

# 2025

SPRING

THE CROSSROADS



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Timeless Memories at NMRC

# A Letter from Dr. Hayles

Spring invites us to slow down and appreciate the beauty around us. At NMRC, the season is full of vibrant colors and meaningful moments that remind us of life's beautiful joys. This same spirit is reflected in the wonderful events and celebrations in March like the recognition of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Month where people with special needs and their unique abilities are celebrated. Other recognitions at NMRC in March include Music Therapy Month and Social Work Month offering an opportunity to thank dedicated professionals whose service enriches the lives of our clients each day. Also, Educational Services joined in Read Across America Week, with the staff and clients reading favorite books and enjoying themed classroom decorations. Additionally, the Recreation Department's Awards Banquet in the Hudspeth Gym occurred, honoring NMRC's outstanding athletes and presenting the prestigious "Warrior Award" for outstanding performance and spirit. As March concluded, clients enjoyed several exciting community awareness trips, including a fun visit to the Enid Lake Fish Hatchery.



In April 2025, NMRC celebrated Occupational Therapy Month with well-deserved recognition for our outstanding occupational therapists and therapy technicians, whose dedication helps clients maintain their skills, independence, and well-being. The compassion and commitment shown by Therapy Services reflect the strong friendships and caring community at NMRC.

A major highlight of the month, in honor of Autism Acceptance Month, was the completion of a state-of-the-art Sensory Room in Dogwood Cottage. Designed to support calming strategies, sensory integration, and specialized activities, the room was made possible through generous donations from families, friends, and the "Friends of NMRC" organization.

The success of this project was a true team effort, with vital contributions from staff in Resident Living Services, the Life Skills Education Program, and the Engineering Department. Other notable April events included the return of the “Animals in Our Backyard” presentation, where clients explored the connection between humans and local wildlife. NMRC also hosted its annual Blood Drive—an important way to give back to the supportive communities we serve.



To round out the month, several departments came together for two fun-filled client celebrations: Life Skills Fun Day and Easter Fun Day. Clients enjoyed special activities, great food, live music, and themed t-shirts. NMRC extends heartfelt thanks to our staff, volunteers, and special guests like Jaxon Saradpon, Philanthropy Chair for Pi Kappa Phi at Ole Miss, and his fellow fraternity members, who helped make the events especially memorable.

As Summer approaches, NMRC has much to celebrate. In May, NMRC has already begun to plan for a special event highlighting the importance of friends and communities. To recognize advocacy and support of the clients we serve, there is a special “Friends of NMRC” membership drive this month through the end of June. The Friends organization, established in May 1974, is a nonprofit organization contributing to designated events and special projects for the clients and earmarks activities and recognition programs for the staff. The organization's membership group and board members continue to be an essential part of NMRC's success. This membership drive focuses on advocacy and community. If you, your business or civic organization are interested in becoming members of the Friends of NMRC organization, please contact, Ms. Dwana Harvey, NMRC Director's Office by email: [dfharvey@nmrc.ms.gov](mailto:dfharvey@nmrc.ms.gov) or phone: 662-513-7681.

## **Edith M. Hayles, Ph. D.**

*NMRC Director*





# EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



**Sharon Taylor**  
July



**Kelvin Carson**  
July



**Scharazadez  
"Shae" Lyons**  
August



**Versondra Taylor**  
August



**Anthony Walker**  
September



**Rebecca Barnes**  
September



**Quanta White**  
October



**Terri Atkinson**  
November

**'24 - '25**

# Professional Development at **NMRC**

NMRC continues to nurture a culture of professional growth and development. Take a look at some of the recent experiences offered to NMRC staff who recognize the importance in striving for excellence through professional development opportunities.



***Terrance Yarbrough*** from the Mississippi Department of Transportation and Strategic Resource Solutions presented on the Multigenerational Workforce on November 18th. Over 100 staff from various departments attended the engaging presentation titled “Who’s Coming to Work?”

***Michael Jordan*** from Belhaven University shared his expertise on Emotional Intelligence on February 28th. With over 80 NMRC staff in attendance, the experience proved to be beneficial and motivating as teams learned about ways to enhance communication and collaboration.



***Bradley Roberson,*** Oxford School District Superintendent of Education, presented to a group of NMRC leaders on Organizational Excellence. The hands-on and thought-provoking seminar was a captivating and inspiring experience for the leadership team.







#### Rec Therapy

The Recreation Therapy Department would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who donated to the 2024 NMRC I-CAN Food Drive. We would also like to give a special thank you to the NMRC Friends Organization and the University of Mississippi for their generous donations!

