



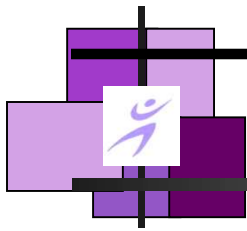
# The Insider

July 2021

## UNIVERSAL MH/DD/SAS Mission Statement

Universal MH/DD/SAS is dedicated to helping individuals and families affected by mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance abuse in achieving their full potential to live, work and grow in the community.

**WHY THE NEED FOR THE INSIDER ?** *The purpose of this newsletter is to provide specialized information to all Universal MH/DD/SAS employees. The intent is to develop an informed workforce, to foster a greater sense of community and to build morale.*



**FEATURE STORY -**  
submitted by Emily Arrowood

### Inside This Issue

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Forest City's Maureesa received an award for her "Outstanding Personal Involvement and Significant Contributions Toward the Betterment of Rutherford County."

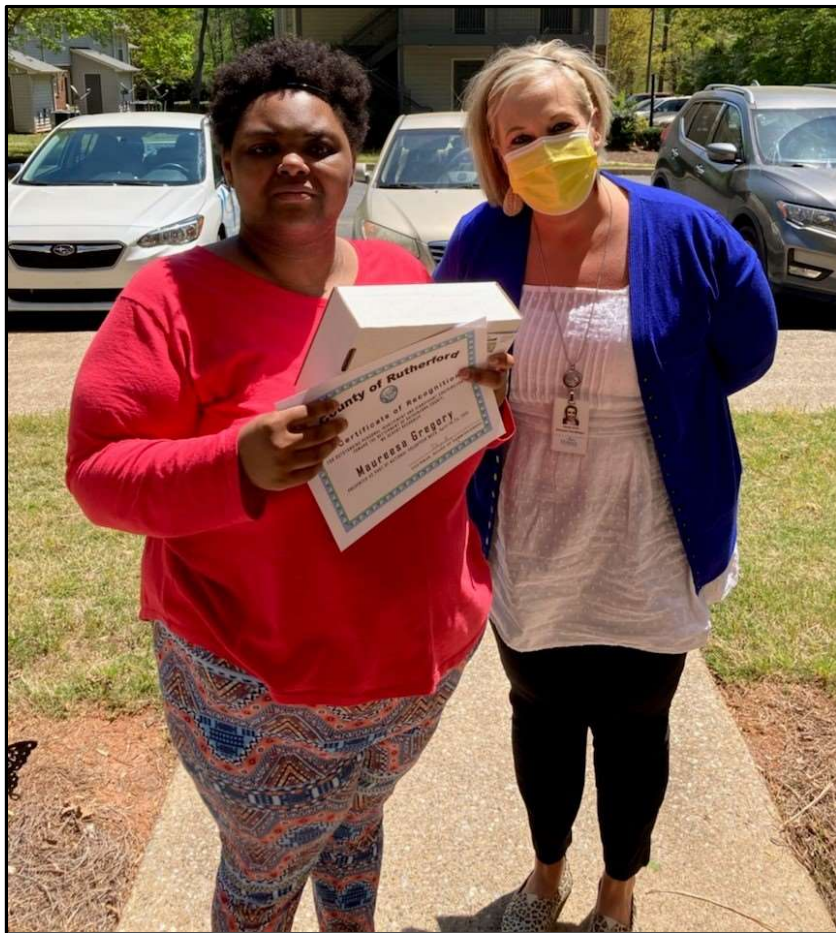
She received this award as a result of her volunteer work and activities through the Hospice House of Rutherford County. This award was presented as part of National Volunteer Week, April 18-24, 2021.

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Along with the award, Maureesa received a gift basket and gift card. Pictured below is Maureesa alongside a Volunteer Coordinator for the Hospice House.



While vacationing in Hawaii with his sister, Jason had lots of FUN staying in a Disney Resort Hotel for 7 days. Jason met multiple Disney characters and went surfing for the first time. His sister stated he was "living his best life!" Pictured above is Jason in the pool enjoying his vacation.

Ms. Alice Ramseur-Nunn- Joined the Universal Team in September of 2009. Ms. Alice is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the state of NC. She holds a BS of Applied Science and Criminal Justice and Corrections from North Carolina Central University and a MA in Mental Health Counseling from Webster University. Ms. Alice comes with many years of experience working with the IDD and MH populations. She has used to support the families on her caseload to get the care they need to live their best lives. The families that Ms. Alice supports would say that she is a true advocate and supporter.



