



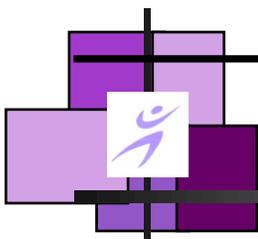
The Insider

July 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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Salvation Army Volunteer Inspires – The Times News

"If you are in a grouchy mood, spend one to two minutes around Scott Hricsina and all of a sudden you're not anymore" said Social Services Director Carrie Israel. Scott has been volunteering at the local nonprofit for seven months. He helps run the front office, answering phones and making sure people get connected to the services they need. Israel along with others at the Salvation Army sees Scott as an inspiration. He has multiple congenital birth defects resulting in severe limb deficiencies, leaving him with no arms (only appendages and no femur in his one leg.) He wears an artificial leg on his right side.

Scott believes there is always an opportunity. *"We all have gifts and skills we can offer. Even just a smile goes a long way. Just being able to reach out and smile at someone and ask them how their day is going. Just taking a moment of your time to help someone and recognize someone else."*



Hricsina says he has always loved to volunteer. Now he works two days a week at the local Salvation Army. Along with his duties in the front office, he has expanded his focus and has begun training with Israel to learn more about the screening process to help people with rental assistance and energy needs. Those who work along side Hricsina say they are inspired by his attitude, work ethic, sense of humor and ability to fix any computer problem almost instantly. "He is just a whiz and we love him" says Israel.

Scott says "I am a disabled man who has severe congenital birth defects leaving me with truncated upper limbs and one leg. In my 20's I worked various jobs, but after I sustained a knee injury I decided to go on Social Security Disability. After many years of this I felt my life to be incomplete and lacking any great purpose. It was then I decided to try to return to work. I learned about the Ticket to Work program through Vocational Rehabilitation in August 2018. I was extremely lucky to have been assigned a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist, who I continue to be impressed with her dedication to me. It was through discussions with Terri that we decided to enlist the services of Universal, a job coaching and skills training company. Prior to coming to North Carolina, Scott attended college in Seattle and worked in Information Technology at an airport. When living in Pennsylvania, Scott was president of an environmental advocacy group.

Once again, I was so fortunate in being assigned a talented, dedicated professional, Kelley R. Corwin. Her commitment has also been unmatched and her skill in service is superb. We met several times and decided to do a couple of real-world skills assessments. One assessment, working at the front desk at Salvation Army, turned into a long-term volunteering position, which I later would use as a reference. After completing those Kelley suggested that since I had some quality skills and didn't need training that she instead focus on being an advocate for me. When initially introduced to people they struggle to understand my capabilities because of the severity of my disability. Kelley saw this and understood it well, so that became the focus. We worked together to build an effective resume and collaborated on several job applications. When the time came to start interviewing she helped prepare me with intensive mock interviews. Kelley attended several job interviews with me. Acting as my advocate, she was able to convey to potential employers my abilities and skills. Eventually, we did so well that two departments in Henderson County were fighting over me! I made my decision and landed a great job with Henderson County Parks and Recreation. I owe a great deal of my success to the day-to-day coaching and interactions I had with Kelley. We covered so much and she put in a lot of intensive work for me. Her support and contribution has been invaluable through this whole process."

Scott says "my job is fantastic and fulfilling and I couldn't have done it without the tenacity of Terri and the incredible support I received from Kelley. My life today is so much more satisfying. I cannot express how grateful I am to have received such outstanding help and services. Scott's Employment Specialist Kelley Corwin says, ***"This amazing man certainly has an amazing story. One from which we can all learn!"***



Universal's "Team Amazing" Peer Support Specialists presented at the Addiction Professionals of NC Spring Conference at the Crown Plaza on April 24, 2019. From left to right in the photo: (Back Row) Ray Shinn (person served), Ashley Bessent, Mary Sibila-Lemons, Rhett Henderson and William Jenkins (Front Row) left to right: Tricia Howard, Charlyne Boyette and participant.

The presentation was titled "The Ethics of Love and the Power of Team." Participants were guided by "Team Amazing" to explore the ethics of love through experiential practice of heart strengthening and interactive examination of the NC Peer Support Code of Ethics. "Team Amazing" shared stories through role play that emphasized the benefits of heart based team work "with emphasis on healthy communication." This photo was taken after the presentation and the posters represent specific principles that empower our team-based approach: "strengths-based, person-centered, recovery-oriented, unconditional LOVE, compassion, boundaries, emphasis on self-care and nothing-about-us-without-us." We closed with "tips and tools for self-care" and provided participants with a handy guide to take with them.

