



UCP of Greater Cleveland
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SPRING 2018 EDITION



Embracing Children. Empowering Adults.

CHARLIE'S STORY

Charlie is a charming five-year-old who is the definition of a social butterfly; he is quick to make new friends and always introduces himself to be sure people will remember his name. He is absolutely unforgettable.

After being adopted from China early last year, the only English word Charlie knew when he and his family first met was "chocolate," his favorite sweet treat. Four short months later he was speaking nonstop in fluent English!

In China, Charlie was repeatedly told he would never be able to use his arms or his legs after being diagnosed with a condition that causes weak joints, but once he was home with his new family, he didn't take "no" for an answer! According to Charlie's mom, he is "always asking if he can try new things and every day he surprises himself with what he can accomplish."

Charlie looks forward to the moment in the morning when his shoes are on and he can show his mom how he is able to go from a sitting position to standing up on his own, something he was once told he would never do.

Charlie has been coming to LeafBridge, a Center of Excellence for Children with Disabilities at UCP of Greater Cleveland, since June 2017 for weekly occupational and physical therapy sessions and completed his first *Steps to Independence* session last summer. *Steps to Independence* is a unique, intensive therapy approach that gives children with cerebral palsy and other neuro-muscular conditions an extra "push" to quickly achieve developmental goals such as crawling, standing and walking.

When he is not asking to take a snack break, Charlie is making great strides in therapy, working on building strength in his arms and legs. Charlie recently received his first power wheelchair which offers him more independence and access to the world around him. He was recently seen racing across the agency lobby, giggling loudly and begging to go faster!

Charlie's therapists and family are ecstatic with the progress Charlie is making and are looking forward to a future full of possibilities. With the addition of his new power wheelchair, there is no telling where this social butterfly will be off to next.



UCP of Greater Cleveland's Two Centers of Excellence,
LeafBridge for children and OakLeaf for adults:



FIND UCP OF GREATER CLEVELAND AT:



WWW.UCPCLEVELAND.ORG | 216.791.8363

Matching gifts are a great way to increase the impact of your gift! Contact your Human Resources Department to see if your company has a matching gifts program and how you can participate.

Upcoming Events

Race to Empower 10k, 5k & One Mile Fun Run

Sunday, May 6, 2018
7:00 am Packet Pick-up & 9:00 am Start
Start & Finish: 10011 Euclid Ave, Cleveland

Tee Up for UCP Golf Outing

Monday, June 4, 2018
11:00 am to 7:00 pm
Canterbury Golf Club

UCP of Greater Cleveland 68th Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 28, 2018
5:30 to 8:30 pm
100th Bomb Group

Around the World Gala

Saturday, September 15, 2018
6:00 to 11:00 pm
InterContinental Hotel

For more information on any of these events, please call **216-791-8363 ext. 1232** or visit: ucpcleveland.org/news-and-events/events

Embracing Children. Empowering Adults.

Hello and welcome to our spring newsletter! We are pleased to offer you a brief peek into our activities of the last few months at UCP of Greater Cleveland, and our two Centers of Excellence- LeafBridge for Children with Disabilities and OakLeaf for Adults with Disabilities.

UCP is proud to have been a leader in our industry over the last 68 years and is well poised to take on the challenges that will move us into the future. Our board and leadership team are continually seeking opportunities to expand our services, trial new approaches and pilot new programs. 2017 was a very active year.

LeafBridge developed three new services in 2017 that have potential to expand upon those we serve and meet critical gaps in services for children with disabilities. We established a Feeding Clinic for children with barriers to swallowing and eating food orally due to neuromuscular challenges that often accompany cerebral palsy and other motor disorders. LeafBridge also established an Assistive Technology (AT) Mobility Clinic to help children and their families identify and find funding for AT equipment to access the world around them, including wheelchairs, gait trainers, communication devices, special seating, sleeping positioning and more. Perhaps most exciting, we designed a special camp last summer, Camp LeafBridge, for children with physical disabilities, which provides the opportunity for children to experience the fun and joy of camp activities, while also focusing on therapy and health and wellness. All three programs were developed as a result of our expertise in serving children with significant and complex physical disabilities and understanding the unique challenges they face in gaining greater independence.

