

Hi Everyone,

Happy Employee Appreciation Day 2021! Who knew when we last celebrated Employee Appreciation Day that...

- we would close the agency a week later when we realized that we were facing a major health crisis?
- we would still be dealing with a pandemic that has affected every one of us in so many different ways?
- Our world would change so dramatically in the coming months including a growing movement and conversation around racial injustice?

You have always been appreciated, however, what we have learned about you over these past 12 months is a humbling reminder of how fortunate we are as an organization that you all choose to share your compassion, expertise and extreme efforts with UCP of Greater Cleveland. Between LeafBridge, OakLeaf, OakLeaf Partners, OakLeaf Homes and Administration, there is no better team of people in the developmental disabilities field here in Northeast Ohio. I'm not just saying that – I mean it. I talk to leaders at many different agencies in the area and I can sincerely tell you that we are incredibly lucky to have you and that UCP staff are highly respected in the community by all.

I feel so proud when I think about the countless ways that you have stepped up throughout the past year. You have worked as individuals and as teams to do whatever it takes to serve our clients and to get the job done. You have worked long hours, been isolated from other staff and clients, learned new skills (some you never *wanted* to learn), been flexible with where and how you work, and have been patient and understanding of your team members' personal and professional needs. You've done everything asked of you to maintain your health for your sake, your co-workers' sake and our clients' sake. Some of you have personally battled and beaten COVID-19 (and other serious health issues). All of you have dealt with the emotional and mental exhaustion of the pandemic. Through all of this, you continue to give us your very best! It has truly been remarkable to watch. Your collective commitment to UCP has allowed us to continue to serve our community in these most volatile times and to stay strong as an agency.

As a small token of our appreciation, you have or will soon be gifted with an umbrella. We hope that it will protect you from the elements and serve as a reminder of how much you are appreciated at UCP of Greater Cleveland. It feels as though a lot has "rained down on us" recently but spring is just around the corner and we hope to see more of each other sometime soon!

Gratefully,
Trish

P.S. For those who may be superstitious...don't open your umbrella indoors – it could bring bad luck!