



March 2024

Dear Friends of UCP Heartland,

I hope everyone is having a great start to spring. For those of you who were able to get down to Florida to watch a little Cardinal spring training, I am hopeful you have good and positive vibes for the 2024 baseball season. I'm anticipating a strong year from the Cardinals and a bit of redemption from the '23 campaign.

The month of March has been and continues to be a busy month for UCP Heartland. If you did not know, we have been celebrating Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This is important throughout the year, but the month of March is a great way for UCP Heartland, along with our partners, to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with disabilities in all facets of life. It is also a time we can advocate and bring focus to barriers that are still faced by the people we support in their quest to be as independent as possible.

### **UCP Heartland Gala**

The month kicked off with UCP Heartland's 70 Years of Service Gala in St. Louis. I want to personally thank all 250 people who attended, invested over \$315k, and celebrated UCP Heartland's incredible impact in Eastern and Central Missouri. Your support, commitment, and most importantly, your belief in a brighter future for people with differing abilities is what continues to drive us forward.

Congratulations to Bill Siedhoff for being awarded the Heart of the Community Award for his unwavering, selfless commitment to service in St. Louis and specifically his work, leadership, and support of people with differing abilities in this area. See Bill's impact [here](#).

We also shared Darin's story that night, which you can watch [here](#). Thank you to everyone who made this year's Gala a huge success!



## Disability Rights Legislative Day

“We Are Here” was the theme for Disability Rights Legislative Day at the Missouri State Capitol on March 13<sup>th</sup>. If you happened to be there, this became loud and clear during the rally in the people’s house. It was wonderful to be a part of a community of people with disabilities, employees, and other constituents who gathered together to make sure their voices were heard and speak directly to Legislators. UCP Heartland was proud to take a group of 61 people, led by Duane Gruis, UCP Heartland’s Client Advocate/Service Navigator. As you see in the pictures, we all had t-shirts with the saying “Advocate with Passion,” and this group did just that, as they participated and had great conversations with different Senators and Representatives.

In partnership with Starling, the priority message was to 1. ensure people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities receive essential services to live and work in their communities by appropriating sufficient funding for these services. 2. Strengthen employment services for individuals with disabilities to join Missouri’s workforce by supporting Employment First initiatives and funding community employment services. 3. No changes to Missouri’s property tax structure because they play a vital role in funding community services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



## COMO Wing Ding

If you live in the central Missouri area, please join UCP Heartland at Logboat Brewing Company on April 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. for COMO Wing Ding! Enjoy Columbia’s best wings from 9 different restaurants and meet some celebrity judges while supporting UCP Heartland’s mission. Tickets are available [here](#).



As always, I want to thank each of you for your continued support and interest in UCP Heartland, our services, our impact, and most importantly the people we serve. If you ever want to learn more about our programs, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,  
Clint