

# The Insider

April 2023



## 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.*

**SUCCESS** - submitted by QP, Sheila Moore

### Inside This Issue

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Sheila Moore says this about Ashley Henderson, *“Ashley is an amazing Job Coach who gives the people she serves 100% of her energy and attention. She supports with confidence and sincerity to help them meet their employability goals.*

*Ashley is a GREAT communicator and has a solid relationship with the site managers/co-workers/families. The families served have expressed that they have seen the growth of their children, especially in confidence levels and pride that they have in becoming valued employees.”*

Check out her hard work on the next page.





CST Ashley Henderson says this about the brothers she supports, *“The progress these two have made is tremendous. Their willingness to show up on time, work hard and be a team player isn't going unnoticed either. Within the last 3 months, both brothers, have managed to win the McDonald's Employee of the Month Award. The managers vote & they decide each month who gets the award within their store. It does come with a generous prize of \$300, that was awarded to both boys. Galen won back in December when they first started the program under the new owners & just a few short months later, Gabin took home the award for the month of March.*

*Initially they were not social butterflies like they are today. They always have positive attitudes, and I could not be prouder of my guys! I am so glad the company they work for gives them recognition for their efforts in the workplace!”*

Sheila Moore also says this about another hard worker, *“Makensie has received her 2-year pin at Wendy's in Columbus, NC. She and her Job Coach, Ashley Henderson, make a great team in maintaining her job at Wendy's. Makensie's tasks have increased, and she has met the new assignments with confidence. We wish her continued successes.”*

*Universal could not be prouder of you all!*





Peter pictured with one of his many heroes!

Asheville's Genell Carson says this about staff River Ashe. *"River is one of the most conscientious employees. It is obvious that he loves what he does. You make a difference in the people's lives that you support."*

River says this about the person he serves. *"Peter and I have been working together since January 2023. He has a love for Police Officers, First Responders and Firemen. One of Peter's goals is to get pictures of him with the Public Servants, but only if he achieves his daily tasks. Peter has started a portfolio of all the photos he has collected."*

*Peter just got a \$1.25 per hour raise for his work performance. He's obviously come a long way in a short period of time."*

*Universal could not be prouder of both River and Peter!*

“My name is Melissa Abshire, MS. LEWISVILLE, NC PLUS AMERICA. A little background on how I got involved with NC PLUS AMERICA. I have a friend who recently opened a plus size boutique here in Winston-Salem, NC, named The Curvy Fox Boutique. When they opened their store, they asked their friends to come out to the boutique and model their clothing in order to get their name out there. I started going just to help them out. At this point I was asked to be a part of the Amarje Enterprise Fashion Show at Winston Salem State University on October 8, 2022.

That night I ran into Dr. Stephanie Hurt, the Executive Director and Ahmad Johnson is the Co-Director of NCPLUSAMERICA. Dr. Hurt and I go back a few years and she and I have had conversations about many different things that have taken place throughout my life. She asked me to sign up to be a part of the NCPLUSAMERICA. This was way out of my comfort zone. However, once I got through the Fashion Show at WSSU I told myself that I can do anything and that a person only lives once in life, and I should go ahead and go for it. Funny enough Dr. Hurt texted me, *“I don’t see your application for the Pageant. I will be looking for your application to be submitted.”* I thought about it for about a week before I completed and submitted the application.

I was and am very excited and nervous at the same time, SO that is how I became involved with this Sisterhood of Queens. I was formally Crowned and named Ms. Lewisville , NC on December 18, 2022, in Winston-Salem, NC. My platform was **Surviving One’s Self after Domestic Violence**. In the meantime, I prepared for the actual pageant that was March 17 -19, 2023.

I’m proud to have placed 3<sup>rd</sup> overall.”



***Universal is so proud of you  
Melissa Abshire!***



This was the 36th year the United States recognized and celebrated March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan designated this special month with the intent of building recognition and equal opportunities for people with I/DD.

Nearly 200,000 people with I/DD live in all 100 of North Carolina's counties. The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), along with other organizations, self-advocates, and government agencies, works to help people with I/DD realize their full potential at school, work, home, and in their communities.

Diverse minds and bodies provide different perspectives, ideas, and innovations. NCCDD firmly believes in the strength, productivity, and value of all individuals with I/DD. Increased access to competitive employment, integrated education, housing and healthcare will only enhance our economic and social structures to create a better state, country, and world.

