



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

What's New at UDS?

March 2024 | Issue 24

Navigating Life with Low Vision



February has come and gone, but we continue celebrating Low Vision Awareness Month here at UDS. Having low vision impacts millions of Americans each year. Individuals like our own Ed Emerick, who visits **Judith A. Read Low Vision Services** at UDS to take proper care of his eyesight.

Ed was born with *retinitis pigmentosa*. In most cases, this disease leaves individuals with several challenges, including the inability to drive. But just like our services, Ed is unique.

Thanks to **Dr. Jocelyn Pettitt** and **Heidi Seymoure** with UDS Low Vision Services, Ed has been equipped with the necessary tools and technology to help him maintain his active lifestyle. He can also continue to drive confidently with the training he has received from the Northern Ohio Bioptic Driving program and the State of Ohio. You can [read more about Ed's incredible journey here](#).

Low Vision Services helps others like Ed every day. Whether it is something as simple as providing someone with a reading lamp or helping patients continue to do the things they love, the low vision clinic is here to help. To learn more, [visit our Low Vision Services page](#) or consider a [donation](#) to help others learn how to navigate life with low vision.

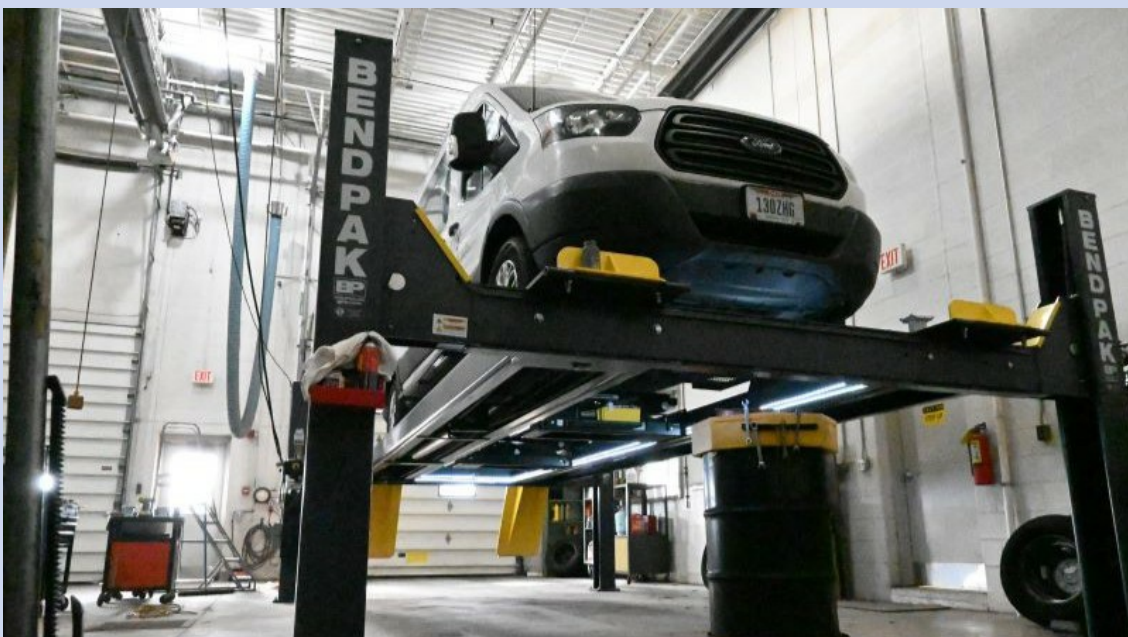
Stark State Students Take a Lesson from UDS

Students from the Stark State College occupational therapy program stopped by recently to learn more about UDS and what they might expect from a career working with individuals with disabilities.

During their visit, students had the opportunity to see our programs in action by touring BraVo!, CHAMPS, Prevocational Services, and the Toy & Resource Center. Additionally, Low Vision Services, Community Employment Services and Community Living Services provided information on other services offered here at UDS. Thank you to Stark State for joining us for this opportunity. If you or a community group is interested in touring or volunteering with UDS, contact [Lisa Armstrong](#), director of communications and external relations.



Upgrade Lifts Transportation to New Heights



Thanks to a grant from the **Charles E. and Mabel M. Ritchie Memorial Foundation**, UDS was able to purchase a new heavy-duty four-post lift from

BendPak for our transportation department. In addition to helping us stay compliant with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), it also makes the life of our mechanic **Tom Beliles** much easier.

The new 27,000-pound lift features contorting ramps and includes a galvanized cable lifting mechanism, which is a dramatic upgrade from our old chain system. The new lift will help keep riders safe and vehicles on the road for decades to come. While our garage may have received a big boost, we'd like to turbo-charge our team as well. If you or someone you know is interested in joining Transportation Services as a driver, [consider applying today](#).

