

One year ago today, UCP of Greater Cleveland and the rest of the world came to a sudden halt. We all left work that Friday saying, "Do we really need to close? Okay...well, I'm sure we will be back in a few days." Little did we know that Wolstein would be closed for 113 days and how greatly our lives would be impacted.

Sadly, many of us have dealt with illness and death due to COVID-19. UCP staff and board members have lost family members and friends to the virus and some fell ill with it. Many of us miss being with our families and friends, especially new babies born and the elderly who have so greatly suffered the effects.

One of the bright spots in all of this is that here at UCP of Greater Cleveland, much work was done to protect all staff and clients every day. In-person services were immediately suspended until a plan could be developed that we could trust. Many of you went above and beyond to not only develop that plan but also to switch to virtual services, keep in touch with all of our adult clients and families and then do everything necessary to follow each and every protocol that was instituted. Over these past 12 months, we have seen ZERO positive COVID cases in OakLeaf Group Homes, ZERO client or staff fatalities throughout all of UCP of Greater Cleveland and the completion of close to 20,000 electronic and paper health assessments. THAT is a huge accomplishment and one that you should all be very proud of.

Many of you are beginning to ask about relaxation of our protocols. Please know that we will continue to abide by all CDC and State of Ohio guidance in order to continue practices that have obviously worked! Beth wrote last week regarding the ending of quarantining requirements following plane and train travel -- this is one example of our paying close attention and sharing your hopes in "getting back to normal" or whatever that new normal will be.

A note to those of you who are seeking vaccinations for yourself, your friends or family members, a new vaccine clinic has opened at the Cleveland State University Wolstein Center. To register, please go to <https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov/>. Registrations are opening and closing based upon availability so you may need to check the site more than once.

It may sound strange to suggest that we *celebrate* this one-year mark. There is much to mourn in lives lost, jobs lost, and fear over our country's and community's economic recovery. However, we must understand that, through it all, our collective connection to UCP of Greater Cleveland as our employer and as a service to our community has not only helped to carry us through but has also served as a supportive team through one of the toughest periods of our lives. Many of you have worked very hard and very long hours even continuing today. I am grateful for all you have done and so is your community.

Continue to stay healthy. I feel as though we are in the homestretch so let's see this through together.

Trish and the Leadership Team