



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031



A Message from Sister Lidia Valli, SSJBC

Executive Director, Marian Center School & Services

Dear Friends,

In just three years we will be celebrating our 65th Anniversary. Since 1963, the Marian Center has been a place where children with diverse abilities are seen as, not problems to be solved, but as persons to be cherished. Starting at school age, individuals with diverse abilities have been receiving support and services at our school. The Adult Day Training Program provides continued services that empower them to find their place in the community. Services include job placement and activities that increase self-esteem and promote a sense of belonging.

As Sisters of St. Joseph Benedict Cottolengo, our Congregation has long devoted itself to the mission of love and service to those most vulnerable. Here in Miami, that same spirit has guided our every effort since the beginning. Many professional lay people have shared our mission.

The Strategic Plan is more than a roadmap – it is a promise. It is our commitment to offer the very best in education and therapy as well as care to every student and family entrusted to us.

Rooted in the Gospel's call to love, charity and justice; we will expand our programs, strengthen family support and build the financial foundation that is needed to ensure that no child is ever turned away.

Just as our founders laid the groundwork for the Marian Center's first six decades; this plan establishes a foundation – both economic and cultural – that will carry this mission forward for decades to come. The strength of the Marian Center does not rest on any one individual, but on the enduring values, community support, and unwavering commitment to those we serve.

With your partnership, we are strengthening a service that will thrive well into the future, remaining a vital resource for families and for our community. I invite you to walk with us. With your support, the Marian Center will continue to be a beacon of dignity, compassion and hope for generations to come.

“Every time a human being does something to improve another human being, we really do something good for all humanity”.

– Sister Lucia Ceccotti, Marian Center Foundress–

May Our Lord Bless You!



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Pillar I

Financial Sustainability



From its founding in 1963, the Marian Center has always opened its doors regardless of a family's ability to pay. For over sixty years, we have ensured that finances are never a barrier to education or care. This pillar builds on that legacy, safeguarding our future through strong fundraising and careful stewardship of resources.

Focus Areas:

- Grow the Marian Center Fund to enable operational flexibility
- Maximize access to state and federal funds
- Develop new revenue streams

Actions:

- Hire a Development Director to lead fundraising efforts
- Raise money to enable the Marian Center endowment to sustain operational activities
- Strengthen annual giving, grants, and major donor cultivation
- Initiate state appropriation request process

Impact: A stronger financial foundation ensures Marian Center can serve families for generations to come.





Pillar II

Program Excellence & Client Outcomes

Since 1963, the Marian Center has believed every child can learn and flourish when given the right support. For decades, our individualized classrooms and therapies have empowered clients with diverse abilities to reach their potential. This pillar continues that legacy by expanding programs and ensuring students thrive.

Focus Areas:

- Expansion of existing programs
- New programs that enhance the client experience with a focus on independence
- Introduce innovative strategies for communication and sensory support
- Ensure an environment that is conducive to learning and development

Actions:

- Establish an 18–21 post-secondary program focused on independence, vocational training, and community integration
- Expand and strengthen speech, occupational, and physical therapy services
- Create and execute a campus maintenance master plan that includes the hardening and beautification of existing infrastructure

Impact: Students gain the tools, confidence, and skills to thrive in school, at home, and in the community.





Pillar III

Community Awareness & Engagement

From the beginning, the Marian Center has been rooted in the Archdiocese of Miami and the broader South Florida community. Pastors, principals, and families have always helped spread the word about our mission. This pillar renews that commitment, elevating our name recognition and deepening community connections.

Focus Areas:

- Increase marketing and brand recognition in South Florida
- Publicly celebrate our success
- Share progress with the community

Actions:

- Partner with principals and pastors across the archdiocese to increase referrals
- Build visibility in parishes, schools, businesses and local media
- Host open houses, tours, and community events
- Expand our digital presence and storytelling

Impact: Greater recognition leads to increased enrollment, stronger partnerships, and broader community support.





Pillar IV

Family & Client Support

At the Marian Center, supporting the family has always been central to supporting the child. From our earliest days, Sisters and staff have walked alongside parents and caregivers, offering compassion and guidance. This pillar strengthens that commitment by expanding resources that empower families to thrive.

Focus Areas:

- Hire for the mission
- Identify areas of need for additional support
- Deepen collaboration between teachers, therapists, and parents

Actions:

- Create a Parent Support Coordinator role to connect families with resources
- Provide workshops and support groups for parents
- Offer social-emotional support for clients and families

Impact: Families feel empowered, supported, and fully engaged in their child's journey.





Pillar V

Organizational Strength & Governance

What began with a handful of Sisters in 1963 has grown into a school, day training program, and residence that serve over 100 individuals annually. That growth has always been anchored in strong, mission-driven leadership. This pillar builds on that history by strengthening governance and investing in people.

Focus Areas:

- Strengthen the Board of Directors
- Dedicate resources to grow and improve our staff
- Keep the Marian Center mission at the heart of all that we do

Actions:

- Actively recruit members of the community to bolster the board
- Ensure solid succession planning is in place to ensure continuity of operations
- Hire a Project Manager to oversee plan implementation
- Provide ongoing professional development for faculty and staff
- Review and reaffirm our mission statement regularly

Impact: A strong, mission-driven organization ensures accountability, sustainability, and long-term success.



Rooted in the Gospel and inspired by the Sisters of St. Joseph Benedict Cottolengo, the Marian Center remains committed to its mission:

“To educate and empower persons with diverse abilities, and nurture them to wholeness, following the Gospel and the Church’s call to love, charity, and justice.”

This Strategic Plan strengthens the foundation built over the past six decades and ensures that the values and quality of care that define the Marian Center will endure. Through these pillars, we will expand opportunities for those we serve, strengthen our organization, and secure the resources needed to sustain this vital ministry well into the future.

With God’s grace and the support of our community, the Marian Center will remain a beacon of hope, compassion, and dignity for generations to come.

To make a contribution or learn more about The Marian Center please visit • www.mariancenterschool.org

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