Although we were the presenters, "Team Amazing" received the greatest benefit from this presentation because it brought us together in planning and presenting, reminding us of how grateful and blessed we are to work at Universal Mental Health and with each other. Each of us were given full access to the entire conference and attended individual sessions of our choice that we were then able to share with each other at our weekly team meeting. None of this could have happened without our Amazing leaders believing in us, so THANK YOU to Brook and Patra.



Feedback from presentation:
"this is the best presentation I have ever been to and I have been to a lot!"



NCCDD, March 28, 2019 (North Carolina) - Governor Roy Cooper officially declared North Carolina as an Employment First State through signing of an Executive Order today in Kernersville, NC, at the Piedmont Triad Regional Council.

The principles of Employment First include working in integrated settings and earning competitive wages and benefits; securing employment with reasonable and appropriate placement and support; employees with and without disabilities are equally valued and that jobs should match an individual's work skills, abilities and career choices to the greatest extent possible.

This effort has been 10 years in the making. The collective impact of state agencies like NC Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Mental Health/Substance Abuse Services/Developmental Disabilities, Office of Disability Employment Policy; nonprofit organizations like Association of People Supporting Employment First; and many community advocates have brought the state to this milestone for people with disabilities.

"This is a very exciting moment for the disability community," said Alexandra McArthur, chairperson of the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities. "Employment offers a rewarding sense of purpose, high expectations and an ability to contribute to society. People with disabilities are talented, capable and ready to work and we are excited to see the State of North Carolina support this effort."

In North Carolina, there are approximately 1.3 million individuals with disabilities who experience disproportionately high levels of unemployment, residential segregation, dependence and poverty. Additionally, less than 35 percent of North Carolinians who are between the ages of 18 and 64 and have a disability are employed - a huge contrast to the nearly 76 percent of North Carolinians without disabilities who are employed.

This announcement comes on the heels of many employment initiatives that have begun across the State to increase employment outcomes for under-served and unserved communities.

In 2017, the NC Job Ready Initiative better aligned public sector resources with the evolving needs of businesses. The Hometown Strong Initiative in 2018 bolstered existing public-private efforts to expand employment opportunities to all North Carolinians.

NCCDD launched EveryBody Works North Carolina to increase awareness of the skills and expertise of North Carolinians with disabilities; provide them and their families with information on how to access training and education; help them become more competitive for available job opportunities and to improve their job readiness.



Governor Cooper signs an executive order declaring North Carolina as an Employment First state.





1. SHOW UP!
2. CULTIVATE AUTHENTICITY
3. SET BOUNDARIES
4. ACTIVELY PRACTICE GRATITUDE
5. EMBRACE VULNERABILITY
6. LET GO OF PERFECTIONISM
7. EXPLORE YOUR EMOTIONS
8. BUILD SHAME RESILIENCE
9. RISK FAILURE
10. DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS

You deserve to set healthy emotional boundaries



*You can't get to courage
without walking through
vulnerability.*

-Brene Brown





I've now been in therapy for four years. I talk about four years a lot. It's an important number in my life. After I was raped in 2011, I suffered in silence for just under four years. It happened at college in Chicago by a fellow student on the third weekend of my freshman year. I tried to get justice, but after months of meetings and hearings, my rapist never had any consequences. I experienced four years of dark depression, overwhelming anxiety, self-blame, self-harm and self-hatred. It's hard to believe that I have been in recovery for about as long as I suffered. In the spring of 2015, after years of desperately wanting and trying to find help, I started to see my therapist. We'll call her Kelly. In honor of these four years, here are four lessons I learned along the way.

1. If at First you Don't Succeed, Keep Trying

You don't like every person you meet. You've had teachers you liked and ones that you couldn't stand. People are people and therapists are people too. The first therapist I saw was pushy and intense. *Not for me!* The second one used language that blamed me for my rape. *Why are you even a therapist?* Third one? We just didn't "click." *It happens.* The fourth one was Kelly and from the start she was different. She was kind and really listened. She gained my trust and helped me re-learn how to trust people. I know how overwhelming and even scary it can be to seek help. If an appointment does not go well, it can feel defeating. There are so many therapists out there and it might take a little extra time to [find the right person](#) who can help you thrive.