NCCDD recognizes and advocates for people with I/DD all year long but gives special thanks and celebration to March's Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.



The IT Department would like to thank everyone for their patience and cooperation during the Azure Active Directory project. This project is now complete, and our company devices are now more secure and can be managed more efficiently. Even with the added features and security of Azure Active Directory, we still need help to keep our network and data secure.

### **Remain vigilant when receiving email:**

Even though Universal has a solution in place to scan all incoming email and block known threats from being delivered, malicious email sometimes makes it through to our mailboxes. If an email looks suspicious, please do not open it, click on any links in the email, or open any attachments included with the email. Report any suspicious email to the IT department immediately.

### **Routinely restart computers and ensure updates are installed:**

It is important for users to restart their devices from time to time. Ideally, this should be done at least once per week. This helps your device offload clutter and run faster. This also provides an opportunity to run updates if they are available. Instructions to restart/update your computer can be found on this website: <https://umhs.net/update-reminder-two>

If you have any questions or would like more information about this or any IT issue, feel free to contact the IT Department. The easiest, most-effective way to reach IT is by emailing [trackit@umhs.net](mailto:trackit@umhs.net).



*Rachel Sullivan, LCSW is a clinician with 10 years of experience providing psychotherapy to survivors of sexual violence, intimate-partner abuse and other crimes, as well as consultation to medical providers. Here are her thoughts on this important issue.*

*“People who have experienced abuse can struggle with the ability to trust others. A common refrain from trauma survivors is: *If I was hurt by someone who was supposed to take care of me, how can I trust anyone else?*”*

Unsurprisingly, some will cope by relying only on themselves. For example, I’ve worked with countless trauma survivors who describe themselves as excellent "planners." They are the friend who designs the itinerary ahead of time, or the family member who diligently researches every option. For these individuals, their planning skills serve to help them feel empowered and in control, which is particularly important in the long-term recovery from abuse. One of the most influential interventions of trauma-informed care is restoring a sense of power and control over time in different aspects of a survivor’s life. By reclaiming their control, a survivor is undoing some of the long-term damage done by their abuser. Many survivors find healing in gaining independence, autonomy and self-worth. Since 2020, however, COVID-19 has brought to light an interesting tension: How can we rely only on ourselves when our health is dependent on the behaviors of the people around us?

### **Trauma Survivors May Face Unique Stressors And Challenges**

People have been encouraged (or required) to get vaccinated, wear masks, socially distance, etc. to maintain individual health and safety — but also protect the greater good. And our individual safety relies on a widespread commitment to these protocols. There is only so much sanitizing and masking I can do to keep myself safe. If someone else chooses to enter the room I'm in, my health is now dependent on that person's actions.

This can be extremely anxiety-provoking for someone who already struggled to trust people before this global public health matter.

**Survivors of interpersonal abuse** — like sexual violence, intimate-partner abuse or family abuse — may have noticed an increase in anxiety in the last few years. They may have even noticed increased conflict in their relationships or a decreased ability to trust new people in their lives. Collectively, we have had to rely on other people during this pandemic, which can be exceedingly difficult for someone who has been working on trauma recovery.

### **Self-Care Must Be A Priority**

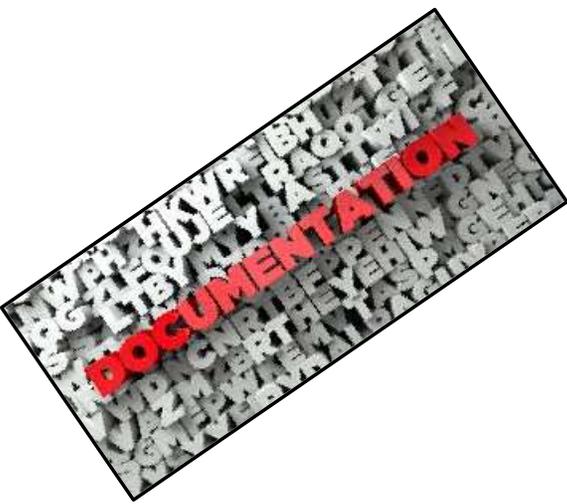
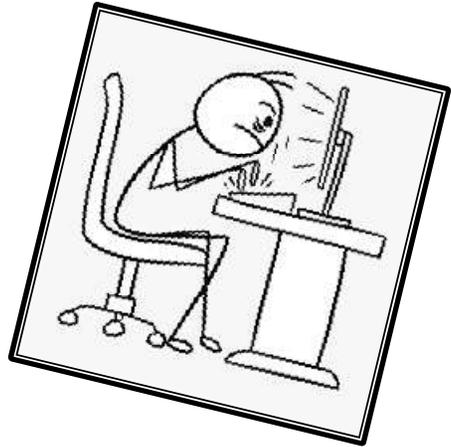
To those who are navigating this complex situation while coping with past trauma, there is hope. Unfortunately, there's no easy solution to addressing this increased anxiety, but what you can focus on is strengthening your confidence in what you *can* control. If it feels good to wear three masks at the same time, then do it. If it brings you comfort to sanitize your packages before bringing them into your home, then do it. Your sense of safety and control matters.

