

In The Know, UDMO December, 2024



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Happy Retirement!!

Dianna Georg has been with UDMO for about 20 years as an Outreach Specialist. Dianna has always shown compassion to the families, dedication to our mission and wisdom/guidance to her co-workers. We wish her the best on her new chapter and will miss her tremendously!



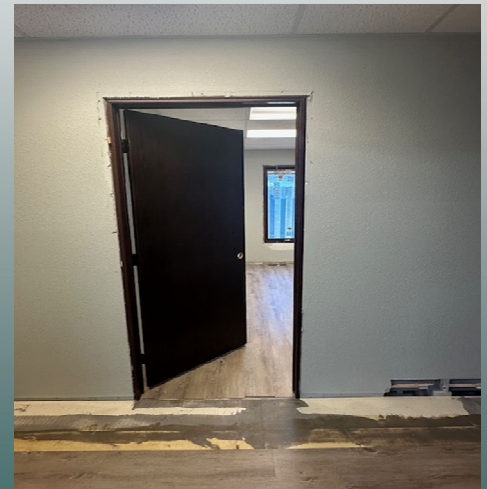
The Clay Outreach Office



Awesome!



Here are Becky Carlin & Ashley DeMoss picking up Adopt-A-Family & Santa for Seniors gifts at PACHS in Emmetsburg, to be delivered to the Outreach office there.



Executive Director Report by Julie Edwards



December Events:

1st Annual Giving Tuesday on December 3rd: The goal this year was to initiate UDMO presence during Giving Tuesday and learn from the process. The goal each year will be to make progress by reaching more individuals within our 12-county service area who support UDMO in various ways. Total earned was \$6,800.

Legislative Discussions & Advocacy: December 4th @ Spencer ILCC Highlights:

- **2024 Decisions & Unintended Consequences**

- **AEA changes** have impacted staff support in developing intensive interventions with children when a developmental concern has been identified. The result has been slower identification of children needing IFPS/IEP services.
- **Liheap (LEWIS) data system** launched prior to completion and adequate testing. Has resulted in slower payments to utility companies and many days when the system is not available.

- **2025 Topics includes:**

- **Statewide Voluntary Preschool (Head Start and School District collaboration)**

- Senator Lynn Evans stated he supported the collaboration and was only proposing changes in the number of hours and correlating reimbursement. Plus, hours would be tracked by school year verses weekly. Increasing hours would not be required to continue just an option.
 - Head Start is designed to support children and their families experiencing low income through services that extend beyond the classroom and into the home.
 - Current Head Start & Spencer Schools Partnership Strengths & Share Practices (Presented by: **Dee Graettinger & Melissa McGuire**)
 - Recruitment and Selection
 - Share applications and place children where best served
 - Talk to families & partners to meet needs of children
 - Work hard to support seamless transition for children from Head Start to Spencer Schools
 - Partner for Professional Development
 - Collaborative team time – all 4 year old teachers from Head Start and Spencer Schools work together to meet the needs of children and families
 - Supportive administrative teaming
 - Monthly training with Area Education Agencies
 - Professional Learning Communities – all Spencer preschool partners at one table, reviewing child data from behavior to academics in order to plan interventions and best practices
 - **Resounding messages were:**
 - State to agency communication has decreased in the midst of State realignment.
 - Lack of appropriate planning prior to change implementation has negatively impacted the services the state was trying to improve.

UDMO Apartment Buildings: We have successfully closed on the four properties.

County Supervisor Visits: I have presented annual reports and requested funding in all counties except four counties.



Executive Director-Continued:

Outreach:

- **Spencer Progress Update:** We are very excited to finally have a handicap accessible door installed since this was part of the initial renovation efforts at time of purchase. Flood repairs continue: drywall, painting, flooring, interior doors and trim have been completed. **Moving date is December 16.** Dawn and Terri have a **dedicated group of volunteers** who are going to assist in this effort. We can't thank any of these individuals enough!! The only item delayed is the cabinetry for the main reception office workspace. We can fully function without this.
- **Spencer FEMA:** Tyler, Shakira and I continue to meet weekly with representatives. Requested documentation is being completed.
- **Adopt a Family** – Our **UDMO central office staff have enjoyed assisting Outreach staff** at these events. The collaboration allows our staff to build relationships with fellow co-workers, work with the individuals we serve and become more familiar with services offered. It is a wonderful opportunity to support each other within our UDMO family. Thank you too all!

