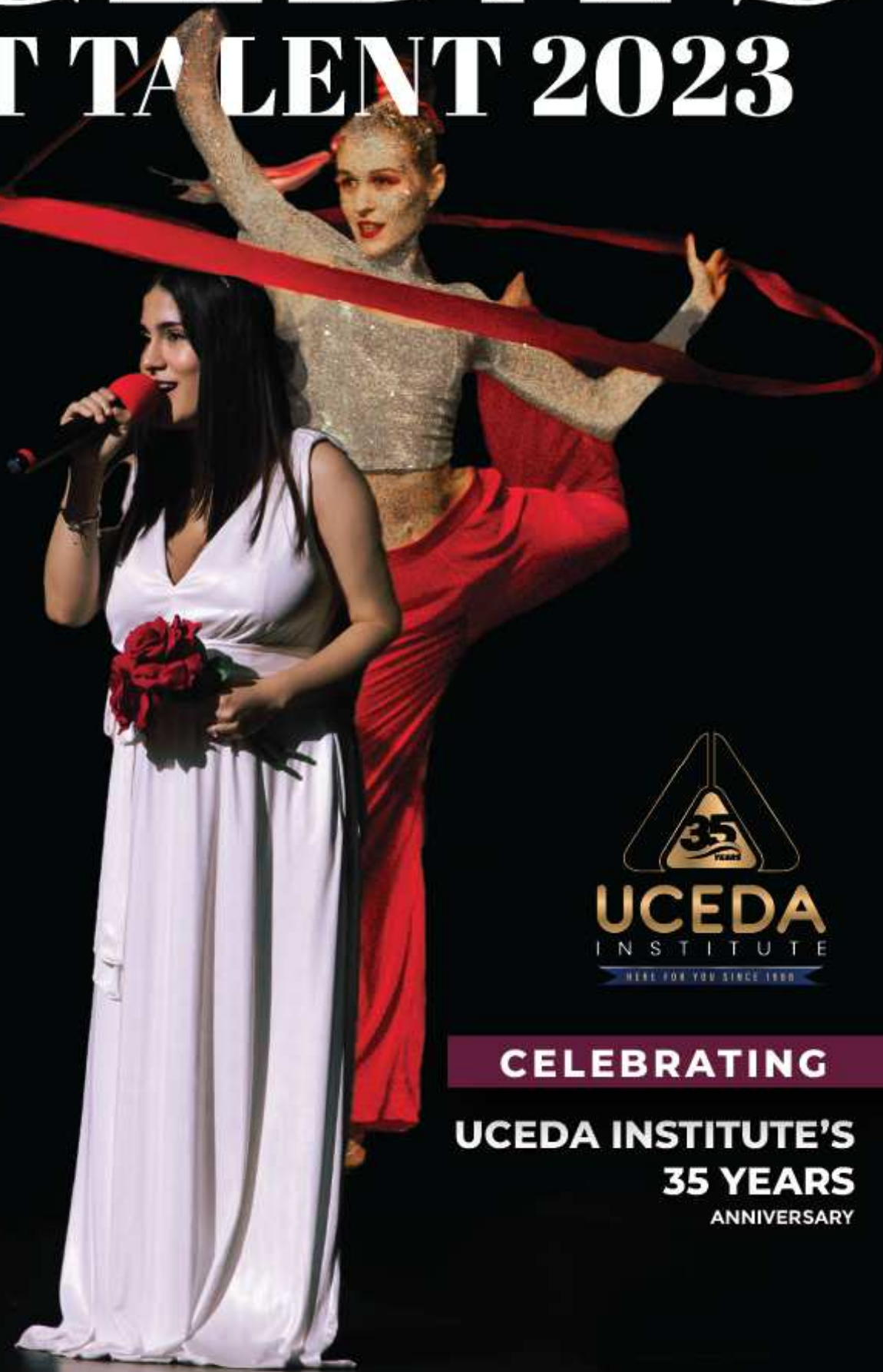


UCEDA'S GOT TALENT 2023



UCEDA
INSTITUTE
HERE FOR YOU SINCE 1988

CELEBRATING
UCEDA INSTITUTE'S
35 YEARS
ANNIVERSARY



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A man in a red and black floral suit is performing on a stage. He is seen from the back, facing a large, seated audience in a hall. The stage is lit, and there is a microphone stand in the foreground. The background shows the audience and some stage equipment.

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MAGAZINE



BY UCEDA INSTITUTE

2023

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO OF UCEDA

Dear friend,

I appreciate you taking a moment to explore this commemorative magazine of our outstanding fourth-annual-artistic-event UCEDA'S GOT TALENT. This year's show was especially significant as it marked a celebration of our 35th anniversary.

The last 35 years have been full of exciting experiences, in which all members of UCEDA, from executive and academic leaders to faculty and student representatives from various nations, have contributed to our mission of facilitating the integration of immigrants into American society.

Our awareness of the richness of our ethnic diversity is what inspired us to create UCEDA'S GOT TALENT. This is a yearly event in which thousands of students submit auditions in singing, dancing, or playing a musical instrument. Experienced experts in these three disciplines are selected to evaluate and choose the finalists and winners of this extraordinary event.

Putting together a show of this magnitude is no easy task. And it would have never been possible without the participation of a team of almost a hundred volunteers, who tirelessly worked for months, organizing, spreading, and maintaining the enthusiasm necessary to make our show a success. This magazine is, and will continue to be, a testament of their creativity, determination, perseverance, and leadership.

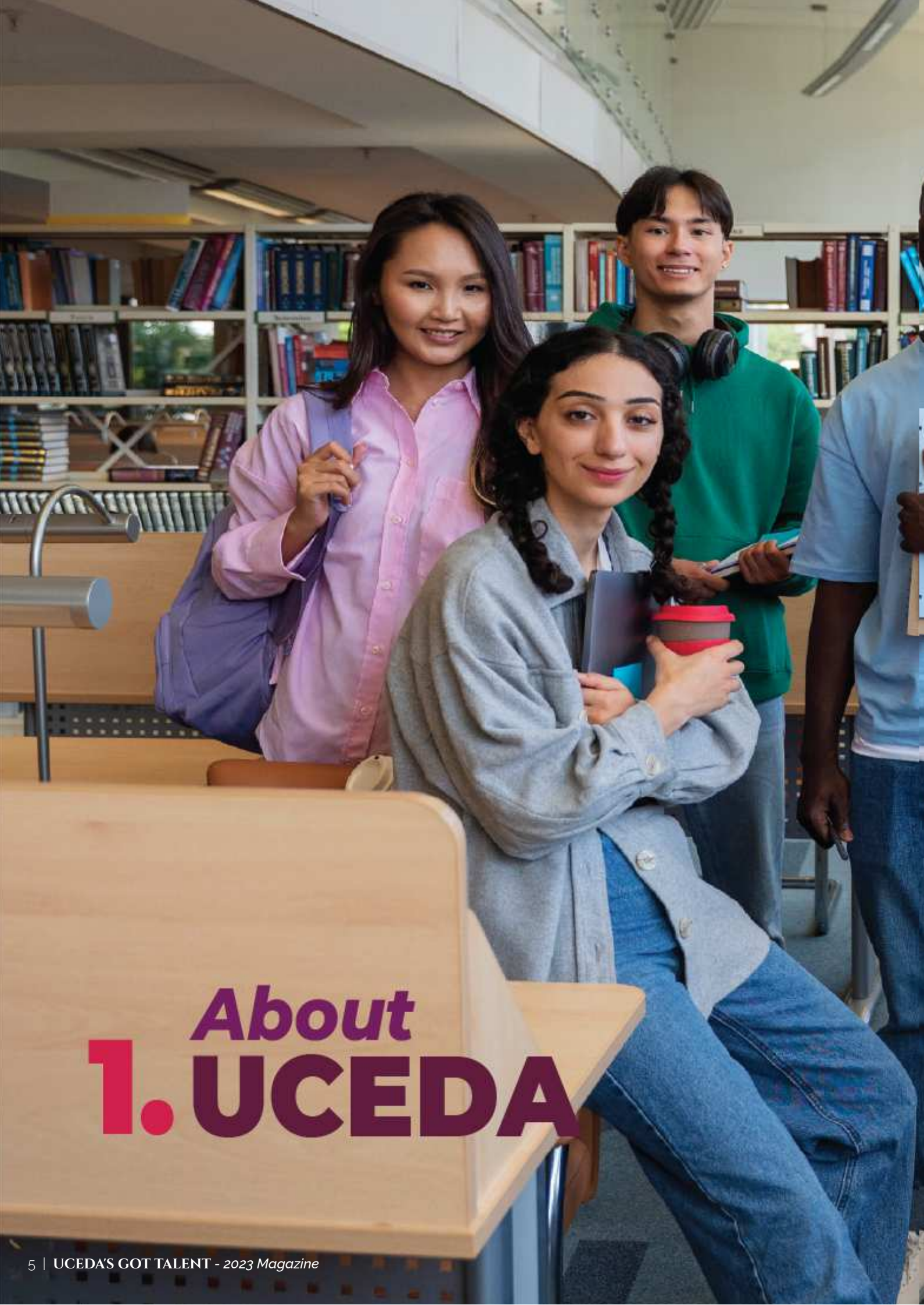
I express my gratitude to everyone who was part of this exciting experience. Furthermore, I encourage you to look forward to our show in 2024, where we aim to, once again, outdo ourselves. For now, I invite you to look through our magazine and enjoy the highlights of UCEDA'S GOT TALENT 2023, where for one night, our students came together with their talents to celebrate the wealth of our diversity.