2. Once you Start, Give it Time!

When I started therapy, I thought I would be "cured" by the time I graduated from college. In reality, it has been a slow process and that's okay. Therapy felt like a burden at first. It felt like work and I had to motivate myself to go. I had never processed the trauma and I was struggling with depression, anxiety and an eating disorder. It was hard and time consuming work to peel back the layers of trauma.

After the first few months, I started actually looking forward to each session. Kelly and I decided it would be useful to keep talking when I graduated and moved back to Boston. So we used FaceTime and still do. Healing takes time and the road to recovery can seem long and never ending, but whether you are in therapy or not, the time will pass. I decided to focus less on how much time it was taking and just take each session as it came.

3. Therapy and Medication can be a Winning Team

In the fall of 2015, Kelly and I decided that medication might be beneficial to me. I made an appointment with my primary care doctor and after a bit of discussion, she prescribed Zoloft. I know there can be a stigma with mental health medications, but it has been so important to my recovery. It may not be the right choice for everyone, but for me, it helped a lot. With the medication I wasn't having overwhelming panic and anxiety over small things and my depression wasn't taking over anymore. Therapy has helped me work through the trauma and my mental health struggles and medication has added a piece of armor.

4. Don't be Afraid to "Go There"

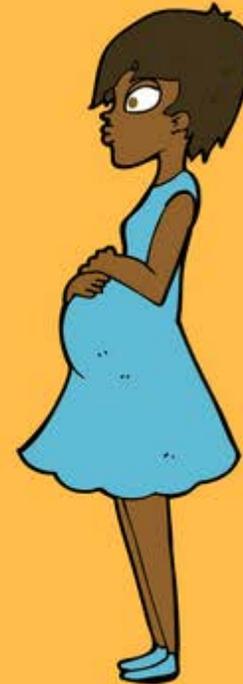
It can be so helpful and empowering to bring up the really hard stuff in therapy—even if it feels embarrassing or hard. Even if the words are painful. Even if it takes you time to feel like you can. In those first few months I was suicidal and [cutting myself](#). I felt like a failure and was afraid to bring this up to Kelly. It was hard, but sometimes a secret or a struggle can feel bigger or less manageable when you have to carry it alone. It was hard to learn how to talk about all these struggles and to learn who I was, beyond the identity I had tied to my trauma. Sometimes I write down notes in my phone of what I want to talk about. I find it easier to read off the hard stuff rather than coming up with the words on the spot. My openness with Kelly enabled her help me. It helped me help myself. For four years I believed that my rape was my fault. I believed that I was unworthy of love and happiness. I believed that I was broken and worthless, and that my life had no value. I believed that suicide was the only logical answer to my problems. But, in the past four years, I have learned that my life has value. I know now that my rape was in no way my fault. I don't hate myself. Learning to love myself has been perhaps the greatest gift that therapy has given me.

Kelly said that she did not save my life, but over the last four years she has played a starring role. Therapy helped me reclaim my identity and my life and for this I will forever be grateful.



Empathy vs Sympathy – by Brene' Brown

"I know how
you feel."



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>



Communication. How many of us have a smart phone with us right now? My guess is that almost everyone that reads this newsletter will be doing so with a smartphone within their reach as they read it. We all have so much content coming at us from so many different angles these days, it's gotten to the point that it's overwhelming.

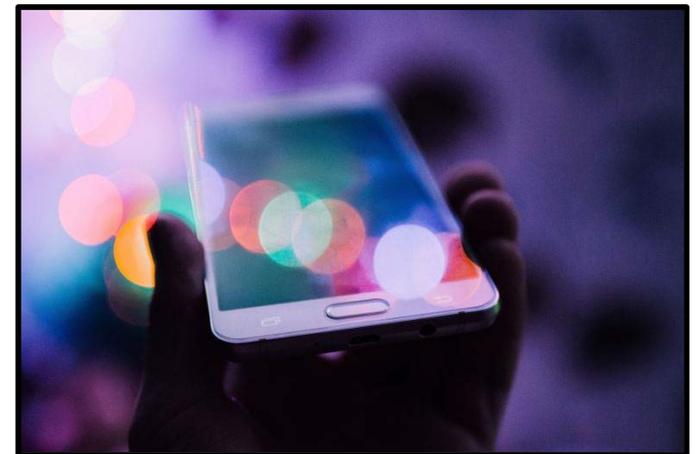
On an average day, I personally receive content and messages via phone calls, texts, email, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat, Microsoft Teams, calendar requests, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and others. Yet, that's only a fraction of the services that are out there. How do we keep our sanity and streamline communications these days?