Grant Updates:

- **WRAP Grant:** Before & after school child care to wrap around the Head Start day. At the November Policy Council and Board permission was given to submit the grant. Submission deadline is 1/14/2025, but we will **submit in December** prior to Christmas break. UDMO currently, holds this grant providing a total of 90-day care slots for Head Start children in Emmetsburg, Spencer and Storm Lake.
- **Shared Visions Preschool Grant:** Presently, UDMO has a classroom in Storm Lake and Spencer Head Start. Board and Policy Council gave permission to submit an application at the November meetings. Submission date of 1/22/2025, but the state has not released the RFP and are not responding to inquiries. We did identify this as a concern to Senator Evans who chairs the Education Committee during UDMO's Legislative Forum. At this point, we are **waiting**.
- **Shared Visions Parent Support Grant:** Provides educational support services to parents of at-risk children ages birth through five years, with priority to applicants who serve parents of at-risk children from birth to age three. UDMO hopes to expand our home visiting efforts. Board and Policy Council permission was received at the November meetings. Submission date of 3/26/2025. **We hope this RFP is released.**

FaDSS: The State report will be shared at the January Board meeting as results were shared on Monday 12/9 with staff.

Overall, a positive report.

Weatherization: Kyle and the State held Contractor meetings were held the first week of December to review impending changes regarding the **switch to flat fee** with Weatherization contractors. Flat fee excludes plumbing, electrical, and HVAC. Policies and contracts are in the process of being adjusted for a mid-January implementation date.

NEW Housing Grant: HOME American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) award of **\$150,000** grant contingent upon Iowa Finance Authorities availability of funds to go towards UDMO's efforts to increase decent and affordable housing for low-income Iowans in our service area.

Save the Dates:

- **Finance Committee on December 17 @ 1 pm.**
 - Monthly Financials
 - Contracts & Amendments
- **UDMO Board of Directors on January 28 @ 5 pm.**



DECEMBER SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

1- Year

Amy Morris - Home Base Teacher @ Jefferson
Lindmila Sanchez Pena- Food Service @ Storm Lake

4- Years

Kathy Graves - Substitute @ Hartley
Candra Rieman - Assistant Teacher @ Storm Lake

5- Years

Jessica Swenson - Teacher @ Hartley
Joan Uthof - Accounting Clerk @ Central

9- Years

Becky Carlin - CACFP @ Central

11- Years

Mary Enderson - Substitute @ Estherville

14- Years

Mari Cruz Flores-Hernandez - Home Based Teacher @ Storm Lake

29- Years

Michella Koppen - Administrative Coordinator @ Jefferson

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
DEDICATION TO UDMO

Get to Know-UDMO



UDMO hosted the Supportive Services Symposium on December 4, 2024 at Iowa Lakes Community College in Spencer, IA. The Symposium was led by 7 presenters representing UDMO, Spencer Schools and Early Childhood Iowa (ECI). We are thankful for the 20 Community partners who attended and engaged in discussion and feedback. Attendees represented Public Health, Nurse Practitioners, Mental Health, Behavioral Health, Substance Abuse and Gambling Prevention, Parent Support Programs, Community Action, Public Schools and more.

Thank you to Senator Lynn Evans, District 3, for attending and engaging in the dialogue with attendees. Senator Evans serves on many committees including Education and Health and Human Services and is the newly elected Chair of the Senate Education Committee and a member of the Interim Study Committee: AEA Task Force.



Turkey Trotters donated 337 items for local food pantries

It was a cold morning but 121 Turkey Trotters braved the conditions to run the 2024 Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving on November 28. As a result, 337 items were donated to local food pantries. Those donations were matched by Realtor Tami Hejlik and Abens Realty for an even bigger impact to the local community.

