



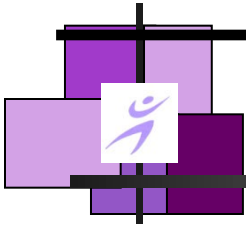
# The Insider

Apr 2025

## 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.*



## A Successful 2024 ~ by Brook Phillips

I am delighted to share that 2024 was a highly successful year for Universal. We achieved notable growth in service delivery while upholding the exceptional quality that defines our work. Expanding the scope of our services without compromising quality remains one of our core objectives at Universal, and I'm proud to say we delivered on that commitment.

This success is a testament to the outstanding dedication and talent of our team. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to every team member for their hard work and contributions to making this achievement possible.

Brook Phillips, CEO  
Universal MH/IDD/SAS



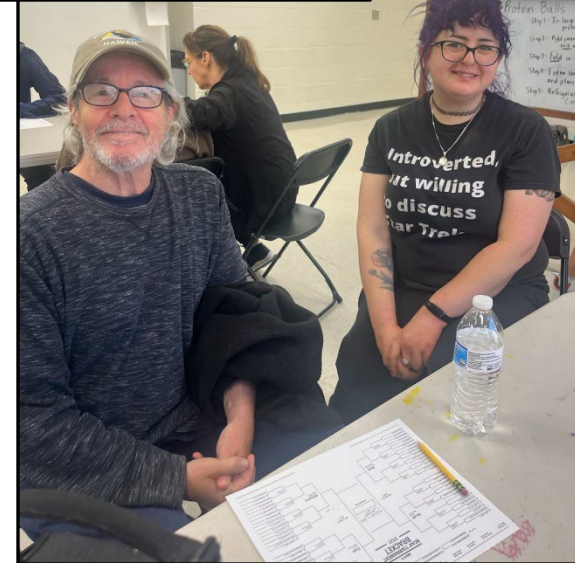
I just wanted to brag on the smartest guy, Gabin. When we first met, he could barely look me in the eye as his job coach. Over the last few years, we have been working on his job & communication skills and his ability to just be around people. He has made tremendous progress in all areas. When he first started in the lobby and moved up to front register, I had never seen someone so excited to work a cash register. He had a rough time starting off. With a lot of work & communicating, he eventually made his way to back drive thru, where he accepted cash for the orders. I was surprised at how well he did with how fast paced it can get. I am very proud to say, that within the last few months, he actually graduated the program through McDonalds to become a Shift Manager!

👏👏💖👏 He had to do a week's worth of training in Belmont, NC. He has worked so hard over these last few years & I could not be prouder. Of course, he still has some off days, who doesn't! I just wanted to brag on how great he has done! We were there the day his black shirts came in! I am so proud to have been able to watch him grow & progress. 👏👏



Raleigh's Sarah Gupta, QP says, *"I just got a call from a local thrift shop, HandMeUps where one of my staff supports a member with his job. They were singing the praises of this staff, Carmen Meuller. She is a fantastic staff that has been amazing with the member she supports. He has made so many strides in a positive way in the last year she has been working with him."*

*Just another shout-out for another amazing staff!"*





*“Community Support Technicians (CSTs) are more than caregivers. They are mentors and advocates who help individuals navigate and engage with the world around them. Their work goes beyond basic assistance; they foster independence, confidence, and meaningful community involvement.*

*Take Roshell, a CST, and Dustin, the person she supports. Their day starts with a trip to the local pastry shop where Dustin works to serve others. With Roshell's encouragement, he can confidently practice communication in a real-world setting. The smiles and gratitude he receives from others reinforce his sense of belonging and purpose. Later, they visit a cafe where Dustin orders and pays for it himself - a small but **EMPOWERING** step towards independence. As they enjoy their lunch, Roshell and Dustin talk about his goals for the future, brainstorming ways he can continue to grow and engage with his community.*



*Each moment spent in the community is an opportunity for learning, growth, and connection. CSTs help bridge the gap between ability and opportunity, ensuring that the people they serve can fully participate in and contribute to their communities. Through patience, encouragement, and dedication, CSTs make a lasting impact-- not only in the lives of those they support but, in the communities, they help build.”*

I enjoy working in Early Intervention because I take pride in knowing that I can be a helping hand in the lives of my families through my experience, knowledge and skills. Knowing I can help mold these children in the first three years of life, brings me true happiness. Thank you to Universal for giving me this beautiful opportunity!

