



## A monthly newsletter for UCP of Stanislaus County August 2020

### From the Desk of Chris Martin

#### Shifting to Individualized Services



The past five months have been difficult. We have all faced numerous challenges that we could not have predicted or prepared for. UCP participants are home and unable to attend in person. They are not able to see their friends or participate in community events. While health and safety are of the utmost concern, it does not make it any easier. Over the last month, UCP has received more direction from those that regulate how we offer programs. This is at least a little progress on the path to reopening.

Starting in September, UCP is offering some additional enhanced Remote and Alternative Services. In March we started this as quickly as we could. Our staff stepped up in ways we could not have even thought of in the beginning. We will now provide individualized services to each of our participants while still maintaining the group classes that have been such a great success and benefit to so many.

I look forward to seeing these enhanced services roll out and connect people who have been missing that personal connection that they get through UCP services. The silver lining in all of this is that many have learned new ways of connecting through technology. While it may not be the most ideal way to connect, it is a blessing that we have it to avoid complete isolation in these trying times.

I would encourage all of our participants, families and care takers to make the effort to let our staff connect individually with you as they reach out over the next few weeks to develop an action plan for each UCP participant. This will benefit all involved, if you have questions, please reach out to any of our staff.

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## Programs Change Lives

### Family Style Camp Creates Memories

For the past 5 years UCP of Stanislaus has partnered with **Camp Tuolumne Trails** to offer our program members a camp experience in the beautiful Sierra Nevada Mountains. Our members enjoy the camp and look forward to it every summer. Unfortunately, due to the recent COVID-19 restrictions we were not able to offer our traditional camp as we know it. This was devastating to all of us, yet we all knew it was for the best and the only way to keep us all safe.

Thanks to the teamwork of UCP and CTT, we were able to modify the camp and create our first family style camp that allowed us to offer it to families who were still interested in attending. Families had an opportunity to safely attend camp by following some simple safety guidelines. Camp was a huge success thanks to our amazing staff and especially the CTT staff who worked so hard to keep things clean and sanitary for all the campers!

We are so happy our families had an opportunity to attend camp this summer and everyone had a great time. We know this was a much-needed break for a lot of our members and their families. It gave them an opportunity to relax and find respite from being isolated at home for the last couple months. Here are some quotes from our families themselves!

***Thank you for giving me and Divya some respite from home! We enjoyed the camp very much. I'm grateful for the wonderful opportunity! – Meena Tadimeti***

Camp was great, I like being out of my house. When can we go back? – **Josh Monds**

Thank you UCP for camp, we had a great time. – **Connie Galhano**

Thank you! Patrick and all of us had so much fun being able to see what happens at camp you guys are amazing. **Pictures on next page.**



UCP and all our members look forward to returning to Camp Tuolumne Trails next summer, it truly is the greatest camp and everyone who attend finds a place that is welcoming and inclusive of all!

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## DSP Recognition Week

### What is a DSP and why should we celebrate them?

*Direct support professionals are basically walking side-by-side in partnership with people with disabilities on their life's journey, they're there every step of the way.*

Joe Macbeth, CEO & President

#### National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals

A Direct Support Professional (DSP) is someone who works directly with an individual who has an intellectual or developmental disability. If asked most DSP's would tell you that it is more than just a job, it is a passion. UCP employs 40 DSP's between our Day Programs and Employment Services program. The job that the DSP's do are the backbone of our organization. They keep the programs running and keep the participants coming back each day. The job is not always easy, everyone has days where they go home emotionally and physically drained. They do not make nearly enough money due to low reimbursement rates, yet they come back each day with smiles on their faces ready to tackle a new adventure. When asked what they both love about their job and what is the biggest challenge, we heard a variety of answers.

Jessica, instructor in the Modesto Day Program said, "What I love most is helping others, knowing I am making a difference. The most challenging part is having to deal with people in the public that are rude or just don't understand what we are doing."

Edith, instructor in the Turlock Day Program said, "I love helping the members and their families, but that can be challenging at times because there is only so much we can do for them."

Lance, instructor in the Turlock Day Program said, ***"I love how the members have helped me grow as a person and have taught me to appreciate the most simplistic things in life. The most difficult part of the job is the lack of proper funding for DSP jobs, it leads to most DSP's needing a second job to pay their bills."***

Shannon, instructor in the Modesto Day Program said, "I love working alongside the members as they achieve their goals and overcome challenges they face. The hardest part of my job is having to realize that there are people who may not understand what it's like to live with a disability and choose not to show compassion."

At UCP we have the best team of DSP's out there. They are fun, energetic, caring, compassionate and dedicated. While we may be biased, the participants in our programs and their care takers also agree.

***"The UCP staff always treat it's members with dignity and care. My child looks forward to attending program each day."*** – Denise Whisenhunt (parent of UCP participant)

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"I love how UCP staff are dedicated to their career and the passion and love they have for the members. They are hardworking, creative, patient and understanding of their member's needs." – Barbara Nunez (UCP Board of Directors member and parent of UCP participant)

"I love being with my friends and staff at UCP and playing with the iPads." – Frank Galhano (UCP participant)

Each year DSP's are recognized for their efforts and dedication during **Direct Support Professional Recognition Week**, this year it is September 13-19. During this week, please take the time to thank a DSP for their great efforts. Also check out UCP of Stanislaus Facebook and Instagram pages during DSP Week to see highlights of our amazing DSP's. **Pictures on next page.**





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## Board Briefs

### Results of Strategy Session

We began a new fiscal year faced with challenges this organization has never seen before. On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, The Board of Directors and Staff Leadership Team held a strategic session with Michael Loschke from Arista Advisors. The leadership workshop enabled board members to get a better understanding of everything UCP does. Attendees were also able to share ideas on some of the areas of focus for the upcoming year. We developed subcommittees for these focus areas so that we may derive tangible goals for our organization. Oh - and I found out I was an OTTER through a Myers–Briggs Type Indicator.

The results of the strategy session with organization leadership and the Board of Directors resulted in the following as objectives for UCP over the next year:

- Increase number of emails on our contact list
- Increase grants funding
- Reduce and improve individual department processes
- Increase average training hours for employees
- Increase Employment Services revenue
- Increase program participation
- Increase staff retention
- Increase Board of Directors involvement

Ralph Waldo Emerson said; *“What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”*