Congratulations to Gavin Stalzer on his first place finish, and thanks to everyone who took part in this fun event. Pictured above, Jamie Flugstad of Upper Des Moines Opportunity Inc. accepts donations from the Turkey Trot. Also pictured are Tami Hejlik of Abens Realty, right, and Mark Glascock, City of Webster City Parks and Recreation, left.



Tyler Henderson-Fiscal Director
Tyler stated that sometimes due to budget constraints he feels like a Grinch! His wife gifted him this apron!



The Central Office employees had a great week! (Here are a few of them) There was a Secret Santa Exchange, Treat Week was held and there was a potluck at the end. Here are some photos from the potluck. Tyler and Bill played the (elves) and passed out the gifts as they did not take part in the Secret Santa exchange. This was very popular and several employees mentioned it would be fun to do again.

Congratulations!

NOVEMBER EMPLOYEE

OF THE MONTH

Peg Cavanaugh

Assistant Teacher @ Storm Lake

Peg shows up with the most positive attitude each and every day. Even on the hardest days, she brightens up our classroom with an effortless smile. Without even knowing it she motivates me to become an even better version of myself. The kids and I love her so, and we are lucky and grateful to have her as a part of our classroom family.

Peg is always on top of cleaning, re-stocking everything in our classroom. When the kids are needing extra help, she has so much patience with them and goes above and beyond to help each child succeed in their own way!



Peg is very deserving of this award because she is always willing to try new things, especially technology and in-kind related. I want her to know how grateful I am as it is not always easy, but she goes into learning new things with a positive attitude.

CONGRATULATIONS!

NOVEMBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Even with the hassle of new two new state systems at once, employee has remained positive and willing to work through any hurdles.

Jason Petersen - Outreach Specialist in Dickinson County

Jason is very pleasant and welcoming to everyone that walks through the door. Despite his office being one of the busier ones, he is always willing to lend a hand to other counties specifically with processing Li-Heap apps.

Jason truly has a passion for helping those in need. His drive & dedication to the mission truly shows with the outpouring of support and partnerships throughout the community.



Monthly Board Report:

Counties Served: Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, and Sioux.

CACFP had 37 providers submit claims for November. For the 2024-25 FY, I applied and received a waiver. This will allow me to conduct 2 of the 3 required reviews virtually and 1 in person review for all providers that are 50 miles or more from UDMO Central office. All providers inside the 50-mile radius will have 2 in person reviews and 1 virtual review.

This will impact my annual budget tremendously. I am continuing my recruiting efforts.

CACFP In-home Providers served the following meals in November:

	November 2024	November 2023
Breakfast:	4,382	4,731
Lunches:	4,347	4,697
Snacks:	5,231	5,821
Suppers:	6	157
Total Meals Served:	13,966	15,406
Providers Served:	37	37



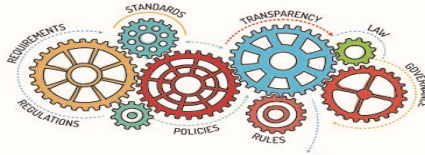
Weatherization for the month of November 2024 we completed 10 homes again which is another great month of completions and meeting our goal of 110 homes. Couldn't be more happy with our employees for the Weatherization program and for the PY24 program year. We will be next month starting our new WAMS system and our next contract year with HEAP, DOE, BIL, BLACK HILLS ENERGY, ALLIANT, and, MIDAMERICAN ENERGY contracts and look forward to completing the same amount of homes or more. The Weatherization Department would like to wish you happy holidays and a Happy New Year. We will continue to serve our 17 counties and assist in working to help make families homes more energy efficient.



- Liheap (Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program) starts Oct. 1st for a household with an elderly (60 years of age or older) and/or a disabled household member. Also, any household in a crisis related situation may apply for Liheap in October. Everyone else can apply Nov. 1st thru April 30th.
- **LIHEAP APPLICATIONS:** For November, Outreach took and processed 1,334 Liheap applications.
- 28 applications were denied.
- 3 online applications.
- **CRISIS:** For November, 105 households received ECIP-Crisis funds in the amount of \$34,363.72. We had to stop assisting with Crisis applications temporarily, until we received more funding and State fixed an issue with this.
- We are working on a new State Liheap System.