#### Items Donated

We were able to collect the following items for the Oxford Food Pantry:

- Over 100 canned goods
- Boxes of cereal
- Boxes of macaroni & cheese
- Bags of pasta
- Bags of beans



# ASCP

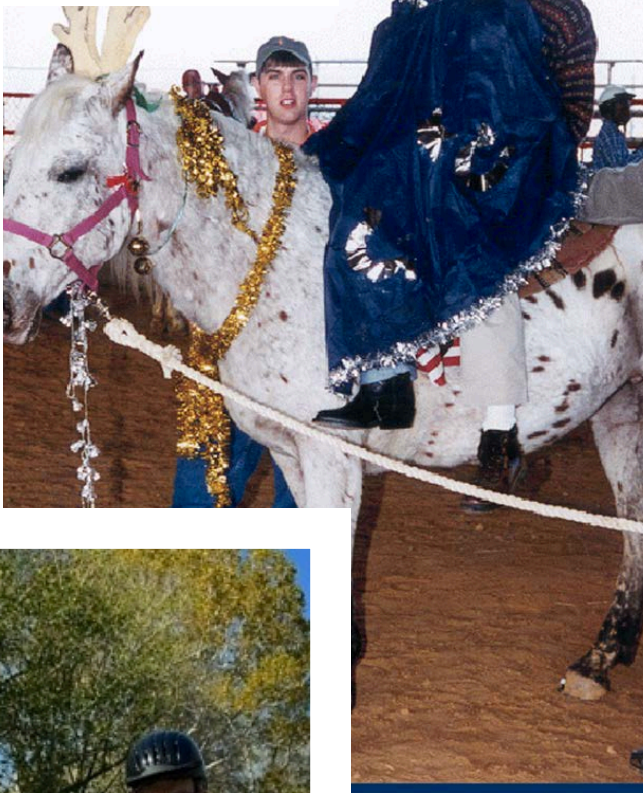
## Graduates

We'd like to acknowledge the error in our previous newsletter and apologize for any confusion it may have caused. Thank you for your understanding as we give our ASCP graduates formal recognition. The Administrative Services Certification Program (ASCP) is a comprehensive training and certification program for support staff of governmental entities. The program combines classroom training and hands-on learning to develop teamwork, leadership, and customer service skills. ASCP graduates are highly regarded team members in their agencies and the State of Mississippi. *Pictured: Teresa Wright, Kathy Cunningham, Janet Herring, Dorette Wimberly, Melinda Harper and Monica Taylor*



# GALLOPING INTO GROWTH

## The Magic of Hippotherapy



In the early 1990s, NMRC lacked the necessary equipment for hippotherapy, so clients traveled to a program in Senatobia to participate. The photo in the middle shows Jason M. and Chris Dale at the Senatobia arena during this time. In the mid-1990s, Julie Chadwick was hired with the mission to develop and expand NMRC's Hippotherapy program. No longer would clients need to ride a bus; instead, Julie, an avid horsewoman, would transport the horses from the donor to the riding area—a small, green arena at the time.

As the program grew, so did the understanding of hippotherapy's benefits, which extend far beyond the physical. While hippotherapy is well-known for improving core strength, posture, and balance, it also enhances coordination and range of motion for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The movement of the horse helps improve sensory integration, allowing riders better control over their own movements. For many individuals with IDD, a horse's gentle, non-threatening nature provides a calming environment, and the bond formed between rider and horse fosters trust, confidence, and a sense of accomplishment.

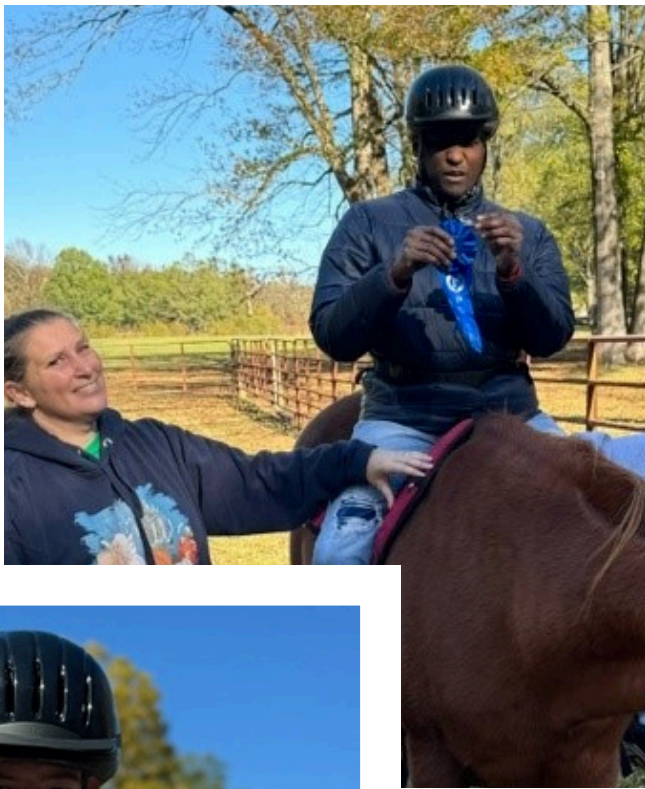
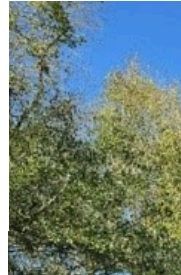
The first metal gates for the NMRC hippotherapy program were donated by the NMRC Friends Organization, creating the initial round riding pen. As the program continued to grow, NMRC supported further expansion, upgrading the riding area and purchasing additional equipment.