**Alice Ramseur-Nunn**



**Sylvia Gardner**

Ms. Sylvia Gardner- Joined the Universal Team in June of 2008. Ms. Sylvia holds a BSW from Shaw University and a Master's in Divinity and Theology from Saint Thomas Christian University. As a IDD – Staff Supervisor QP, Ms. Sylvia is very passionate, loving and caring about the work that she does for the families she supports. Ms. Sylvia has been known to go above and beyond to support the families.

*...more QPs to come*

Ms. LaTonya Harris joined the Universal Team in November of 2010 and quickly became a raising star. She holds a Master's degree of Human Services Counseling from Liberty University. Many would agree that Ms. Harris's most precious asset would be her loving personality and her ability to connect with just about anyone. Ms. Harris has a passion for supporting others, as well as cooking and trying new healthy recipes. The families that Ms. Latonya supports would say that she is a true jewel of a person.

**LaTonya Harris**





## **The Forest City Office is happy to spotlight Office Assistant Lead, Danielle Augustine.**

QP, Emily Arrowood says “Dani” always goes above and beyond her duties - not only for the QPs, but the staff, families and persons served. She is always eager to lend a helping hand for anyone in need. Dani enjoys talking with and getting to know our families and the people we support. We call her our “social butterfly.” All the Forest City family look forward to her infectious, upbeat personality.

Not only is Dani good at what she does, she keeps the office sanitized, neat and organized.

Dani really IS the best!!!”

Human Resources Director, Ingrid Freeman says *“It has been great working with Dani. Dani has an eye for detail and is a true team player! Most of all, Dani is willing to go the extra mile to make sure staff, persons served and peers have the necessary tools/information to do their job well.”*

During the swirling social and political unrest, I have observed humanity's worst and best. I want to emphatically say that all people and all cultures should be treated with compassion and humbleness. After watching the video on Cultural Humility, we must examine ourselves and see what Cultural Humility means in OUR lives. I just want to say that Universal's Training Department really emphasizes this. Whatever prompted them to step out and step up and require Universal employees to watch a video on Cultural Humility, I thank them for it. If you haven't watched it - you really should!

I believe that I am culturally accepting. I feel most people are. But watching this video was like shining a light into my mind. I had never even thought of some of the things discussed in the video. It was a wake-up call. Through all this, I have come to believe EVERYONE has some sort of cultural bias. Armed with this knowledge we should throughout our lives, reflect, recognize and repair our biases. It matters not whether it is based on political, gender, religion, socioeconomic, racial, sexual orientation or people with limited abilities.

Cultural Humility is a very personal, reflective and lifelong process by which we change ourselves. In changing our thoughts, attitudes or biases; we affect those with whom we work, associate and influence. In our work at Universal, we work with people from all walks of life, cultures, ideas, beliefs and abilities. It is evident that Cultural Humility is an important part of Universal's principles and culture. Without it we could not effectively support those we serve.

So, I'm asking you to take some time and think about different cultures from your own those we serve with, especially those we support. Check yourself – do you have any biases?

Thank you to the Universal Training Department... Job well done!

*"Humility speaks the truth, Arrogance hides it"* - Dan Rockwell, Leadership Freak



Forest City's Crystal Carter, CST

Communications Director **Terry Bedford** represented Universal Mental Health with Benchmarks' Karen McLeod and Paige Wiggs at the Direct Care Advocacy and Rally Day held at the North Carolina General Assembly. What was this all about? The rally consisted of a coalition of organizations across Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, Aging and Mental Health providing residential, home and community-based health service who rallied at the General Assembly in support of increased wages for direct support workers.

**HB 914 Support Our Direct Care Workforce** would increase the hourly wages of direct support staff across a variety of medicaid services including Innovations and other home and community-based waivers, personal care services, ICFs, home health, nursing homes and other behavioral health community and residential facilities. This increased rate is intended to make sure that people who qualify for services have the needed direct support workforce. Increased rates mean providers can pay competitive wages, retain experienced Direct Support Workers and people who need support can receive the help they need.

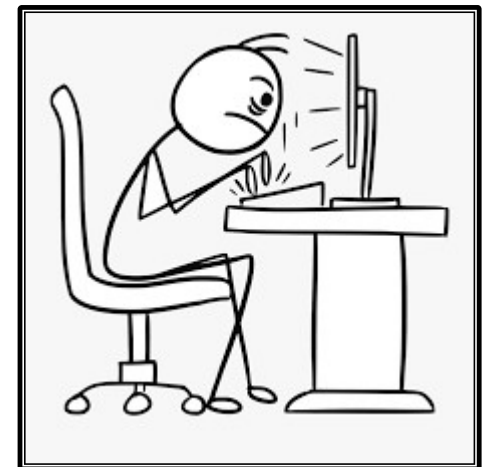
### Advocating for our Direct Care Staff



Documentation consistency is important!  
**"THANK YOU"** to these awesome individuals!?



