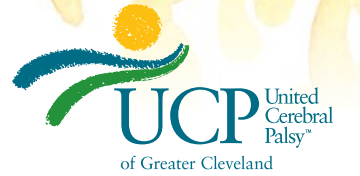




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# Embracing Children. Empowering Adults.

When the doors of the UCP of Greater Cleveland Iris S. and Bert L. Wolstein Center opened in 1999, a playground was newly constructed just outside its front entrance. However, over time, the outdoor area became weathered and worn – to the point of being nearly unsafe for use by UCP clients and staff. As this happened, the need to completely renovate the open-air space so critically used for therapeutic and recreational activities became increasingly more apparent; but, for years, the high price tag stood in the way of making the dream a reality.

Trish Otter, President and C.E.O, spoke of this dream at our 2019 gala during which she urgently invited members of the community to make an impact on the renovation of the playground. Two guests in attendance that evening, Amy and Mike Southard, were intrigued by the opportunity to be involved with such a project. Not long after the event, Amy and Mike committed to a transformative gift through their foundation, Crofton Cares, which catapulted us over the capital campaign goal by significantly adding to donations made by Medical Mutual, Solana, and Megan and Gordon Short, thereby making the new space come to life. Staff members invested countless hours scanning catalogs to finalize selections and layouts to achieve maximum use of the area and ensure it to be as adaptive and inclusive as possible. On a cold and snowy day in late January 2020, Freedom Construction Services donated their time by providing a crew of workers to demolish all of the outdated and



Amy and Mike Southard with their daughter and son-in-law, Ashley and Mike London, at the playground dedication

damaged surfacing and equipment. Construction and installation began in March and, although delayed due to pandemic-related shutdowns, was complete for UCP's reopening in July.

On October 10, a beautiful fall day, we officially dedicated the Amy and Mike Southard Adaptive & Inclusive Playground at UCP of Greater Cleveland with a small, intimate, and distanced gathering. In just three months, the new playground has hosted many therapy sessions, a butterfly release, bubble parties, staff lunch breaks, and more. The bright-colored playground greets all clients, staff, and guests upon entering our facility and has proven to be a shining star during an otherwise dark time.

To learn more, watch our playground video on UCP of Greater Cleveland's YouTube Channel: [www.youtube.com/ucpcleveland](http://www.youtube.com/ucpcleveland)



UCP clients enjoying the new playground during their therapy sessions

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](http://WWW.UCPCLEVELAND.ORG) | 216.791.8363

UCP of Greater Cleveland is celebrating our 70th anniversary this year! Help us honor UCP's legacy by making a donation using the enclosed envelope or online at [www.ucpcleveland.org](http://www.ucpcleveland.org). Be sure to check out our 70th anniversary video on our YouTube channel and/or follow us on social media so you can stay up to date on all the happenings at UCP!

# Embracing Children. Empowering Adults.

Dear Donors,

COVID hit in mid-March. We suspended our facility-based services and furloughed one third of the UCP staff. We continued our work in our group homes and, where possible, in the community working with our clients on their path to employment. In some cases, that involved placing them into jobs and in others, assisting them with their application for unemployment dollars. The UCP staff stepped up to continue to operate programs and serve as many people as possible, both in-person and virtually. Our administrative team brilliantly managed all of the complex pandemic related HR matters, continued to raise money from generous donors and to obtain government relief dollars that have sustained us thus far. Our facilities and maintenance staff's work has become crucial to our continued operations. Our Chief Operations Officer, Beth Lucas, and her collective team of nursing and operations staff carefully devised a pandemic operational plan that has kept staff and clients healthy since re-opening facility-based services in July. The Agency's Board of Directors has fully engaged in every way to support and guide us. This was a test of epic proportions and UCP of Greater Cleveland has passed it with flying colors. I have never felt a greater sense of pride to be part of this organization and I hope that you feel the same knowing that you have lifted us and allowed us to continue our work.



As all others, we know not what we will face in 2021. What we DO know is that we need to continue to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities in their home settings, in therapy, and in internship/employment services. We cannot allow for regression in the children's physical development that will take months if not years to recover. We cannot allow for adults to be isolated in their homes and not receive the necessary supports. We cannot allow for high school grads and adults to stall in their preparation for and success in becoming employed.

David, pictured below, is a perfect example of our need to continue to do what we do! With your support, we will continue his physical therapy sessions during which he is learning to walk. If we are forced to close our building again, we will serve him virtually. He recently looked his therapist in the eye and stated in his three-year-old voice, "I need your help." His determination and hard work, the support of his older brother and parents, and our expertise will make it possible for him to walk sooner than many thought he would. David and his family thank you.

Thank you and Happy Holidays.

Trish Otter  
President & CEO



Our Memphis House clients and staff reminding us that we're all in this together



LeafBridge has resumed in-person therapy services, while also continuing virtual treatments for some clients



David walking in his stander

## SAM'S STORY



Sam Resnik is an IT professional who currently works for Shaker Heights City School District repairing student Chromebooks and setting up teacher workstations. Sam is very knowledgeable in his field and has even built his own computer. Sam also happens to have Asperger syndrome.

Three years ago, Sam was underemployed and, although he had a good accumulation of skills as well as an associate degree in the IT field from Cuyahoga Community College, he was finding it difficult to obtain employment. He applied for services with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and was referred to the OakLeaf Partners job placement team at UCP. After meeting with then OakLeaf Partners Job Developer Andy Kruse, who had previous experience in the IT field, Sam knew he could trust Andy to help him find a position that suited his skills and interests.

Andy worked with Sam to improve his interviewing and networking skills, including taking Sam to job fairs, which is where Sam met and was hired by a local software company. Unfortunately, after three years with the company, Sam was let go as a result of the company restructuring due to the pandemic. Sam's family reached out to Andy as soon as Sam got the news, and Andy helped connect them with OOD to reopen Sam's case so that Sam could once again work with the OakLeaf Partners job placement team.

It was evident that Sam had grown in his abilities and, more importantly, his confidence during those three years. Although Sam was worried about how the pandemic would affect his career, he knew he had the skills to land a good job. With the help of the OakLeaf Partners team, Sam was soon hired as a part-time IT Professional at the Shaker Heights City School District, with the goal of eventually moving into full-time employment once again.

We believe Sam said it best when he said "If you'd hire people, then hire people with disabilities too. I mean, that's just as simple as it is!"

## GREATER CLEVELAND COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE FUND



UCP clients and staff wearing PPE purchased from the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund Grant

As soon as the novel coronavirus began its widespread impact on the world, Northeast Ohio community members acted quickly to join forces and resources to create the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund. Administered by the Cleveland Foundation, fund partners granted more than \$8.6 million to nearly 160 nonprofit groups and organizations in Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties throughout the first phase of the initiative beginning in March. UCP of Greater Cleveland was a grateful recipient of a \$50,000 grant, which covered pandemic-related increased staffing expenses, the purchase of gift cards to assist employees in continuing their essential duties and for clients to meet their basic needs, as well as necessary and life-saving personal protective equipment and sanitization supplies. UCP staff, Board of Directors and clients extend sincere appreciation to the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund for uplifting our agency this year.