

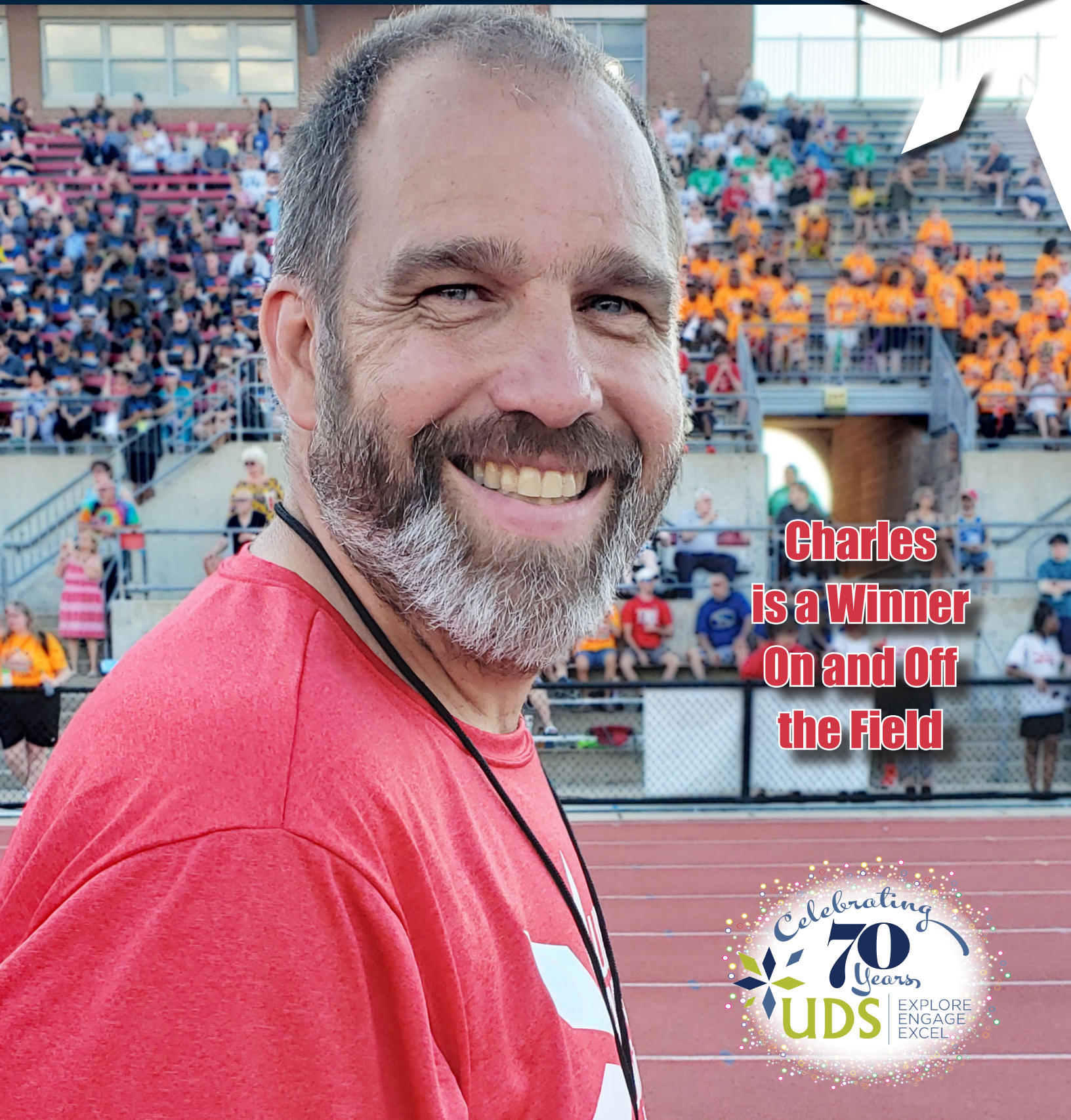
ASPIRE!

"Labels can only confine. Aspire to be undefinable."

