



Transforming the lives of uniquely abled individuals through meaningful employment.

In this issue: New board members and staff, a success story from a student, a new vocation, new UAAs, webinar.

A Message from our Founder and President

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter!

There has been much to weather during this chilly season, but the UAP has been warmed from the inside out by the great things happening within our organization. I am happy to welcome Margaret Schmidt and Greg Surtman as our newest board members, and Stephanie Riley as our Outreach and Communications Coordinator. A generous grant from the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation has allowed us to fund this new position, and I look forward to working with all three of them, especially as we expand our programming.

Thanks to a grant from California's Department of Developmental Services, College of the Canyons will start a cohort training for a new vocation: programming manufacturing robots. We are thrilled to be supporting a new career option for our community.

It would be easy to say that our main focus is placing workers in jobs. But we have an underlying mission: supporting the very human desire in all of us to lead satisfying and productive lives, and most of all to find a place where we feel connected. Below, you can read the story of Siri Reichelt, a student at the MATC Uniquely Abled Academy who says, "The very best thing is that I finally feel like I belong somewhere."

We are on an intentional journey to help people find a place in society and a life that feels like home, and we



Ivan Rosenberg

The Uniquely Abled Academies

- College of the Canyons (CA)
- Glendale Community College (CA)
- Long Beach City College (CA)
- MiraCosta College (CA)
- San Bernardino Valley College (CA)
- Rhodes State College (OH)
- South Central College (MN)

thank you for your continued support and assistance in making our mission a reality!

Ivan

- Crawford County Career & Technical Center (PA)
- Milwaukee Area Technical College (WI)
- Bridgewater State University (MA)
- Cherry Creek Innovation Campus (CO)
- Erie Community College (PA)

Welcome New Board Members & Staff!



Margaret Schmidt is the owner of Margaret Schmidt Business Solutions. She consults on project management, facilitation and sales/marketing skill sets for a variety of clients. She has a successful track record in grant writing and development work for nonprofits.



Greg Surtman is the Workforce Development Manager at Tooling U-SME. He leads the team that supports Tooling U-SME's 900+ partner network including academic institutions, manufacturing extension partnerships, and workforce agencies. He is passionate about connecting individuals and manufacturers to create local talent ecosystems.



Stephanie Riley is our new Communications and Outreach Coordinator. She is supporting the UAP by developing marketing strategies, designing education and outreach materials, doing social media management and content creation, as well as assisting with funding and outreach.

Siri's Story



Siri Reichelt is the Milwaukee Area Technical College UAA's first female participant. In an article by Mark Feldman, she shares how meaningful the program has been for her. Siri had tried college and a job, but she didn't feel accepted or supported until starting her training at MATC. Hesitant at first, she bonded with her teachers and soon felt a sense of belonging and accomplishment: "Being in a place where I'm truly accepted for who I am is a miracle... My mother has said this is the happiest she has ever seen me." Siri is now in her second semester and wants to be a role model for others. "Hopefully, another girl with autism sees what I have done and sees what I am doing and feels like she can come into the program."

Read the full article and find more information about this UAA on MATC's website [here](#).

We wish you all the best with your training and your new career, Siri!

Career Pathways: The Uniquely Abled Academy Webinar

10-11am PST, Wednesday March 15, 2023 on Zoom

The UAA is a proven groundbreaking program that prepares young people with autism for meaningful careers and places them in jobs in the advanced manufacturing and IT industries.

Our Zoom webinar is free and open to all! Please join us to learn more about:

- Our program and the training we provide.
- What the program is like from the perspective of an instructor, graduate, and employer.
- The CNC Machining program at College of the Canyons.
- How you can get involved or start a Uniquely Abled Academy at your institution.

Click [here](#) to register and save your seat!

Eastern Region Update

from John Wheeler, UAA Consultant



Crawford Technical Center held their first UAA graduation ceremony on February 1, with four graduates. Here they are with their instructors! The next cohort starts in September 2023. You can read more about the program [here](#).

Milwaukee Area Technical College started their new two-semester program with five students in August 2022, and the second semester has begun.

Two new UAAs will be starting programs in 2023. Bridgewater State University (MA) plans to train their first cohort at a local vocational tech school starting this summer. Erie County Community College (PA) is planning to start their first cohort in Fall 2023. Welcome to the UAP!

Western Region Update

from Mike Bastine, UAA Consultant

College of the Canyons kicked off with a new UAA cohort on February 21. We're delighted to announce that we will soon begin training in a new vocation: programming manufacturing robots. College of the Canyons, along with the University of Southern California, received a grant from the State of California's Department of Developmental Services to open a UAA providing this training for those with Level 1 Autism Spectrum Disorder. We continue to work to open up new career options for individuals with autism and other diagnoses.

Thanks to Our Donors!

We're proud to be a grassroots organization, with 90% of our budget going straight to serving our students. We greatly appreciate generous support from:

- Citizens Business Bank
- Comerica Bank
- McRae Care Foundation Fund
- Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation

- Marisol Puga

- Wells Fargo Bank

Thank You for Your Support!



Serving students, families, and companies

The Uniquely Aabled Project enables those with autism to start meaningful careers that provide income, dignity, and purpose while filling a major need for employers. To grow our impact and serve more students, families, and companies, we need your support! Help us:

- develop new tools to identify students' unique abilities
- create training programs for uniquely abled individuals
- collaborate with employment programs
- match graduates with meaningful, fulfilling jobs

The Uniquely Aabled Project is a 501(c)3 non-profit org.
Tax ID: 81-3868351

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