



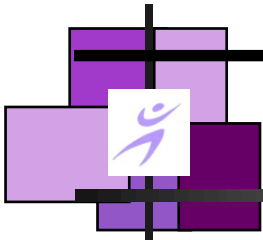
# The Insider

Oct 2018

## 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.*



## MESSAGE FROM THE AGENCY DIRECTOR

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I am pleased to say that this is proving to be another good year at Universal. We, as a team, have accomplished a lot thus far. The company has had multiple audits by MCOs, DHHS, etc. all which have been very positive. The Office 365 conversion has been successfully completed. The company is financially stable and moving forward in expanding existing services and providing new services.

We have a great Team here at Universal but, as always, there is room for improvement and development. As we continue to grow and move forward, here are a few tips:

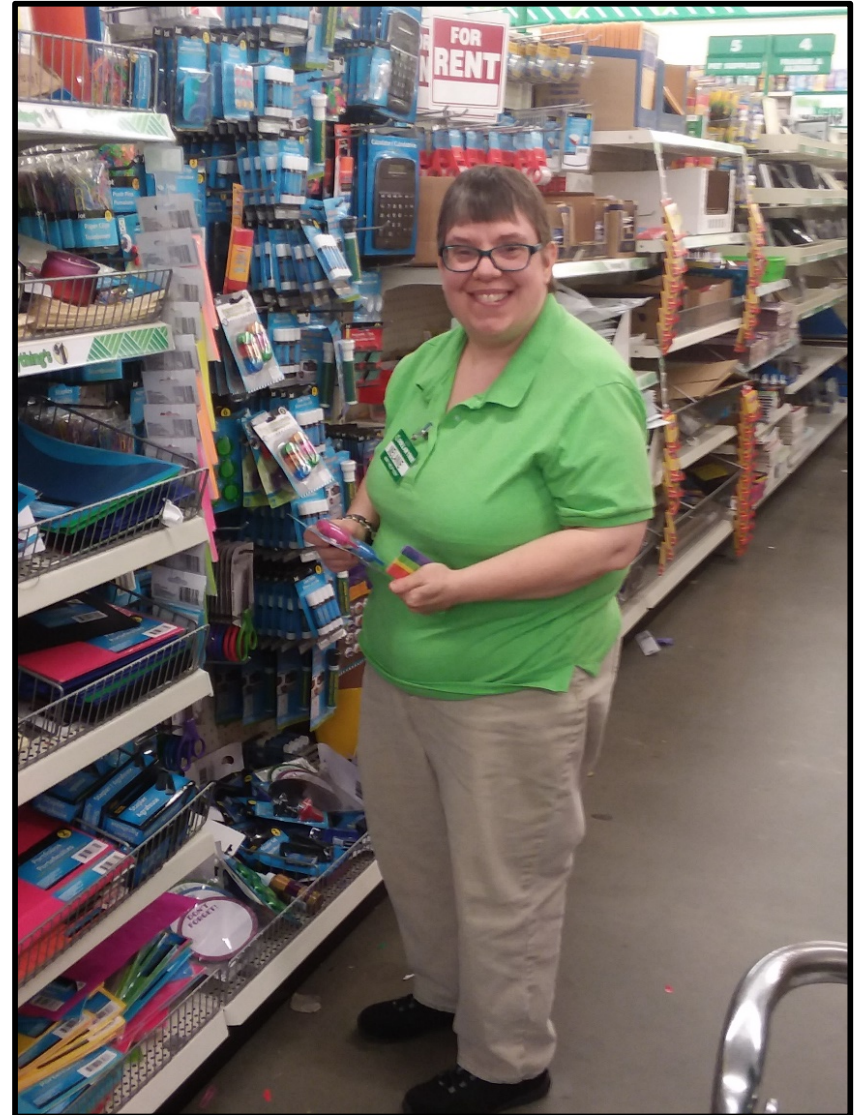
- *Always strive to represent our company and yourself in a professional manner to co-workers and stakeholders.*
- *Be very attentive to interacting promptly with the individuals we serve and their families.*
- *Each of us can also benefit from developing and improving time management skills.*

As we near the close of another year for Universal, I encourage you all to continue representing Universal in the most professional manner possible.