- Colin Wright

A publication of United Disability Services

SUMMER 2019



**Charles
is a Winner
On and Off
the Field**





A Message from Brian Thomas, UDS President/CEO

Recently a woman who has participated in our Vocational Services program

for many years stopped to chat with me about her visits to other workplaces to learn about community employment opportunities. She is quite pleased that UDS is providing these experiences.

More time spent in community settings is becoming common in the daily routine at UDS, and not by accident. This is part of large-scale "transformation" that is occurring in day programs throughout Ohio, and even nationwide.

Whereas for decades vocational and day habilitation programs have been almost exclusively facility-based, we are now called to move toward more community-based programming. Individuals at every location, and in each day program, are now spending

time in more inclusive settings outside of our agency facilities.

This is change – and change can feel stressful and challenging. The people we serve, and the staff members supporting them, are learning new ways to connect with the community, leaving familiar "comfort zones" from time to time, in order to meet new requirements.

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities continues to redefine services related to pre-vocational programs as it aligns itself with federal guidelines. Changes are anticipated as soon as next summer in the service areas related to work, based upon your age, future community-based employment goal and how you spend your day learning the skills needed to reach that goal.

More options will become available to you, but some of the programs we are all accustomed to will look differently.

Throughout the transformation, one thing that remains certain is that UDS will be here for you, providing options to help you move forward on your path to employment life while continuing to offer other meaningful programs and activities to help you live your best life.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated Community Employment department ready to support you with a variety of services intended to help prepare and place you in community employment. Other programs, including BraVo!, SociAbilities, and All-Star Training Club continue to become more community-based; these are excellent options on their own, as well as paired with employment-related programs.

UDS is an agency of choices, and we strive to remain your agency of choice. Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

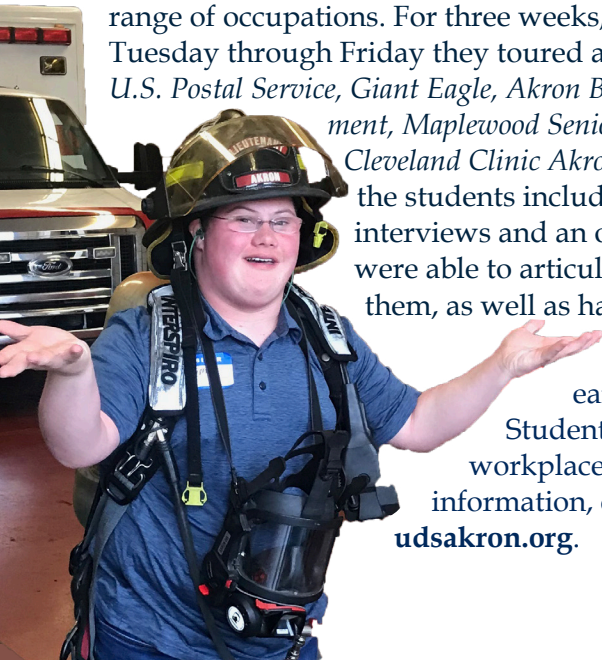
Brian

Future Firefighter?

Six students from high schools around the county participated in Summer Youth Career Exploration at UDS. Designed for students who have limited vocational experience, they were exposed to a wide range of occupations. For three weeks, students learned about job readiness skills on Mondays and then Tuesday through Friday they toured a different employer each day. Companies toured this year include: U.S. Postal Service, Giant Eagle, Akron Barberton Veterinary Clinic, EarthQuaker Devices, Akron Fire Department, Maplewood Senior Living, Akron-Summit County Public Library, Sheraton Suites and Cleveland Clinic Akron General Hospital. Each employer provided a unique experience for the students including job shadowing, tours, presentations, discussion, informational interviews and an opportunity to try job tasks. At the end of the program, participants were able to articulate a desire to work and recognize employment options of interest to them, as well as have more insight and awareness of their own strengths and abilities.

UDS Transition Youth Services help students with disabilities, as early as age 14, prepare for employment upon leaving high school.