Happy holidays, my friend!

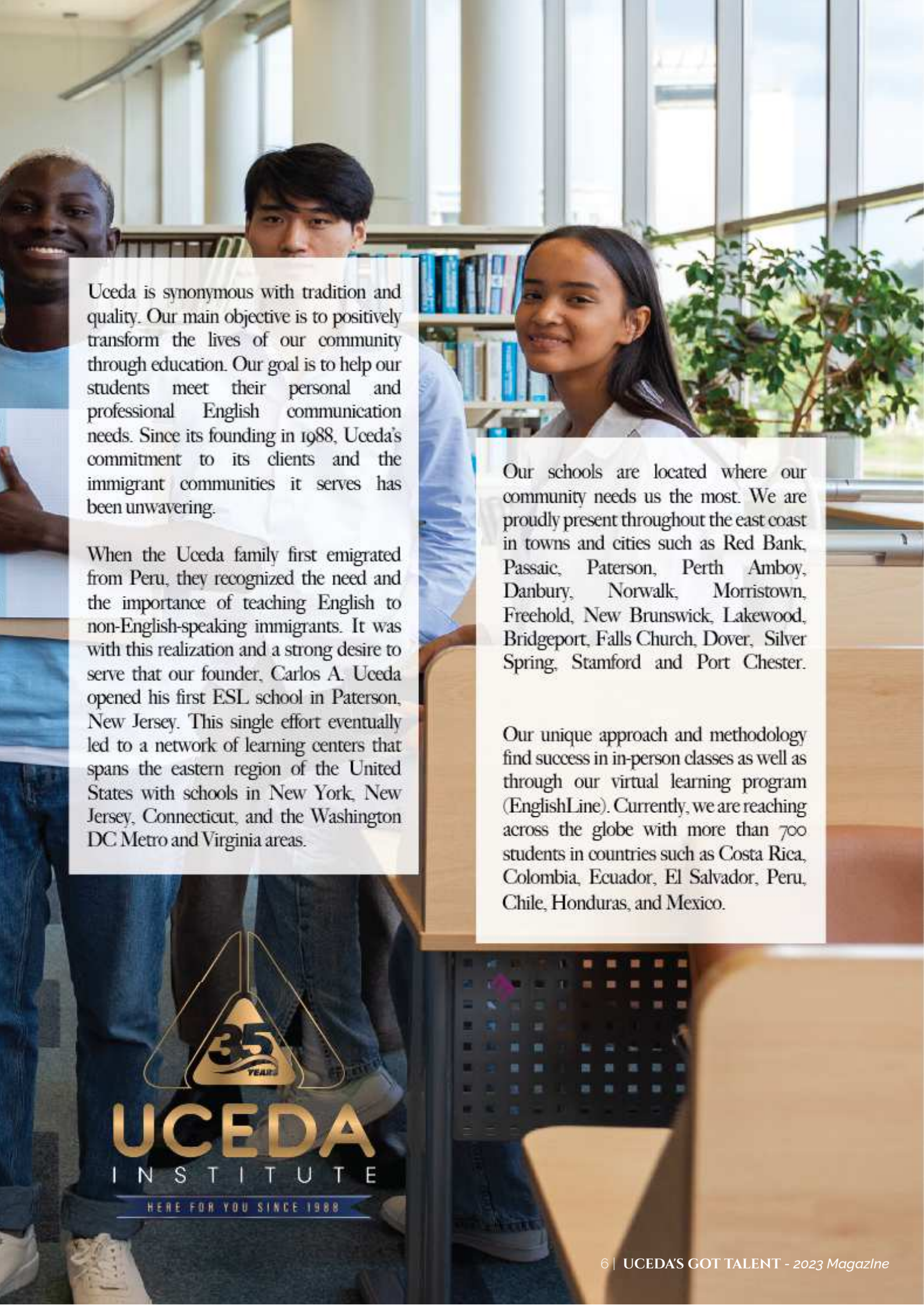
Sincerely,

Carlos A. Uceda
President & CEO





About
1. UCEDA

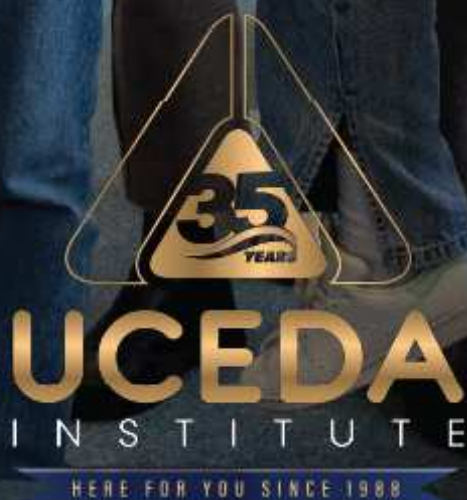
A photograph of three diverse students in a library or classroom setting. On the left, a Black male student is smiling. In the center, a young man with dark hair is looking towards the camera. On the right, a young woman with long dark hair is smiling. They are standing in front of bookshelves filled with books. A large window on the right side of the image shows a bright outdoor scene with a green plant in the foreground.

Uceda is synonymous with tradition and quality. Our main objective is to positively transform the lives of our community through education. Our goal is to help our students meet their personal and professional English communication needs. Since its founding in 1988, Uceda's commitment to its clients and the immigrant communities it serves has been unwavering.