Thank you for everything you do to make Universal **"The Best."**  ~**B**rook

Melanie is one of Asheville's Supported Employment individuals who has been successfully working her Dollar Tree job for two years. She works in recovery, helping to keep the store straightened and cleaned for the customers. She spends four hours per shift going through the store removing misplaced items from the shelves, straightening the items and returning items to their proper places. This is a great help to her co-workers and to the customers. It gives her co-workers a chance to focus on other aspects of their jobs and to keep up with the recovery. It also helps customers shop easier when all the items are in their proper places.

Melanie is very thankful for having the opportunity to work there and hopes to continue working there for as long as she can. Her co-workers enjoy her company and the help she provides. Her managers are always happy to see her and express relief that she is there. Even though it is a tough job to keep the store straightened, Melanie always looks forward to work and enjoys what she does. Congratulations for two successful years!!



Melanie said "I hope to work here for a long, long time."



*"My name is Kevin. I was born in Stoney Brook, NY. My father died when I was an infant and my family moved to Central Florida. My mom would eventually meet another man who was by no means decent. Then my younger brother was born. Fast forwarding through years of abuse, neglect, financial abuse and animosity, I was diagnosed with Autism. Through my perseverance and my mom not giving up on me, I was able to push through school and navigate social settings much more easily until graduation.*

*Eventually my mom became seriously ill and afterwards I became her caretaker. Though she was still with the abusive individual, neither he nor my younger brother chipped in to help.*

*From the abuse on all fronts, being a caretaker, depression, and having no real outlet outside of the home, I began succumbing to dangerous and desperate thoughts including suicidal ideations. My behaviors became increasingly destructive and my mind would break at times.*

*Fortunately I had the mindset enough to reach out to family members who helped me and got me out of there. I eventually landed in Asheville, NC where I gained a grand new life living with family. It was there that I would get my first job with Brother Wolf Animal Rescue and now I work at Zaxby's. I am now making friends, going out, volunteering and have begun to taste the life I've always wanted, but never had.*

*My mom eventually succumbed to illness causing things to spiral downwards. Due to my behaviors I would end up in a group home in West Asheville. Enter my Peer Support Specialist, Casey. She is a big asset in my life. She goes the extra mile by taking calls on her time off. She aids me in grocery runs and has even helped me find a new grocery app. Casey helps me grow in proper social and life skills. I can not thank Casey enough for helping me navigate independent living and workplace settings.*

*Today I am engaging in therapy and outside support groups. I am proud to have written a book which I hope to get published soon. I am living on my own, quite successfully I might add. I am making artwork and am even a part of an art group. I am volunteering and have gainful employment. I am getting around on the buses and am rebuilding my relationship with my family. Also, I am making friends, all within a few short years. To whatever the future may hold, I'm looking forward to it.*



*Thank you Casey and thank you Universal Staff!"*





In between the laughter, the high-fives, the silly jokes and the snow cone breaks, there was some serious competition on display during PSR's recent trip to Tropical Gardens Mini-Golf.

"I had a lot of fun playing putt-putt," Prince wrote in his newspaper group later in the week. "What was interesting to me was the volcano and putting the ball down the hill. I also made three holes-in-one. I also pretended like I was Tiger Woods. My strategy was lining my ball up and making sure my mind was focused on my shots."



He took his game very, very seriously, sometimes even asking for silence while he paused to envision the trajectory of the ball. When it went in the hole, others in his group burst into cheers. He celebrated like a champion who had just won the Masters tournament.

"It helps me escape and get my mind off things," Prince explained later. "It's fun, relaxing. It's therapeutic." Not everyone could make the putts like Tiger Woods. But PSR members said they sure had a lot of fun trying.

Sharon wrote "I like to go up in nature and go up in the hills. I'm not for big crowds, but I like to go out every now and when we do these kinds of things, I would like to participate in them again."

