



## News, Stories and Event from Your Friends at UCP Stanislaus

January 2021

### From the Desk of Chris Martin

#### New Hope in Action



Happy New Year from UCP of Stanislaus! The past year has been one that we will always look back on as a time of struggle and heartache. This New Year offers hope and anticipation of being able to gather with others again, get back to things we have missed for the last year and regain some semblance of normal day to day lives.

Hope is also found in the recently approved vaccine usage to combat COVID-19. While this may take months for the public at large to receive the vaccine, it is still encouraging that the process has begun. On a National and State level, UCP has been involved in ongoing advocacy efforts to encourage those that make the decision of who receives the inoculations first prioritize people with intellectual and developmental disabilities given their extremely acute vulnerability.

If you are wondering how to help. ***Take the time to contact the governor's office and/or your local legislative leaders. Contact County Health officials and ask them to consider those with intellectual and developmental disabilities first for the new vaccine.***



While the CDC is expected to release recommendations regarding who will be inoculated first, there is still time to influence the decisions. While the State is expected to follow the CDC guidelines, they will have wide discretion in deciding who to vaccinate next. Some states such as Connecticut and New York have already come out and said people with IDD and their caretakers and DSP's are in group 1A in the disbursement structures.

Thank you for your continued support of UCP of Stanislaus and I look forward to the New Year and all that it holds.

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## Programs Change Lives

### A year in the Life of UCP

By Andres Fuentes

**M**ost of us welcomed 2020 with open arms and had many plans and goals to accomplish this year. Unfortunately, things did not turn out the way we all planned. Everyday lives were changed dramatically. In early January, we began to hear about a rare virus spreading across China and other parts of the world. COVID-19 “Corona virus” reports warned us of the serious harm. As deaths increased, we realized it was serious. Our government issued a stay-at-home order in early March to slow the spread of CV-19. Social distance, face coverings, disinfect and frequent hand washing were recommended. The stay-at-home order forced many businesses and organizations like UCP to suspend in-person services.

UCP quickly adapted and began to explore different ways we could continue to re-connect with our members and safely provide services. We turned to technology and became familiar with various communication platforms such as Zoom, Facetime, Facebook Video, Google Duo and more. Many UCP members and families hopped on board and connected with us virtually and others decided to continue services via phone. In hopes to challenge our members, we made worksheets for each member based on their personal goals and delivered them to their homes. Familiarity with the virus nature spiked high demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies, sanitizer and disinfectant supplies. Realizing families and care homes rely on PPE supplies to provide care for our members, UCP partnered with Valley Mountain Regional Center and other organizations to gather supplies and distribute to those in need.



In September, Stanislaus county was placed on the CV-19 “red tier” allowing us to provide in-person services in October to those interested. We scheduled for one hour a week and they were modified to comply with the most protective or local CV-19 safety guidelines in effect at the time. Staff implemented enhanced safety precautions such as completing a self-screening before each visit; use of face covering; social distancing; and sanitation before and after each activity. Visits were outdoors on the front porch, driveway, yard or other outdoor structure. Members loved in-person services and we received a lot of great feedback from families. However, our county again returned to the purple tier in November and in-person services were again suspended.

2020 has been a year like no other. We encountered many new challenges, but UCP will continue to provide the best services possible for our members. I thank all of our managers and staff for all the hard work they have done over the year and we look forward to what 2021 has in store for us.

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## Employment Services Thrive in Covid

By Ignacio Chavez

The Employment Services Department (ES Dept.) at UCP of Stanislaus County pivoted to online training during the pandemic. It was not an easy feat considering most of the training provided prior to the pandemic was in-person and hands on. Connectivity, technological understanding and distance were challenging for both the members and staff, but everyone pulled together to succeed.

New classes offered in the ES Dept. range from Body Language to Cooking to a review of the DMV Handbook and almost everything in between. The classes have been taught by staff of the ES Dept. with a few classes being taught by the members themselves.

The ES Dept. is always looking for new ideas for future classes as well as teachers from the community. If you are someone who enjoys working with people, is interested in teaching a class (or two or three) or interested in sharing your professional or personal expertise, please contact me. Ignacio Chavez **(209)577-2122** or email ([ichavez@ucpstan.org](mailto:ichavez@ucpstan.org)) with your interest.



Lastly, a sincere thanks to all those who supported UCP's Employment Services Department during this time. Saving your recyclables, hiring our Landscape Services, bidding in our Online Auction, and giving the members individually wrapped almond cookies almost weekly (thank you Sandy!) makes a big difference. We appreciate all of the support no matter the expression. Thank you and stay safe.

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## Recycle That Christmas Tree

Looking for a way to use some of your leftover Christmas tree leaves? How about making some simple natural paintbrushes! The **materials** you need to make the brushes are in the photo below – some twigs, twine or string, and some evergreen leaves.

**Directions** - Lay the string out flat on your surface.



Layer the evergreen leaves around your stick until you have a good-sized brush.

While still holding the twig/leaves, gently lay it down onto the string. Let go slowly – most of the leaves should still stay in place.

Tie the string. Tie twice around each paintbrush so that the leaves would be secure.

Tie as many times as you have to in order for your leaves to stay in place. That's it!! You should have some great looking paintbrushes like these below:

You can use a “slap” technique that, when combined with the evergreen leaves, created a splatter, dotted effect. You can use as little as 3 paint colors to go with the three paintbrushes and go to town with the splattering.



