

Faces of Bay County

Pursuing Her Dreams by Helping You Pursue Your Dreams

Meet Marlana Cork

By Ben Champagne

Marlana Cork is a go-getter in the Bay City community. She volunteers for several groups that we will get into later. But at the heart of everything she does, for work, fun, and play is a sense of helping to illustrate the best of what Bay County has to offer. She has worked in the Great Lakes Bay Region for most of her career and has made in-roads with many people and organizations. Currently, she serves with the Bay County Chamber of Commerce in workforce development. So she is a big push behind making the region attractive to live and work in.

Marlana is a graduate of Bridgeport Community High School and Davenport University. Over the last 14+ years, she has worked in several capacities in Workforce Development in the Great Lakes Bay Region. Marlana said, "I have worked in several capacities such as a Career Coach, Trade Adjustment Assistance Team Leader with the Arnold Center and Delta College, Admissions Representative with Davenport University, and as a Staffing Recruiter with Adecco Staffing."

You can find Marlana at the Chamber of Commerce working with the Hey, Bay City! initiative (The purpose of this initiative is to retain and attract talent to the Bay County area.) She works with those looking for internships with K-12 professionals and assists students with career exploration and education needs.

Marlana would like our Bay County neighbors to know about her passion for seeing our community grow, of course, in a positive direction. "I look at myself as being a connector and servant to the community. Anytime someone needs a connection to a business or employment opportunity, I try to position myself as that person to assist in any capacity I can."

We asked Marlana about her greatest accomplishment, and this is what she had to say:

Other than raising my children, my proudest moment was when I finally earned my Bachelors and Master's degrees. When I graduated high school, I was able to get a pretty good-paying job, where I earned a nice income. I said to myself, why do I need a degree? I was earning as much, if not more, than those with an advanced degree. When I

was in school, I struggled quite a bit. So, I decided to take the easy way. Then I got married, and we had our son Charles. After the first year, I saw how demanding parenthood can be. The employer I was working with at the time was not a family, friendly organization. I missed my husband and our kids so much; I said I can't do this! The employment opportunities that would allow me to advance my career with the schedule I wanted required a degree. So, I promised myself and my family that I was going to school and finishing my degree. It took over ten years! After all the struggles, the highs and lows, I finally finished! Then I was crazy enough to return to school and complete my Masters degree in 2019. So, to say the least, dedication and perseverance were all that was on my mind.



Volunteering is close to her heart, so she serves with three different organizations. She is a current board member with Saginaw Community Action Committee (Saginaw, MI), and a board member with United We Go! (Bay City, MI), and lastly, Great Lakes Bay Health Centers (Great Lakes Bay Region). She also volunteers with her Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc, and my church-Ephesus SDA Church. So to say she is busy probably isn't saying enough!

When she's not busy working, she spends time with her family. Her husband, Charles L. Cork, and her children, Trenton Cork Sr., Charles Cork II, and Caleb Cork. She's also blessed to have a grandchild! Trenton Cork, Jr. With all the boys in the house, she says, "We are very much a sports family. Everything we do as a family is centered around our boys' activities. From golf to basketball, bowling, and track. Our absolute favorite thing is hanging out with family and watching the Bay City fireworks. We have such a great time!"

We are so happy to have made her acquaintance, and you should be too! She is always willing to lend a helping hand to those who need it and to put a friendly face on Bay County. A lesson she likes to live by is paying it forward! My friends and spouse would say I'm passionate about my family and helping others succeed; paying it forward is important to me! So give her a chance to pay her success forward and come to her with your dreams.