

# PROGRESS



A Publication for the Friends of Unified Community Connections

WINTER 2025

## Hoodstock XXI Raises \$100,000

Thank you to everyone who supported Hoodstock XXI at the Baltimore Museum of Industry. More than 300 guests danced and rocked the night away raising \$100,000 for Unified's programs that benefit people with disabilities.

"We support hundreds of individuals and their families throughout Maryland each year, and we cannot do this without your support," said Amy Kreitz, president and CEO of Unified. "Our goal is to help individuals with disabilities live as independently as possible, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who stands with us in this mission. Thank you to Hoodstock founder Russ Causey, all of the bands, our committee members, volunteers and staff, all 50 of our generous sponsors along with everyone who attends and celebrates Hoodstock."

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2024 Samuel A. Tucker Memorial Can Do Award to Sydney Maddux by O.J. Brigance, former Unified board member and Baltimore Ravens senior advisor for player development. *(Read more about Sydney on pg. 2.)*

Kudos to Hoodstock committee members Russ Causey, Lauren Bussard, Julie Carper, Blake Curry, Virginia Curry, Migena Dilolli, Jonathan Horton, Angela Lane, Nick Richardson and Emily Sutorius for making Hoodstock XXI a huge success.

A very special thank you to the musicians who donated their time and talent and performed for free. The musical lineup featured Russ' band Roses n Rust and performances by 6 Feet Apart, The Wafflers and Horty & the Who.

Save the Date for Hoodstock XXII on Friday, Nov. 7, 2025, featuring Roses n Rust at the Baltimore Museum of Industry.



▲ Hoodstock founder Russ Causey performs with his band, Roses n Rust.



▲ Roses n Rust headlined this year's event.

Guests had a groovy time at Hoodstock XXI. ▶



### Thank You to Our Sponsors

**Rock Star Royalty**  
Melanie Dorsey, in Memory of  
Mary Elizabeth Beukema

Josie Raney & Brian Lund  
Anita & Nick Richardson  
Saiontz & Kirk

**Tie Dye Diamond**  
Jen & Russ Causey

**Flower Power Gold**  
ALCO Pharmacy  
CMD Outsourcing Solutions, Inc.  
Sandy Snyder

**Peace and Love Platinum**  
Maury Donnelly & Parr, Inc.

**Groovy Silver**  
Abacus Staffing  
Amicci's  
Aquanetta & Jim Betts  
Kathy Bradley & Sandy Goodman  
Diligent Remodeling, LLC  
Firstrust Bank  
Diane & Rob Freedman  
Gorfine, Schiller & Gardyn

Kennedy Services  
Lenny Kline  
M&T Bank  
Metro Data, Inc.  
Offit Kurman | Attorneys at Law  
Risk Management  
SFG Wealth Management  
SignalQ  
USI Insurance

*continued on pg. 2*

# Development News



## Montclair Home Receives New Shed

Who doesn't love more storage space? Thanks to the generous donation of a new shed from the **Home Builders Care Foundation of Maryland**, Unified's Montclair home now has a convenient place to store medical equipment and heat-resistant supplies. Montclair is a Unified community living group home in Ellicott City and home to four individuals. One male resident resides in the home's attached apartment, and three male residents, who use wheelchairs, reside in the main house. The new shed has freed up an abundance of space within the home – a big benefit for wheelchair mobility. The shed will also be an asset for storing items when the home is undergoing maintenance and renovations.

## Thank You to Our Hoodstock XXI Sponsors

continued from pg. 1

### Media Partners (In-kind)

100.7 The Bay  
Baltimore Magazine  
FASTSIGNS of Owings Mills  
SouthBMore.com

### "Be Cool" YETI Cooler of Cheer Champion

Emily Sutorius, State Farm Agency

### Far Out Bronze

Sheri & Barry Brill  
Chesapeake Telephone Systems  
Diane & Dave Coughlin  
Dataprise  
Linda Lampkin  
Matt Lenihan  
Gracie & Larry Musher  
Kathleen Schneider  
Carol Sholes & Bob Wallace

### Drink Partners (In-kind)

Checkerspot Brewing Company  
Sagamore Spirit  
SoBo Café

### Very Cool Friends

Ankura  
Carper Cre8tive  
The Cooper Family  
Tierra Dorsey  
Pauline & Barry Hildebrandt  
Leah & Jeff Maddox  
The Spurrier Family  
Noelle & Rob Wahl

## Holiday Giving

Please remember Unified as you think about your end-of-the-year charitable contributions. Your gift directly impacts the individuals we serve.



A **\$50 donation** provides craft materials for all the individuals in one of our day habilitation centers to express themselves and create something fun.



A **\$100 donation** provides gas for a week of outings for the individuals in our community development services program to engage with their community.



A **\$250 donation** provides a week's worth of healthy groceries for a group of individuals living in one of our community living group homes.

Visit [unified.org/donate](https://unified.org/donate) to make a donation today.