We are working on our regular contract called Liheap-24 Crisis contract.

Shakira Meyer – Director of Program Development, Compliance & Reporting



The UDMO team hosted the 2nd Annual *Supportive Services Symposium* on December 4, 2024. A primary topic was the unexpected opportunities for growth and unintended consequences of the ongoing HHS Alignment.

Highlights include:

- 7 presenters representing UDMO, Spencer Schools and Early Childhood Iowa (ECI)
- 20 Community Partners attended and engaged in discussion and feedback.
 - Attendees represented Public Health, Nurse Practitioners, Mental Health, Behavioral Health, Substance Abuse and Gambling Prevention, Parent Support Programs, Community Action, Public Schools and more.



Building the airplane while flying it...
Unexpected Opportunities for Growth or
Unintended Consequences?

- Senator Lynn Evans (District 3) attended and engaged in the Symposium
 - He serves on many committees including Health and Human Services and being the newly elected Chair of the Senate Education Committee and a member of the Interim Study Committee: AEA Task Force.

UDMO Funding Requests Update:

Recent Foundation/Organizational/Trust Grants Submitted & Status: December 2024	County	Program	Submitted/Pending	Awarded	Not Funded
<i>Giving Tuesday – Outcome Update to Come</i>	All	<i>Outreach</i>		X	
Dickinson County Good Neighbor Fund	DI	Outreach	X		
Homeland Security – EM FEMA Grant	CL	Repairs – App in Process	X		
Berkema Trust	WR	Client Services		X	
William Morrison Trust	HA	Client Services	X		
Hoepfner Trust	CL	Chore		X	
Pocahontas County Community Foundation	PO	Outreach Accessibility	X		

Program Grants Submitted and Status: December 2024	County	Program	Submitted/Pending	Awarded	Not Funded
IA BOS CoC *TBD – Approved, but funding of the project contingent on total HUD award to the IA BoS CoC.	All	Housing – Permanent Supportive Housing (Long-term Rental Assistance)		X*	
IFA - Supportive Services	All	Housing		X	
Head Start Continuation Grant	BV, CL, DI, EM, PA, PO	Head Start/Early Head Start Continuation Funding		X	
WRAP - Wrap Around Child Care Program for Head Start/Early Head Start	BV, CL, PA	WRAP at 3 sites	X		

KIDS Program Report

November 2024

Over View Of Services

KIDS Program provides in home parent education and family support services including:

- Families with children 0-5 years old.
- We provide free, confidential and voluntary services
- Goal include: preventing child abuse and increasing protective factors among parents
- Utilize Parents As Teachers Curriculum and Interactions Across Abilities for concerns with developmental or social emotional concerns.

Key Strategies

- Connecting, collaborating and supporting community efforts aimed at child abuse through local councils
- Providing in home and group support to families
- Promote resources in the community that are available to families

Activities

- Palo Alto County Leadership Meetings
- Presentation to Head Start Coordinators and Prairie Lakes AEA Emmetsburg Advisory Meeting
- Gearing up for Dolls and Trucks, Tacos for Tots and other Winter events ECNCI Meetings
- Postnatal Doula Training
- Collaboration through diapers Kossuth County

Successes/Challenges

- We continue to see an increase in referrals
- Very few referrals have come from Palo Alto County

1st Five

Healthy Mental Development in the 1st Five Years!

DECEMBER 2024

CSA-1

Teresa Ball, ph: (712) 298-6751, tball@udmo.com

Serving Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, O'Brien, Osceola, & Palo Alto Counties

New Referrals located in Clay & Dickinson County

5 New Referrals in November

Reason for Referrals:

- Mental Health
- Parent Education
- Child Care
- Food Insecurity
- Transportation
- Household Goods
- Clothing

Resource Connections:

- KIDS
- FaDSS
- Liheap
- Outreach
- SNAP
- WIC
- Hunger Coalitions
- Head Start/ EHS
- Seasons Center
- Kings & Queens, Kaden's Closet
- Child Care Assistance
- Public Health
- Convoy of Hope