Survivors I've worked with have told me that they want to do these things, but they're afraid of being judged. People may roll their eyes or make unhelpful comments, but there's no shame in prioritizing your self-care. You can't control the behaviors of others, but you can control what you do to make yourself feel better.

If actions like these are starting to impact your ability to perform daily tasks or strain your relationships, then perhaps it's gone too far — and you may want to consider talking to a mental health professional to develop more effective tools for dealing with your trauma. But if not, then pause and try to consider them as positive coping mechanisms. Try to let go of self-judgement and own the power of self-care. Your trust issues of others may still be triggered, but at least you'll know that you are doing what you can to maximize your safety and health.”

**Documentation consistency is very important! How do you qualify for this? By entering your notes within 24 hours of the completion of the service – consistently!**

**"THANK YOU" to these awesome individuals!**



Staff – 2022 4 <sup>th</sup> Qt
COOPER, MARY B (Wilson)
HONG, HAEJU G (Raleigh)
GADDIS, LAURA M (Wilson)
REELS, ALONZO MARINO (New Bern)
PLANTS, RICKY A (Raleigh)
LAWRENCE, GORDON G (New Bern)
MAHMUDA, SYEDA IFFAT (Raleigh)
HARPER, DENISIA EULAYA (Asheville)
TWITTY, PEARLINE (Morganton)
EVANS, RHONDA D (Forest City)

Recently we witnessed the collapse of a Buffalo Bills football player on national TV. Our thoughts are with Damar Hamlin, his family and the entire NFL community, and he seems to be experiencing a fast and full recovery. Accidents and emergencies can happen anytime at home, in the workplace or in the community. Every second counts when sudden cardiac arrest occurs, and it's critical to know what to do in an emergency.

If you see someone collapse call or have someone else call 911 and start Hands-Only CPR (chest compressions only) immediately. Universal requires this lifesaving training for employees and contractors. Parents, grandparents and caregivers may attend our training FREE of charge. CPR/First Aid training takes only a few hours and can give you the skills and confidence to act when moments matter.

CPR will help buy the person time.



# How to Avoid Slips, Trips and Falls

## DON'T RUSH



## WEAR PROPER SHOES



- Tied shoe laces
- Non-slip soles
- Closed toe



KEEP FLOORS CLEAN & DRY



## WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING



1. You should test your smoke alarms every month.                      a. True                      b. False
2. When should you remove batteries from a smoke alarm?
  - a. Before cooking because you don't want to be bothered
  - b. When it makes chirping noises and scares your children.
  - c. Never, unless it is time to change the batteries.
3. Where should smoke alarms be placed?
  - a. Just one in the kitchen will do.
  - b. One on every floor of your home except for the basement.
  - c. On every level of your home, inside and outside every sleeping area.
4. How often should you change your smoke alarm batteries.
  - a. Every six months (unless it has a long-life battery)
  - b. Every year (unless it has a long-life battery)
  - c. Every five years (unless it has a long-life battery)
5. How often should you and your family practice your home fire drill?
  - a. Just once should be fine
  - b. Twice a year
  - c. Once every two years



**Remember:** direct care individuals are to maintain the safety features of your vehicles...taillights, turn signals, tire pressure etc.

If you are working with someone who are struggling with the effort to maintain hygiene, I have a few suggestions:

1. Attach the act of bathing to the start of something, like the beginning of the work week. This built-in routine can be a helpful reminder when you might otherwise forget about showering.

