



News, Stories and Event from your friends at UCP Stanislaus

November 2020

From the Desk of Chris Martin

Much to be Thankful for



We made it to November! The Thanksgiving season is here. It always has me thinking about the many things in my life that I am grateful for. We have all had a challenging year. Yet somehow in the face of all the chaos, we have all found things to be grateful for. After speaking with a few others, I heard things like:

“I am grateful for more time with my family”

“I have had more time to focus on hobbies that I hadn’t always had time for”

“I have gotten to know the UCP staff better as they have come to do individual visits”

Personally, I am grateful for the support and understanding that we have gotten from UCP families and the community during these last 7 months. During these times when families and UCP participants are home and struggling with missing programs and friends, I have still gotten calls thanking UCP staff for all they have done. The community showed support for UCP for our only fundraiser we were able to have this year. We are all very grateful for that!

I truly believe that in difficult times, we can help make ourselves and those around us feel better by showing gratitude for the blessings we have in our lives. I found a list of some fantastic ideas on how to show gratitude in our lives.

Write a thank-you note. You can make yourself happier and nurture your relationship with another person by writing a thank-you letter expressing your enjoyment and appreciation of that person’s impact on your life. Make a habit of sending at least one gratitude letter a month. Once in a while, write one to yourself.

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Thank someone mentally. No time to write? It may help just to think about someone who has done something nice for you, and mentally thank the individual.

Keep a gratitude journal. Make it a habit to write down or share with a loved one thoughts about the gifts you've received each day.

Count your blessings. Pick a time every week to sit down and write about your blessings — reflecting on what went right or what you are grateful for. Sometimes it helps to pick a number — such as three to five things — that you will identify each week. As you write, be specific and think about the sensations you felt when something good happened to you.

Pray. People who are religious can use prayer to cultivate gratitude.

Meditate. Mindfulness meditation involves focusing on the present moment without judgment. Although people often focus on a word or phrase (such as “peace”), it is also possible to focus on what you're grateful for (the warmth of the sun, a pleasant sound, etc.).

Programs Change Lives

Landscaping Leads to Inclusion and Independence

by Doug Hea



These are things that should be done before the first rains of the season. On the outside of the home we should clean our rain gutters. Then, test them to make sure that the water flows away from the home and it does not puddle next to the home. This will help avoid water damage and mold.

Replace batteries and test your flashlights in case of any power outages. Have your heaters serviced prior to the really cold weather. Clean or change the air filter if your heater has one.

Now the vehicle. Replace your wiper blades with new quality ones so you can see the road. Make sure to check that all the lights on the vehicle are working correctly. Check the air pressure in the tires and the tread depth. All of these will help with winter driving.

Don't wait until the weather is cold. Do this all now to make sure you are prepared for winter.

Get a FREE QUOTE for landscaping services today when you call 209-577-2122.

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Sweet Potato Casserole

Filling:

½ stick (4 Tbsp) butter

3-4 large sweet potatoes (about 2 Lbs) peeled and cubed

½ cup milk

¼ cup brown sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

½ tsp salt

2 large eggs

Topping:

½ cup flour

½ cup brown sugar

½ stick (4 Tbsp) butter, melted

¾ cup chopped pecans



Directions:

1. Put cubed sweet potatoes in large pot with enough water to cover the potatoes. Bring to a boil on high heat, then lower to simmer and cook until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain and cool. Mash in a large bowl.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Butter a 13X9 baking dish.
3. For Filling: Which together butter, mashed sweet potatoes, milk, brown sugar, vanilla, salt, and eggs in large bowl. Transfer to the prepared baking dish.
4. For the Topping: Combine the flour, brown sugar, and melted butter in a medium bowl until mixture crumps together. Stir in pecans. Spread mixture over the top of the sweet potatoes in an even layer. Bake until mostly set in the center and golden on top, about 45 minutes. Serve hot.