Welcoming a New Crew to Team UDS



UDS better get a sheet cake, because we have several new employees to welcome to the team! Recently, we hired four new direct support professionals: LaShayla Henderson and Diamond Grant (SociAbilities), Deb Grier (CHAMPS) and Laterra Shy (Prevocational Services) are all new faces at UDS. All have extensive experience working in the caregiving field.

Transportation Services also welcomed a new member to its team. Derek Mitchell recently joined us as our new administrative assistant and has worked at various universities. Welcome, everyone!

While we are cutting the cake, remember we have several open positions. Navigate to our [Current Openings page](#) and apply to join our team!

Local Bands Rock for UDS

On March 8, UDS was ready to rock! A special event was held at [The Rialto Theatre](#) in Kenmore to benefit the agency.

In total, more than **\$700** was raised in support of UDS and the people we serve!

Thank you to the Rialto Theatre for hosting this phenomenal event. We'd also like to give a special shout-out to *The Twanglers*, *Freez-R-Burn*, and *The Crones* for rocking all night to help support the work we do! Couldn't make it to the event? You can still be a rock star by [visiting our donation page](#) to show your support.



UDS Gets Souped-Up for Souper Bowl

While football fans went wild for Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce at the Super Bowl, BraVo! took to the kitchen to bring back its annual Souper Bowl fundraiser. Though the pandemic prevented us from hitting the gastronomic gridiron for several years, the Souper Bowl is back and better than ever! This year, the BraVo! team raised \$660 for **One of a Kind Pet Rescue** in Akron by selling tastings of delicious soups crafted by UDS staff members and friends. A wide assortment of pet items, including food and toys were also donated. **Thank you to all the members of the Bravo! for planning and executing this fun event!**



Thank you to all the employees who donated their time and culinary talents including **Evelyn Burkhart** (*Development*), **Heidi Imhoff** (*BraVo!*), **Angie Klingfus** (*SociAbilities*), **Kelly Maze** (*Community Living Services*), **Teri Mino** (*Administration*), **Heidi Seymoure** (*Low Vision Services*), **Kay Shellenberger** (*Administration*), **Lana Stryker** (*Adult Services*), **Brian Thomas** (*Administration*) and **Heidi Young** (*SociAbilities*).

Congratulations also go to Judges' Choice winner **Brian Thomas** (*Administration*), and Tasters' Choice winner **Kay Shellenberger** (*Administration*). Congratulations to **Christy Wilson** (*Prevocational Services*) and Anthony of BraVo! for winning the raffle! We're excited to kick things off again in Flavortown next year.

All-Star Training Club Prepares for Spring Sports



Is everyone ready to **get in the game**? Spring is coming soon, and that means a new season of sports for the All-Star Training Club! Though winter may have kept everyone indoors, folks are ready for that beautiful sunshine, vitamin D, and some inclusive competitive sports.

Lace up for the following sports arriving soon:

Track and Field

April 1 - May 8

Monday and Wednesdays 6-7:30 p.m.

Soccer

April 7 - May 19

Sundays 6-7:30 p.m.

Bocce Ball

April 9 - May 14

Tuesdays and Thursdays 6-7 p.m.

Gymnastics

April 13 - May 18 and June 8

Saturdays 6-7:30 p.m.

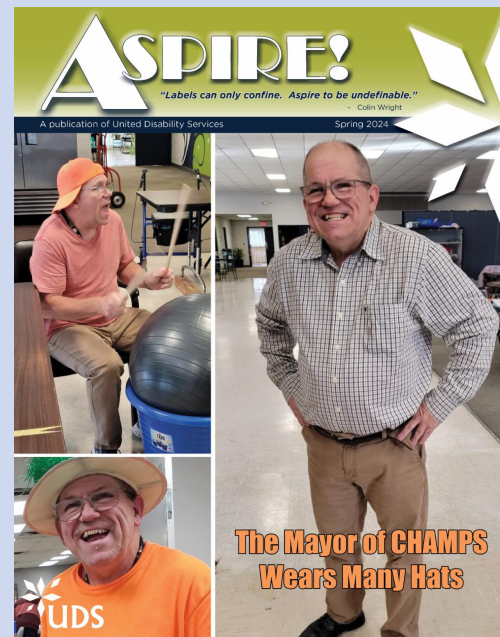
Visit the [All-Star Training Club page](#) for more information.

Spring 2024 *Aspire!* Now Available!

Our first quarterly publication of the year is available now! Catch up with the latest happenings at UDS. Learn more about our services and take a look behind the scenes at what it takes to keep our gears turning.

[Read the latest *Aspire!* here.](#)

Our *Aspire!* publication is for consumers, caregivers and anyone who serves individuals with disabilities. If you would like to receive a hard copy of this publication, [contact us today](#) to be added to our mailing list.



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