



*"We provide and support inclusive, life-enriching options through person-centered programs and advocacy."*

**What's New at UDS?**

February 2025 | Issue 35

## UDS Celebrates Low Vision Awareness Month



February is Low Vision Awareness Month, a time to bring clarity to the challenges faced by individuals living with vision impairments. Affecting millions of people globally, low vision issues often remain overlooked. This month, UDS is raising

awareness about low vision: what it is, what resources are available and how we can help those impacted.

Low vision is a visual impairment that cannot be corrected with surgery, glasses or medication. It includes conditions like macular degeneration, glaucoma and eye diseases caused by diabetes. **UDS Judith A. Read Low Vision Services** offers support to Northeast Ohio residents living with these and many other conditions.

The Low Vision Services clinic provides personalized assessments to help individuals maintain their independence through assistive technology, including closed-caption televisions (CCTVs), magnifying lenses, bioptic telescope glasses and more. Director **Dr. Jocelyn Pettitt** and Office Coordinator **Heidi Seymoure** are committed to helping their patients find the right vision aids, adaptive equipment and specialized training to meet their individual needs.

This Low Vision Awareness Month, we encourage you to take the time to learn about low vision, spread awareness and offer support to those who may need it. We also ask you to consider making a donation to our Low Vision Services. Your contribution can help improve the quality of life for those affected by bringing back the joy of everyday activities.

**DONATE TO LOW VISION SERVICES**

## BraVo! Souper Bowl Goes the Distance



Soup's on! While football fans were gearing up for the Super Bowl, our BraVo team of volunteers was getting ready to kick off its annual Souper Bowl fundraiser. After taking a brief break from festivities due to COVID-19, this popular event made its triumphant return in 2024 and now it's back bigger than ever!

The event raised **\$1,178** for **Grace House**--a local organization that provides a loving home for indigent, homeless and abandoned individuals at the end of life. The **BraVo!** team sold tastings of delicious soups crafted by staff members of UDS.

Thank you to every member of BraVo! for planning and executing this fantastic event!

Thank you to all the employees who donated their time and culinary talents to making soup and baked goods, including **Barb Lane** (*Prevocational Services*), **Cindy Buckohr** (*BraVo!*), **Heidi Young** (*SociAbilities*), **Lee Harget** (*SociAbilities*), **Angie Klingfus** (*SociAbilities*), **Teri Mino** (*Administration*), **Heidi Seymoure** (*Low Vision Services*), **Kay Shellenberger** (*Administration*), **Lana Stryker** (*Adult Services*), **Evelyn Burkhart** (*Development*), **Kelly Maze** (*Community Living Services*) and her husband **Josh Maze**, **Kristy Mulneix** (*Prevocational Services*), **Karen Rittmann** (*BraVo!*), and **Troy R.** and his family.

Congratulations to Judges' Choice winner **Barb Lane** (*Prevocational Services*), and Tasters' Choice winner **Heidi Young** (*SociAbilities*). Also congratulations to raffle winner **Christy Wilson** (*Prevocational Services*)! We're excited to kick things off again in Flavortown next year.

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## Welcome to the Team!



UDS welcomes **Jaion Gordon**, a direct support professional in **Prevocational Services!**

Jaion has a family member with a disability and says he chose this type of work while searching for his purpose. He lives in Akron and has a Pomeranian named Carter. Hobbies include building computers and putting things together. He previously worked with an area cleaning company. Glad to have you at UDS!

If you'd like to join the UDS team, take a look at our **available job openings** today.

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**BraVo! Braves New Territories with Advisor Anywhere**

