



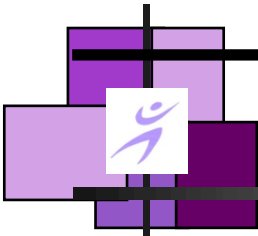
# The Insider

Apr 2019

## 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 a better informed workforce, to foster a greater sense of community and to build morale.*



### FEATURE STORY

#### Inside This Issue

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*~written by Courtney Ward, Asheville IDD, QP*

Ken Andrick is a long-time AFL Provider in the Asheville office who I had the opportunity to talk with regarding his longevity with Universal. I asked him what gives him the motivation to continue on a daily basis. When asked why he had stuck with Universal all these years, Ken replied: *"They've always been there for me. Anytime there's been a crisis, Universal has been there."*

When asked what made him first choose Universal, Ken said *"Universal was honest about paying AFL Provider's according to the level of the individual served."* Ken was working with another agency prior to Universal where he says *"the person would have qualified to be a Level 4, but he was only getting paid for a Level 2."* Ken said he would reach out to the proper channels in that agency, but no one would give him the help needed. When he met Regional Program Manager Sherry Douglas who was happy to work with him, he then realized that Universal was the way to go. Ken reiterated: *"I have worked for various agencies and Universal had more of what was appealing to me."*

Now Ken and his wife Elaine provide a family style, safe haven for two young men who have grown their skills and overall independence while part of their family. Both of the young men have held lasting positions in food service jobs outside of the home and are also very active in their local church. Ken and Elaine work to assist both of these men in their endeavors while allowing them the freedom to make daily decisions and choices about their lives. Ken says after 17 years with Universal, *"We wouldn't have it any other way."*

**Thank you for your service Ken!**



"Hi, I'm Sharon. I grew up in the mountains on a farm where my family was very abusive. As a child I was miserable and unhappy. I knew there was something better. I just didn't know how to find it. I would go to the mountains and pray for new parents who would love me but when I got home it'd be the same. When I was a child I was struck by lightning and was in the hospital for three months. As a result, I had no memory of my family. I wrote everything backwards and I had to relearn everything, spelling, reading, how to do everything. With help and support my reading and writing improved.

When I got older, I started trying to change, make a better life. I tried to take care of my brothers, aunt and grandmother. I even took care of my mom till she died about three years ago. I had a lot of anger from never getting the love and attention I wanted. I started to use drugs and alcohol to cope. I had anger outbursts and the threats I made got me into trouble. I got into fights and went to jail for cussing out a cop. I got arrested and was put on probation for writing bad checks. After going to jail I realized that I was going down the same path as my family and I knew I had to change.

I was married at 16 and had two daughters. A teacher and her husband took me in at age 17. They helped me get a job working with kids and helped me with my first apartment. "They believed in me." I was the first one of my family to graduate.

When I was 26 I started a house cleaning business that grew quickly by word of mouth. I also did landscaping and had my own crew. We did lawn care services and my family members worked for me. We were cleaning new homes, doctors offices and banks.

*Continued on next page*



I began using drugs to cope with depression anxiety and feelings of worthlessness. I was admitted into inpatient treatment 3 to 4 times. I came off as being someone tough. I never thought anyone would enter my life to make me feel beautiful, believe in myself again or find someone I could trust. Someone who would believe in me, that was my Peer Support Specialist, Mary.

I knew right off there was something special about Mary. I watched how she handled herself, how she talked and listened. She wasn't there to label or judge me. I felt at ease from our first visit. She took a person that had no future ahead of her and gave me something more valuable than life. She taught me to cut out negative people and how to cope. Her support has touched me in a mighty way.

I started attending the PSR program where I enjoy the staff and classes. I even get to teach a class about nature. Now my goal is to become a Certified Peer Support Specialist. I feel like I have new skills to deal with stuff every day ~ like breathing techniques, meditation or relaxation music, walking in the woods. Now when old feelings of anger come up I manage to tell myself *"it ain't worth it - let it go!"*

Mary Sibila-Lemons, Sharon's CPSS says "We did many things together. Sharon talked about her childhood a lot and I was fascinated to hear how her childhood events affected her and how she developed ways of getting around the challenges it presented. I continue to be impressed with her resourcefulness; how she adapted and got through major points in her life.

At first it was very hard for Sharon to hear someone validate her. To hear someone say, "It was not your fault, you did nothing wrong." I just keep on emphasizing that message and even gave her a handmade poster for her mirror that says, *"I'm beautiful, I'm amazing and I deserve to be happy."* I tell her to repeat that to herself every day while looking in the mirror.