I'm working on that answer for myself. With my children headed to separate Universities in separate states in August, we will have to come up with a way to keep family lines of communication clear. Whatever the method we choose, I certainly hope it does not add to the complexity that I mentioned above.

One thing is clear to me, I have too many means of communication, and my brain craves respite. With that said, I plan to be able to practice mindfulness around my phone usage. A quick Google search (using a device none the less) turns up an array of articles related to "mindful phone usage".

One such article from Left Brain Buddha, suggests 5 tactics:

1. Ask yourself, why am I turning to my phone?
2. Check in with how you feel after using your phone.
3. Non-judgmentally monitor your device.
4. Check your iPosture.
5. Use your phone as a call to mindfulness.



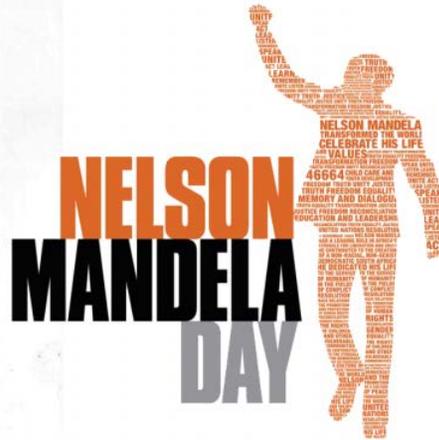
If you have any questions or would like more information about this or any IT issue, feel free to contact Leslie Cothren at lcothren@umhs.net or David Evans at devans@umhs.net.



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."

July 18



Nelson Mandela International Day

Teacher's Day in Taiwan



Sept 28

Aug 15



Hungary Ghost Festival



Zsa Zsa Johnson says"
Kudos to Drema for always doing a great job on The Insider. I always make time to read it and there is always an article in it that keeps me in this field. For that I say thank you."

Heather Everhart ~
"Kudos to the VR Teams in Asheville, Forest City and Morganton! They have embraced the new Electronic Form submission for their milestones completed. They have also done a fantastic job transitioning over to using Time Sheets in OTC. They also have 2 wonderful Supervisors that have shown great leadership during the transition!"

"Kudos to Melissa Abshire for all that she does for the Winston office. She serves beyond her normal duties to assure that our client's needs are met. She has a positive attitude and is definitely a team player in the office. She is a valuable asset to this company! -LaTonya McLean

"Kudos to Justin and Kelli for all the support and care taken to keep our program going strong. Supported Employment, like all the great programs at Universal, changes lives and we get to see an impact on the people we serve. I am proud to be an employee of Universal and part of this amazing team of people who want to help and make a difference in the lives of others! Thank You to everyone who keeps the gears turning! Kudos! Heather Constante

" Shout Out" to Melissa Abshire Administrative Assistant in Winston office always so helpful, friendly, good about following up and/or putting in contact with right person! Thx so much, Terry James RN Winston

Kudos to Christine Hope who covers for me when I am out of the office. I never worry about anything while taking a break as Christine is absolutely awesome!

I'd like to thank Leslie Cothren so very much for offering me the opportunity to work in IT here at UMHS! - David Evans

"Kudos to Anthony Yingling and Marilyn Porter for their quick response on questions from Alliance! Loretta

"Kudo's to all the OAs for working so hard to get me back up staffing reports and utilization comments!" Loretta

I would like to thank Kelli Radcliff for the patient and kind training she is providing me as QP in Supported Employment in the Forest City office. Her strength and confidence shine through in such an easy manner that everyone she comes into contact with feels better after having met her. Sheila Moore

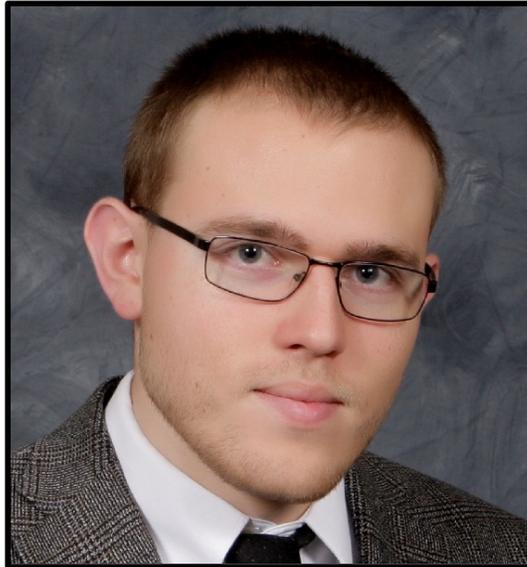
I am thrilled to be working on a team that includes Heather Everhart. She is brilliant, a huge support, and always willing to go the extra mile for everyone! ~ Les

Les says "Kudos to Drema for doing an amazing job on the newsletter!"