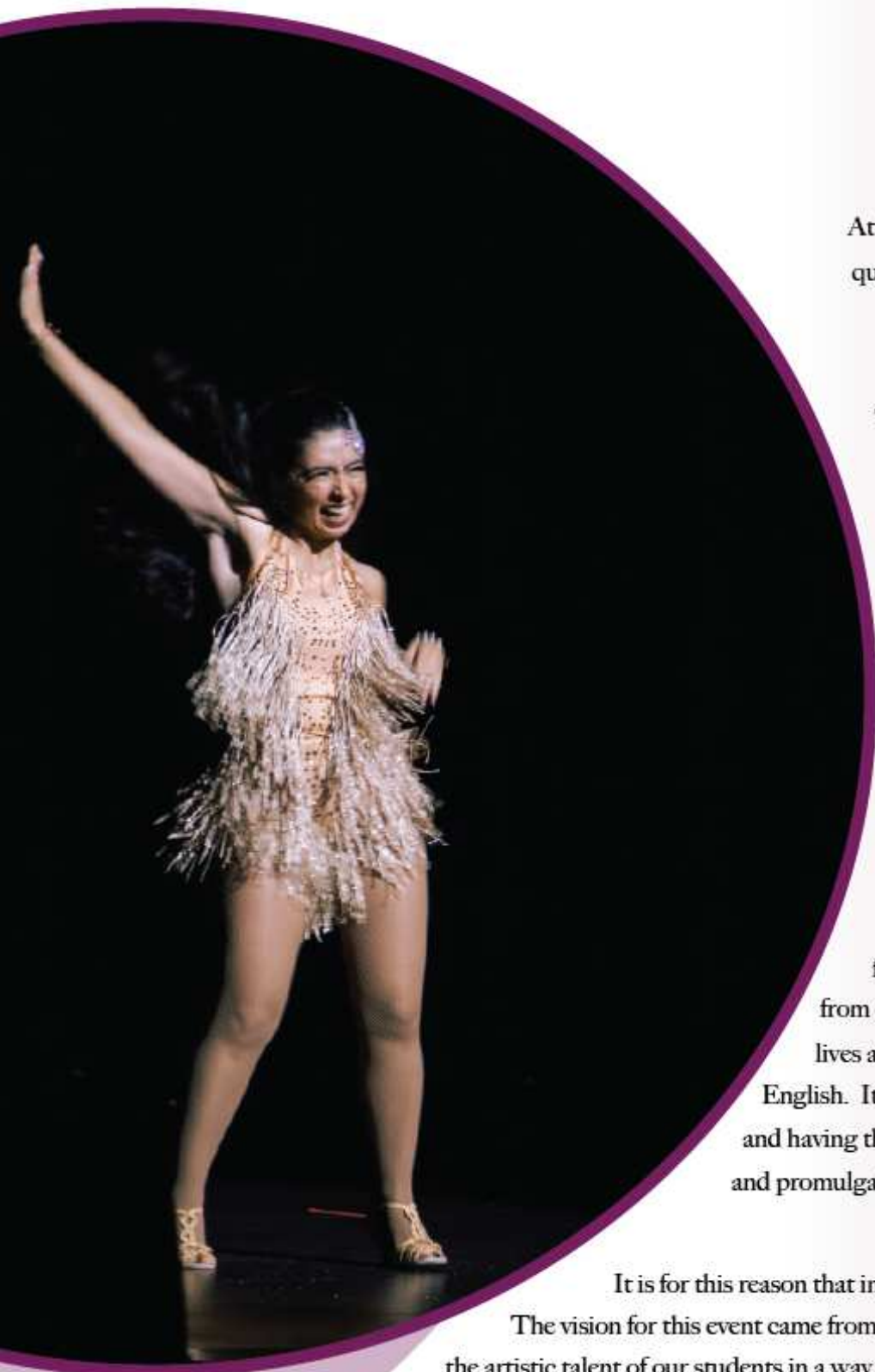
When the Uceda family first emigrated from Peru, they recognized the need and the importance of teaching English to non-English-speaking immigrants. It was with this realization and a strong desire to serve that our founder, Carlos A. Uceda opened his first ESL school in Paterson, New Jersey. This single effort eventually led to a network of learning centers that spans the eastern region of the United States with schools in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and the Washington DC Metro and Virginia areas.

Our schools are located where our community needs us the most. We are proudly present throughout the east coast in towns and cities such as Red Bank, Passaic, Paterson, Perth Amboy, Danbury, Norwalk, Morristown, Freehold, New Brunswick, Lakewood, Bridgeport, Falls Church, Dover, Silver Spring, Stamford and Port Chester.

Our unique approach and methodology find success in in-person classes as well as through our virtual learning program (EnglishLine). Currently, we are reaching across the globe with more than 700 students in countries such as Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, Chile, Honduras, and Mexico.



2. About UCEDA'S GOT TALENT



At Uceda we are synonymous with tradition, quality, education and the transformation of lives through the teaching of English as a second language.

Throughout the last 35 years, our schools have been an integral part of the lives of thousands of non-English-speaking immigrants in the United States.

People who come from all over the world looking for better opportunities and a chance at reaching their dreams.

Thanks to the diversity of nationalities, languages and costumes that our students represent, we have become a hub of cultures from all the continents of the world. At our schools, people from all walks of life get to share and learn from one another; in the process enriching their lives as well as ours. It is not just about learning English. It is about coming together as a community and having the opportunity to value, respect, assimilate and promulgate the wealth of art and culture in our lives

It is for this reason that in 2008 we organized our first talent show. The vision for this event came from a desire to publicly recognize, and honor the artistic talent of our students in a way that would benefit the entire community. Our vision gradually morphed into a cultural event that is today's Uceda's Got Talent.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENT



+ \$5,000 US 
WORTH IN PRIZES

1,200 
ATTENDEES

100 
AUDITIONS



@UCEDAINSTITUTE



@UCEDAONLINE



SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

+2,100
LIVE STREAM VIEWS
ON YOUTUBE

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEST

+46,117
ACCOUNTS

700
ACCOUNTS PER POST

FOR MORE INFORMATION
GO TO WWW.UCEDA.ORG

+5,200
INTERACTIONS

+325
VIEWS PER STORY

BE PART OF THIS GALA IN 2024

3. MEET THE FINALISTS

 **DAVID PARADA**

UCEDA STAMFORD - SINGING CATEGORY



 **BRAYAN QUEZADA**

UCEDA PERTH AMBOY - DANCING CATEGORY



 **SINEM TALAN**

UCEDA DANBURY - SINGING CATEGORY



 **DIANELYS MOLINA**

UCEDA FREEHOLD - SINGING CATEGORY



THE
GOT



STEPHANIE AGUILAR



UCEDA PATERSON - DANCING CATEGORY



JUAN CHACON



UCEDA PASSAIC - SINGING CATEGORY



LISA MPM



UCEDA PATERSON - SINGING CATEGORY



FRANKLYN PEREZ



UCEDA FREEHOLD - SINGING CATEGORY



MARLON LUNA



UCEDA PASSAIC - PLAYING AN INSTRUMENT

NALISTS



DOMENICA MARTINEZ



UCEDA DOVER - SINGING CATEGORY



DARIA NAZAROVA



UCEDA MORRISTOWN - DANCING CATEGORY



BENJAMIN NICCOLAS



UCEDA LAKEWOOD - SINGING CATEGORY



MARIA TERESA ROJAS



UCEDA PORT CHESTER - SINGING CATEGORY

NALISTS



EUSEBIO ROSALES



UCEDA BRIDGEPORT - SINGING CATEGORY



MICHELLE MONSERRAT



UCEDA SILVER SPRING - DANCING CATEGORY



ELIZAVETA STRUKOVA



UCEDA NEW BRUNSWICK - DANCING CATEGORY



ANDRESSA DE OLIVEIRA



UCEDA SILVER SPRING - SINGING CATEGORY

NALISTS



ERICK AVILA

UCEDA RED BANK - SINGING CATEGORY



INGRID GIRALDO

UCEDA PERTH AMBOY - SINGING CATEGORY



KEILY HERCULEZ

UCEDA FALLS CHURCH - SINGING CATEGORY



ISABELLA OSPINA

ENGLISHLINE - SINGING CATEGORY



NALISTS



ZURI SANDOVAL



ENGLISHLINE - DANCING CATEGORY



ALEJANDRA VARGAS



ENGLISHLINE - SINGING CATEGORY



JAVIER POSADA



ENGLISHLINE - SINGING CATEGORY



CARLOS MARIN



ENGLISHLINE - SINGING CATEGORY



KAREN VERGEL



ENGLISHLINE - SINGING CATEGORY

NALISTS



4. MEET THE JUDGES

MELVIN NUÑEZ



Musician, saxophonist and producer from Dominican Republic with extensive experience playing instruments since he was 10 years old. Melvyn has played for professional bands in the highly competitive New York music scene and for some very well-known artists named Romeo Santos, Toño Rosario, Joseph Fonseca and more.

