

Hitting your professional stride within 10 years of graduating college isn't always easy. But for Meijer Distribution Center Unit Director Marcelo Olivarez, it's an accomplishment that's being celebrated. Marcelo was recently honored by Central Michigan University for its '[10 Within 10](#)' award, which recognizes exceptional achievements by alumni within a decade of graduation.

Marcelo graduated from CMU in 2009 with a bachelor's degree in sport management and again in 2012 with a master's degree in sport administration. Marcelo began his career with Meijer in 2014 and has since worked his way up to his current role as Unit Director in one of our busiest distribution centers in Lansing, Mich.

In his award profile, Marcelo said he's most proud of how he's been able to leverage the experience and knowledge that he gained at college into a successful business career. He said it's inspiring to recognize that he's only two generations removed from grandparents who traveled from Texas to Michigan as migrant workers during the summer months to pick strawberries. Now, their grandson is the director of one of the highest volume grocery distribution centers in the country. Marcelo says his grandparents' sacrifices, along with his opportunities at CMU, allowed him to change the course of his family tree.

While these accomplishments are impressive in themselves, Marcelo is even more exceptional because he accomplished them all with one hand. Born without a right hand, he never let that stop him from achieving his goals.

July 26 is [National Disability Independence Day](#), a federally-recognized day to celebrate the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). When asked to reflect on what this means to him, Marcelo said prior to the signing of the ADA, individuals with disabilities were openly denied access to life-changing events that affected their ability to play, work and live the same way as non-disabled people.

Now, 31 years later, Marcelo says people with disabilities are more empowered and have opportunities both personally and professionally that were not available prior to the signing of the ADA.

"I'm a firm believer that a job or career shouldn't define you as a person, however it's important to recognize the impact a job can have on one's life regardless if someone is disabled vs. non-disabled," he said. "As a disabled team member, I cherish the opportunity to be a part of this team because we get the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than ourselves."

Marcelo finds great pride in his work and his community. He says, at Meijer, his contributions matter and bring value to himself and others.

"Each and every day we have the opportunity to enrich lives in the communities we serve," he said.

Having recently been named a [Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion](#) for the fifth straight year, we're proud to play a part in Marcelo's story and the stories of all our team members.

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Additional assets available online: [\(2\)](#)

<https://meijercommunity.com/Award-Winning-Team-Member-Reflects-on-Career-in-Honor-of-National-Disability-Independence-Day>