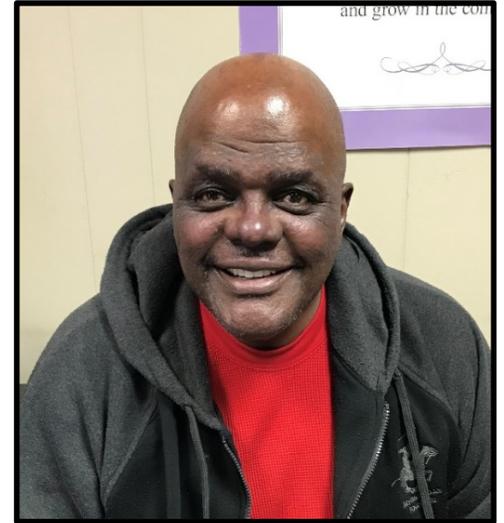




**Asheville's
LMHC ~
Catherine
Fulop**



**Morganton's IT
Specialist ~
David Evans**



**Welcome back to
Wilson's QP IDD
~ William Best**

Welcome

Welcome



**Morganton's ITFS ~
Angela Jackson**

**Asheville's OA ~
Misty Candia**



**Morganton's ITFS ~
Tiana Eovaldi**



**Forest City's QP
~ Sheila Moore**





Look who is now sharing the word about **Universal** during job fairs! If your office is in need of applicants – please contact Drema Greer!



Les Cothren is taking all forms of donations ...lol... as his twins are both entering college this fall.



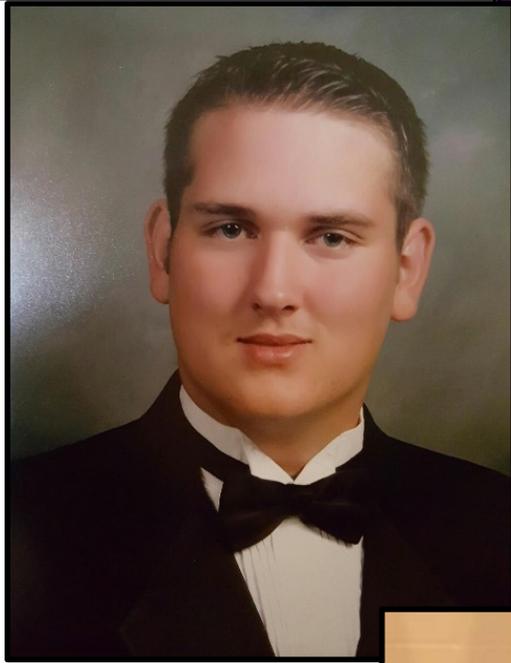
Asheville's Maurice Murray crossing a stream in Toxic Valley. Toxic Valley was given this name for the same reasons the Vikings gave Iceland its name—b/c it's gorgeous, and they didn't want people to come there.



Asheville's Kelli Radcliff's son Cole graduated Summa Cum Laude from App State University with a B.A. In Professional Writing. He accepted a position with Hatchet Coffee Company in Boone.



Congrats to **Corporate's** Christy Hartley's son Jonathan who graduated from West Caldwell HS. In addition he earned a certificate in Autobody and Collision Repair from CCC&TI.



Some of the **Morganton** folks trying to hurry Lawson Paul McCarty along....oh there he is! Congrats Autumn McCarty!

Corporate's Pattie Fries' granddaughter Macie McAlister graduated from pre-school. Look out Kindergarten!



Piper Smith, granddaughter of **Corporate's** Beverly Smith, graduated from Pre-School. Piper was voted by her classmates as the "girl" Citizen Of The Year." The criteria was being a good friend, saying helpful words and being kind.

Forest City's Julia Littlejohn's daughter Imani is moving on up to 1st grade. She also received a handwriting and citizenship award! Congrats Imani!

