



Dear Woodlake,

We received a proposal from MICC, Minnesota Independence College and Community (formerly MLC, Minnesota Life College), a non-profit to help teach and train college aged kids on the autism spectrum. Specifically, MICC would like to create a space for their Careers Program at Woodlake.

ABOUT MICC?

MICC's Careers Program prepares young adults on the Autism spectrum with vocational skills and skill-based training which eventually leads to employment. There is a need to expand the office and classroom space for participants in the careers program.

Minnesota Independence College and Community is a skills-based training program for individuals on the Autism spectrum or those with similar learning differences. The CDC recently released new data statistics that estimates the average number of individuals with Autism prevalence increased from 1 in 68 to 1 in 59. MICC enrolls students from not only Minnesota but also from across the United States. Individuals enrolled in MICC's programming have the common goal of leading fulfilling, independent lives. Created in 1996, MLC's goal has been to equip individuals with the necessary skills to successfully transition after high school into productive, self-reliant adults.

Young adults on the Autism spectrum represent a population at great risk for unemployment and poverty in adulthood with less than half of young adults on the spectrum holding any kind of paid employment within four years of graduating from high school. Missed opportunities for continuing education or workforce participation lead to increased levels of social isolation and depression. At the same time, there are several industries (e.g., retail and hospitality) that are struggling to find qualified, skilled workers. MICC recognizes these community needs and created a Vocational Certificate Program, addressing the needs of the disability community and the needs of local employers who want and need skilled applicants. By combining traditional classroom learning with real-life working experience, MICC enhances the employability of our graduates and helps provide a solution that greatly benefits the Autism community and the local workforce.

MICC'S MISSION

The mission of Minnesota Independence Community and College is to transform the lives of individuals and families affected by Autism spectrum disorders or learning differences. Since 1996, MICC has worked to create a community of resources, helping to build independence by teaching individuals on the spectrum how to successfully and confidently transition from high school into safe, healthy, productive, and independent adults. Young adults with Autism spectrum disorders and other learning differences represent a population at risk for future need, both with economic assistance and social support, while also presenting a population with tremendous opportunity for greater community and economic participation.

The number of Minnesota students diagnosed with Autism spectrum disorders and other learning differences is growing, while most programming focuses on the early intervention stage - preschool-aged children from 3-5. Young adults on

the Autism spectrum find themselves without support and programming after high school. As a result, young adults are in need of specialized vocational training and social supports that help them successfully transition after high school into educational and/or job placements that allow them to fulfill their potential and live productive, independent lives. MICC has maintained a successful vocational program. With the increased need for programs like MICC, the space to provide support services is limited. There is a need to expand the program.

VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

MICC has created a Vocational Certification Program. The certificate program is an additional component of our vocational training that enables our participants to combine classroom learning with job-skill development in real-life workplace settings.

In partnership with MICC job developers, students select a certificate program that interests them. Choices for the 2019-2020 program year include: culinary, hospitality, health services and retail. Students then complete a training program, career exploration, and focused internship that allows them to receive a vocational certificate from Century College, along with 35 continuing education credits, that may be transferable to other institutions for future educational purposes.

MICC partners with local employers to provide real-life practicum sites within the community, providing on-the-job training for students. The employers understand the positive impact that real-world experiences can provide. The on-site instructors, paired with the employers' professional staff, help our students interpret their experiences in real time with the resources and supports available to help guide them through the day-to-day challenges that may arise on the job. In addition to the practicum experience that program participants attend off campus, the students spend several hours a week developing various vocational and job-related interpersonal skills in the classroom. The ultimate goal of our Careers Program is to enhance our graduate's vocational skills and employability.

REQUEST FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH WOODLAKE

Objective 1: To create a learning environment for participants in the Careers Program at MICC

Objective 2: To create office space for the staff within the Careers Program at MICC

MICC has had various partnerships with Woodlake in the past and are currently using our building occasionally, renting space for \$400/month. MICC has seen a significant increase in enrollment, therefore wants to enlarge their footprint at Woodlake.

The Leadership Board felt MICC's mission fits with Woodlake's and there was excitement about a potential increased partnership. A side effect of our past partnership with MICC has been seeing their students in worship and we currently employ two of their past graduates on our custodial staff. We hope that this partnership increases with a larger MICC footprint.

The large part of the Leadership Board's discussion concerning this proposal regarded space and its use. MICC proposed:

- Exclusive use of Classroom A (including the storage closet) and the Nursery.
- Monday through Friday use of Room B.
- Use of the kitchen for approximately 8 hours per week.
- Occasional use of Rooms C & D.
- Infrequent use of Fellowship Hall

MICC would also make leaseholder improvements on the rooms they retain exclusive rights to. Leaseholder improvements would primarily involve converting the Nursery into individual offices. For this increased use of the church, their rent would increase to \$4,300 per month. In addition, MICC is proposing to sign a 4-year lease. MICC carries a \$3 million-dollar umbrella policy for liability which would cover their students and instructors at Woodlake.

MICC's proposal, created a lively discussion on the Leadership Board and it was decided that this could be possible, if those that use these spaces are able to find other suitable places for ministry. It was determined that the church supports the mission of MICC, and that the Ministries of Woodlake would be able to find new space to continue their ministries of Families Moving Forward, Nursery, Sunday School, and others that use the spaces to be designated for exclusive use.

TIMELINE

May 2nd, approached by Amy Gudmestad, Executive Director, Tim Peterson, Director of Finance, and Ben Lentz, Director of Development to discuss partnership and rental space options for next school year.

May 23rd, heard back from MICC about their interest and needs to find a solution for rental space options for 2018 school year.

June 6th, met with MICC's leadership team to discuss possible lease agreements.

June 13th, MICC reviewed space options again and continued lease discussions.

June 14th, discussed lease options with Leadership Board and majority vote approved outline of the lease as stated above.

June 15th-July 10th, discussed proposal with key stakeholders involved with the space MICC will use. Continued lease negotiations with MICC.

July 11th, MICC agreed to lease agreement (pending contract review by MICC's lawyer.)

August 13th, 1st day of classes at MICC

QUESTIONS LEADERSHIP BOARD CONSIDERED

- Is the mission of MICC compatible with the ministry at Woodlake?
- Does MICC's proposal help further Woodlake 2020?
- What are the benefits of this proposal?
- What are the drawbacks of this proposal?
- Is this a faithful use of Woodlake's building space?

Please consider the following and let me know your thoughts. This is an important decision for the church and we value your feedback. Join us for a congregational information session Sunday, July 15th in the fellowship hall at either 11:15a.m. or 11:45a.m. to learn more and ask any questions you might have. If you aren't able to attend the July 15th congregational meeting, feel free to speak with me at any time or any Leadership Board member about any questions you may have.

Blessings,

Pastor Micah