Sharon and I have grown together in this journey as we continue to learn from each other. I have seen her smile more than ever. Now her strength and resiliency is a powerful force. It has not been an easy journey, but to see someone use the tools you give them and talk about how they never thought they would love themselves makes it all worth while!

This is only a small part of this much broader story, but it is an example of the role and power of Peer Support. More importantly, the power of the human spirit to overcome massive obstacles. Sharon is a valuable Member of Universal PSR and has begun teaching a class about what she knows best ~ NATURE. Her peers lovingly call her 'Gramma.' I look forward to the day she starts the CPSS certification program."







Matthew is a gentleman who has lived in his own apartment with paid supports for over thirteen years. He is interested in movie trivia, politics, history and enjoys having conversations about these topics. Over the last year he has developed a natural support system with a group of church members from a local church. About once a month they will come to Matt's apartment to spend time with him to discuss religious topics and other world events.

For the last two years Matt has attended the Night To Shine Dance which is sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. This picture is of Matt in his apartment prior to leaving for this year's dance. In the future Matt may be interested in obtaining a new apartment in Wake Forest but for the time being, he says "I am content living on my own and for now I'm happy with my current Raleigh home."

*On December 12, 2018 my husband had a heart attack. I was able to use the CPR training that I had received from Universal's Training Department. Although I was scared to death, with God's help I was able to provide as the doctors said - "just what my husband needed at the time - CPR."*

*I am so very thankful that because of this training, I still have the love of my life here with me. I am more thankful than I can even put into words. Thank you from my heart to the Universal trainers.*

*~written by  
Asheville's CST,  
Renee Banks*



If you or your child has a permanent disability you may be entitled to a free, lifetime pass to visit the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands. I actually learned about the program because a friend of mine's child has Type-1 diabetes and qualifies for the program. Qualifying disabilities include physical, mental, or sensory impairments.

The pass can be used at over 2000 Federal recreation sites across the nation. Those include National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, and other federal recreation lands. It also extends that same privilege to everyone in the vehicle with the pass holder. So, if one person in your family qualifies, you can all visit a park for free with that person's pass.

In order to get a pass you'll need:

- A statement signed by a licensed physician attesting that you have a permanent physical, mental, or sensory impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, and stating the nature of the impairment; OR • A document issued by a Federal agency, such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Administration, which attests that you have been medically determined to be eligible to receive Federal benefits as a result of blindness or permanent disability. Other acceptable Federal agency documents include proof of receipt of Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI); OR
- A document issued by a State agency such as a vocational rehabilitation agency, which attests that you have been medically determined to be eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation agency benefits or services as a result of medically determined blindness or permanent disability.

Showing a State motor vehicle department disability sticker, license plate or hang tag is not acceptable documentation. You'll need to [fill out this application](#), and then mail it in with a \$10 processing fee or go to a federal recreation site in person with proof of disability and residency, in which case you can skip paying the fee and filling out the form. The Access Passes can also be purchased online through [store.usgs.gov/access-pass](https://store.usgs.gov/access-pass), this is the organization's preferred way to receive applications.



Once your application is processed, you'll receive a physical card that can be used for park admission.







Never give up on someone  
with a mental illness.

When you replace "I" with  
"WE," *ILLness* becomes  
*WELLness*.



BYCHRISVANDLE.COM



*You're getting ready to meet up with your friend Jill when she sends you a text: "I can't hangout today. Sorry to bail last minute." "Is something wrong?" You respond. "Just not feeling life today." "I'm coming over." You get to Jill's house, where you find Jill crying and hyperventilating. She tells you, "Life is too hard." Jill is having a mental health crisis. So, what do you do?*

A mental health crisis can take many forms—self-harm, panic attacks, suicidal ideation, getting in trouble with the law, planning or considering hurting one's self or others—but no matter what kind of crisis someone might be going through, you can help. Make sure to stay with your loved one while they're at risk and do not hesitate to get them professional help.

**Practice Clear Communication:** When de-escalating someone from crisis, communication is key. It is *essential* they feel heard and understood, so make sure to give them your undivided attention. "In sessions with suicidal clients, I often try to 'hold their story,' because I know that there are very few people in someone's life who a person can talk to about suicide," explains therapist Larry Shushansky. "Sometimes, just listening can be immensely helpful."

**Let your loved one talk about how they feel and ask them questions:** Don't be afraid to ask directly if they are thinking about suicide. Talk openly and lovingly about their thoughts. If they need time to respond, allow them to process. You can always repeat the question after a moment of silence, if necessary.

