MRC presented in person to the group. The mission for MRC Industries is to empower individuals with disabilities and mental illness through equity, independence, and inclusive community opportunities. The Vision is to foster a community where individuals with disabilities and mental illness are supported to thrive. Core services include Bridgeways, Case Management, Community Employment, Skill Building, ArtWorks, Thriftability, and Community Living Supports. The pre-employment transition services assist more than 160 students with disabilities across four counties. The program goals for pre-ETS are as follows: workplace readiness, self-advocacy, job exploration, post-secondary planning, and work-based learning experiences.

MRC hosts a summer work experience program to provide real-world job experience, skill development, and exposure to various career paths. Many work sites and community partners work together to provide these opportunities.

Following the presentation, a discussion addressed inquiries concerning application deadlines, the referral process, available support, and how summer work experiences are communicated. For additional information, contact Jami Dykstra at 269-343-0747 Ext. 332.

A proud partner of the American Job Center network.
An equal opportunity employer / program supported by the State of Michigan. 1-800-285-WORK (9675). Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request.
Dial 711 Relay Center and TTY. Supported in part with state and/or federal funds.

AGENCY UPDATES

- **KRESA –** Katie McCuen reported that KRESA is gearing up for its summer programs by engaging in school outreach and through partnerships. Ms. McCuen will share the flyers that can be distributed to the group. Industry Tours will begin on March 23, 2026. Additionally, the CTE programs are in full swing at the new Career Connect Campus facility.

- **Veterans Employment Services –** Carrie Headworth reported an upcoming Military-friendly job fair on March 23, 2026, and she will provide a flyer for distribution to the group after the meeting. Updates for veterans include the renewal of veteran forms, while updates from LEO highlight that 23 agencies are in ADA Compliance.

- **Michigan Rehabilitation Services** – John Fiore reported that MRS will be hosting first Friday events beginning in April; however, the April date will be the 2nd Friday (April 10th) due to the first Friday being Good Friday. A flyer including this information will be shared with the group after the meeting.

- **MRC Industries –** Hilary Smigiel reported that there is a growing social enterprise, and they just opened a thrift store on Gull Road in Kalamazoo. Ms. Smigiel encouraged the group to come check it out.

- **Recovery Institute –** Ramona Lumpkin reported that the Recovery Institute will relocate to Crosstown Parkway in mid-summer of 2026.

EMERGING ISSUES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT & ADVOCACY

Hilary Smigiel mentioned that she is not getting the qualified applicants that she typically would see. A recommendation was made to utilize the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTC) for assistance.

UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS

Debbie Horn requested resources for a Mental Health Awareness Training for the job seeker side. Katie McCuen suggested Integrated Services Kalamazoo (ISK) and will provide a follow-up email to Ms. Horn after the meeting.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A. Disability Network Secondary Education http://www.dnswm.org/
B. KPL Oneplace https://www.kpl.gov/oneplace/
C. The Synergy Health Center https://synergykzoo.org/
D. Incompass Michigan https://incompassmi.org/ - see the Education & Training tab
E. DART Desktop Training Modules https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/resources/at-your-desktop-training

NEXT MEETING
The next DART meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 2026, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute.

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Debbie Horn, Policy and Program Trainer/WDB Liaison
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