<b>UMH-Asheville</b>
DUCKER, HELEN LOUISE
HARPER, DENISIA EULAYA
RAY, STEVEN M
<b>UMH-Burlington</b>
WRENN, JANET GAYLE
ERICH, RAYMOND M
PARKER, DEBRA P
HARRIS, JERLENE TIMMIE
CHATMAN COULON, NICOLE TRULL
<b>UMH-New Bern</b>
DUCLOS, SHELLY
REELS, ALONZO MARINO
<b>UMH-Raleigh</b>
FULLER, ANJA
STEWART, ALFREDA
HIGHSMITH, WANETTE ALSTON
MAHMUDA, SYEDA IFFAT
<b>UMH-Wilson</b>
WHITE, DUNTASIA JYNAY
SHERROD, NATARSHA LATRICE
<b>UMH-Winston</b>
SEARCY, PHILLIP D
QUESENBERRY, JR, EDDIE L
MURPHY-COLE, ATESSIA T



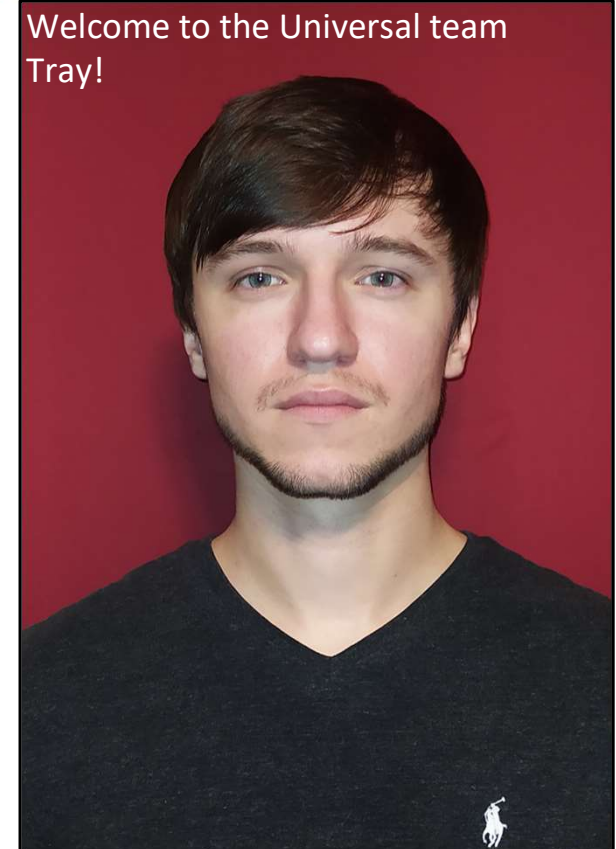
Recently the IT Department created “At a Glance” reference cards to give our employees quick access to reference items; such as CyberSecurity basics, OnTarget and a variety of others. Make sure you check out these resources. The Quick Reference guides can be found in SharePoint, or the IT Department will be glad to send those out upon request by email.



Also, recently the IT Department was fortunate to add Joshua Tray Smith to the team as our IT Specialist. He prefers to be called Tray. Tray says, *“I'm very happy to have joined Universal. I can't wait to get started helping everyone with their tech needs. I've been enthralled with computers and tech for as long as I can remember and I don't think that's about to stop anytime soon. I recently obtained my Associates in Information Technology from Western Piedmont Community College in Western NC. I'm ready to apply what I've learned and what I will learn in the future to help Universal in any way I can. As for my hobbies, I like video games (I know, so unexpected for an IT guy) and things related to them. I also really like a lot of classic movies from the 80s-90s. That said, I'll be learning and getting ready over the next few days, wish me luck!”*

If you have any questions or would like more information about this or any IT issue, feel free to contact Leslie Cothren at [lcothren@umhs.net](mailto:lcothren@umhs.net) or Tray Smith at [jsmith@umhs.net](mailto:jsmith@umhs.net) (please note that his email address is jsmith rather than tsmith).

If you have an official Information Technology request, please e-mail that to [trackit@umhs.net](mailto:trackit@umhs.net).