**It's essential to use an empathetic, non-judgmental tone:** Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong or whether their feelings are good or bad. Minimizing their problems or giving advice may create distance between you and upset them further. Let them know that whatever they're experiencing is not their fault and offer your help. *"What's going on? What's wrong?" Jill doesn't answer. You wait a moment and then ask, "Why are you crying?" "I try so hard every single day. I try, despite my life being terrible. I'm tired of having to work so hard just to live. Things never get better for me; so, I just don't see the point." "Yeah, that really sucks. I'm sorry. I've noticed how hard you've been working and I really do believe that your effort will pay off with time. You can't give up now. How can I help you?" "You can't help me. No one can help me." "You're not going to push me away, Jill. I may not fully understand what you're going through, but the way you feel isn't your fault. I'm here for you. I'm not going anywhere."*

**There isn't one specific response that will de-escalate all crises:** based on what's happening, you can assess the situation and provide a supportive reaction. "Try not to figure out what the 'right' thing to say is—just be caring and concerned and let that show through in your conversation," says Shushansky. The most important thing you can communicate in a crisis is that you are concerned for your loved one's well-being and that they can lean on you for support.

**Reach Out For Help:** If you feel that you are not able to de-escalate the person in crisis without additional support, call someone. You don't need to do this alone. If your loved one has a mental health provider, that would be a good place to start. If they don't, there are organizations who can help you through any crisis safely.

*Jill's phone buzzes. She looks down at her phone and her expression shifts. She starts crying again. "What is it?" "It doesn't matter. There's nothing you can do. Just leave me alone!" You're not sure what else to say, so you decide to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Jill sees what you're doing and gets upset. "I don't need to talk to those people." "Jill, please. It's just a conversation. I want you to feel better." She doesn't respond. You hit dial and get a crisis counselor on the phone. You put the phone on speaker. The counselor asks a few questions and you respond as Jill remains silent. After a little while, Jill reluctantly starts responding. As she receives counseling, you sit next to her as a source of support and comfort. When she gets off the phone, you give her a hug and tell her: "You are not alone. I'm here."*

It can be intimidating talking to someone who is going through a mental health crisis or seriously considering suicide. However, sometimes all a person needs in that situation is one person being there, helping them access the help they need. You can be that person.

~Laura Greenstein is Communications Coordinator at NAMI.





I love chopping wood. Throughout the late fall and winter, I participate in our church's wood ministry by hand splitting logs for a couple of hours on Wednesday mornings. The others on the team refer to me as Paul Bunyan. OK, in all honesty, they do not refer to me as Paul Bunyan. But it's sure how I feel when I swing that eight-pound maul into a large piece of helpless oak.

Now, I just turned fifty-eight a few days ago and often, I come home with aches and pains from chopping wood. In fact, the other day, I was working on a log and fell. I landed squarely on top of the log, banging up my knee and arm. It wasn't a serious fall but now that I think about it, maybe my new nickname should be Paul Bumblin'. But here's what I find interesting. The aches and pains I get from chopping wood are not distressing because the end result is for a greater good. In other words, it's not about chopping wood but about heating houses.

According to several online wood-cutting geeks, a few pieces of oak will keep a wood stove hot for two to three hours. If I could split four pieces of oak in a couple of minutes, an hour of consistent splitting would lead to eighty pieces of firewood. That's twenty to thirty hours of heat for someone who may rely on wood to warm their home. So, whenever I get tired, feel an ache in my lower back, or start to whine about the cold morning temperature, I imagine how it would feel if I didn't have heat at all. That connection reminds me of the bigger picture—it's not just what we're doing but why we're doing it. And actually, this concept applies to just about anything we do.

The classic example that is often used in corporate customer service programs is that when you buy an electric drill, you are really buying a hole. The drill provides the technology but the hole is what you ultimately need. And if you're like me, you'll also need spackle to fill the unnecessary holes that were made because you're not so good at using drills. But that's another issue. So how does this hole concept apply to our routine jobs and tasks?

Let's say you're a receptionist and your job is to answer incoming calls and then transfer them to the appropriate person within your organization. On the surface, this may seem like a very mundane job. But in reality, it's critical to the success of the organization. For instance, when I worked in hospice care, our receptionist was the key to everything. She greeted callers with warmth and compassion. She connected prospective patients to the departments they needed. And she had a smile for every employee when they came in to work each day. In addition to simply answering the phone, she was both a resource and a bright light for everyone she encountered.

