



March 2023

Dear Friends of UCP Heartland,

I hope everyone is well and as the month of March is quickly passing, there are signs of warmer weather in the forecast. As for me, I always enjoy this time of year with the NCAA Basketball tournaments in full swing.

If you did not know, the month of March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This is an opportunity for all of us to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life, as well as awareness of the barriers that people with disabilities still sometimes face in connecting to the communities in which they live. UCP Heartland kicked off the month with a group of Self-Advocates and staff members going to the State Capitol in Jefferson City to participate in a rally with the theme of “We the People.” The rally included a lineup of speakers and then an opportunity for our group to meet with legislators to discuss important issues such as transportation, employment, and the caregiver crisis. This annual event is always an important day of advocacy but a great chance to give the people we support an opportunity to voice their concerns and issues that impact their lives. Click [here](#) to watch a short video of some of the highlights of the day!

On February 25th, UCP Heartland hosted our annual “Follow Your Heart” Gala at the Hilton Frontenac. It was an evening of celebration, recognition, and a huge success. UCP Heartland cannot thank everyone enough that attended, sponsored, and invested in the lives of the people we support and the mission of UCP Heartland. Because of all of you, there were \$135,000 in sponsorships, 270 people attended, and UCP Heartland raised \$350,000. This was an increase of \$80,000 from the previous year. I want to personally congratulate Brian and Nina Murphy for being this year’s recipients of the Heart of Community Award. Brian and Nina have been key partners, strong advocates, and incredible supporters of UCP Heartland over the years and I was honored to recognize both of them for this most deserving award. Watch their inspiring video [here](#)! I also want to thank Jen Bierling and Jeff Eichholz for being our Co-Chairs. Their leadership and collaboration with the Development team and the host committee made the night a special evening.

Another fun event we have coming up is our Columbia Wing Ding! Taking place on April 25th at Bur Oak Brewing, you’ll be able to taste-test some of the most delicious local wings. You can sample wings from participating restaurants and cast your vote for the People’s Choice Award. Don’t miss out on this upbeat event, where all proceeds benefit UCP Heartland programs and services in Columbia, Missouri. To learn more or to buy tickets, visit [Columbia Wing Ding!](#)



Starting in November 2022, UCP Heartland has been making space improvements to the 6,800 square feet of new space in Jefferson City to expand the Gibbs Center for Independence. The space is in the final stages of completion and we are excited to be able to serve more people and enhance the program options for people and families in the Jefferson City area. We are planning an open house in the month of May and we will provide this information as we finalize plans. We are looking forward to sharing this beautiful space with the community.



I continue to be amazed by the generous support of our community. UCP Heartland turns 70 years old this year and it is a reminder how important community is to the success of UCP Heartland and to the people we support. We are grateful for you for believing in our mission and if you want to learn more about UCP Heartland, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,
Clint