OakLeaf continues to evolve during its third year of Project Transformation, a process that is expanding our approach to our adult services, focusing on engaging individuals of all levels of ability in community-based activities. 2017 saw the implementation of many of our strategies, including the arrangement of an incredible number of individuals to volunteer and participate in the community. In addition, OakLeaf Partners Employment programs placed 114 adults into jobs, an all-time high number in our 30 years of community employment services.



During 2018, we will be leading our Board of Directors and agency staff through an extensive strategic planning process as we look toward the future of our agency and services for individuals with disabilities. The issues before us are complex, but our board and staff are determined to find real solutions that will move our agency and those we serve onward to meet these challenges. We extend a big "Thank you!" to you as donors who have supported us in the past and invite you to continue to partner with us as we move forward.

Thank you,

Trish Otter and Julie Jackson
President & CEO; Chair, Board of Directors

2017 BY THE NUMBERS

59 YOUTH
served in the Assistive Technology Mobility Clinic during its pilot year

13 CHILDREN
participated in the inaugural year of Camp LeafBridge

114 ADULTS
placed into jobs (compared to 87 in 2016)

53 HIGH SCHOOLERS
participated in summer jobs/internships (compared to 37 in 2016)

95% OF OAKLEAF HOMES RESIDENTS
participated in monthly community activities



OakLeaf Partners

In March, OakLeaf Partners and its Business Advisory Committee hosted "Connecting DisABILITY & Employment," an informative panel discussion and breakfast for area businesses to learn how they can add value to their companies by employing individuals with abilities of all levels. The event, which aligned well with Development Disabilities Awareness Month, featured Keynote Speaker Jeremy Shapira, head of special projects inclusion and diversity at Giant Eagle. Mr. Shapira addressed the history of employing people who are differently abled at Giant Eagle, one of UCP's employment partners.

OakLeaf Partners recognizes that businesses work to hire the best person for the job. When it comes to hiring people with disabilities, getting started is often the hardest part for employers, but OakLeaf Partners has the expertise to assist in this process.

As the preeminent private agency meeting the disability hiring needs of employers in Northeast Ohio, OakLeaf Partners has over three decades of experience matching qualified, job ready individuals, who happen to have a disability, with jobs in the community. We are a single point of contact for meeting hiring needs through the offering of free services, which include pre-screening and training motivated candidates, assisting with the pre-employment and onboarding processes, providing on-site and/or off-site job coaching to the new employee and providing disability awareness training to staff.

For more information on how OakLeaf Partners can serve your hiring needs, please call Director of OakLeaf Services, Paul Soprano at (216)791-8363 ext. 1258 or email psoprano@ucpcleveland.org.

FEATURED AGENCY PARTNER

This edition's Featured Agency Partner is the TEGNA Foundation, a corporate foundation sponsored by TEGNA, Inc., a multi-media company serving communities in 39 markets across the U.S. through empowering news stories, impactful investigations and innovative marketing services. Cleveland's local TEGNA station is WKYC Channel 3.

The TEGNA Foundation is driven by their strong purpose of serving the greater good of their communities. Their values - inclusion, integrity, innovation, impact and results - help them better understand and serve those in need. The Foundation also supports agencies and programs that celebrate the diversity of the communities they serve. TEGNA Foundation's mission and values align well with UCP of Greater Cleveland's mission to empower children and adults with disabilities to advance their independence, productivity and inclusion in the community. UCP's OakLeaf Partners is a proud recipient of a TEGNA Foundation grant in 2018, supporting our high school-to-work transition program, Project SEARCH. This program provides opportunities for high school seniors with disabilities to participate in three 10-week internships with the goal of becoming employed within six months of graduation. Program results are exceptional.

UCP's President & CEO, Trish Otter, was recently featured on WKYC's "We the People," along with other TEGNA grant recipients, highlighting the work TEGNA supports through nonprofits in the Cleveland community.