The group experience to the miniature golf course was a break from the routine and it was a prime opportunity for members to use their social skills on the course. Players would encourage one another to try fancy shots. They'd playfully console one another when shots went off target. They would celebrate together when a ball would roll down a hill, bounce off a wall, change course and suddenly plunk into the hole.



"I had fun at putt-putting. I almost made a hole in one!" Janet wrote. "I also liked the Icee. I enjoyed watching people play putt-putting."

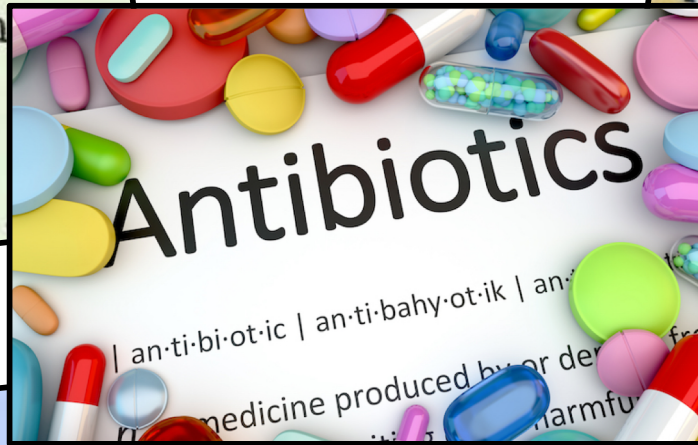
Jacob said "I had fun when I played putt-putt and got the balls in the holes and my group had fun with me," he wrote. "I loved my snow cone and I enjoyed watching all the peers and staff playing putt-putt and having fun."

Participants still were talking about the event several days later.



Want to learn more about Safety throughout the Autumn season?

Log on to: <https://www.cdc.gov/family/autumn/index.htm>

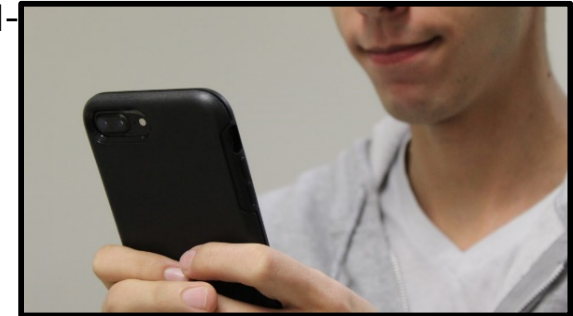


Smartphones have transformed modern life in more ways than anyone could have imagined. They enable 24/7 access to infinite information and tools that help us stay organized, track our fitness, express ourselves and be entertained. However, easy access to these digital devices and their habit-forming qualities has led to high screen time for both children and adults. Emerging research suggests that such high screen use can have a negative impact on mental health.

Since the rise of the smartphone, indicators of mental “wellness” such as happiness, self-esteem and life satisfaction have decreased. While serious mental health issues like anxiety, depression, loneliness and suicide have increased significantly, particularly among young people. A possible reason for this increase might be that more time on screens, particularly social media, leads to increased risks of stressors like social isolation, cyberbullying, social comparison, decreased life satisfaction, reduced productivity and distraction from personal values and goals.

Increased time on screens also means there’s less time available for positive real world experiences that promote mental health like exercise, quiet reflection and quality, in-person social connection. With all of this in mind, it’s not surprising that research suggests that less time on social media leads to better well-

While more research is needed, it certainly appears that less screen time bodes well for mental health. So, consider the following tips to keep screen time in-check, leaving more room for healthy, positive real-world experiences.



### **Connect for Real**

Despite opportunities for online “connection,” loneliness is at an all-time high. Indeed, quality face-to-face social connection is critical to mental wellness. So, make it a goal to have screen-free, in-person social connections with friends, co-workers and loved ones on a daily basis. Consider making it a standard to power down whenever there is an opportunity for conversation such as in the car, standing in line and during meals or social gatherings.

### **Commit to a Screen-Free Bedroom**

Screen time within an hour of bedtime can negatively impact sleep, which can contribute to physical, mental and cognitive issues. However, the lure of a screen in a quiet bedroom is hard to resist. It’s difficult to ignore texts, resist a Netflix binge or mindlessly scroll through social media. Eliminate the temptation by keeping phones out of the bedroom entirely and reach for a book or magazine instead.



