

Good Afternoon,

How are you? Really...I really do want to know. It is easy to feel disconnected at this point and a bit burnt out on working in isolation and communicating so much through screens and phone calls. I know that Wolstein is still not back to the bustling place that it was prior to the pandemic. However, children and adults are returning for services and we are seeking space outside of Wolstein to expand LeafBridge's Alternative Education program. AND, our last furloughed employee and longest serving employee, Bill Jones, returns to work next week!

We remain committed to helping our clients manage their challenges. All of you have worked so hard to lift and encourage our clients for more than a year. That has come in the form of connecting them with others whenever possible, switching to virtual communications/services, delivering equipment to their homes, working long hours to do job coaching during their work hours, learning new technology, and reaching out to them by phone to check in and support them in whatever ways you can. That is what sets UCP apart from many other providers of services to individuals with disabilities.

We regularly witness our clients' progress to meet goals they have set for themselves. We also hear comments and receive notes from their families and other community organizations complimenting us on the outstanding work you do. I share a few examples with you as proof that together we are achieving this agency's mission:

- Six-year-old Amelia has been a part of **LeafBridge** since she was three. She recently had surgery to remove half of her brain to alleviate seizures. She continued therapy, both virtual and in-person, as LeafBridge is well known for doing wonderful work with children after they experience major surgeries. Some physicians tell parents that they will perform the surgery only if their child will receive post-operative therapy with us! Amelia surprised us a couple of weeks ago when she took off on a three-wheel bike! THAT is progress! Kudos to all of the therapists who work with Amelia!
- We recently received a note from one of our **OakLeaf Partners** client's Support Administrator complimenting the "remarkable" work of our own Liz Wilson, Job Placement Specialist. She wrote Liz's supervisor to let her know of the wonderful results she is seeing in this client's job success as a result of Liz' efforts. This young man, who the SA has supported for several years, has had great difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment. As a result of Liz's expertise, compassion, and patience, for the first time, this young man is now successfully employed!
- Mike, now participating in Career Planning in **OakLeaf**, received therapy services as a child in LeafBridge! Amy Vedova, UCP's Activities and Training Manager, has been working closely with Mike (virtually) over these many months when he was unable to leave home. He now looks forward to moving into his own apartment and Amy worked with Mike to develop a PowerPoint slide show titled "All About Mike" that informs others of his challenges, needs, and interests through great pictures and fun text. It will serve him well as he meets new people!

While we are cheering on all those we serve, we remain tuned into the changing world around us. Learning of the guilty verdict in the Chauvin court case in the killing of George Floyd brought many mixed emotions and we all hope that this is a sign of better things to come in racial equity and social justice in our country. While justice was served in this one case, much more must be done. I heard a news commentator say that this is too high a price to pay for justice and that many changes need to be made to prevent these deaths versus finding satisfaction with more guilty verdicts of tragic murders. I am hopeful that those in power (today and tomorrow) heed such words and that history will tell us that this was a turning point in racial justice.

Thank you for all you do to support the individuals you serve. Continue to take care of yourselves.

Trish and the Leadership Team