Suppose you do data entry. You might feel that your time at work is filled with the monotonous typing of numbers and letters. However, information *is* one of our most important assets. In fact, in healthcare, the coders are responsible for entering the data that leads to insurance payments and effective medical records. If done correctly, healthcare organizations remain viable, insurance companies cover their subscribers, and patients get the necessary care they need. What may seem like just hitting computer keys can actually lead to keeping people healthy.

Lastly, let's imagine that you're a manager. Your job not only has specific duties, but you are also responsible for supervising other employees. You could feel that all you do each day is put out fires and answer questions. I found that managing people was one of the hardest jobs I ever had. But when I stepped back and realized the importance of my role, it made it easier to handle the challenges. You see, as a manager, your job is to help employees reach their greatest potential. That requires attending to their needs, mentoring them, and in some cases, replacing them when they pursue bigger and better opportunities. You are actually not just managing them, you are developing their potential. And that's pretty cool.

So you see, what we do is often not just about the task but about the bigger picture. When I chop wood, I'm heating a house. When I write an article, I'm helping someone see their world differently. And when I use humor in my presentations, I'm actually making a meaningful point in a fun way. The "why" in what we do is bigger than the "what." And when we understand that connection, the little things become the big things. And that makes a difference to us and to others. I may not be Paul Bunyan but when I'm chopping wood, every swing matters.



# FOOD DRIVE

Recently there has been an increase in need within our communities. A string of both natural disasters paired with the recent government shutdown has left a palpable shortage at our local food banks. In February, Universal had a statewide food drive to benefit our local foodbanks. The Corporate office, along with its own food drive, kicked off each office with a 25.00 donation to add food for the drive.

Each office donated to the following at the end of the drive:

Asheville – Manna

Forest City, Morganton and Corporate – Second Harvest Foodbank – Metrolina

Winston and Burlington – Second Harvest Foodbank – Northwest NC

Raleigh, Wilson, New Bern, and Wilmington – Foodbank of Central & Eastern NC



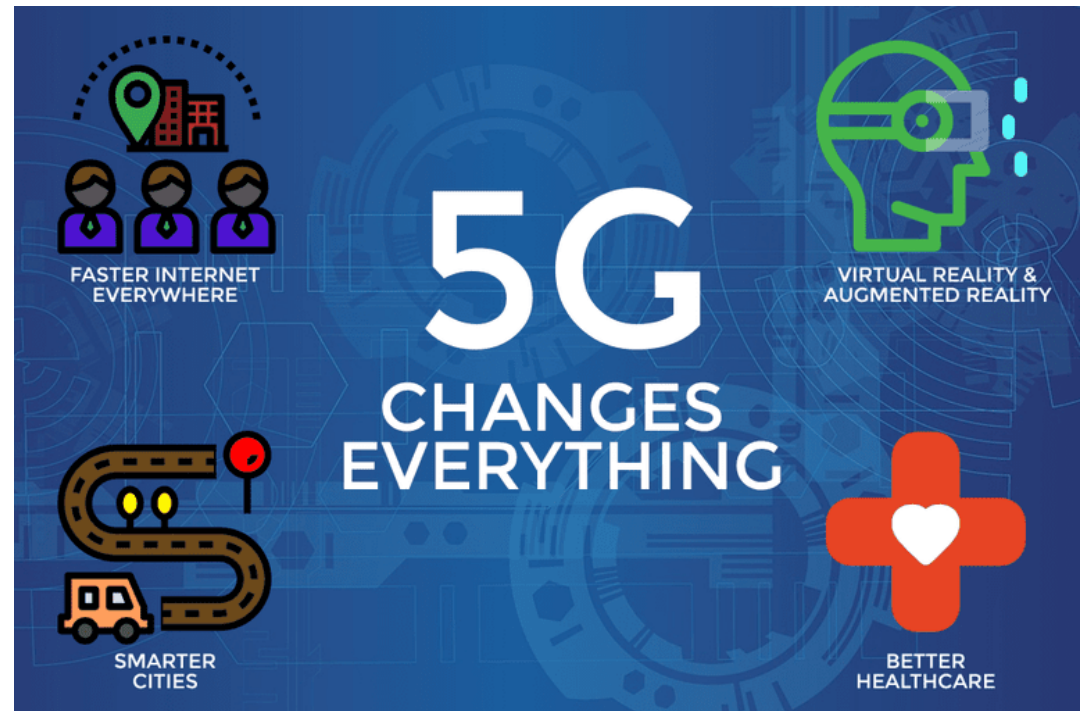


With cell phones and newer technology taking over our everyday lives, it's no surprise that they are innovating at an extremely fast pace. One of those innovations being the up and coming phone network speed, 5G. While most people don't pay as much attention to their phones network speed and stick to their home network, this may be the main reason to pay attention. At the time of writing this, everyone's phone uses 4G LTE. That is currently the fastest network speed available on cell phones which easily surpassed by the typical home network. The biggest difference between 4G LTE and 5G is the speed. 5G is so fast that it is possible to surpass your current home network speed. In fact, commercial 5G promises faster home-internet speeds than you might find from your current internet provider.