## Meet "Can Do" Winner Sydney Maddux

Sydney Maddux's drive and dedication are an inspiration to all who know her. She began receiving supports from Unified in 2019 at age 21. After living with her grandmother, Sydney moved into a Unified apartment in Frederick. As she adjusted to independent living, she struggled with confidence, anxiety and social situations. Over the course of five years, she has found her footing and is thriving. In recognition of her tremendous strides in achieving her goals, Sydney was awarded the 2024 Samuel A. Tucker Memorial Can Do Award at Hoodstock XXI.

While not big on talking, Sydney loves to text, and she welcomes the people in her life with kindness and warmth. Sydney is also very talented at doing makeup and

nails. In fact, Unified's staff say Sydney is so good her nails look like they were done at a salon.

Sydney is very responsible and reliable. She reminds staff of her upcoming doctors' appointments and always makes sure her plans are in order and scheduled around her job. She takes her job at Food Lion very seriously. Sydney works in the production department and has never missed a shift since she started. In recognition of her hard work and commitment, Sydney was recently promoted to a full-time position.



Unified President and CEO Amy Kreitz (l), 2024 Samuel A. Tucker Memorial Can Do Award recipient Sydney Maddux (c) and Samuel A. Tucker's widow Rebecca Tucker.

Sydney has much to celebrate. She is also newly engaged and looking forward to starting a new chapter in her life. Congratulations, Sydney. Your future is bright!

## Preparing for the Unexpected

No one expects to have an emergency, but things happen, and Unified is making every effort to be prepared. In observance of National Preparedness Month in October, Unified's leadership team took additional steps to educate staff and evaluate residential group homes to make sure everyone is ready for any kind of potential emergency or natural disaster. The agency-wide training included staff from all levels and involved the individuals Unified supports.

Unified's Director of Quality Assurance Vickie McGilton says, "Every October, we distribute an extensive list for our staff to review to make sure we have all the necessary safety equipment and emergency supplies — that the information we have on file for each individual is up to date, that we have emergency to-go bags prepared along with food and water supplies, and that each individual has a custom to-go bag and a shelter-in-place kit."

Unified's training focuses on specific procedures to increase awareness and ensure the safety of individuals with disabilities. "We talk about readiness with our staff all the time," says Vickie. "We all have certifications, but if you haven't been in a specific situation before, you don't really know how you are going to respond. We do monthly drills, often unannounced, to help staff prepare for the unexpected — falls, choking and other types of medical emergencies, a power outage, fire, flood and other natural disasters."

Vickie's team has developed a safety awareness assessment to help staff identify the strengths and needs of each individual and incorporate trainings to support safety and awareness in an emergency. Often the individuals Unified supports participate in the drills and safety trainings. "For residents living in Unified's apartments, we take a deep dive into potential hazards in their environment and look at how we can ensure these individuals are safe and know how to problem-solve in certain situations."

Unified plays a critical role in the lives of vulnerable adults. Vickie emphasizes, "The individuals we support depend on us, so it's imperative we be proactive and prepared for any type of emergency situation."



▲ Unified's staff participate in year-round trainings to keep people safe.

## We Love Our DSPs



▲ Unified's management staff in Hagerstown held a car wash for our DSPs.

Unified hosted a fun-filled spirit week to celebrate our amazing direct support professionals (DSPs) during Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week, Sept. 8-14.

"DSPs are the heart and soul of our agency," said Amy Kreitz, Unified's president and CEO. "We recognize what they do every day to better the lives of individuals with disabilities, and we sincerely thank them."

The role of a DSP is to provide support and assistance to adults with disabilities by helping them develop their independent living skills, including personal care, and develop and implement energetic leisure and recreational activities. The weeklong annual event is dedicated to honoring the remarkable work of DSPs who tirelessly contribute to the lives of people with disabilities day in and day out.



▲ Thank you to our DSPs for making a difference in the lives of those we support.

▲ We treated our DSPs to coffee and donuts in celebration of Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week.

## Around the Agency



▲ Annie from Hagerstown follows her passion for horseback riding.



▲ Relaxing at Deep Creek Lake is a favorite pastime of individuals from Frederick.



▲ Thank you to this customer service representative at the mall who took the time to welcome Iris to the store and wish her well.



▲ After a day at the fair, individuals from Frederick share big smiles and memories of funnel cakes.



▲ Individuals from Cumberland had a spooky good time celebrating Halloween.



952 Ridgebrook Road, Suite 1000  
Sparks, MD 21152  
410-484-4540

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Baltimore, MD  
Permit No. 3348



## Tee It Up for Unified's 19th Annual Golf Classic!

Join us for a Cinco de Mayo-themed golf fundraiser on **Monday, May 5, 2025**, at the Elkridge Country Club.

Visit [unified.org/golf-classic](https://unified.org/golf-classic) for more information.

## OUR MISSION:

To support individuals with disabilities in achieving independence, productivity and the quality of life they seek.