Sips & BBQ Thank You to the Sponsors & Donors

By Ignacio Chavez

UCP's Sips & BBQ 2020 was a great success and our amazing sponsors played a huge role. This year we partnered with Mike's Branding Iron BBQ to hold a drive-through dinner fundraiser in October. We were able to sell 410 dinners and give out 110 bottles of wine for diners to *Sip* on. We could not have done it without the help of our *Sizzlin' Premiere Sponsor* **F&M Bank**. F&M Bank has supported UCP of Stanislaus County through the years by sponsoring our events and providing much needed volunteers. We even found a Board Member through this relationship! **Andreini & Company** has also supported UCP for many years and did so for this event as our *Flamin' Sponsor*.

Keep the applause going for our *Smokin' Sponsors*, **Ball Metal Pack** and **Chris Nichols with Atlantic Realty**, our *Tasty Sponsor*, **Atherton and Associates** as well as our other donors, **McManis Family Vineyard** and **ARISTA Advisors**.

Supporting individuals with disabilities in our community for 40 years is the UCP mission. This could not be done without the much-appreciated support from our sponsors, donors and the Stanislaus County community.



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Board Briefs

(Editors Note: Over the next few months, we are highlighting individual Board members, so our readers get to know them a bit better.)

Hi, I'm Cheryl Carpenter and have been a member of the UCP board for almost two years. I have been a resident of the Central Valley all my life, moving to Ceres when I was five years old. I attended school in Ceres, graduating from Ceres High School in 1979 (go Bulldogs!).

While I should have gone to college, I instead began my very long association with the Ceres Police Department. I became a police dispatcher in 1980, while I was 18 years old. If you notice, I didn't say 911 dispatcher, because Ceres and the rest of Stanislaus County didn't have 911 until a year or so later.

Thus, began my 37-year full-time employment with Ceres Police. During those years, I served as a computer specialist, secretary, and dispatch/records supervisor. I retired in the beginning of 2016 but found that I wasn't quite ready to actually quit working. About 10 months later, I returned home to Ceres Police as a reserve 911 dispatcher, working part time.

After I officially retired, I began part-time work at my church, New Life Christian Center in Turlock, as an aide in the special need's ministry, Embrace. Unfortunately, with Covid, that has been placed on hold.

At home, I recently moved to Turlock, where my husband, Larry, and I have two dogs that allow us to take care of them. Lucy, a 12-year-old Chiweenie, and Sissy, a six-year-old dachshund, are the queens of our home!

Additionally, we are blessed with a wonderful son, Michael, his wife, Deanna, and our five grandkids, Michael, Aliyah, Aubrey, Noah and Riley. God has been great to us, and we are very happy. I am very proud of the work of UCP of Stanislaus, and excited to be a part of the organization.



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Staff Halloween Door Competition Video

In a typical October, staff and members are divided into teams to decorate a door within program. Due to COVID closures, we changed things up this year. Staff were given the chance to compete from home. There were 4 categories to be judged by a panel comprised of UCP Board members, staff and community supporters of UCP. Check out the YOUTUBE video here <https://youtu.be/LNQR44UKIGQ>

The winner of each category was:

1. Scariest Door: Jessica Reynoso's **Caution Ghosts**
2. Most Creative: Nathan Vitorino's **Ghouls Mansion**
3. Overall Best: Nathan Vitorino's **Ghouls Mansion**
4. Overall 2nd Place: Nicael Moore's **Spooky Eyes**



Michaela Maltoni-
Skeleton's Playground



Nathan Vitorino's-
Ghouls Mansion



Jessica Reynoso's-
Caution Ghosts



Andres Fuentes-
Mummy's Room



Nicael Moore's-
Spooky Eyes



Maria Miranda's-
Bloody Mask



UCP Virtual Classes

Giving UCP participants and others a fun and interesting way to interact with others.

During the last 7-months of COVID closure, UCP Day Program and Employment Services staff have been teaching online UCP Virtual Classes each week. These classes touch on topics such as Arts & Craft, Safety, Karaoke, Voting Rights and science to name a few. These classes are a way for UCP participants and other people who have joined to stay connected and have something to do throughout the week. Classes are held weekdays at 10 & 2, the schedules can be found on our Facebook and Instagram pages each week. On September 23rd Valarie, from our Turlock Day Program, hosted a Science Experiment class where she demonstrated how to make a volcano and how to make it erupt.

<https://youtu.be/8c2PdpG6qGg>

Check out our UCP of Stanislaus YouTube page for even more videos of the classes we have offered.