

“One Red Paper Clip” Will Help Fund Disability Services

By Dayna M. Reidenouer

A few years ago, Canadian Kyle MacDonald parlayed a red paper clip into a house. Inspired by MacDonald's accomplishment, UDS (formerly United Disabilities Services) has launched “One Red Paper Clip,” a unique fundraiser that will conclude with a gala event on Friday, April 30.

Around 20 teams of UDS volunteers, clients, employees, and friends are trading red paper clips for items of increasing value, which must be donated to UDS by March 31. The items will be sold on eBay during April.

Advertising account executive Justin Brubaker of Manheim is tracking four paper clips. He traded the first clip with his boss for a golf shirt, which he traded with a customer for an MP3 player. Someone with a hand-etched crystal bowl wanted the MP3 player more, so they swapped. Brubaker then traded the bowl with Mount Gretna artist Fred Swarr for an original painting, which he hopes to trade for an even more valuable item. Brubaker sent a paper clip to the Philadelphia Phillies to see what they would offer, and he challenged his fraternity brothers to do their own trading.

“I like companies that think outside the box, especially in this economy,” Brubaker remarked. “If (UDS) can think outside the box, so can I.”

UDS is headquartered in Lancaster at 1901 Olde Homestead Lane. More than 5,000 families currently receive services from UDS, which provides in-home personal care, independent living support, and personal development and enrichment services for people with disabilities, the elderly, and veterans to enhance their independence and enrich their lives.

Manor Township resident Melissa Sneath and her family have benefited from services provided through UDS. A personal care attendant stays with the 30-year-old woman while her mother, Carol Sneath, goes to work. The



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Justin Brubaker (right) of Manheim displays the Fred Swarr painting that is the result of several traded items, starting with a red paper clip. Inviting the public to participate in the One Red Paper Clip fundraising project to benefit services for the elderly and people with disabilities are (from left) UDS chief communications and development officer Cindy Davidson, along with UDS client Melissa Sneath and her mother, Carol Sneath, both of Manor Township. Melissa's custom seating and her service dog, Gabby Rose, were provided by UDS.

seat and back padding in Melissa's wheelchair were custom-molded to her frame through a partnership between UDS and another company. Previously, Melissa had to travel to Virginia for custom seats. A licensed contractor, UDS also remodeled Melissa's bathroom to make it accessible according to her particular needs. With help from UDS in finding funding for the project, the Sneaths were able to install an automatic door system at their front door. Gabby Rose, Melissa's 7-year-old boxer and a UDS Service Dog, can activate the door by pushing buttons on either side.

Other services offered by UDS include skills instruction, transition school, employment services, adult enrichment, and youth sports, recreation, and arts.

“Most people don't realize that

we have these services,” remarked Cindy Davidson, UDS chief communication and development officer.

Brubaker first encountered UDS when his son was born with serious health issues. Now 8 months old, the boy has had a shunt placed in his brain to lessen swelling, and he is relatively healthy.

“He has a clean bill of health now, but he's one infection away from a mess. That's when the challenge starts,” Brubaker commented. “I'm glad UDS is there if we need them.”

For more information about UDS and One Red Paper Clip, readers may call Tonya Martin or Faith Alicea at 397-1841 or visit www.udservices.org/paperclip and the One Red Paper Clip page on Facebook.