Today, NMRC's Hippotherapy program continues to thrive, thanks to the expertise of Amanda Pounds from Therapy Services and Jennifer Hughes from Educational Services. Jennifer has a BA in Therapeutic Horsemanship from St. Andrews University and a Masters in Special Education. Both are highly qualified, having completed the "Hippotherapy Treatment Principles" program through the American Hippotherapy Association at Mississippi State University.

Each year, Dr. Hayles, Director of NMRC, selects a charitable organization for her governing body Christmas gift. This past Christmas, she graciously chose the Hippotherapy program at NMRC. The generosity of Dr. Hayles and those who contribute to this program ensure a meaningful therapeutic experience for the clients of NMRC. In every horse's rhythmic stride, there is healing, growth, and a reminder that sometimes, the best therapy happens when you form a connection with something as simple and profound as a horse.







# FRIENDS Events



*NMRC Parents and Friends Organization celebrated Valentine's Day with campus and community home clients, staff, and family members. The day was filled with fellowship, food, music, and so much fun.*







*The Friends' Organization celebrated its annual Christmas Program with singing and joy. A special thank you goes out to all family and friends of NMRC who came out to celebrate and make the event a success.*









# Adria J.

## BRIAR RIDGE



If you ever want to see pure joy on someone's face, just look at Adria when she is dancing. With a boisterous laugh that can be heard across the dancefloor even above the music, she exudes happiness and energy as she breaks into her favorite line dances. If you know Adria, you know that she loves to have a good time and is often considered to be the life of the party. She enjoys getting dressed up and taking part in a variety of social and recreational events. Adria will often ask the Briar Ridge staff to assist her with glamming up, and they are happy to help her style her hair, put on bright colorful make-up, and paint her nails. Adria is always busy, and she can usually find something to do that brings enjoyment. She is friendly and has a wonderful sense of humor. Even if it is a quiet uneventful type of day, she is going to find someone to talk to that she can share stories with and have a good laugh. But Adria is not just about having fun. She is one of the most helpful, kind, and considerate individuals you'll have the honor of meeting. Adria can often be heard asking others how they are doing or inquiring about their family members. She enjoys cooking and assisting with cleaning the kitchen. You may even hear her singing while she puts away her laundry. If her friends ever need help, she doesn't hesitate to step up and offer support. Her strong work ethic landed her a job at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Mississippi in Blue Springs.

Adria first became part of the NMRC family through short-term stays, before joining the ladies in Weeping Willows cottage.

Less than a year later, Adria moved to the Briar Ridge South Community Home in Nettleton. The "ridge" has not been the same ever since her arrival! She brings out the joy in others with her personality and positivity. Northeast Mississippi is home for Adria, and the community is happy to have her as a part of it. The local shops and restaurants are very familiar with Adria, and she is always happy to chat with them while she's shopping or dining. As a fan of lip gloss, nail polish, hair products, and fragrances, Adria is always ready to head into town on a shopping trip.

One area in which Adria also excels is in sports. Her athleticism has led her to many Special Olympics achievements and accolades. She has won countless ribbons and medals which are on display in her bedroom. She was even awarded the prestigious Briar Ridge Bear Award in 2022 for overall athletic achievement. She is usually one of the first to jump up if there is an opportunity to exercise, walk, do Zumba, or dance. Adria is a natural athlete, but she doesn't just do well at sports; she does so with a smile on her face. Her kindness on and off the field is evident in her sportsmanship conduct. To know Adria is to love her, and if you have the pleasure of meeting her then you can be certain that you've made a friend.





*Timeless  
Memories*







at  
NMRE





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