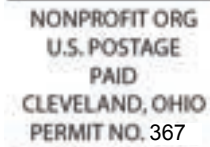


## YOU'RE INVITED!

Save the date for our interactive virtual event, "The Magic of UCP," to be held on Saturday, October 2, 2021. You will hear personal stories from those served by UCP in addition to watching exciting acts of illusion. Sponsorships are available now! Contact Emily Hastings at [ehastings@ucpcleveland.org](mailto:ehastings@ucpcleveland.org) to learn more.



Join us for "The Magic of UCP" on Saturday, October 2, 2021.



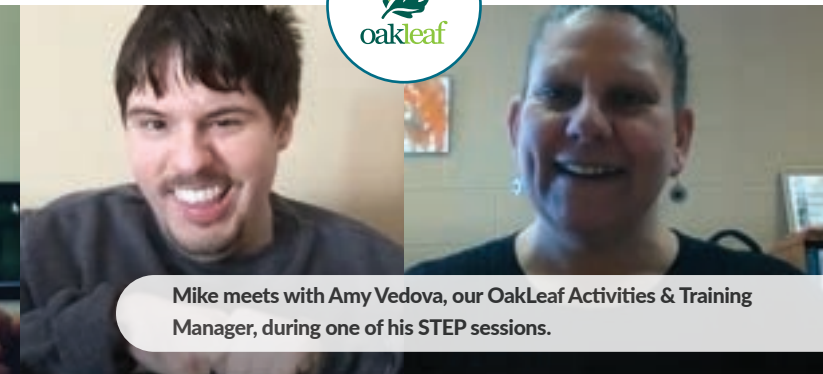
# UCP GOES VIRTUAL

## LeafBridge & OakLeaf Adapt Programming to Include Virtual Services

Over the past year, children and adults with disabilities, along with their families, have encountered significant barriers while trying to receive life-enhancing therapies and services. In response to the pandemic, LeafBridge and OakLeaf programs have been adapted to reflect the need for both in-person and virtual service delivery methods. Telehealth therapy and other virtual programming address challenges, such as sheltering in place because of medical concerns, transportation difficulties, loss of income due to employment hardships and more, and are now considered a necessary and successful part of our services.



Amelia working hard during her telehealth speech session.



Mike meets with Amy Vedova, our OakLeaf Activities & Training Manager, during one of his STEP sessions.

Within days of the pandemic-related closure, LeafBridge therapists focused on converting our physical, occupational and speech-language therapies from in-person to virtual formats. Executing this change allowed for many children and their caregivers to have access to high-quality therapy in order to continue progress on their goals.

Since our July 2020 in-person facility re-opening, many children have continued receiving our telehealth therapy services. Based upon an individualized treatment plan, therapists instruct caregivers how to perform specific therapy exercises and assess as the exercise is being completed between parent and child to provide real-time professional feedback.

Amelia has received LeafBridge Therapy Services at UCP for the past three years and switched to virtual speech services during the pandemic facility closure. She participated in speech therapy twice a week via Zoom to work on expanding her communication using her speech generating device. As a result of the effort and guidance of our expert therapists, Amelia has blossomed in her communication skills while working alongside her mother at home!

In October 2020, OakLeaf Adult Day Services began to offer a modified, virtual day service called Start Toward Emerging Possibilities (STEP). Individuals who do not feel comfortable returning to in-person services are able to connect virtually, either individually or in small groups, to work on their personal outcomes with the guidance of our staff. STEP program activities are highly customized to meet each individual's goals such as communication skills, socialization with peers, vocational skill building activities or English as a Second Language. During one of our small group sessions, participants held an in-depth discussion on what they want the public to know about people with disabilities.

Mike, one of our STEP participants, has reached more than one of his communication goals during the past few months. With the assistance of UCP staff, he recently recorded a speech for his cousin's wedding because he could not attend in person. Mike is making eye contact, socializing, initiating conversation and gaining confidence!

Virtual services have allowed UCP to remain engaged with homebound clients and their caregivers. As a result, individuals continue to progress on their goals while at the same time maintaining contact with the community.