## Your Best Shot at Stopping COVID-19...Get Your Vaccination!

### Here are seven facts you should know before taking your shot:

- 1. No serious side effects were reported in clinical trials.** Temporary reactions after receiving the vaccine may include a sore arm, headache, feeling tired and achy for a day or two or, in some cases, fever. In most cases, these reactions are good signs that your body is building protection.
- 2. Scientists had a head start.** They are built on decades of research on vaccines for similar viruses. A big investment of resources and focus made sure they were created without skipping any steps in development, testing, or clinical trials.
- 3. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.** The vaccine gives your body instructions to make a protein that safely teaches you to make germ-fighting antibodies to fight the real COVID-19.
- 4. Concerns about safety are taken seriously. Very seriously.** The CDC and FDA are constantly monitoring safety, following federal safety guidelines, and updating North Carolinians with the best safety information. You can trust that the process has been careful and thorough.
- 5. A hundred million people in the U.S. have already received their COVID-19 vaccine.**
- 6. It works. And once you're fully vaccinated, you're protected.** The vaccines are proven to help prevent COVID-19 and are effective in preventing hospitalization and death.
- 7. The vaccine does not affect fertility.** Vaccination for those who are pregnant or wanting to become pregnant is recommended by [the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\)](#), the [Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine \(SMFM\)](#), the [American Society for Reproductive Medicine \(ASRM\)](#), and the [Society for Male Reproduction and Urology](#). [More information.](#)

#### Ready to find your spot and take your shot?

If you have more questions, we encourage you call the NC COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center at 888-675-4567 or <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines/find-your-spot-take-your-shot>



**If you're a North Carolinian adult vaccinated against COVID-19, you could win \$1 million.**

“Everyone who gets a COVID-19 vaccination is a winner! They protect themselves, their loved ones and others from severe illness, hospitalization and death. Millions of people have already taken the vaccines. These summer cash drawings add another reward to the many that come with getting a COVID-19 vaccination.”

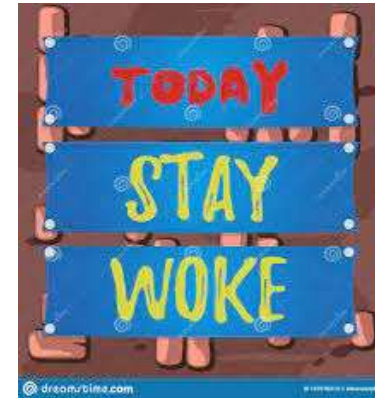
—Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of NCDHHS



**It's easy to enter—get your vaccine!**

Anyone vaccinated starting June 10 will be entered TWICE to win Summer Cash. North Carolinians 18 and over who have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine are automatically entered into four drawings for a chance to win a \$1 million cash prize. Drawings will be held every other week starting June 23.

**Already got your dose?** Great! You're automatically entered.



**Stay Alert & Be Aware of Your Surroundings**

Watch for slip and trip hazards. Icy streets, rough pavement and sidewalks, unmarked curbs and poor lighting can set the stage for a bad fall as you walk in unfamiliar surroundings. Your shoes or boots should have soles with good support and grip.

Plan for safety. Wake up and get started early enough that you won't be tempted to speed or take other shortcuts. Likewise, allow enough time for safe travel before after-work engagements.

Learn to manage fatigue so you won't be traveling when you are drowsy. Get enough sleep, exercise and nutritious foods to maintain good general health and alertness. Avoid overuse of alcohol and other drugs, which decrease your level of alertness and contribute to fatigue.

When you walk, don't shut out your surroundings with a personal stereo or cell phone. Stay aware of your surroundings.

# Heat Impacts: Vulnerable Populations



## PREGNANT

Extreme heat events have been associated with adverse birth outcomes such as low birth weight, preterm birth, infant mortality, and congenital cataracts.



## NEWBORNS

Newborns are extra sensitive to heat because their ability to regulate body temperature is limited.



## CHILDREN

Young children and infants are particularly vulnerable to heat, as their bodies are less able to adapt to heat than adults. Those under four are especially vulnerable.



## ELDERLY

Older adults, especially those who have preexisting diseases, take certain medications, live alone or have limited mobility are at higher risk for heat illness.



## CHRONIC ILLNESS

People with chronic medical conditions are more likely to have a serious health problem during a heat wave.

Source:  
*The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States,  
 A Scientific Assessment (U.S. Global Changes Research Program)*

weather.gov



# Universal's Cultural Sensitivity Mission Statement

"Universal MH/DD/SAS strives to develop awareness and respect in order to celebrate the diverse backgrounds of people."