“If you love what you do, you’ll never work a day in your life.”



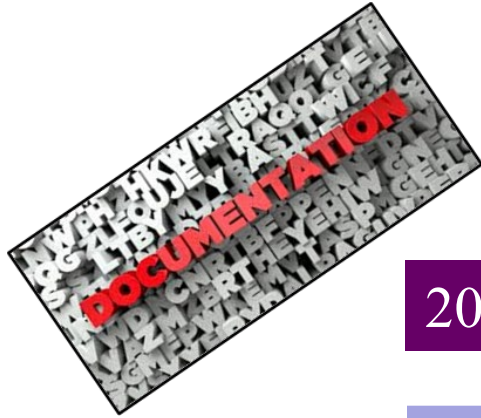


These ladies process everything that comes into Accounting. From new members to member updates, as well as authorization requests to denied claims. These ladies cover it all! Need a password reset, we've got you. Can't schedule a service? We got you! These ladies are here to help make your workday easier with OnTarget assistance and great customer service. Their OnTarget knowledge coupled with their impeccable response time has made this Accounting Department the best we've ever had.

Need help, email [ontarget@umhs.net](mailto:ontarget@umhs.net) and we'll be glad to assist!



# Here are the Top Ten Note Writer Winners



2024 4<sup>th</sup> Qt

**Mary Moore**

**Michael Ross**

**Shalonda Coats**

**Iryna Simmons**

**Rachel Jones**

**Shelly Duclos**

**LaTonya Hamlet**

**Aida Taylor**

**Angela Harris**

**Haeju Hong**

2025 1<sup>st</sup> Qt

**Shelly Duclos**

**Wilford Greene**

**Erdeena Hall**

**Shinika McGhee**

**Alfreda Steward**

**Julie Jones**

**Andrea Alexander**

**Jerlene Harris**

**Kay Washington**

**Jamal Fraizer**



You guys ROCK!

## Plugged In ~ by NADSP Director of Education



*“This article, DSPs Should Be ‘Plugged In’ To Community Resources, Activities, Events, And More! is part of an ongoing series about the NADSP Competency Areas. The NADSP Competency Areas offer DSPs the opportunity to address challenges, work on issues identified by the person they support, or assist a person in pursuing a particular goal. Each Competency Area has corresponding skill statements that describe the knowledge and skills DSPs must have to demonstrate competency in each area.*

### **Community and Service Networking**

*When a direct support professional researches, develops, and maintains information on community and other resources relevant to the needs of people they support, they are meeting the spirit of inclusion, community integration and standards set by the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Final Rule.*

*This landmark regulatory guidance was established in 2014 by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ (CMS) Home and Community Based Services division. The regulations were intended to encourage more community-based services and community integration and inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Direct support professionals are integral in ensuring that the people they support can thrive and experience life in their respective communities.*

### **Inside The Skill Statement**

*The competent DSP has knowledge of and uses modes of communication that are appropriate to the communication needs of participants. Knowing one’s neighborhood, community, city and environment can be something we can innocently take for granted. When someone we support has not had the opportunity to learn about the resources and options that exist in their communities related to shopping, learning, leisure, food, transportation and all the things associated with living as a true community member, it is our responsibility as direct support professionals to help them learn to navigate these community resources. Direct support professionals have an obligation to assist people in making informed decisions that are associated with all the benefits and challenges of participating in the communities in which we live.”*





# Spring Safety Tips

1

Spring clean your workstation to eliminate trip hazards.

2

Upgrade worn out PPE that you have from the winter months.

3

Keep an umbrella in your car, work bag, or purse at all times.

4

Make sure your windshield wipers are in good condition.

5

Bring a reusable water bottle to work and stay hydrated.



As technology evolves, cyber threats are becoming more sophisticated, and Universal's network is a prime target. To keep our data and systems secure, the IT Department must implement additional security measures to stay ahead of these threats.

Some of these changes may require employees to take extra steps in their daily processes or learn new ways to complete familiar tasks. For example, users may need to verify their identity more frequently through multifactor authentication, use specific software on mobile devices, or access company data in designated ways. While these security controls can sometimes feel redundant, inconvenient, or even invasive, they are essential to protecting our network from cybercriminals.