Students can engage in job exploration counseling, work-based learning and workplace readiness training through a variety of service options. For more information, contact **Kristen Campagnano** at 330-762-9755 or kcampagnano@udsakron.org.



PRESENTED BY:



UDS



ALL-STARS ALLEY

SATURDAY
July 20, 2019
6-9 p.m.

Bowling begins at 6:30 p.m.

Spins Bowl Akron
2911 E. Waterloo Rd., Akron

4 Bowlers Per Team

\$60 Per Bowler Includes:

- 2 hours of bowling
- shoe rental
- appetizers/pizza/soft drinks
- game tokens
- contests/prizes

(4 bowlers per lane, smaller groups will be combined)

Register by
July 12, 2019

For more information
or to register, contact:
Leah Ochsenhirt
330-762-9755, ext. 233
lochsenhirt@udsakron.org

UDSAllStars.org

**A night of bowling,
fun, food and
friends!**



All proceeds
benefit

ALL-STAR
TRAINING CLUB
A PROGRAM OF UDS

Bowl strikes? Gutter balls?
No worries!

Everyone is welcome!

Help us fill the alley
to support inclusive sports
for people of ALL abilities!



Day of Action at UDS

Fifteen FirstEnergy volunteers spent the day at UDS for United Way's annual Day of Action on Friday, June 21. They helped patch, sand and paint Willow and Buckeye suites in SociAbilities, cleaned toys/shelves and checked batteries in the adaptive toys in the Toy & Resource Center and spent the day with BraVo! participants. We are so grateful for FirstEnergy's continued support each year. Throughout the day they contributed a total of 97.5 volunteer hours, saving the agency more than \$2,300.

While painting was taking place at SociAbilities, participants had lunch and spent the day fishing, playing games, doing crafts and enjoying nature at the Reach Opportunity Center. Mark made a cardboard bird feeder and is shown here, on the right, hanging it on a tree during a hike.

We are grateful to Taste Buds for preparing lunches for our volunteers and to the many staff members who helped make this event a success.



Latest Low Vision Technology & Training

Judith A. Read Low Vision Services now has the OrCam MyEye2 available for demonstration to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Our clinic is collaborating with Magnifiers and More, the sole Ohio distributor for OrCam, to demonstrate, sell and provide training on this amazing new device. MyEye2 is an advanced, wearable, wireless, piece of artificial intelligence technology that magnetically attaches to the eyeglass temple and can read text, identify products and even recognize faces!

Other new products include the Bright Reach Lamp, Occutech VES Falcon autofocusing bioptic telescope, wearable technology (NuEyes and IrisVision) and an assortment of video magnifiers.

For more information or to schedule an in-office demonstration contact **Dr. Cheryl Reed** at 330-762-9755 or creed@udsakron.org.

Smartphone Training

Low Vision Services will host a two-hour introductory class covering basic accessibility features for seniors who are blind or have low vision. It will include the use of "assistants" like Siri or OK Google and magnification features. Helpful apps, both free and fee-based, will also be included. **Each class is limited to 10 participants.**

Friday, July 26 1-3 p.m. Android only
Friday, August 23 1-3 p.m. iPhone only

There is a \$10 fee for the class but each participant will receive a \$10 gift card to purchase apps. For more information contact **Heidi Chalmers** at 330-762-9755, ext. 229.

Charles in Charge

An Athlete with Heart and a Winning Attitude

For more than three decades, Charles has been involved with All-Star Training Club (ATC), a program where children and adults, with and without disabilities, participate in competitive sports that help build self-esteem, promote sportsmanship, encourage healthy living and develop long-lasting friendships. He loves ATC, the friends he has made and staying physically fit by participating in nearly every sport offered. This summer he is not only a golfer hitting the links, hoping to finish under par, he has also started partnering with athletes to lend a helping hand. ATC Recreational Coordinator Leah Ochsenhirt says, "Charles has the kindest heart, he's always willing to help and he truly loves ATC." He is an excellent ambassador of the program and Leah's "go to guy" when she needs someone to speak about the benefits of participation.

