



OFFICE OF PRESIDENT & CEO



October 2021

Dear Friends of UCP Heartland,

I hope everyone is enjoying the fall weather. If you love sports like me, this is a great time of year as well. I was hoping for a little longer post season from our St. Louis Cardinals, but it was a great run to get into the playoffs.

If you did not know October is a month that recognizes and brings awareness to several groups in the disability community. October 6th was World Cerebral Palsy Day and not only on this day but throughout the year we should strive to celebrate and join UCP Heartland supporting those living with Cerebral Palsy, embrace diversity and to help create a more accessible future for all. The month of October is also Down Syndrome Awareness Month, a time to commemorate people living with Down Syndrome and make others aware of their abilities and accomplishments.

Finally, October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This year's theme for NDEAM is "America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion." A powerful tagline emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workforce, promoting and fostering a work environment that is open to the talents of all qualified individuals, including individuals living with disabilities.

Unfortunately, in the year 2020, there was a 7-year high unemployment rate for people with disabilities. The total employment rate for this population was 17.9%, which was down about 2% points from 2019. No doubt the pandemic influenced this data point on several fronts, but in an area where barriers and challenges are difficult to overcome in normal times, this compounds the issue.



Our Employment Resources Program is vital and support staff play a crucial role in the lives of people with disabilities that want to be a part of the competitive workforce. Below are some impressive outcomes and data points of this program that I thought are important to share during this month of awareness.

1. Our Employment Resources Program served 212 clients different services (assessment, evaluation, placement, coaching, retention & Summer Work Program)
2. 46 high school students participated in the summer work programs and 4 were offered permanent jobs when the program was completed
3. 117 individuals with disabilities were referred to our program
4. Our Employment Resources Program team placed 34 new individuals into permanent employment and have maintained an 82% retention rate of workers that have been hired and we support
5. Over the past year, this program team engaged 25 new employers

It is no secret there is a workforce issue as there are close to 11 million job openings. So, if you are a business owner, hiring manager, or a CEO of a company experiencing a gap in filling open positions, put people with disabilities on your priority list. Let's all do our part in helping move the needle on employment for people with disabilities. If anyone would like to know how UCP Heartland can help, please contact Richard Coleman, Director of Employment Services at (314) 994-1600 or colemanr@ucpheartland.org

FY21 Annual Report

I am excited to share with all of you our annual report. The link to the report is below. I am bias, but it is a great read and gives you a small glimpse of the "good" that has taken place during an unprecedented time in our history. #UCPHeartlandStrong

<https://ucpheartland.org/fy-2021-annual-report/>

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Clint Bolser