CAROLINA BAEZ

Musical Theater professional and passionate dancer since she was 6 years old. Her career has been developed by studying all forms of dance including Ballet, Jazz, Pointe, Folk, Contemporary and Ballroom. Carolina was a dancer choreographer on a well-known TV program in Paraguay and Chile and she has competed professionally in South America and in the USA.





LINAS KOREIVA

He started dancing at age 6. Among some of his proudest accomplishments is that he was the Youth World Champion in 1997 and Prestigious Blackpool Dance Festival Champion in 1998. Linas was a European cup winner as an amateur. He was a finalist in all major US professional Ballroom competitions.

ALEJANDRO ATAUCUSI

Peruvian guitarist, composer, educator and bandleader of Afro-Peruvian Jazz band "Forbidden Tropics". Alejandro has been the guitarist for the William Paterson University Latin Jazz ensemble for the last 10 years. He has played with well-known Latin Jazz artists such as Jimmy Bosch, Claudio Roditi and others. He has also recently been considered "one of the finest interpreters of the Hatun Charango" by El Peruano newspaper.



NAOMI NOTO

Naomi Noto is a soulful Rock and Roller who was classically trained in piano and trombone, and is a self-taught drummer and percussionist on the rise. Her years of experience come from performing in musical productions as a child, to headlining in rock cover bands for the past two decades.

5. OUR FRIENDS



SAKANA
JAPANESE CUISINE



EasySEOResults
Search Engine Experts



F ILLUSION
Engraved



6. We Celebrate **35 Years of Success and Commitment** to English Teaching

It is with great pleasure and pride that we commemorate the 35th Anniversary of UCEDA. This institution has significantly impacted English language education in the United States

My inspiration for founding UCEDA comes from my father's passion for education. When my father immigrated to the United States, he did so to join his children and

grandchildren, who were already residing in this country. When he first came here, he was quick to notice the frustration of many immigrants trying to master the English language. It was then that he came to our family with the idea of opening a school specialized in teaching English to immigrants. Thus, in 1988, we established our first school. It was a dream that, once crystallized, has experienced constant growth

UCEDA's most significant achievement lies in developing a methodology that allows people to learn English very effectively, providing them with the necessary resources to learn the language and fully develop all their communication skills. This methodology has been vital to earning the reputation we have today. Additionally, I highlight the training and education of a committed team, both academic and administrative, who have contributed to the success of our institution. As the leader of UCEDA, my focus has been the pursuit of academic excellence and service, values that always guide our decisions and actions. We seek to fulfill what we promise, transmit hope to our students, and encourage excellence in the development of their skills.

In a market as competitive as the United States, we are characterized by specialization and dedication. Beyond our classrooms, we create a community where each student is essential. We provide them not only with education, but also moral support. We help them not only achieve their linguistic goals,

but also adapt to their new life in the United States. We do this by promoting various activities that strengthen their identity while helping them integrate into American society. Our teaching is based on interpreting American culture in order to give students a well-rounded experience

Looking ahead to the future, we embrace the use of technology. We embrace it as our tool without compromising the quality of our teaching. Virtualization does not limit us.

It expands our capabilities of reaching more students, and offer a constantly evolving educational experience.

Recognizing the significant investment that education entails, we periodically award scholarships and actively engage with the communities we serve. We form alliances with organizations that share our goals of strengthening and integrating immigrants to the US.

As we continue to grow we look forward to opening in new states and enhance our teaching methods with specialized programs to meet the specific needs of various industries.

For those considering studying at UCEDA, I guarantee that we will be your unconditional allies in your quest for English proficiency, and cultural immersion in the United States



Your success depends on your commitment & determination. And at Uceda, you will find solid support to achieve your goals. Welcome to Uceda!

