



For Immediate Release:

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Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation Awards \$137,000 to the Marketing Association for Rehabilitation Centers, Inc. for Economic Parity for People with Disabilities

Fletcher, NC: The Marketing Association for Rehabilitation Centers (MARC) announced today that it has received a \$137,000 grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to support its MARC Parity Initiative, which will create sustained revenue growth and 20 new jobs.

“We are honored and thrilled to win this grant from Z. Smith Reynolds.” said Noel Watts, MARC Executive Director and CEO. “MARC and its members are committed to improving the lives and opportunities of adults with disabilities and disadvantages through vocational preparedness and employment. Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation is partnering with MARC over the next 24 months to support our efforts to improve economic parity between people with and without disabilities and also our efforts to improve ‘capability parity’ among our members.”

“According to statistics from the National Industries for the Severely Disabled, people with disabilities earn on average one fourth to two thirds what people without disabilities earn,” Said Watts. “MARC’s vocational training and preparedness programs have helped improve the earning potential, quality of life and self esteem of the people we serve with disabilities, disadvantages and other barriers to employment. The MARC Parity Initiative is designed to embed for-profit Business Accelerator concepts in to our nonprofit social enterprise member organizations; enabling member community rehabilitation programs to become sustainable economic and social assets for jobs and services in their respective communities. Over the two-year grant period, we project that the MARC Parity Initiative will result in commercial revenue growth of \$1.5MM and the creation of 20 new jobs. New jobs will be targeted for low-income workers with a disability, including a developmental or physical disability or both; or a disadvantage, such as long-term unemployment, mental health or social dependency issues. Over the longer term, three to five year horizon, we expect continued business growth that will support 60-75 full time jobs.”

“We are very pleased with what MARC has been doing to create pathways out of poverty for some of the most vulnerable people in our society,” said Leslie Winner, Executive Director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. “Our prior investments in them have supported the creation or retention of nearly 400 jobs during the worst of this recent recession and also their ability to provide

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training, development and sustained improvement in the lives of the people they serve. We look forward to seeing continued strong outcomes from them through this new initiative.”

About MARC:

The Marketing Association for Rehabilitation Centers is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit whose purpose is to serve people with disabilities throughout a 21-county region of western North Carolina that is roughly the size of Maryland. MARC serves by developing and implementing collaborative programs among its 14 member programs located throughout this service area. MARC was founded in 1978.

About Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Inc.

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was established in 1936 as a memorial to the youngest son of the founder of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. In that year the brother and two sisters of Z. Smith Reynolds, R.J. Reynolds, Jr., Mary Reynolds Babcock, and Nancy Susan Reynolds Bagley, provided that their inheritance from his estate would go to the establishment of a trust for the benefit of the people of North Carolina. One of the initial trustees of the Foundation was Z. Smith Reynolds’ uncle William Neal Reynolds, who at his death in 1951 created a trust that now provides a portion of the Foundations annual income.

In its history, the Foundation, as the beneficiary of the income from the Z. Smith Reynolds Trust and the W.N. Reynolds Trust, has now made grants totaling more than \$460 million to recipients in all of North Carolina’s 100 counties. The Foundation currently gives special attention to certain focus areas: community economic development, the environment, and democracy and civic engagement; pre-collegiate education; and social injustice and equity.

In 1986 the Foundation, as a part of its fiftieth anniversary observance, established the Nancy Susan Reynolds Awards to recognize people who have made a difference in leadership in their communities and have gone largely unrecognized. Also, in May 1989 the Foundation’s Board of Trustees established a sabbatical program to reward individual leaders in nonprofit organizations who have made exceptional commitments of time, talent, and energy to their positions.

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