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## PRESS RELEASE

### MDI Honors Hibbing Graduates of In-House Training Program

#### ***Program is Helping Meet Individual Needs for Learning and Skill Improvement While Supporting Regional Workforce Development***

HIBBING, July 17, 2017 – A celebration was held at the MDI facility in Hibbing on Friday, July 14, to recognize nine MDI employees for their completion of Work Skills 101, an in-house training program developed and launched by MDI in April 2017. The celebration was for the second cohort of MDI employees to graduate the six-week, 13 session workforce development program.

“These individuals worked very hard during the Work Skills 101 program and spent time getting to know both themselves and their co-workers better,” said Paula Frings, Owner/CEO of Maven Perspectives, who helped develop the curriculum and facilitates the sessions. “They were asked to answer tough questions such as ‘Am I providing an honest day’s work at my job at MDI?’ and ‘What is my vision of working in the community?’ They also learned about important topics such as a proper handshake, self-discipline, personality types, and health and safety.”

The primary goal of Work Skills 101 is to provide an opportunity for MDI employees to grow both personally and professionally. Secondary goals include helping MDI increase the skill level and productivity of employees and contributing to regional workforce development. Work Skills 101 consists of pre- and post-assessments of participants as well as structured learning about professional and life skills. The program is strengths-based and customized for each participant, so they have the opportunity to focus on work and goals for self-improvement or career advancement. Fitting to MDI’s mission, the classes are offered to and attended by employees without disabilities learning side-by-side with their co-workers who have disabilities.

“Integrated learning is a true innovation in the field, it aligns with the state’s overall shift away from non-integrated settings and opportunities toward integrated, community-based options,” said MDI Director of Employment Services, Jeanne Eglinton. “MDI is regarded as a successful model of integrated employment, however, the implementation of an integrated training program takes this concept to a new level.”

Each graduate of Work Skills 101 receives a certificate of completion, which they can use as a resume-builder for future job searches. Opportunities for advancement are also periodically available at MDI, and MDI leadership is hopeful the new learning will result in internal promotions.

“Work Skills 101 is a great fit in our region because it helps address the employment crisis we’re already starting to see,” said Mark Phillips, commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, who was in attendance at the Hibbing celebration. “More and more, we’re going to be seeing opportunities for people with disabilities, and this program helps build the needed job and life skills. I was especially glad to hear that MDI is also moving toward expanding the program to include other community members.”

During closing remarks at the event in Hibbing, Jeanne Eglinton announced that MDI had just been awarded a grant from Minnesota State (formerly MNSCU) to help expand the scope of Work Skills 101. MDI is also waiting for word on a number of other grants that could help expand the program further.

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“I’m thrilled about Work Skills 101, and it has been an honor to be a part of this celebration,” said Representative Julie Sandstede (DFL – Hibbing). “This program is helping build ground skills for individuals, which will help them advance here in their work or move into positions with other employers in a variety of settings. This type of programming is good for our region, and I’m excited to watch it develop.”

### Captions

During a July 14th event in Hibbing, MDI recognized new graduates of the Work Skills 101 training program and presented them with certificates of completion. The graduates will be able to use their certificates and strengthened professional skills to improve and advance in their chosen lines of work.

Tandy Tetteh, a production worker, has worked at MDI in Hibbing for just over a year. She says Work Skills 101 taught her about resume development, how to get along with coworkers, and how to problem solve.

Angela Anacker has worked for MDI for more than two years and is currently a production worker in Hibbing. During the Work Skills 101 training, she developed two goals. One was to operate a top welder at MDI Hibbing at or over quota by September 2017. Her personal goal was to purchase a car and save enough money for the first year of insurance by the end of March 2018.

Korey Thiel has been with MDI for approximately five years and currently helps make boxes for one of MDI’s largest customers. He learned skills, such as giving a good handshake, during Work Skills 101, and also set a goal of working one to two hours every day on making lamps, clocks, and other items from diamond willow. He hopes one day to turn this hobby into a business.

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### About MDI

[MDI](#) is a leader in manufacturing corrugated standard and custom plastic packaging solutions, production assembly, and environmental services. Through a Social Enterprise model, MDI creates self-sufficiency by providing meaningful work in an inclusive environment, with nearly half of the workforce comprised of people with disabilities. Headquartered in the Twin Cities, with locations in Minneapolis, Hibbing, Grand Rapids, and Cohasset, MDI offers an unparalleled customer experience, while providing high quality products and services to businesses and organizations.

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