Celebrating **35 Years Of Excellence**



UCEDA

HERE FOR YOU SINCE 1988

05/12/1988
UCEDA ENGLISH
INSTITUTE
Established

1988

03/30/1992
UCEDA Passaic/NJ
Grand Opening

First UCEDA
ESL Beginners
booklet

1992

06/01/1996
UCEDA Perth Amboy/NJ
Grand Opening

1996

08/06/1998
UCEDA Dover/NJ
Grand Opening

1998

1989

07/01/1989
UCEDA Paterson/NJ
Grand Opening

1993

04/21/1993
UCEDA ENGLISH
INSTITUTE becomes
UCEDA INSTITUTE

1997

11/01/1997
UCEDA INTERNATIONAL
is born

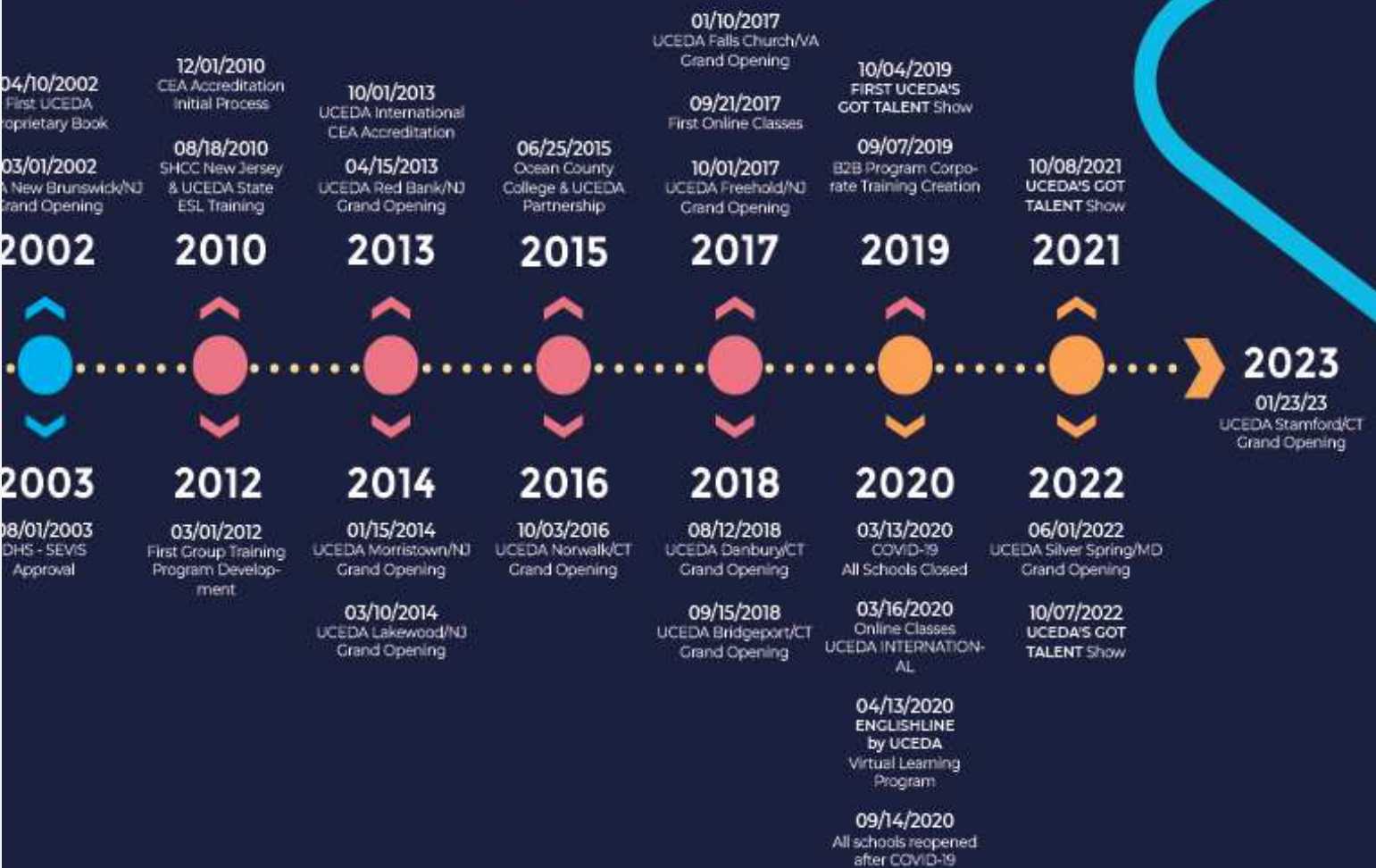
2000

04/01/2000
UCEDA Port Chester/NY
Grand Opening

INS - International
Students Approval

Uce

ellence In English Education



UCEDA 35 Years



RUSSIA

DARIA NAZAROVA

FIRST PLACE WINNER - DANCE CATEGORY

UCEDA INSTITUTE OF MORRISTOWN

THE DANCE OF DREAMS

In the world of dance, there are few moments in which a dancer is able to captivate the attention of an audience, making them feel emotion and joy. Daria Nazarova achieved just this, the evening of October 6th at Uceda's Got Talent 2023. Her performance drew a great ovation from the audience as she took first place in the dance category.

Born November 10th, 1997, in Moscow, Russia, Daria's artistic journey has taken her from the cultural heart of Moscow to New Jersey, where she has been learning English at Uceda Institute since July 2023. Daria's love for dance began with rhythmic gymnastics, a discipline she practiced from the age of five until she turned seventeen, earning through her dedication and talent the highest title in rhythmic gymnastics:



“MASTER OF THE SPORT”



“MY JOB AS A DANCER IS TO HELP PEOPLE FIND THEIR OWN CATHARSIS THROUGH MY PERFORMANCE”

However, at some point, Daria decided to move away from rhythmic gymnastics and turn to dance. It was an experience that she found different, not only in movements, but in the expression of emotions as well. Nevertheless, it all felt familiar to her. "I'm still learning, as dancing is very different from what I used to do. It feels very new to my body, but I love it! I'm planning to take dance lessons in New York!", explains Daria. Her artistic aspirations, however, extend beyond dancing; she is also interested in attending acting school in the future.

"I love how I can express my feelings and tell a story without saying a word, and how my art can make people feel something. When I dance, I live on the stage, I get lost in the music. It's no longer physical, it's about what's inside... If I achieve that, then I've done my job perfectly," she said.

Daria draws her inspiration from the world-renowned ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov and Courtney Schwarts. "Baryshnikov is pure genius. He performs with passion and devotion. It's impossible to describe his work", expresses Daria. On the contemporary side of dance, Courtney Schwarts' artistry, gymnastics, and acrobatics, capture Daria's admiration. But when it comes to personal inspiration, Daria attributes her artistic journey to her mother: "I would say that it all started with my mom. She's the one who first took me to the gym of rhythmic gymnastics. It all started there. I am grateful for that every single day! It was hard to be a gymnast, but it opened many doors, and it gave me the future. Thank you, mom! And also, thanks to my sister who is my biggest fan."



Daria lives in East Hanover, New Jersey, where looking for a school to study English, she found Uceda Institute in nearby Morristown. "I like everyone at school! I like my teachers who are very professional and nice. They are always ready to help. The managers are the best! They are very helpful and it's nice to talk with them. They are super-friendly. I will never forget the support I got from them! And, of course, I like my friends and classmates," says Daria.

Entering Uceda's Got Talent was a challenge that Daria took on with great commitment and intensive training, practicing three to four days a week perfecting her performance, and ensuring that she was at the peak of her form for the big event.

At the grand finale, Daria found the support of her classmates crucial to her confidence, and her winning first place. Her performance made an impact on the audience that could be seen in her own expressions of joy and appreciation. As for the grand prize of \$1,000 - Daria has still yet to decide how to spend it.

Daria describes herself as a persevering person, capable of achieving whatever she sets her mind to. "Belief in one's dreams and in oneself is paramount. Without that belief, progress remains stagnant." With these words, she encourages all Uceda students with artistic talents to seize opportunities like this, and share their talents with the world. She emphasizes that the best time to start is now, and that Uceda's Got Talent is an ideal platform for budding artists to take that first step.

DOMENICA MARTINEZ

FIRST PLACE WINNER - SINGING CATEGORY

UCEDA INSTITUTE OF DOVER

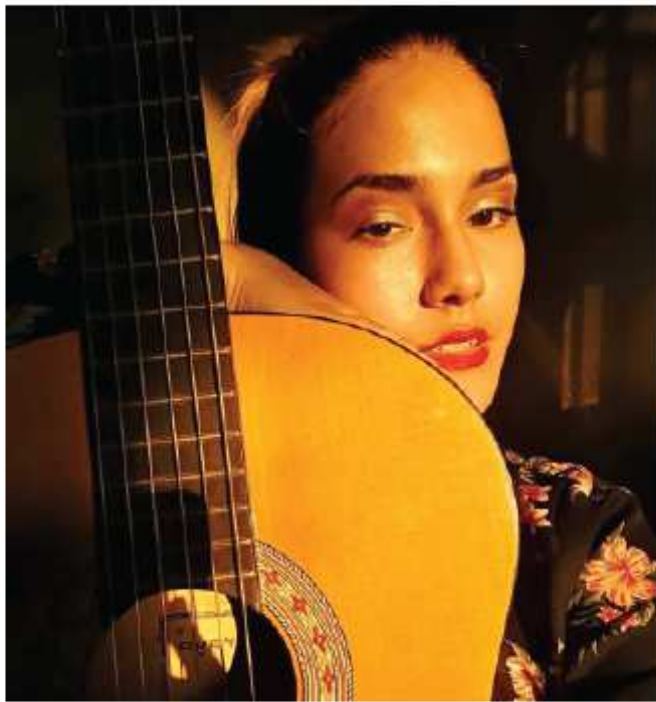


**“MUSIC IS
A REASON
TO LIVE”**



ECUADOR

- DOMENICA MARTINEZ



In the world of music, there are voices that transcend the ordinary and capture the essence of emotion. Doménica Carolina Martínez Moreira, born September 11, 2003, in Huaquillas, Ecuador, possesses one of those voices. Sporting a long white dress that made her shine on stage and with her wonderful vocal skills, she captivated the jury and the audience at Uceda's Got Talent 2023, where she won first place performing in English the song "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen.

Doménica's journey in the world of music began in her hometown at the age of 7 when her parents enrolled her in singing classes. She may have been the youngest in her class, but it was then and there that she first discovered her love for singing and her passion for everything related to music. It was in her church choir that she learned the nuances of performance and developed her stage presence. She expresses herself through music in ways that words alone cannot convey.



