

# Positively UC

*A moment to focus on the good our team is doing every day*



AUG. 12, 2022

Vol. 3 Issue 30



## UCDD, UCHRA WELL REPRESENTED AT INAUGURAL UC ECONOMIC SUMMIT

UCDD and UCHRA were both well represented at the inaugural UC Economic Summit held earlier this week. The two-day seminar will convene developers, political, and community leaders to talk economic issues.



## CHEERS TO 50 YEARS!

Henry Bowman, data guru for UCDD, recently marked 50 years with the Development District. Thank you for your dedication to the Upper Cumberland and UCDD, Henry!



## CLIENT'S RECOVERY JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A WALK

With addiction destroying his entire life Damian Gonzalez walked away from everything. Homeless, sick, and ready for a change, Damian stepped into a hospital for treatment. He was unable to purchase needed meds and was hungry. With nowhere to go, he began walking. His first stop was at a local retailer where he stole food.

At that moment, Damian realized he couldn't continue on this path - something had to change. He found a nonprofit that was willing to listen. There, he also received food, counseling, and transportation to a crisis stabilization unit before being referred to a detox treatment unit before moving into a residential unit and beginning a journey that would change his perspective and give him hope.

Damian only had the clothes on his back when Mikel Miller, Employment Manager with UCDD's Inspire/Recovery2Work (R2W) program, first met him.

*Continued on Page 2.*



# CLIENT'S RECOVERY JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A WALK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“We were able to purchase clothing and, at that moment, there was an instant connection,” Miller recalled. “Over the next 28 days, I witnessed the beginning of an amazing transformation.”

Miller and R2W connected Damian with a year-long program and provided the resources to help him move forward. Damian grew and strengthened his commitment to recovery over the next 30 days.

“Yet in recovery, we still find bumps on the road,” Miller said.

While in a program that could support his mental health needs, Damian found himself in a compromising position. His first instinct was to walk away. He walked to the local mission and contacted the crisis stabilization unit again for assistance. With no bed availability, Damian found himself walking and searching for answers.

The mission advised Damian to reach out to Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) — which works with clients struggling with addiction and homelessness; connecting them with resources and support needed to promote stability and working with individuals for up to two years. Damian had no idea that these resources, as well as support, would be available to him.

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Hope, in the form of a new program, was just around the corner and would soon be opening its doors. Damian was not only accepted into this new program but would be the first resident. There, in a house full of men all working on their recovery, he found himself. He is now part of a brotherhood of men who have chosen recovery; leaning into each other for strength while learning a 12-step program and a better understanding of what a higher power truly is.

Damian has surrendered his life and chose baptism as an external representation of an internal change. Damian has reconnected with the family he walked away from more than three months before. He has since been able to hold a new grandchild in his arms and see two grandchildren and his daughter on the day he was baptized. In this journey of perseverance, Damian has found himself, recovery, family, hope, and purpose. ■