

The latest updates on what is and is planned for the Uniquely Abled Project.



Welcome to the Uniquely Abled Project Newsletter

June 2017

An update as to what has been happening with the Uniquely Abled Project, and plans for the future.

[Visit Our Website](#)

The Uniquely Abled Project

The purpose of the Uniquely Abled Project is to

- Shift the societal paradigm from "disabled" to "uniquely abled".
- Provide vocational opportunities to uniquely abled folks by matching their unique abilities to jobs in demand

The UA Project currently has two programs: the Uniquely Abled Jobs (UAJ) program and the Uniquely Abled Academy (UAA) program.

The Uniquely Abled Academy Program

The UA Academy program is focused on careers that require specialized training. The approach is to identify the unique abilities of folks with a particular diagnosis, and then match jobs in demand that require those unique abilities. The first career for which training is being provided is CNC (computer numerically controlled) manufacturing machine operator for those diagnosed with high functioning autism.



A Possible Cause of 80-90% Unemployment

Working with the GCC UAA has given us some thoughts about contributing causes to the 80-90% unemployment rate. Of course, first is the limitations of viewing people through a "disabled" label. We also saw that a successful vocational training program for the uniquely abled needs to include nine critical components, e.g., CNC machine skills, soft skills, training the instructors, job search and placement, coaching employers, and post-hire support. No one organization can provide all nine components, and thus a project team of multiple service organizations is required. However, before the UAA such project teams have been rarely (if ever) formed, and thus the number of successful vocational programs for the uniquely abled has been severely limited, thus contributing to a 80-90% unemployment rate.

UAA Replication Guidebook

The UAA Replication Guidebook is currently being written and is expected to be available by the end of June 2017. The Guidebook is a compendium of lessons learned and will be a major source of information for those wanting to establish a UAA.

GCC UAA Video Released

In August 2016 the UA Academy at Glendale CC was visited by a video team from American Built Media (now named Titans of CNC). Led by Titan Gilroy and his son, Tyson, the team interviewed and taped the operation of the UA Academy.



We are more than delighted to announce that the video has been released and it is terrific!

Access the video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qgu0Esp0Qqo>

Thank you to Titan, Tyson, and your entire video crew for a spectacular job.

Results from Glendale Community College UAA

In addition to CNC operator and job skills training, the GCC UA Academy provides job placement assistance, recruiting of potential employers, and coaching of potential employers in selection, on-boarding, and management of UA Academy graduates. As each student secures employment, an evaluation is made regarding what post-hire support is needed and would be useful, and arrangements are made to provide that post-hire support. Examples of post-hire support include job coaching (ranging from a few hours per day to full-time support), internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.

Cohort 1 of 13 students completed the program classwork in August 2016. Of the 13 students, two decided to pursue other career paths. Of the 11 available for employment, 8 have secured full-time jobs as CNC operators, and we expect to be able to place the other 3.

Equally important has been the reaction of the employers. "They learned in weeks where others have taken months," said Susan Solebello, Human Resource Generalist at Mulgrew Aircraft Components, Inc. Björn N.P. Paulsson, CEO & President of Paulsson, Inc. said, "In five months our staff hired from the Uniquely Abled Academy have become critical members of our CNC operator team, machining some of the most difficult metals in the industry." We now have data that those with high functioning autism not only can learn to operate CNC machines, but their unique abilities enable them to operate at an extraordinary high level.

Cohort 2 is currently in session, graduating in June. Potential employers are encouraged to contact Marcel Becker, Employment Coordinator at DOR Glendale Branch, (818) 551-2149 or Marcel.Becker@dor.ca.gov.

Applications Open for GCC UAA Cohort 3

Applications are now being accepted for Cohort 3 of the GCC UA Academy.

- 16-week program, August 28 - December 13, 2017
- The last three weeks are a workplace experience.
- Monday-Thursday, 8am - 3:15pm

- To teach those with high functioning autism to be entry-level CNC machinists.
- Includes CNC programming, setup, and operation and job readiness skills training
- For those who qualify, most or all of the costs may be covered.

See complete application procedure at:

<http://uniquelyabledproject.org/applying-to-the-gcc-uniquely-abled-academy/>

[Attached](#) is a 1-page flyer for Cohort 3. Please distribute to your contacts and refer potential students.

Two New UAAs in Formation

Implementation planning has begun for two new Uniquely Abled Academies. One will be located in Santa Clarita, CA, in affiliation with the College of the Canyons. The other is being started by Jan Nolan & Associates.

We think that the fourth UAA will be either in the South Bay area of Greater Los Angeles, or in the Inland Empire.

Let Ivan know if you would like to be involved in any of these UAAs, or if you would like to start a UAA elsewhere.

The Uniquely Abled Jobs Program

The UA Jobs program is focused on jobs that do not need specialized training, generally jobs with a high degree of repetition such as electronic assembly, deburring, buffing, filing, scanning, organizing, inventory management, etc.



To date there have been 18 job placements in this program. The major insights have been:

- Most organizations do not realize how many repetitive or simple jobs they have
- People do not realize that there is a population for which such jobs are highly desirable.
- Having this jobs performed can make a major difference to the

morale and productivity of the organization.

Employers interested in hiring uniquely abled folks under the UA Jobs program can contact [Brian Larson](#) at the Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF). If the employer is not in ECF's service area, we will find the appropriate agency for that employer.

Uniquely Abled Project Update

We are delighted to announce that David Viar, Superintendent/President of Glendale Community College, has agreed to join the UAP Board. David has been highly supportive since the inception of the GCC UAA, and will make a major contribution as the UAP grows.

The UAP has filed for 501(c)3 non-profit status with the IRS (thank you O'Melveny & Myers). When we receive that status we will be able to begin limited fund-raising to pay for a small staff and other operational expenses.

The UAP website is currently undergoing a complete renovation to enable us to post the large amount of information useful to potential students, parents, and supporting agencies, as well as to accomodate multiple UAP sites.

How can you make a major (non-financial) contribution to the UA Project? Strike the word "disabled" from your vocabulary and only use the term "uniquely abled." Our experience is that almost everyone immediately "gets it" and is delighted with the new insight. Encourage others to do the same. Eventually "disabled" will disappear as have other pejorative and limiting words.

To be added to the UA Project Newsletter mailing list send an e-mail to IRosenberg@UniquelyAbledProject.org.

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