32 Total Referrals in FY 2025
24 Active Referrals

5 Closed Cases earning top rating during Family Experience Survey

CSA-4

Meredith Mickelson, ph: (712) 298-6292, mmickelson@udmo.com

Serving Calhoun, Hamilton, Hardin, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster, & Wright Counties

10 New Referrals in November 2024
49 total 1st Five Referrals
7/01/24 - 11/30/24

Provider Main Reason for the 1st Five Referral:

- Speech Delay
- Developmental Delay
- Behavior Concerns
- Food Insecurity
- Fine Motor Delay
- Personal/Social Delay
- Resource Needs
- Parenting Support
- Assistance applying for benefits
- Safety Concern/Resource Need
- Nutrition Concerns

November 2024
5 Referring Clinics
7 Referring Providers

- Iowa Specialty Clinic
Webster City (Hamilton County)
 - Kari Patten, PA-C
- McFarland Clinic
Iowa Falls (Hardin County)
 - Dr. Laura Brunsen, MD
- UnityPoint Clinic Family Medicine
Fort Dodge (Webster County)
 - Dr. Joseph Larson, DO
- UnityPoint Clinic Pediatrics
Fort Dodge (Webster County)
 - Molly Schilling, DNP, ARNP, CPNP-PC
 - Alexandra Adam, ARNP, CPN-PC
- UnityPoint Clinic Family Medicine
Eagle Grove (Wright County)
 - Dr. Dustin Smith, MD
 - Charity Hayes, ARNP

Holiday





Enrollment:

Fully enrolled in Early Head Start with 183 children and Head Start Preschool with 289 children.

Disabilities:

Early Head Start students served on IFSP's: 14

Head Start Preschool students served on IEP's: 23

Total served: 37 Target: 47

TEACH – CDA, 2 year or 4-year Degree:

CDA certification completion: 4

Associates degree in progress: 1

Bachelor degree in progress: 1



Coaching:

Teachers – 6 and Home Base Teachers – 3

What's Happening:

- **Director Sarina Smith has been actively visiting sites and classrooms, gaining valuable insights to support our programs.**
- With the launch of Seesaw, we are seeing improved interactions with families, and our Storm Lake teachers are making remarkable progress in fostering these connections. Special recognition goes to Juana Ramos-Flores, Madey Rosewall, Susan Ketcham, Marlen Garcia, Malea Nielsen, and Alice Wilk for their outstanding efforts.
- UDMO Head Start is proposing to offer Wrap Around Child Care full day, full year services to 95 children in the rural communities of Spencer, Emmetsburg, and Storm Lake, IA. The grant proposal has been submitted.
- Our program-wide PBIS implementation continues to thrive with the successful launch of our Early Learning Expectation Posters, promoting positive behavior and consistency across all sites.



“Weatherization Report for October 2024”

Tiffany Harris – HR Director



HR MONTHLY NEWS

- **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:** The Paylocity voting survey has been extremely successful with over 50% of employees voting. As a reminder, voting is NOT based on knowing the staff. It's about the content submitted.

- **Our Wellness Program** runs from 10/01-9/30 each year. Our program has reset for the year and any employee that completes the Wellbeing Survey and 80 out of the 100 points available will be entered into a raffle drawing for 8 hours of vacation time at the conclusion of our program year September 2025.

- **January 2025 Challenge: No Dollar Days**
 - Registration: January 6 – January 26
 - Challenge Date: January 20 – February 16
 - Participation Incentive: UDMO ¼ Zip Sweatshirt

New Hire Feedback:

- “It was helpful having mentors to help guide me through the new journey within this position.”
- “It was helpful having my coach and supervisor always checking on me and making sure I was doing okay and understanding my new position.”
- “I really like all my co-workers and feel like I was welcomed right away.”

Exit Survey Feedback:

- “UDMO is very much about supporting their workers. I have enjoyed working here and just the little "Thank you's" from everyone in whatever form they are given has meant a lot to me. I enjoyed the annual meetings they we had. It is a great place to work for. Everyone treats each other with the most upmost respect. Thank you for everything and everyone here at UDMO!”