For me, music is a reason to live, music is my deepest and most personal form of connection. I love to sing. I even write my own songs. I have always wanted to release my own album. And I have recorded in a studio twice, but I have not been able to release anything due to lack of resources. However, I realize that nowadays, social media is very useful in helping artists get discovered and recognized. So, I have uploaded some videos and cover songs to my social media accounts.

While many artists find inspiration in legendary figures, Doménica's muse is deeply personal. "My parents, my siblings, my unborn child, and my husband are my inspiration. My husband who is my best friend and my support. But above all - God. He, who has given me this talent, and way of perceiving music. He, who has brought me here, because without him, I am nothing. Singing is not just my pastime; it's my vocation." Doménica participated in Uceda's Got Talent while seven months pregnant, and hopes to meet her son Jacob, soon. She hopes to teach him everything she knows about music, and help him nurture his.

Beyond her love for music, Doménica has a multifaceted personality. She enjoys creating content for social media, immerses herself in reading books on psychology and finance, and finds satisfaction in teaching. In Ecuador, she taught singing to children and adults, leaving a lasting impression on her students.

"I AM A PERSON WITH A LOT OF ART SPEAKING INSIDE OF HER"



“ UGT IS A PLATFORM THAT NOT ONLY FOSTERS GROWTH, BUT ALSO CONNECTS PEOPLE WITH GENEROUS & SUPPORTIVE HEARTS WHO SHARE A PASSION FOR ART ”

Doménica considers herself a reserved person with a deep artistic soul. Her ambition and perfectionism drive her to seek excellence in everything she does. Motivated by her passion for music, she decided to participate in the fourth annual Uceda's Got Talent, recognizing this opportunity as a platform to showcase her talent and meet people who share her dedication to the arts.

She, however, did not anticipate her victory in the competition. "When I saw that they started giving out the prizes for the fourth place, I said to myself: "okay, I don't think I won anything". But I didn't care because I considered that there had been better voices than mine." Doménica was surprised when she realized she had won. Her humble reaction and surprise upon winning first prize clearly demonstrate that talent and hard work can sometimes lead to the most unexpected victories.

To students and alumni of Uceda who harbor talents in singing, dancing, or playing musical instruments, but have not yet ventured to participate, Doménica sends this message: "This is an opportunity to showcase the talent that resides in each of you. It is a unique experience that everyone should have the opportunity to live."

BENJAMIN

2ND PLACE WINNER
SINGING CATEGORY

NICOLAS

UCEDA INSTITUTE OF LAKEWOOD



AN INNATE MUSICAL TALENT



MEXICO



However, he is still learning. He recognizes that he can still improve his vocal abilities, and he knows that constant practice is essential to developing his voice.

For Benjamin, music is very important. It is something that has sustained him through dark and difficult moments. It is a refuge that has offered him shelter and release from times of loneliness and depression

He loves to sing. His passion for the song is evident in his delivery, and emotional investment in his performance. Clearly, Benjamin would love to pursue a career in music. What performer doesn't yearn to be discovered? "If someone ever came along and offered me the chance to record an album, "I would definitely jump at the opportunity," he says.

HE CONSTANTLY PRACTICES AT HOME, PAYING ATTENTION TO HIS VOICE AND LEARNING ON HIS OWN.

Benjamin Nicolas started singing in elementary school at around six or seven years old. He found that he liked romantic ballads and mariachi songs, and he has been singing ever since. On October 6, dressed in complete mariachi regalia, Benjamin took to the stage at Uceda's Got Talent, winning 2nd place with Vicentes Fernandez' "La Ley del Monte".

Benjamin has never taken singing lessons, but his passion and love for singing more than made up for his lack of musical training. Although he plays guitar a little, he enjoys singing the most. He constantly practices at home, paying attention to his voice and learning on his own. When he was ten, he joined his church choir, where he learned to use his voice.

An initiated listener of Mexican music can easily recognize the influence that legendary Mexican singers have had on Benjamin. One could say that he learned to sing from such giants as Vicente Fernández, José Alfredo Jiménez, Marco Antonio Solís and Joan Sebastian.



BENJAMIN DREAMS OF ONE DAY BECOMING A FAMOUS ARTIST, & ESTABLISHING A FOUNDATION TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

"I would give it my all." Thanks to Uceda's Got Talent, Benjamin got the opportunity to experience life on the spotlight, singing in front of a packed audience.

In addition to his love for music, Benjamin is an avid enthusiast of Mexican and Oaxacan culture. He is interested in gastronomy, dance, and culture in general. He also participates in charitable activities, helping the disabled, and those with low economic resources. Benjamin considers himself a simple, humble, and friendly person. He believes in equality for all and values people

One of the hardest things he has ever had to endure was to leave his family in order to come to live in the United States. But facing loneliness and difficulties has taught him some valuable lessons, things that have motivated him to set his sights on the future. Benjamin dreams of one day becoming a famous artist, and establishing a foundation to help people with disabilities.

Of his performance at Uceda's Got Talent, he says, "I chose 'La Ley del Monte' because I love it, and it's a widely recognized song. It is well-known by Mexicans and other Latin Americans." It is a great song about love. Besides, Vicente Fernandez was a great singer." The audience and the judges couldn't agree more, awarding him 2nd place and a cash prize of \$750. Benjamin plans to use some of the money for tuition, and to help someone in need.

Benjamin knows that, just like him, there are other talented students at Uceda Institute. He would like to encourage them to take a chance, overcome their fears and self-doubts, and not worry about what others might think. He thanks Uceda Institute for creating opportunities for talented young people to express themselves artistically.



“I WANT TO USE SOME OF THIS MONEY TO HELP A HOMELESS PERSON. MAYBE GET HIM SOME FOOD. IT'S WHAT'S IN MY HEART. IT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO...HELP SOMEONE.”

MICHELLE PEÑA

3RD PLACE WINNER - DANCING CATEGORY

UCEDA INSTITUTE OF SILVER SPRING



MEXICO

**“A YOUNG
WOMAN FULL OF
TALENTS, DREAMS
& DETERMINATION”**

In a world full of diverse opportunities and challenges, talent and passion are essential to forge a path to success. Michelle Monserrat Peña Martínez, born in Maryland, United States, but with roots in Mexico, is a clear example of perseverance and determination. Proudly representing Mexican folklore, she won third Place in Uceda's Got Talent 2023. Her life is a narrative that combines the search for knowledge, independence, and a passion that has led her to explore multiple facets of her life.

A little over a year ago, Michelle was living in Mexico before coming back to the United States. In Mexico, she finished high school and graduated as a Community Development Technician. Now she studies English at Uceda in Silver Springs, Maryland, where she lives on her own. "My main motivation for learning English is that I want to be able to communicate with people of different nationalities," she says. "My dream is to become a flight attendant." But in order to become a flight attendant, she will need to acquire certain specific competencies, in addition to being able to communicate in English. Michelle, however, seems unfazed by these challenges and feels confident of reaching her goal. She wants to travel the world, meet people from other cultures, try new foods and listen to new music.



In addition to dance, Michelle enjoys exploring other interests and activities. She also enjoys cooking and making cocktails. "When I lived in Mexico, I started a small business selling sushi and cocktails. I like to learn new things and I enjoy learning a little about everything," says Michelle. She is also interested in languages, and she likes to learn new words in different languages.

Currently, she works at a Korean restaurant. It is an experience that she feels has enriched her life and given her a glimpse of the cultural world that is waiting for her out there.

Michelle loves to dance. Although she only dances occasionally, dance remains an essential part of her life. In Mexico, she attended an academy of folkloric dance. It was there that she acquired the skills and experience that she used to compete in Uceda's Got Talent.



For her, Mexican folkloric dance has a purpose and a meaning. Beyond being an artistic expression, folkloric dance is a way of sharing her culture with the world. Her dance is a window to the beauty of Mexico, and a way of expressing her cultural identity.



