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## Marion Cultural Alliance expands with art-and-gift shop

**OCALA, FLA.** – The Marion Cultural Alliance (MCA) has selected Circle Square Commons for the first step of a long-range expansion program by opening its first art-and- gift shop in western Marion County at Circle Square Commons – the cultural and entertainment hub at On Top of the World Communities, just off SW 80th Street.

According to Jo Salyers, general manager for Circle Square Commons, the art-and- gift shop will present a wide range of artwork produced by local artists. Proceeds from those art sales will help fund many grants and other financial aid provided by the alliance to promote the arts in Marion County.

The MCA is a non-profit organization created to increase and support cultural activities in the county. Since 2001, MCA has provided more than \$130,000 in grants to various artists, artistic events and other artistic efforts including the highly successful public-art project Horse Fever.

Aside from its new location at Circle Square Commons, MCA also operates the Brick City Center for the Arts near downtown Ocala's historic town square.

Although the art-and-gift shop are open for business, the official grand opening will take place in October. Currently, MCA is hosting the Art in Bloom exhibit, featuring 25 local artists, until July 5.

Art and gift shop hours are noon-5 p.m Tuesday and Wednesday; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday; and noon-7 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Circle Square Commons was conceived as the social hub of On Top of the World Communities, the 12,972-acre central Florida community named one of America's 100 Best Master-Planned Communities Where to Retire magazine.

Featuring traditional, small-town architectural influences, Circle Square Commons brings entertainment, dining and ... most important ... education to residents of On Top of the World and surrounding communities through its 10,000-square-foot Master the Possibilities Education Center.

Built in 2006, the center offers 600 classes, lectures, presentations and film series each year to about 3,500 students, who are expected to rack up 17,000 enrollments this year. About 80 percent of the Master the Possibilities faculty have graduate degrees and roughly 50 percent have taught on the college level.

Also open here since 2007 is the Circle Square Cultural Center, Ocala's largest venue for concerts, art exhibits, conventions and social functions.

The Town Square at Circle Square Commons also provides free entertainment every Friday and Saturday evening, while Marion County's oldest, continuously operated Farmer's Market sets up here every Thursday.

For leasing information, call Ellison Property Management at (352) 351-0055. Want to learn more? Visit [CircleSquareCommons.com](http://CircleSquareCommons.com).