When will 5G be released? A number of phone service carriers have spoken up and provided some general timelines that they will be launching their first 5G phones, which will inevitably turn into nationwide coverage. AT&T has said that it will launch its first 5G phone, built by Samsung, in the first half of next year. Verizon, T-Mobile and Sprint have promised 5G devices in the future as well. AT&T has promised limited coverage in a handful of cities to begin. T-Mobile says it will launch a nationwide network in 2020. Sprint says its first 5G phone, built by LG, will arrive in the first half of 2019. And finally, Apple will be waiting until 2020 to release a 5G iPhone.

What does this mean for the average person? Well at the moment, not much. While the speeds will be noticeable, the average person does not need more than 4G speeds, however; 5G will provide many new opportunities for technology to improve and advance, including healthcare applications. Be on the lookout for remote monitoring of patients to improve in rural areas. Devices with IoT (Internet of Things) built in, will take advantage of the faster speeds. It has the potential to make doing all of these things we love, a lot easier, as well as to transform our industry.

If you have any questions or would like more information About 5G or any other IT issue, feel free to contact Leslie othren at [lcothren@umhs.net](mailto:lcothren@umhs.net) or Adam Murphy at [amurphy@umhs.net](mailto:amurphy@umhs.net).



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



# 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."

April



EASTER



June

May



World Day of Cultural Diversity





Brittany Crook says  
Kudos to:  
Crystal in New  
Bern- her cheerful  
attitude brightens  
up the office; all the  
Wilson ladies keep  
her laughing  
everyday; I couldn't  
ask for a better  
team at the  
beach(Wilmington)

Loretta Bull ~  
"Kudos to Christy  
for always be  
willing to stop what  
she is doing and  
help me...and to  
Heather for being  
such a good boss.  
She spends time  
teaching me and  
offering me  
opportunities to  
learn."

Mary Sibila-  
Lemons ~ "Kudos  
to my supervisor  
Char Boyette for  
being a great role  
model for my  
development as a  
Peer Support  
Specialist

Leanne Brunton ~  
"Kudos to Morgan  
for being super  
patient with my  
1000's of  
questions in  
learning my new  
role."

Sherry Douglas ~ "Kudos  
to all my QPs (Courtney,  
Julia, Michael, Taylor,  
Stacy and Krystal) for  
their willingness take a  
positive approach as we  
move forward with EHR  
(paperless)."

"Kudos to the awesome  
IT Department that  
endlessly serves us! I  
am very appreciative!"  
~ Donna in Morganton

"Kudos to  
Brittany for  
being so team  
oriented and  
working so  
well with all  
my QPs."  
~ Marilyn

Beverly Smith "Kudos to Leslie  
Cothren and Heather Everhart  
for always seeking more  
efficient ways to utilize time  
and accomplish tasks."

Candace Looper ~  
"Kudos to Amber  
Anderson in the  
Morganton office for  
being so super  
supportive of her Early  
Intervention staff!! We  
couldn't ask for  
anyone better to  
supervise this  
program!!"



*Welcome*



**Burlington's RN  
~ Shirley Austin**



**Morganton's QP IDD  
~ Joi Kirby**



**Asheville's QP IDD ~  
Joshua Swayngim**

*Welcome*







**Corporate's** Loretta Bull and Les Cothren both came in 2<sup>nd</sup> in their respective age groups in Morganton's Night of Lights 5K.



**Universal's** Les Cothren's twins are headed to college. Lauren: ETSU -Nursing and Christian: Wingate-Communications. Les is accepting donations...lol!



**Wilmington's** Jamal Rolle representing at a local Health Fair

Will ya' look at that shirt? Congrats must be in order for **Morganton's** Amber Anderson



Can't tell that **Corporate's** Gail Greer, Robert Greer and Alicia G. Brown are proud of the newest addition to their family can ya'? Welcome Robert's 1<sup>st</sup> grandson: Samuel Harper Everett born on Valentine's Day!



**Asheville's** OA Leanne Brunton's youngest son to hopefully get his Eagle rank in April. Leanne says "the amazing part is that my oldest "Eagled" in August last year and both of my boys have Autism ... they are going to move mountains one day!"