“EVERYTIME I GO ON STAGE, I FEEL PROUD OF BEING MEXICAN AND I’M EXCITED TO SHOW THE BEAUTY OF MY COUNTRY THROUGH OUR DANCE.”

Michelle describes herself as intelligent, loving, independent, and hard-working. One of the hardest lessons she has had to learn is the importance of learning to be independent. "Life often presents us with situations where we have to take care of ourselves."

The opportunity to participate in Uceda's Got Talent was a challenge Michelle was eager to embrace. Although she had never competed on stage, her love for folkloric dance led her to take the plunge. Her preparation for her audition wasn't overly extensive, but she practiced enough to feel confident on stage.

The night of the finals, she faced the audience and the judges with a smile. During her performance, she remembers gazing at the judges, and happily noticing that they were smiling and enjoying her performance. The reaction from the audience clearly reflecting her ability to communicate her passion and her culture through her dance.

Michelle would like to encourage other Uceda students to participate, and not let fear or embarrassment stop them. "Participating in competitions like Uceda's Got Talent can provide valuable experiences and it's a great opportunity to share your talents with the world..." she says. Michelle is saving her \$500 prize for when she goes back to Mexico where she plans to spend it with her family.



AUTHENTICITY & COURAGE ARE THE KEY TO ACHIEVING YOUR DREAMS

Michelle Peña is a young example of determination, courage, and the constant journey to achieve one's goals. Her story is a testament to her ability to face challenges, embrace new opportunities, and pursue her dreams. With dance in her heart and the promise of an exciting future speaking English, Michelle reminds us of the importance of keeping our different cultures alive and sharing our talents with the world. Her story should inspire us to embrace our passions and pursue a future full of adventures and achievements.



COLOMBIA



ERICK

4TH PLACE WINNER
SINGING CATEGORY

UCEDA INSTITUTE OF RED BANK

AVILA

THE VOICE OF A RISING STAR



Living in Hillside, New Jersey, 27-year-old Erik Avila has come a long way from playing music on the streets of Bogota, Colombia. At the age of eight, Erik received his first music lesson from an uncle who taught him his first chords on the guitar. And he's been playing ever since. It was an event that would set the course for his life. Erik would eventually go on to learn the piano, the base, the ukulele, and various percussion instruments.

In school, Erik was an athlete. He was a gymnast and a cheerleader. He excelled in all sorts of sports proving great prowess in the field. However, a torn-Achilles-tendon injury that took five years to heal, forced him to reevaluate his interest in athletics. The injury and the long ordeal of recovery, taught him valuable lessons about adversity and not taking the simple things in life for granted. Erik says that from that experience he learned to persevere and fight for his dreams. In spite of his injury, he was able to attain a degree in Physical Culture, Recreation, and Sports.

Fortunately for Erik, he had music to back him up. Not only was he a natural athlete, he was also a gifted and talented musician. With his voice and his ability to play guitar, he chose music as his way of life. Erik has worked hard developing his sound, perfecting his playing, and focusing all his energy and strength in becoming a professional musician.



**MUSIC IS HIS
MEANS OF HEALING
AND EXPRESSING
HIMSELF IN AN
OFTEN COMPLEX
WORLD.**

His dedication to his music has allowed him the opportunity to play on stage as an opening act for well-known artists in Colombia such as Yeison Jiménez and Jessi Uribe, and abroad, with Boney M on a stage for more than 5 thousand people; a feat that not too many performers can talk about. For Erik, music is not just a way of life. It is a therapeutic necessity. Music is his means of healing and expressing himself in an often complex and challenging world. At the same time Erik understands the power of music to bring people together, and he finds great satisfaction in being part of that.

Erik's family has been a great source of support and inspiration for him. Both, his mother and father, have been tremendously encouraging of his music career. Artistically, however, Erik has been greatly influenced and inspired by Latin singer, Luis Miguel, whose impact on Latin music is undeniable. And whose fame and success Erik, himself, would like to attain.

Participating in Uceda's Got Talent was an exciting experience for Erik. Although he is a seasoned professional with many years of performing experience, this competition offered a different kind of opportunity. It was a stage on which he could measure his talent in front of a more eclectic audience in the United States.



HE DREAMS OF REACHING PEOPLE WITH HIS MUSICA FROM EVERY CULTURE AND FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD.

Erik envisions a future where he is globally recognized. It's a big dream for a kid from the streets of Colombia. But Erik is counting on his tenacity and dedication to make it all come true.

His preparation for the audition and the final show was rigorous. Erik chose a song that stood out for its complexity on the guitar and in the vocals. So, he practiced tirelessly, eventually winning 4th place with Juane's "A Dios le Pido" garnering a spectacular reaction from the audience.

Of the performance, Erik says that he enjoyed every bit of it. The appreciative reception from the audience was all he needed to make of the experience an unforgettable one. He plans to use the prize money to take his girlfriend on a trip.

Erik Ávila is a multifaceted artist who has overcome challenges and learned valuable lessons on his path to success. His love for music and his desire to be a globally recognized artist is driven by unwavering determination. His participation in Uceda's Got Talent was just one more step in his journey to fame. With his music, Erik connects with people from around the world, reminding us of the universal power of music to unite us.

Erik would like to encourage other Uceda students with musical abilities to get involved and participate. He advises them to rise to the challenge, measure their talent, and share it with the world. Erik is an example of how dedication and passion can lead an artist to achieve success on the international stage.

COLOMBIA

**“MUSIC IS
THE
COLOR
OF LIFE”**

ALEJANDRA VARGAS

1ST PLACE - VIRTUAL CATEGORY
ENGLISHLINE

Alejandra Vargas' life is like music itself. It is full of dreams, melodies, rhythms, and emotions of every kind. At eight years old Alejandra saw the movie "High School Musical," and it was then that she knew she wanted to be a singer. "I remember I wanted to be like them," she recalls. "I wanted to be in a musical. That is how my musical training began".

When she turned fifteen, she received her first formal singing lesson. Going to the Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia, marked the beginning of her professional training.

Alejandra has always wanted to sing. "It's been my dream since I was a little girl. I like singing and acting. I have always been interested in the performing arts."

For Alejandra, music is more than just pleasant, melodic sounds. For her, it is the color of life, and a great force capable of providing comfort and motivation. "Music has been my lifesaver," she says. "It helps me deal with the frustrations of life; it helps me heal the wounds that I, myself, or others have caused me."



MUSIC HAS BEEN MY LIFESAVER



“NEVER LOSE FAITH, TAKE A CHANCE AND FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS”

Alejandra wishes she could pursue acting in tandem with a music career. She describes herself as a laid-back person, confident in what she wants out of life and focused on her goals. However, she is ready to admit that she needs to work more on being straightforward in her communication and continue to develop her singing voice.

She names Justin Bieber as an early influence, but she recognizes Christina Aguilera as a more influential artist. Nevertheless, for Alejandra, her family has always been her primary source of inspiration. It is them who have always been there for her.

Despite having participated in previous competitions, Alejandra found Uceda's Got Talent emotionally challenging. She had her reservations, but participated anyway, surprising herself when she won first place in the virtual competition. Alejandra plans to invest the prize money in vocal training, and the release of an upcoming single.

Alejandra acknowledges that talent alone is not enough. She understands the importance of self-discipline. "Discipline is everything," she says. And it's that awareness that keeps her seriously focused on her musical career.

She plans to release three singles of cover songs in the near future. She hopes to, someday, start a family, invest wisely, and continue to sing without placing excessive expectations on recognition or fame.