**Avoid Multitasking**

Put away your phone when you need to focus on a task, particularly related to school or work. Research on multitasking shows that it causes distraction, reduces productivity and increases errors. One study showed that subjects whose phones were in a different room, performed better on a cognitive test compared to those whose phones were in front of them—and set on “Silent” mode. In addition to reduced productivity and cognitive impact, media multitasking also has been linked to lower well-being.

**Notice Motives and Feelings**

Ask yourself if being on your phone is what you really want to be doing at that moment. By using mindfulness, you can identify if you’re trying to avoid negative feelings or a necessary task, or whether you’re truly enjoying your digital experience. This exercise can help with getting in touch with your emotions and improve purposeful decision-making around screen use.

**Pursue Healthy Interests and Activities**

Making time for hobbies or activities that promote health, personal growth or connections with others can help to reduce screen use and provide a sense of meaning and purpose. Some examples are: reading books, hiking in nature, taking mindful walks, prayer or meditation, joining a club, practicing yoga, cooking, volunteering or learning to play an instrument.

**Practice Reflection and Gratitude**

A daily practice in quieting your mind and counting your blessings can boost positive emotion and improve psychological wellness. Research suggests that gratitude may protect against social comparison and envy—common experiences with social media. Reflect on what is good and right in your life. During quiet, screen-free time, write down five good things from each day. Savor simple pleasures like a sunny day, a good cup of coffee or a friendly exchange with someone.

**Clarify Your Values**

Take time to mindfully consider what you value most in life. What do you want your life to be about? Quality relationships? Physical and emotional health? Spiritual growth? Professional growth? Regularly consider whether screen use is moving you toward or away from your values. If you notice that your screen use is moving you in an unwanted direction, give yourself grace, hit the figurative “reset” button and get back on track.

Nina Schroder, MSW, LCSW is a mental health therapist at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. She specializes in the treatment of anxiety and depression and researches the effects of high screen use on mental health, emotional resilience, and overall wellness. You can reach her at [nina.schroder@yahoo.com](mailto:nina.schroder@yahoo.com).





## Important Dates for 2018 Elections

**October 12:** Deadline to register to vote in the general elections.

**October 18 to November 3:**

One-Stop/Early Voting period.

You can register during this period!

**November 6:** Election Day.

Want to learn more?

<http://www.accessthevotenc.org/>

or

<https://www.usvotefoundation.org/>

On July 29, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit struck down photo ID requirements and associated laws in North Carolina ([S.L. 2013-381](#), as amended by [S.L. 2015-103](#)). The state is considering its options. Barring a different outcome on appeal, photo ID will **not** be required in the upcoming general election. Further details will be posted as they become available.

There are certain voters who are required to show some form of identification when they present to vote – either “in person” or when voting “by mail.” First-time voters who at the time of their initial voter registration did not provide their North Carolina driver license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number, or who provided a number that could not be validated, will be required to show identification when they vote. This identification does not have to be a photo ID. The requirement for first-time voters to show identification is a requirement of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, a federal law not unique to North Carolina. Acceptable forms of HAVA ID include:

- A current and valid photo identification; or
- A copy of one of the following documents that show the name and address of the voter: a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document.

First-time voters who are required to show HAVA ID will have been notified of this requirement by their county board of elections. If these voters do not bring an acceptable form of identification when they present to vote, they will be given a provisional ballot. The voter must then submit a copy of one of the acceptable forms of HAVA ID noted above to their county board of elections before the date set for the county canvass of the election in which they voted provisionally. The instructions provided to the provisional voter will explain the exact date and time by which the HAVA ID must be submitted. If the voter fails to provide the county board of elections with acceptable HAVA ID, the voter’s provisional ballot will not be counted.





It's been an exciting few months for Information Technology at Universal Mental Health Services. We have, more or less, changed everything IT related. As we conclude this project, there are still several loose ends, including end-user training. Your patience over the last few months as we've walked this journey together, has been greatly appreciated.