Work Comp Incident Report Recap:

In order to keeps our rates from rising, our goal is to provide a safe working environment to keep these incident reports to a minimum and avoid preventable work comp claims.

- September 2024: 5 incidents
- October 2024: 3 incidents
- November 2024: 1 incident
- Incident YTD Total: **30**
- Work Comp Claim YTD Total: **2**

Thank you to all for working so diligently to keep a safe working environment! When safety concerns do arise, be sure to share them with a member of the Safety & Wellness committee.



Households assisted:

<u>ESG</u> 2	<u>ERA</u> 1	<u>TBRA</u> 22	<u>RSA</u> 14
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Annual Point-In-Time Count also known as PIT Count

In order to gain a better understanding of homelessness in our communities, our staff will be conducting a census of the homeless population called a Point in Time Count as required annually by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. (UDMO) is the Designated Lead Agency for the annual Point-In-Time Count covering 12 counties in Iowa: Dickinson, Emmet, Clay, Palo Alto, Buena Vista, Pocahontas, Humboldt, Wright, Sac, Calhoun, Webster and Hamilton. We will travel through the region on January 29th and 30th, looking for any individuals that appear to be homeless (such as in cars, tents, parks, on the streets, etc.). The data collected affects Iowa’s funding allocations from the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

On January 29th or 30th if you notice, encounter, or are aware of any homeless individuals within our service region, please contact me, at 515-269-7105 to report the number of homeless individuals. If this is a person you have interacted with, please urge them to call me directly. Observational data including the person’s name, gender, age, race and county is helpful, but not required.

It’s important to note that to be included in the count individuals must meet the definition of literally homeless which means the person slept in a place not meant for human habitation on the night of January 29th. (Car, streets, tents, outdoors, homeless shelters, shelter with no heat or electricity, park bench, barn, etc.) We cannot count those who sleep on a friend’s couch.

Staff/Client Success Stories

I pulled a client from our waiting list who had been in emergency shelter for some time. She lost her housing due to a domestic situation and she had been struggling with some depression and alcohol issues. She lost her job because she didn’t have transportation back and forth from the shelter so it was making things more difficult for her to get housed. I met with her to go over the program and sign paperwork. We talked about her goals and which landlords would be a good fit. I gave her a list and I reached out to a few as well. After a couple failed inspections, we pretty quickly got her into a place and she got her job back right away. We were able to assist with deposit and first months’ rent. She was behind on her storage unit as well as needed to buy food and new glasses so we assisted for another month. When we met again to calculate her income she was and doing amazing! She let me know how grateful she was for my help and our program. Said that she has been clean for 6 months now and asked for a hug!

Statewide Crisis Line Update: Clients in need of rental assistance should call the Statewide Crisis Line at 1-833-739-0065 to complete the intake process. Normal business hours are 7am – 8pm. Clients calling outside of these hours will need to leave a message and wait for a call back. Call backs are being made within 24-48 hours.

Family & Community Services Director-Alisa Schlieff



FaDSS:

November 2024

Number of Families Served: for November 2024 72 families

Year to Date Families Served: July 1, 2024 to November 31, 2024: 90 families

Rhonda is a young married mother of a son with ADHD; she enrolled in the FaDSS Program and was able to acquire subsidized housing in a town where both of her son's grandparents live. Her spouse became employed full time; they purchased a vehicle with their tax return money and were able to cancel their FIP due to meeting self-sufficiency goals. Rhonda is able to stay at home with her child until he is old enough for school and she plans to return to work. Her child just began pre-school and is getting the help he needs in order to function well with his ADHD in the classroom.

Outreach:



Outreach continue to do LIHEAP for all eligible families. Families can call the office for an appointment, schedule their own appointment on our website or complete the online application.



Outreach has been busy with Adopt a Family, Bikes for Tikes, Holiday baskets and all things Christmas.

Congratulations!

At the end of December our Outreach Team will be losing a team member that has been such a huge asset to our team. Dianna Georg will be retiring after about 20 years with UDMO. Our team, UDMO and the families will miss her!! Di we wish you the best of luck on this next chapter and do not be a stranger!!