We understand that change can be frustrating, and we want to assure you that our goal is not to make your job harder or invade your privacy. Every measure we implement is designed to safeguard Universal's data and ensure a secure working environment for everyone. While some security updates may add an extra click or require a slightly different process, these adjustments are minor compared to the risks of a cyberattack. As hackers and extortionists continue to evolve their tactics, we must adapt as well.

The IT Department is here to support you. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can contact us by phone, email, Teams, or at [trackit@umhs.net](mailto:trackit@umhs.net).

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to keeping Universal secure!

Jonathan Euper, IT Specialist

[jeuper@umhs.net](mailto:jeuper@umhs.net)

828-759-4099

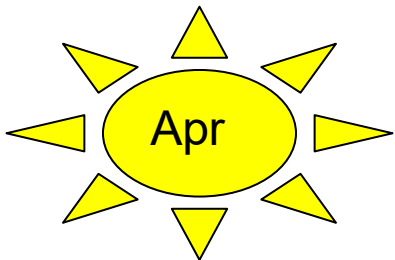
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# Universal's Cultural Sensitivity Mission Statement

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







“The theme for the trees this year was America. As America is a country built on diversity and inclusion. Our tree theme represented Autism awareness as we support youth and families who deal with the challenges of autism. While our tree has the colors of the American flag, red, white and blue: **Red:** Represents hardiness, valor, energy, desire, and passion. **White:** Represents purity and innocence. **Blue:** Represents vigilance, perseverance, and justice. The attributes of these colors also represent individuals with Autism. Blue in our tree is also associated with calmness and acceptance, which is the primary color designated for Autism. We used stars, just as the American flag but to also represents our members as they are shining stars. We used toy soldiers, to represent and honor the men and women, who fight to keep our country safe every day. The toy soldiers also represent our members, who are fighters of adversity in neurodivergence. Finally, the puzzle pieces used in our tree is another commonly recognizable symbol denoting Autism awareness.”

*~ submitted by Regional Director, Garry Wiley*





Valentines Day party with Universal's "Journey to Success" Day Program staff.

Members and staff stopped by for candy and snacks during Winston's Valentine's Celebration.

Pictured is OA, **Melissa Abshire**.







*Morganton's newest OA  
~ Teresa Caldwell*



*Winston's newest QP  
~ Carlos Williams*



*Raleigh's newest QP  
~ Carletta Lawson-Moore*



Christina Clatterbuck says *“I would like to give a big Kudos to **Tamara Bedford**! She’s always a phone call away when you need help! The Eastern Region appreciates YOU Tamara! ”*



Dolly Green says, *“I want to let **Lori Gordon** know from the entire Forest City office: we recognize that you go above and beyond. Our office is the cleanest it's ever been, and we are so very thankful for you.”*

Heather Everhart says *“Kudos to the ladies in the **Accounting Department**. They process on average 140 emails per day. The response time these ladies have when responding is impeccable! Kudos for all you do! I see you ladies and I appreciate what you do.”*

Amber Anderson says *“Kudos to **Chelsea Rollins and Alexis Thompson** for keeping the Early Intervention Team rolling! Couldn’t do it without you guys!”*



Sherry Wilkins says, *“Kudos to **Michael Johnson, Taylor Smith, Ryan Freeman, and Johnea Littlejohn** for assisting with supporting the I/DD members in the Morganton office. Their willingness to work as a team to ensure our members are respected, needs are addressed, and they receive quality support is why I’m so appreciative to have them on my team!*





From the Accounting Dept: “A big *THANK YOU* to all **Direct Care staff** that complete their EVV Clock in/out daily! You are noticed and greatly appreciated.”



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Audrey Cobb says, “Kudos to **Terry Bedford**. He is always willing to help when needed. To Heather Everhart, I can’t say enough about this lady. I appreciate her. To the Raleigh QP’s who make my job easy. They are always willing to help.”



Terry Bedford says, “Kudos to the **Day Program Staff** in Burlington. You all truly make a difference in people’s lives.”

Morgan Dawkins says “Kudos to the **IT Department**. They make me feel like they drop what they are doing every time I need help with something. IT always has very quick responses. Kudos to **Lori Gordon**. She is always willing to help me with anything I need. Kudos to **Teresa Caldwell** for being patient and willing to learn.”