Hardworking

Charles works full time as a custodian for a local middle school and has been employed there for 30 years. He also mows lawns in the summer for friends and enjoys spending time with his family as well as staying active and physically fit. He may even look familiar because his photo appears on some UDS buses that can be seen all over Summit and neighboring counties.

Family Ties

"The services from UDS, like the All-Star Training Club, have been such a positive in Charlie's life," says his sister, Susan. "It has benefited him in so many ways and he looks forward to participating

in every activity he can. I can't say enough good things about everyone there, especially Dan Lancianese, Charlie is so fond of him. We, Charlie's family, are so appreciative!" Charles is one of ten children and lives with Susan, her husband and their two Labrador retrievers, Gracie and Maddie. This summer he is looking forward to vacationing

with his brother who has a home in Connecticut that is right on the ocean.

Evolving

Sports supervisor and founder of All-Star Training Club, Dan Lancianese, has known Charles for 32 years, when he was first introduced to ATC by a friend. Dan is proud of Charles and says, "The best part is that he not only participates in the program, now he

is partnering with other athletes to assist them. This summer he stepped up and said he'd be willing to help since we don't have enough volunteers to partner with athletes. He plays one round of golf himself and then goes back out on the course again as a partner to another athlete."

According to Leah, "you can't help but smile when you're around Charles." Meet him once, and you'll agree. To learn a little more about him, see him in action and hear him talk about his involvement with All-Star Training Club, check out the ATC video on UDSTV.org. If you like sports and staying active, why not consider volunteering with ATC? Contact **Jayme Romanchuk** at 330-762-9755, ext. 253, or jromanchuk@udsakron.org for more information.



Charles is pictured with just a few of his many medals and trophies as he stands in front of a UDS bus with his picture. On the front cover, he is shown during Special Olympics as he prepares to compete in soccer on the campus of The Ohio State University.

United Disability Services

Akron Office
701 S. Main St.
Akron, OH 44311
330-762-9755

**Adult Services -
Firestone Park**
1275 Sweitzer Ave.
Akron, OH 44301
330-379-3337

**Adult Services -
Kent**
1010 West Main St.
Kent, OH 44240
330-676-1493

**Adult Services -
Twinsburg**
10735 Ravenna Rd.
Twinsburg, OH 44087
330-425-3159

Taste Buds
264 S. Arlington St.
Akron, OH 44306
330-379-1873

www.udsakron.org

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Twitter @UDSAkron

On the Road to Inclusion

It's not about the destination. It's about the journey.

We all want to be included and welcomed by others. At UDS, our drivers not only transport passengers to their destination in the community, they also take the time to engage them in conversation and get to know them. Brian Joyce, now director of Transportation, drove Josh to a doctor's appointment when he was only four years old. Over the years, they have become buddies (pictured here) and occasionally get together for lunch or a summertime ice cream treat. You can check out a video of the pair sharing the story of their friendship on UDSTV.org. If you would like to make a difference in the lives of others, we'd love to talk to you about becoming a part-time driver.

UDS provides **Non-Emergency Transportation Services (NETS)** for doctor/dentist appointments, dialysis, therapy, etc. The door-to-door service is provided at no cost to Summit County residents who are determined eligible by the Summit County Department of Job and Family Services. In addition to NETS passengers and those transported to UDS programs, our drivers will begin offering transportation to other area day centers and employment this fall. If you would like more information about eligibility for this program contact our Transportation Services department at 330-762-9751.

To find out more about how you can join our team as a part-time driver visit our website to see current openings www.udsakron.org/careers.



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The mission of UDS is to support people with disabilities and their caregivers by providing the highest quality, client-focused programs and services.

UDS is a non-for-profit organization [501(c)(3)] with programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Amanda Leffler, chairperson
Brian Thomas, president/CEO
Lisa Armstrong, director of communications
Sandy Palmer, editor
Jayme Romanchuk, staff writer



Kaleidoscope has been showcasing the talents of writers and artists with disabilities for 40 years. The next issue will be posted later this month and features the art of Amanda LaMunyon (artwork shown on the cover at left). Visit KaleidoscopeOnline.org to see the newest issue as well as past issues of the magazine.