



April 2022

Dear Friends of UCP Heartland,

I hope everyone is well, healthy, and safe.

During the month of March, we celebrated Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month across the country. To the right is a picture from Missouri's Disability Rights Legislative Day at the State Capitol in Jefferson City, where UCP Heartland's Self Advocates and staff visited with Legislators and attended a rally with other providers/peers around the state. It was a great day!!!



Now that we have moved into April, I think it is appropriate to touch on Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month.

Autism is certainly not a new diagnosis, but just like anything else there has been advancement whether it is understanding, acceptance, awareness, diagnostics, therapy, etc. It is also interesting to know there are different opinions and perspectives on a variety of topics within the Autism community, albeit research, parents/families/individuals, and providers.

Over the past year, it has been exciting to watch the development and creation of our new Autism Services, focused on providing Applied Behavior Analysis therapy to both children and adults. So, I leaned on our Autism employees to give me some thoughts.

The month of April is really about awareness, acceptance, and advocacy for people with autism. We as an organization and specifically with our new service, the month reminds us of the importance of celebrating our differences. As our staff and leadership in the Autism Services state, people with autism bring a unique perspective to the table and their persistence, creativity, and genuineness make our lives better and more interesting every day.

If you want to learn more about UCP Heartland's Autism Services, visit <https://ucpheartland.org/autism-services/>

St. Louis South County Space Update

In March's communication, I announced the organization is investing in a new South County space to meet the needs of clients and staff that live in this area, and it gives UCP Heartland an opportunity to expand our services to new clients as well. The 11,000 square foot leased space is located at 9246 Watson Road, St. Louis, MO 63126. Below are some pictures of the work beginning and I will continue to keep you updated in the months to come. We are looking forward to this much needed space and will invite you to come and visit when the project is completed.



Annual Board of Director's Retreat

At the end of April, UCP Heartland Board of Directors and leadership will be meeting at our annual full-day retreat. This is always a great opportunity to connect, engage, and work together on UCP Heartland goals and plans for the next fiscal year. Our priorities of **expanding our reach**, prioritizing **workforce stability**, guaranteeing **financial solvency**, ensuring **program and services excellence**, and **connecting and engaging in the communities we serve** will continue to be the framework we will focus on. I am looking forward to reflecting and reassessing how we are doing on these priorities and look forward to the idea generation for the future. After the retreat, I will utilize an upcoming communication to highlight the results of our day together.

Give STL Day

You may or may not be aware of the upcoming day of giving in St. Louis, also known as Give STL Day, that is happening May 5th. UCP Heartland has been a proud participant of this annual day of giving for 3 years now and this year we plan to exceed what we raised last year. I ask that each of you consider participating in Give STL Day, whether you're just sharing our social media posts or making a [donation](#) yourself, every little bit helps. Please contact Arianna Morris at morrisa@ucpheartland.org if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about UCP Heartland, please do not hesitate to reach out.

As always, thank you for your support of UCP Heartland.

With sincere gratitude,

Clint Bolser
President & CEO
UCP Heartland