

## Retirement Party

We had another UHI employee retirement party... yeah!! Valentyna Moss retired last August, after 16 years of caregiving.



It was a nice retirement celebration with many co-workers and supported people that came to express their good wishes and say so-long to Valentyna. For those who have the pleasure of having worked with Valentyna, she is an amazing person with a very humble demeanor and caring heart for her supported individuals and co-workers.

We really will miss her having her around in UHI. Valentyna started working for UHI in 2008, After she came from Ukraine with her two sons, her first site was Madrone, then Dogwood and her last site Hemlock. From the bottom of our hearts, we wish her a great time with family on her retirement.

## Winter Activities

Our wonderful DSA team does an excellent job of getting the people we support out into the community, but they cannot do it alone. The DSA team has helped us come up with some great ideas for winter DSA activities that you might like to try.

### Rainy Day Ideas:

The YMCA – Many activities, including gaming area. Museum – Free to the people we support. Roseburg Library, Pool Hall, TenDown – Bowling and arcade, Roseburg Cinema, Church, Thrift Shopping, Having a fire at Singleton Park

### Volunteering Ideas:

Feral Cat Awareness, Saving Grace, Fish Pantry, Douglas County Soup Kitchens, Salvation Army, The VA, The Roseburg Dream Center


See UHI Social Media for Event Updates

## Inspiring Quote

*"If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together."*


– African Proverb





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UHI.LIFE

Our Reward is Your Growth



December  
2024

# Tree of Life



# Works of Heart Award

If you have not already heard, Wendy Grinstead was 1 of only 20 people in Oregon to win the Works of Heart Award this year. The Works of Heart Award is given by the Oregon Resource Association (ORA), and it is given to DSPs, job coaches and other types of support staff in Oregon who have a great passion for supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Wendy has been with UHI for about 7 years, and she is currently part of UHI's DSA team. She shared with me that when she came to UHI, she was looking for a job that would be both meaningful and would feed her soul. Wendy is a wonderful person who stated, "I do this work for the smiles of the people we support."



Seeing them having fun and being able to live their lives is fulfilling to me." Outside of work, Wendy likes to keep it simple. She spends time with her family as well as taking time to garden and relax.

Wendy stated her favorite memory while working for UHI was when she and another team member met up together at Sunset Beach with the people they were supporting at the time. Their plan was to get down to the ocean. Wendy expressed it was a struggle because they had to get wheelchairs across the sand, but they achieved their goal. Wendy and her teammate were able to get everyone down to the ocean so they could all put their feet in the water.



When asked how working at UHI has helped her grow as a person, Wendy answered, "It has helped me be more confident in my own skin." That confidence is clear in the support Wendy is able to provide. Wendy shared with me that winning the Works of Heart Award has been a blessing and an honor, "It reaffirms that I am doing my job the right way. It's nice being awarded for being myself."



It is clear that Wendy is well-deserving of such an honor. She has proven that she is a caring and kind person who is willing to do what is necessary for the people we support to lead fulfilling lives.

# Meet Kim Kerby-Mello

Have you met Kim Kerby-Mellow? She is the lady who has seen it all, done it all, and knows it all in UHI. She has a very serious expression, but once you know her, you will see that she has a humorous sense of humor, is a great conversationalist, and has a great caring heart. Kim's current position is Director of Quality Assurance and Improvement Services.

Kim remembers her first day working at UHI very well. It was June 19, 1989. It has been 35 years already! When I asked her about the positions she has worked in at UHI, she remembered those days when she started as DSA for Patricia Moore.



"As a DSA, I was taking her to Sunrise Enterprise for day work programs, and the rest of the time that we spent together, we would go for a picnic and go to the park. We also incorporated some DSP care a little bit, and I was with her for 8 hours a day."

When I asked her about the positions she has performed in UHI since she started, she responded without hesitation.

"I began as DSA, and later as DSP, working 7 days on and 7 days off. Then I worked as Dietary and later as Med Tech. In 2001, I became a program manager, managing Keasey St (Sequoia), Gary St. (Aspen), and David's house (Dogwood). After that, I became a Residential Director, as well as manag-

In 2017, I became the COO and stepped down in 2021 to the role of Director of Quality Assurance."

I asked her how difficult it has been to obtain these leadership opportunities, and she replied,

"It has been a lot of hard work; I did my job, and I showed up. I had to go through the process. It wasn't something that was given to me. But in 2004, I became the Residential Director for the company. This was the only position I didn't particularly interview for but was offered!

We talked about her next goal in UHI or the community, and she told me without hesitation,

"To facilitate and support the Sunrise opportunity for the dual role and see the next step with Sunrise."

As one of the pioneers in leadership at UHI, I asked her if she had any good advice for staff who aspire to grow in UHI. This is her message to you:

"Ask questions; if you see something that you are not sure about, ask. If you find a training that interests you or something that strikes a passion in you, look at it and explore it. Say, 'I am excited about XYZ, how can I do more?' Get some training, be inquisitive, be curious, and don't take what you have as the end of the line. Look around the corner."

We are sure that after 35 years, Kim has had the best and worst experiences from her time as a caregiver. Here are some of those experiences:

Best experience: "The first time we had so much fun taking the 2 supported people to a hotel because they were doing the flooring on the site. One supported person had high behaviors, and the other person was in a wheelchair. They had never been in a pool before and enjoyed floating in the pool so much."

Worst experience: "When they are passing and transitioning. I don't want any of our individuals to pass away by themselves."

My last question for Kim was if she has any regrets after all these years dedicated to UHI. She answered,

"I regret not having confidence in my abilities and not stepping forward when I knew someone was not being honest, when things were being twisted, and nobody would say anything to me. I should have said something."