2. Attach showering to the end of a workweek. This adds more consistency to your routine.

3. If showering is too much of an ordeal, keep adult disposal bathing cloths handy. These can be bought at any pharmacy or medical supply store.

4. Make agreements with supporters that you will bathe on a specific day or night. Sooner is better as I have found that if I wait, I can create a reason for not taking care of hygiene.

5. If possible, splurge on quality soaps and shampoos. This act of self-care can be fun and make for a more pleasant showering experience.

6. On days when you cannot follow a showering routine, simply cleanse your face and the perineal areas for express cleaning and put on clean clothing. This will cover certain health precautions and likely give you more energy.



When we are having difficulty functioning, we deserve help.

Struggling to practice hygiene (even when you know you “should”) isn’t a moral failing; it’s simply a sign that we need extra support. You should not feel ashamed about voicing your struggles and reaching out to members of your support team. This journey can be difficult, but you don’t have to do it alone.

*Ivory Smith Causey has a B.A. in sociology from Georgia Southern University and a B.S. in nursing from Macon State College. Ivory is a registered nurse at McIntosh Trail Management in Macon, Ga. and works as an assessment nurse. She is a member of the American Holistic Nurses Association and hopes to be certified in holistic nursing.*

*~from February 2023 NAMI Blog*



<https://www.facebook.com/reel/5715824551796771?fs=e&s=aEkTS0&mibextid=z9DgKg>

Look at all the gifts that the Raleigh office gave to a single mom and her 2 young boys for Christmas. *"Ahhhh – the gift of giving!"*



Burlington's Michael Brewington: Check out his link below:  
<https://richandrulerco.com/blogs/news/mike-b-elite>

# 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."

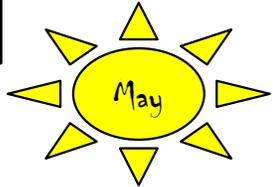
April



Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Month



Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

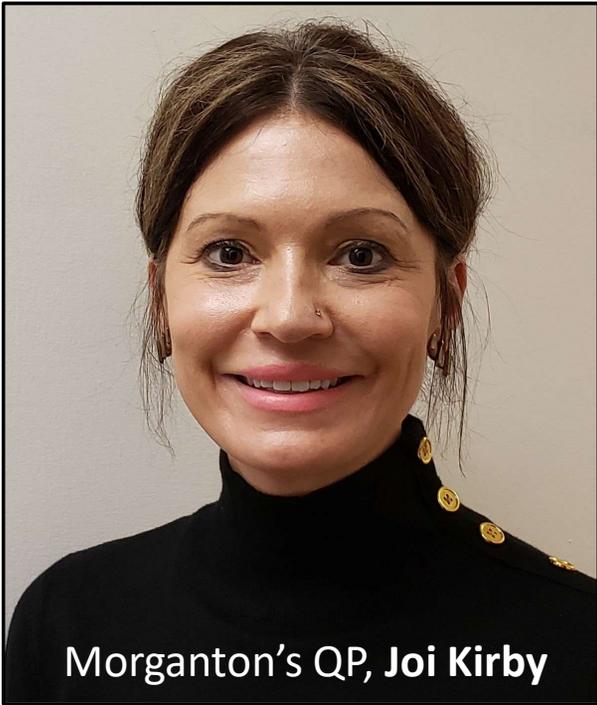


June



LGBTQ+ Pride Month





Morganton's QP, **Joi Kirby**

Raleigh's RN, **Shanea Lining**



Morganton's Employment Specialist, **Nancy Yancey**



Burlington's OA, **Bianca Green**



Check out the Company Store!

KUDOS



IngrShe does an awesome job! She is so helpful and works well with staff and clients!

Lori Gordon says "Sheila Moore in Forest City goes above and beyond in helping our persons served with securing and maintaining employment. Sheila has not only formed strong and loyal relationships with her staff, but with the managers and owners of businesses in multiple counties. She and her staff physically assist persons served in their daily work activities while providing guidance, confidence, and positive reinforcement to ensure the success of our persons served in their workplace."

Amber Anderson says "Kudos to Chelsea Rollins for being a team player and always doing so with a smile on her face!"