Alejandra sees herself as a calm, stable woman with a dream fulfilled, singing but living life like a regular person. Her message to other students is clear: never lose faith, take a chance, and follow your dreams; always take care of yourself and love those around you. Additionally, she encourages them to cultivate their talents, learn, perform, and grow as artists. With determination and love for music, Alejandra Vargas continues her journey in the world of melodies, hoping to achieve her dreams but always enjoying the present.



JAVIER POSADA

2ND PLACE - VIRTUAL CATEGORY
ENGLISHLINE

The power of music transcends borders and language barriers, and Javier Posada is a testament to this. Javier, an online student of UCEDA's EnglishLine program, is the talented 35-year-old singer and father of one from Ibagué, Tolima in Colombia, who won 2nd place in the virtual category of Uceda's Got Talent 2023.

Looking to improve his personal and professional life, Javier joined Uceda's Institute virtual program about a year ago in order to study English as a second language.

Javier is a dedicated student. He works in administration, but he's been singing since he was a young boy. "I used to enjoy singing at home with my sisters. We would come up with our own songs or change the lyrics of popular songs. I remember those as some of the best moments we spent as a family," he recalls. His singing led him to perform at special events in church, and at school where he once won first place.

Back in 2019, Javier and a friend started a band with the idea of turning 80's ballads into rock songs. And that's how their band, "Oficina O", was

born. They used this enterprise, however, not only to share their love for music, but to support social causes such as food collection for the homeless, and animal rights foundations.

Apart from singing as a hobby, Javier has also worked hosting national and local events as an MC, and radio announcer with well-known artists. "But in spite of my love for music, I am not likely to want to pursue a career in it. I have found my vocation in my current profession of administration", he explains.

“

**I SING BECAUSE IT
BRIGHTENS MY LIFE.**

BRIGHTENS MY LIFE.

”

Nevertheless, music holds a special place in Javier's heart. For him, music is much more than a combination of sounds; it is an intrinsic part of life itself. "Music is always present in our lives, accompanying us all through everything; it talks to us, it teaches us. It signifies life itself!", he asserts.

A LIFE FULL OF *MUSIC* & *OVERCOMING* CHALLENGES

Javier's musical influences are many and wide-ranging. He is quick to name Latin and Spanish rockers Gustavo Cerati and Enrique Bunbury. He also mentions British and American singers like Freddy Mercury, Steven Tyler, and Michael Jackson, along with Armando Manzanero and Alci Acosta in the bolero genre. Each of these performers, no doubt, helping him craft his sound and understanding of music.

He says that he finds the richness of life experiences a source of endless inspiration. However, his motivation mainly comes from his family, his mother and his sisters, but above all, he finds his inspiration in his son Juan Manuel. Javier describes himself as a sensitive and sympathetic person, yet direct and precise in his communication. Looking to the future, Javier harbors a plethora of dreams and goals, such as traveling to different countries with his 10-year-old son, opening a restaurant, having a farm with animals and such, and most importantly, seeing his son grow up happy.



Participating in Uceda's Got Talent was a challenging experience for Javier. He was not comfortable performing on video via the internet. He admits feeling intimidated, but at the same time motivated to face his fear of singing online. So, despite his uncertainty, Javier decided to step out of his comfort zone and performed "La Llorona" to the surprise and delight of everyone.

In preparation for his performance, Javier took to singing everywhere; from the bathroom to the bus stop. He practiced and practiced and practiced, with the effort finally paying off when the judges awarded him second place in the virtual category. It was a victory that enabled him to take his family on a trip to Mexico with the prize money. It was an experience that he will treasure for a long time to come.



Javier would like to encourage other students at UCEDA to participate with their singing, their dancing or whatever musical talents they possess. "The satisfaction you get is unique, and you will be proud of your work and of yourselves regardless of whether you win or not, just having participated and done what other dare not do, will be a reward in itself," he concludes.

“ SHYNESS ONLY LIMITS YOUR ABILITIES. BUT YOUR TALENT CAN BRIGHTEN LIFE, & PLESANTLY SURPRISE OTHERS. ”

MORE WINNERS OF THE NIGHT

INGRID GIRALDO



MOST POPULAR ON SOCIAL MEDIA
WITH 609 LIKES ON FACEBOOK



UCEDA PERTH AMBOY



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THE LOUDEST TEAM OVATION

GALLERY



TA

PERY



GALLERY



UGT 2023

GALLERY



Uceda 35 Years



GALLERY

9.

Uceda Institute LOCATIONS

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10.

Our PROGRAMS



EnglishLine - Online English Program:

EnglishLine is the UCEDA INSTITUTE brand for virtual English learning. With the experience gained over the years, we have designed a unique program of its kind, ideal to satisfy the needs and interests of those who want to speak English effectively.

EnglishLine is a program produced in the United States, now available in Latin America and around the world.

E.S.L. (English as a Second Language):

We are specialists in teaching English since 1988. Our pragmatic methodology allows us to teach the language in a way that it becomes a tool to be used in the industries and businesses that move the world economy.

ESP (English for Specific Purposes)

Is a series of short term courses designed for individuals who wish to improve their English in particular areas. These courses are accompanied by UCEDA proprietary textbooks dealing with topics such as:

- Manufacturing
- Technology
- Hospitality
- Food Services
- Entrepreneurship
- Health Services

TOEFL Preparation

During our TOEFL Prep course, students study and practice to take the TOEFL iBT test and complete its different sections.

This course exposes students to the type of content-rich material, questions and tasks on the TOEFL. High-interest listening selections help students to understand a wide variety of styles and topics. You will sharpen critical reading skills such as categorizing, summarizing and analyzing through high-interest academic reading selections. Structured writing activities prepare students for the writing portion of the TOEFL. You will also improve your skills in such areas as skimming and scanning, identifying and using main ideas and details, using detailed examples, paraphrasing, and comparing and contrasting.



UCEDA International

With over 30 years of experience, UCEDA International has become a leader in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) with accredited programs for all levels of language learning.

UCEDA is your best option to study English in the USA. We strive to provide F1 international students with the highest quality education while maximizing affordability.

Now you can live and study in the United States with an F1 student visa. Trust the experts, and register for the UCEDA Intensive English Program today!

This school is authorized under federal law to enroll F1 international students.

B2B

(BUSINESS TO BUSINESS)

English training for companies and other institutions

Increase productivity in your company by improving the communication of your work teams. UCEDA Institute brings its English (ESL) or Spanish Language instruction to your facility in order to meet your specific needs.

Courses can be customized according to your industry and workflow and can be taught by an instructor who matches your specific audience.

GED (General Education Development)

The GED, is the General Education Development Test, it is the exam that will allow you to obtain the certificate equivalent to High School.

At UCEDA we support you with the entire training process to take the exam in the state you reside in. Your classes can be taken virtually or in person. The program lasts 16 weeks.

You will learn basic math, geometry, algebra, graphs, and functions, as well as basic science concepts; In language you will strengthen the comprehension and writing of texts so that you learn to do a persuasive essay. And in Social Studies you will reinforce topics such as civics and government, US history and economics. There is no age limit to take the exam, achieve your dreams, contact us today!



American Citizenship Classes

In our preparation course to obtain American citizenship, you will get all the tools to take the latest version of the exam.

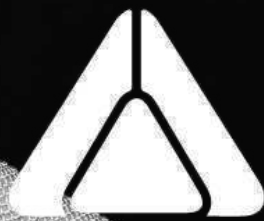
You will learn about American history and politics, as well as practicing for your interview in English.

Available in online and face-to-face mode.

Spanish

Our Program is designed for residents of the United States who want to learn to communicate orally and in writing in Spanish.

We have Latin American teachers from different countries, classes at UCEDA Institute are adjusted to your times and needs, so you can choose between our modality of virtual classes live or face-to-face.



UCEDA
INSTITUTE



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