For more great and simple art project ideas: <http://learncreatelove.com>



## Board Briefs

Editor's Note: We highlight individual Board members, so our readers get to know them a bit better.

**K**aren Young came to the UCP Board in June of 2019, she is a retired Special Education Teacher who offers a vast amount of knowledge about People with Disabilities.



**What is your favorite drink?** Japanese Iced Tea

**When and where did you first hear about UPC Stanislaus?** I first heard about UCP when I started overseeing special education Transition programs, for district students, up to age 22.

**What unique skills or talents do you bring to the Board?** (That's a difficult question) I tend to present as a quiet person, who has an analytical character, and am deeply interested in the welfare of others.

**How long have you been a member of the Board?** I've been a board member for two years

**The BEST thing about COVID is....?** Seven months into shutdown, I'm having a hard time finding positives about COVID. I do appreciate social distance, but I really wish masks were transparent, so we can share our smiles.

**What must people know about UCP Stanislaus that they don't?** I think most people don't know about United Cerebral Palsy, may think the program is restricted to a certain disability, only, and may not understand that UCP provides important life skills, training and community exposure to its clients with all disabilities. My biggest revelation has been just this year: finding out just how dedicated the UCP staff are with clients: reaching out to them during COVID, providing Zoom/online classes. Their care and commitment is incredible.



**What other boards or volunteer roles do you participate in?** Currently, I participate on only one board, UCP.

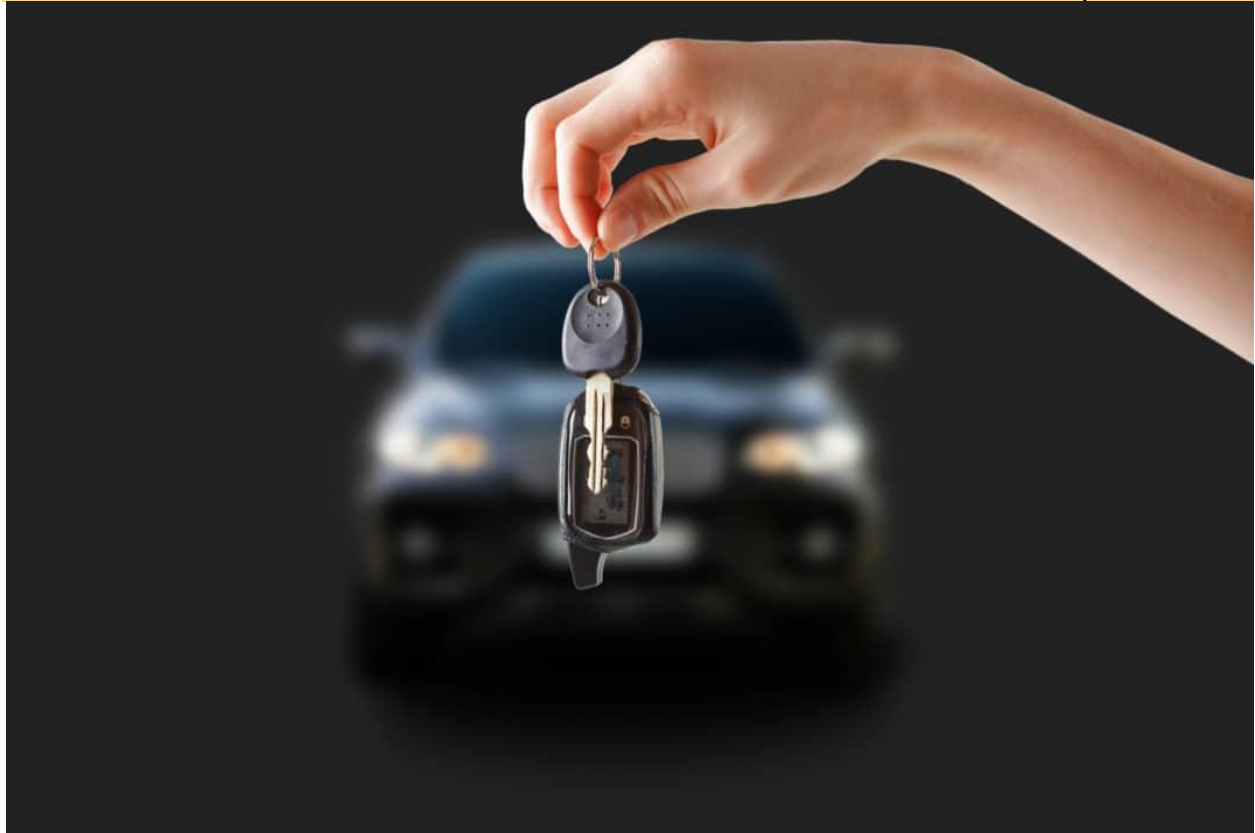
**Your go-to Karaoke song is...?** Anything by Springsteen, who I have seen nearly 100 times. Or Human League's, "Don't You Want Me, Baby"



## Donate that Old Car

### Clear the driveway. Free up the garage space.

Now you can get rid of that unused car or clunker by donating it to UCP. The process is fast and easy! Plus, your donation helps support the programs and services of UCP of Stanislaus County. There is absolutely ***no cost to you and it can be a tax deduction!*** Click the DONATE button and select UCP of Stanislaus as the charity.



<http://www.interactivemarketing.com/donate/>

Video about the program: <https://youtu.be/Wnqlxk2V2U0>

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