As we wrap up the majority of the transitions, our ongoing focus will be to continue to be update and secure computers around the company, work on our internet presence and a few other smaller projects.

As a company, we are looking to expand and enhance our social media and internet footprint. Please take a few minutes to follow, like, and connect with the company. Currently, you can find lots of helpful information on our website, including employee portals, employment opportunities, the services we offer, and locations.

If you'd like to connect with us, we do have links on our website at [www.umhs.net](http://www.umhs.net). Like us on Facebook and follow us on LinkedIn. Along with following, liking, and connecting, please do share relevant content with us. To do so, please feel free to message us on Facebook or send an email to [webmaster@umhs.net](mailto:webmaster@umhs.net). This can include relevant links, photos of employees or person-served outings, or any community event or activity that is relevant to our industry.

If you have any questions or would like more information about our Internet Presence, Office365 or any other IT issue, feel free to contact Leslie Cothren at [lcothren@umhs.net](mailto:lcothren@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."

# Oct



BE PART OF DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

## National Disabilities Awareness Month

## All Saints Day



ALL SAINTS DAY

# Dec

HAPPY KWANZAA



# Kwanzaa

# NOV





**Raleigh's  
QP  
~ Chelsea  
Calnan**



**Asheville's  
Employment  
Specialist  
~ Melissa  
Stumbaugh**

*Welcome*



**Forest  
City's  
QP  
~  
Krystal  
Miller**



**Asheville's  
CPPS  
~ Chris  
Coppedge**



**Morganton's  
IFTS ~  
Haley  
Koehler**

**Burlington's  
Office Assistant ~  
Christie Alston**



*Welcome*

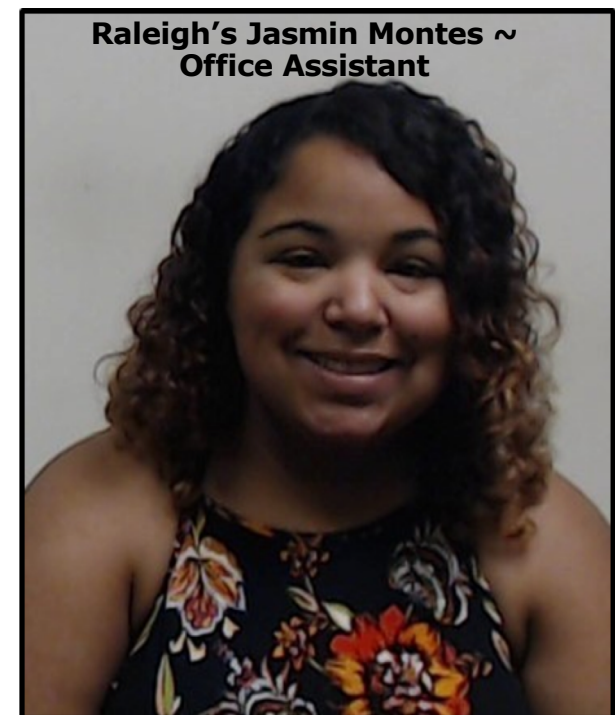
**Asheville's  
PSR Para ~  
Shana  
Mandeville**



**Morganton's Employment  
Specialist ~ Brad Ritch**



**Raleigh's Jasmin Montes ~  
Office Assistant**





**Asheville's Maurice Murray III, AKA Mr. Green Genes (blue shirt)** is pictured powering up his electric car with his electric car charger. The power comes from the solar panels that he installed on his house!



**Raleigh's** newest addition Scarlett Reese Swicegood, born 9/8/18 at 11:10 pm, weighing 7 lbs 12 oz. 21 1/4 in long! Daughter of QP, Danielle Swicegood.

**Corporate's** Pattie Fries daughter got married in Vegas on 8/08/18. Congrats to Amy and Mike Waiter!



**Corporate's CQI Director, Tracy Frye** talking with Representative Blackwell about changes occurring in Mental Health and DHHS.

On her recent trip to Colorado, **Corporate's Controller Jennifer Carroll** hiked a "14er(14,000 feet high!)"





Universal life would not be the same without these awesome people!

