



October 2023

Dear Friends of UCP Heartland,

I hope everyone is doing well, healthy, and safe. You have heard me say this before, but it is officially my favorite time of year with fall in the air, college and pro football season, baseball playoffs, and right around the corner...basketball gets into full swing. I don't like the leaves falling and what comes next, but I will enjoy this next month and a half.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

This year's theme for NDEAM is "Advancing Access and Equity." Every year in October, it is a great reminder of the contributions people with disabilities make in the workforce. This year is also a special year of celebration as it is the 50th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

I am certainly grateful for the commitment UCP Heartland has made to advancing our Community Employment initiatives and supporting people with disabilities in being gainfully employed in the community. This program continues to expand in numbers year in and year out, supporting people that have a desire to contribute to the workforce. Over the course of the month, I hope you have read some of UCP Heartland's social media posts that have highlighted some of the success stories to bring awareness and celebration of those accomplishments. Follow us on social media to meet Brooke, Elderoy, Carrie, Ivani, LaVonn and more incredible spotlights.

A few data points from the Employment crew in St. Louis and Jefferson City to highlight their hard work and dedication to advance access and equity for people with disabilities in the workforce:

- UCP Heartland Employment Services served 274 clients in St. Louis and Central Missouri through Assessment/Evaluation, Placement, coaching/retention, or Summer Work program.
- The UCP Heartland Employment team placed 65 new individuals into permanent employment and maintained a 92% retention rate of workers that have been hired and we support.
- Employment Services launched Adult Brain Injury Services in Central Missouri and are participating in a Vocational Rehabilitation pilot program called Progressive Employment.
- Employment Services plans on adding a Summer Work site and launch Adult Brain Injury Services in St. Charles County soon.

Keep up the great work Employment Services Team in doing your part to break down the barriers for people with disabilities in the business community!

I would also ask that if you know a person who is living with a disability and has a desire to work but needs support, reach out to UCP Heartland in St. Louis and Central Missouri. If you are, know of, or are acquainted with a business owner or hiring manager at a company and they are seeking a diverse and dependable workforce, don't hesitate to reach out to me and an Employment team member will follow up. If you want to learn more about UCP Heartland Employment Services, visit our [website](#).

2nd Annual Gibbs Center for Independence Fall Classic

What a night of celebration, inspiration, fun, and investing in all the programs and services provided to the Jefferson City area. For the 2nd year in a row, Tami Turner, Hallie II and Jada Gibbs, Corey and Paula Backues, Rebecca Rademan, and the UCP Heartland Development team coordinated an incredible event and the community responded to impact the lives of people with disabilities in this area. The 240 attendees raised \$250,000+ to help UCP Heartland support the 246 youth and adults living with disabilities in the Jefferson City area through summer camps, summer work experience, Saturday Night Out event, Gibbs Center, and Employment Services.



Last year at this same event, we asked the community to invest in expanding the Gibbs Center for Independence footprint. They responded and in turn, UCP Heartland invested in doubling the space on Southridge Drive through a lease engagement and capital improvement investment to enhance services and serve more people. As we look into the future, we believe there is more opportunity to make an impact and support people in different aspects of their lives. Serving people that need meaningful community services during the day is a continued focus; helping more people with disabilities become gainfully employed if they desire is a priority; exploring the possibility of creating an Autism Therapy Center for children to offer early intervention is much needed; and supporting people with disabilities that have a desire to live independently in the community is vital.

This community continues to inspire us and our incredible staff in Jefferson City continues to step up and make a positive impact on people's lives. Thank you for embracing and investing in people with disabilities and we look forward to a very bright future.

As always, I want to thank you for your interest, commitment, and support to UCP Heartland. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Clint Bolser