## A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Donors,

In the nonprofit space, volunteer services have never been more valued or more appreciated than they have been over the last 12 months. UCP of Greater Cleveland is fortunate to have volunteers dedicated to assisting with fundraising events and administrative tasks. Of our three main groups of volunteers, our Young Professionals Committee, our Business Advisory Committee, and our Board of Directors, the largest in number is our Board of Directors.

As a charity with tax-exempt status, we are required to operate under the direction of an unpaid Board of Directors made up of professionals holding fiduciary obligation to ensure that the mission of the Agency is honored and that resources are used wisely in support of that purpose. Operating through several fully populated, engaged committees, UCP's Board's expertise includes finance, accounting, investment management, compliance, law, human resources, business development, non-profit leadership, medicine and fundraising. Much was asked of them this past year, and they were fully present, even while dealing with the demands placed upon them in their various professional and personal lives. Their duties include:

- Attend and participate in board and committee meetings – some committees met twice as many times as originally scheduled
- Stay informed about operations – a challenge during everchanging times
- Full involvement with strategic planning – strategy completely changed and evolved weekly/monthly
- Oversee the CEO's performance – the Executive Committee paid even closer attention to my work and offered an extreme level of support

Efforts to recruit board member diversity continues with a focus on increasing minority representation, including individuals with developmental disabilities. Please feel free to reach out to me if you or anyone you know is interested in learning more.

I am grateful for the service and leadership of our Board of Directors, Young Professionals Committee and Business Advisory Committee, and I am inspired by their dedication of time, talents, and treasure, especially during this past year.

Sincerely,

*Patricia S. Otter*



In December 2020, Cathy and Bob were gifted pieces of artwork created by OakLeaf clients in recognition of their ongoing support.

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: VER-A-FAST BY THE HAND FOUNDATION

When it is simple and enjoyable to donate to your favorite nonprofit, it is surely a win-win situation for all involved! That is just what the founders of Ver-A-Fast By The Hand Foundation have committed to in their efforts to facilitate community giving. Bob Bensman and Cathy Soprano established their private, non-operating foundation in 1990 with the mission to support donors, charities and businesses in their philanthropic endeavors, making the process of giving easy, fee-free and fun for all parties.

Ver-A-Fast By The Hand Foundation has supported UCP of Greater Cleveland since 2006 and, for the past two years, they have teamed up with UCP for FastScratch for Charity. This virtual scratch-off game provides donors the chance to “win” additional funds for the chosen nonprofit partner. Ver-A-Fast matches donor contributions up to 200 percent of the original donation. Through three FastScratch campaigns, more than \$30,000 has been raised for UCP!

“We are inspired by the dedication of the UCP staff to provide services to children and adults with disabilities,” said Cathy. “Because of their hard work, the UCP clients are able to achieve things they’ve always dreamed they could do. The organization is run efficiently, and we know our donations are used responsibly to further their mission. We are proud to support UCP and many other local charities.”

## EMAIL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

For the past four years, members of UCP's Young Professionals Committee have participated in an email mentorship program that pairs them with a Project SEARCH student. Project SEARCH is a school-to-work transition program designed for students with disabilities during their final year of high school. Throughout the school year, students spend the majority of their day participating in multiple unpaid internships at a host business. They also attend class with a certified teacher at the beginning and end of each day to develop skills that will help them succeed in the workplace. The goal of Project SEARCH is for the students to find and retain employment in the community within six months of graduation.

To help the students develop email skills, volunteer members of the Young Professionals Committee act as mentors, emailing with their student mentee once a week throughout the school year. The primary learning objective for the students is how to send and receive timely and professional email messages. Virtual meet-and-greets are offered to kick off the mentorship program so that the mentors and mentees can become familiar with one another before their emailing begins.

**Kyle Nagle (pictured right)**, a member of UCP's Young Professionals Committee and Employee Relations Project Specialist at Westfield, noted that this program “provides an excellent opportunity for interns to learn and grow in several important areas – email etiquette, network building, mentorship, and even business knowledge.” Although the growth of the students is tangible, the mentors say they gain just as much, if not more, from this partnership. “This program provides business professionals a chance to regularly connect with, open their minds to, and see the potential of this talented population of individuals,” said Nagle.



To learn more about UCP's Young Professionals Committee, go to [www.ucpcleveland.org/giving-and-volunteering](http://www.ucpcleveland.org/giving-and-volunteering).