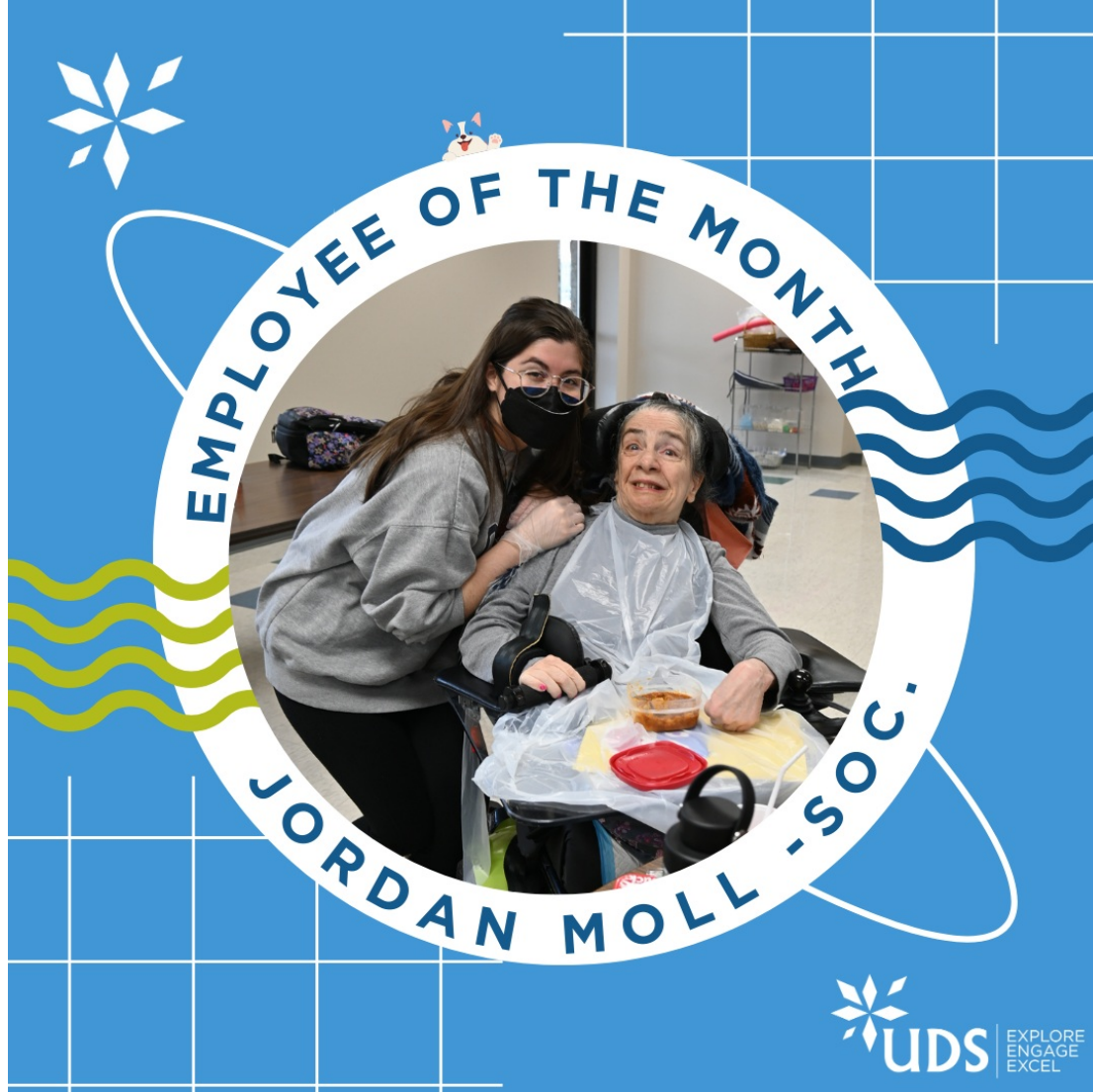


**BraVo!** staff members are diligently learning new computer software called Advisor Anywhere. Designed using Medicaid compliance and billing rules, this software allows us to more efficiently bill for our services while replacing a time-consuming and paper wasting process.

BraVo! is the first program at UDS to implement this new software and Direct Support Professionals **Reggie Greer**, **Cindy Buckohr** and **Karen Rittman** are seen above learning the new system. In time, all of our Adult Services programs will be implementing this software to clock individuals in/out while providing access to important information that aims to serve our participants better.

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## Employee of the Month



Congratulations to UDS Direct Support Professional **Jordan Moll** of **SociAbilities** who was selected as the UDS Employee of the Month for February. Born in England and raised in California, Jordan volunteered with the Special Olympics and other organizations. She says, "I'm thankful to my brother and parents for teaching me to be compassionate and to look at the world with curiosity."

Jordan joined UDS as a member of the SociAbilities team in July of 2022. In her role as a DSP, she encourages individuals to try new things and engage in their community. Deeply committed to the people in her care, Jordan took a class on sensory integration theory when one individual was having difficulty self-soothing. After learning new methods in the class, Jordan implemented them in a manner that allowed the individual to improve their situation in just a few months.

Jordan embodies all aspects of STRIDE—Serving People, Teamwork, Respect, Inclusion, Dignity and Excellence—our core values at UDS. "This job is the right kind of hard. Every day is challenging but so rewarding. When I came to UDS, I knew I'd work with people I would care about but I didn't expect to be loved back. That's the best part about what I do."

UDS celebrated this occasion by awarding Jordan with a certificate, a gift card and her own reserved parking space for the month of February. Congratulations!

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**Thank You Miller's**



This past holiday season, employees of **Miller's Rental and Sales** donated a number of toys and games to our Adult Services and Toy & Resource Center. Thanks to you, we're ready to get our game on!

Miller's was kind enough to donate items from **our Amazon Wish List**. You can be just as awesome by purchasing an item from the list and helping make someone's day that much better!

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