## July 26



Celebrating the anniversary of the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Aug 26



## Sept 24



Marilyn Porter was an unforgettable Regional Director for the Eastern Region of Universal Mental Health Services. For her family and those who knew her, she was a dynamic personality with endless dedication to the people that she served. When you worked with Marilyn, you became family.

Marilyn came to Universal in September of 2011 and throughout her time at Universal, impacted countless employees and individuals that Universal supports. Her advocacy and spirit embodied the mission of “Caring People, Caring for People.” Marilyn passed away on March 27, 2020 after a courageous fight with cancer. Her loss was one that was felt statewide. Marilyn Porter’s legacy will live on through this scholarship.

The Universal Marilyn Porter Scholarship will be awarded annually in the amount of \$1000. It will be awarded to an hourly direct care staff through an application process. The applicant must commit to attend an accredited college (community college, university, etc.) within the year of the scholarship award.

The scholarship will be selected by a 6-person committee made up of Universal employees. The decision will be made based primarily on a short essay from the applicant. The scholarship decision will not be based on, race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender as well as sexual orientation, religious preference, age, disability, or political affiliation.

If you are a direct care hourly staff at Universal, you can apply for the Universal Marilyn Porter Scholarship from July 1st through July 15th. A Scholarship committee will then announce the recipient on August 1, 2021.

You can apply for the scholarship at: <https://umhs.net/scholarship>



**We sure do miss you Marilyn!**



Don't forget to check out the Company Store!

The one - and five - year  
longevity coupons are mailed  
monthly!!



<https://umhs.net/company-store>



Taylor Smith says “Kudos to Sherry Douglas. We appreciate all that you do!”

Cynthia Bradley says “Kudos to **Morgan** in the Asheville office. She is very busy but always takes time to answer questions and sort out problems regardless of how much she has to do. It is a pleasure to work with and learn from her!”

Dolly, Brad, Kelley and Brandon say “Kudos to **Justin & Kelli**. They are literally the best boss we’ve ever had! They go above & beyond for us.”

Tamara Bedford says “Kudos to the **Central Region** for their amazing efforts in the recent Cardinal audit. We scored 100% !”

Maurice Murray says “Kudos to **Morgan Dawkins’** efficient multitasking and staying organized despite tons of paperwork!”

Drema Greer says “Kudos to newbie IT Specialist **Tray Smith**. He went beyond expectations to assist me with my computer issues. I love your passion Tray!”

Zsa Zsa Johnson says “Kudos to the **Office Assistants!** Thank you for fixing files, completing task with time to spare, keeping track of what goes where, staying calm when tensions rise, typing emails, taking calls throughout the day and being great in every way ! ☺ ”



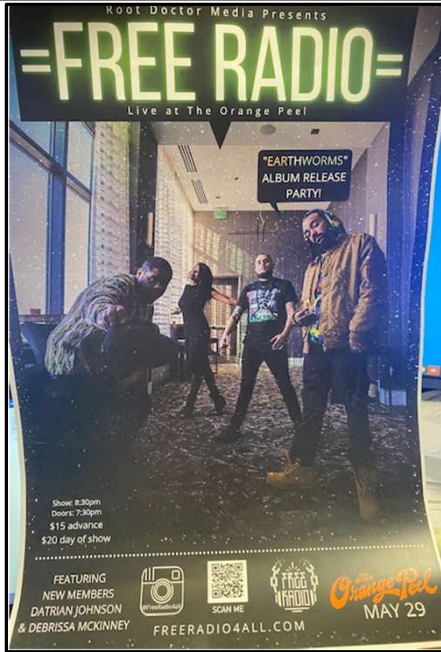
**New Bern's OA ~**  
Jennifer Young



**Asheville's OA ~**  
Brittany Darr







Featuring Asheville's very own CPSS, Datrian Johnson

Our family just keeps growing...just look at this precious-ness. **Corporate's** Drema Greer's newest great niece Lua Greer Smith.



Wilmington's QP Courtney Cox-Weatherwax got married on TOP of Chimney Rock. Congrats from the Universal family!



**Corporate's** Beverly Smith is proud of her granddaughter Piper. Piper's last game of the season, she went four for four - with 3 singles and a double and had 7 RBIs. She and 3 teammates have been chosen to play on the All- Star Team.



**Corporate's** Tracy Frye and Amber Anderson representing at the Morganton Child Fest. Who is that fine fella behind that mask?