Shannon Gonzalez says "Kudos to the Raleigh Group Home for going above and beyond the last few months to cover shifts and make sure the client's transition was as smooth as possible."

The 1- and 5-year longevity coupons are mailed monthly!!

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



# More KUDOs

Shannise Payton says  
*"Kudos to Zsa Zsa Johnson. She has been a tremendous help to the Burlington office during transitions. Thanks Zsa Zsa!"*

Anonymous Kudos for Ingrid Freeman. She does an outstanding job every day! As HR Director she is a great support to all staff. You can call on Ingrid for anything and she is there! She is a Universal STAR. 

Drema Greer says  
*"Kudos to Sabin Carroll. Sabin is a patient teacher!"*

Ingrid Freeman says  
*"Kudos to Drema Greer for always doing a great job with the newsletter. It is not an easy task, and she manages to produce an awesome newsletter each quarter." Ingrid also sends out a Kudo to Brittany Darr – she is so helpful and works well with all staff and persons served."*

Audry Cobb says  
*"Again, I can't say enough about Heather Everhart. She is always patient with me and very helpful."*

Sherry Douglas says *"Kudos to Johnea Littlejohn and Michael Johnson for all the new intakes last quarter. Also, to all my QPs who work so diligently on EVV requirements. It is amazing how my QPs work to find staff to deliver quality services to every person served."*

Brandy Regan says *"Shout out to Inecia Kornegay, Jocelyn Pearsall and Anneice Morman for working as a team to cover needed days off for other Staff! You guys rock!"*

Christina Clatterbuck says *"I would like to give a shout out to the ladies of the Eastern Region! Brittany, Alisia, Courtney, Brandy, Monique, and Mrs. Carr! Each of these ladies work so hard for our region to operate smoothly! Your hard work does not go unnoticed!!!"*

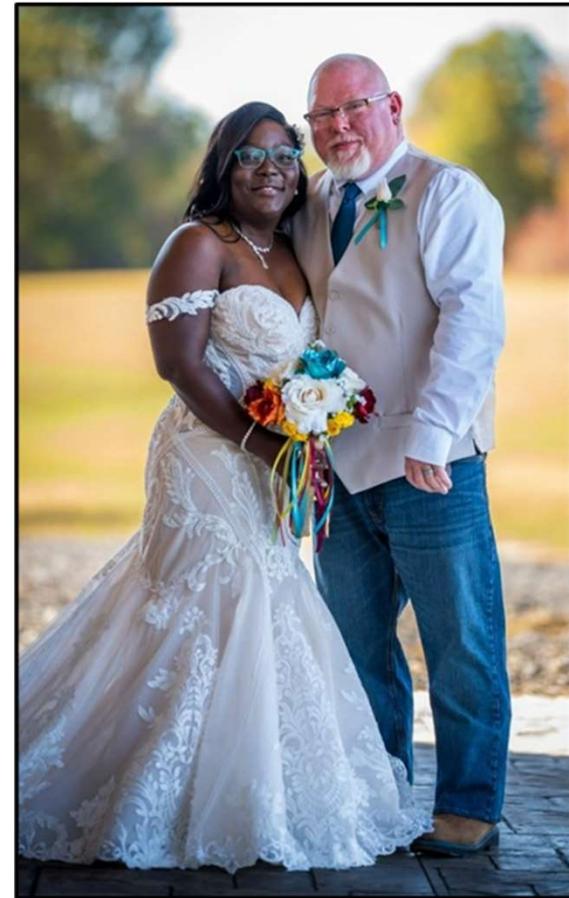
Alicia G. Brown says *"Kudos to Brook Phillips for strong leadership and great decision-making skills.*

*We are so proud to have you leading our team!"*





Michael and Kimberly Carter were married on 10/22/22. Kimberly has been employed with Universal for over 12 years.



Morganton's Office Assistant, Paige Thomas is one proud mama. Her son Eli received a full football scholarship to Guilford College. ...And Paige got married! Your Universal family says, **"CONGRATS!"**





Universal's President, Alicia Greer Brown's son Grayam, married his true love, Brooke...and they have a beautiful new baby Richard Grayson.  
**CONGRATS!**

1. A
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. B

Help me welcome Universal President Alicia Brown's new grandkiddos – Olivia Rae (above) and Richard Grayson (below.)  
**CONGRATS!**

