

2022 MAGAZINE

UCEDA'S GOT TALENT

Winners
UGT 2022

Exclusive Interviews

Red Carpet
highlights

The cultural
richness

of Uceda is the talent
of its students



WINNER UGT 2022

FIGORELLA
CHAVEZ

www.uced.org/uced-got-talent

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UGT

MAGAZINE



BY UCEDA INSTITUTE

2022



CARLOS A. UCEDA

President & CEO
UCEDA INSTITUTE
UCEDA INTERNATIONAL

A LETTER FROM THE CEO

On behalf of UCEDA INSTITUTE, thank you for taking a few minutes of your time to learn more about UCEDA'S GOT TALENT - a cultural and artistic event, marking its third season in 2022.

In its almost 35 years of educational services, UCEDA INSTITUTE has become a meeting place for thousands of students. People who connect through their aspirations, their dreams, and their genuine desire to become part of society in America. They wish to join as an outstanding model of coexistence, and respect for diversity in all its forms.

Being an educational entity where students from all continents converge, UCEDA INSTITUTE was in the most favorable position to create a space for the dissemination of culture and art. There could have been no better opportunity to help promote, and exhibit the artistic expressions of students from all over the world. And so, in 2019 we had our first talent show.

This annual event has become a tradition that serves as a grand showcase of our students' artistic and musical talents. As we know, music, singing, and dancing are expressions connected with the experiences, emotions, and roots of cultures and nationalities. UCEDA'S GOT TALENT is an event that continues to be a source of pride for who we are, our feelings and the things we stand for.

We appreciate the participation of all our faculty, administrative staff, and volunteers. In addition, we extend our gratitude to all our special guests from local municipalities, community leaders, business representatives, and the consuls of the various sister countries that honored us with their presence. You all contributed to making UCEDA'S GOT TALENT a memorable evening where the artistic talent and the dreams of our students, and their families, were the protagonists.

We invite you to be part of our next season in 2023, when we will be celebrating our 35th Anniversary.

Warm regards,

Carlos A. Uceda

1. About UCEDA

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 area of Virginia.

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, 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.



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 34 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.

*A Cultural &
Artistic Event*

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.

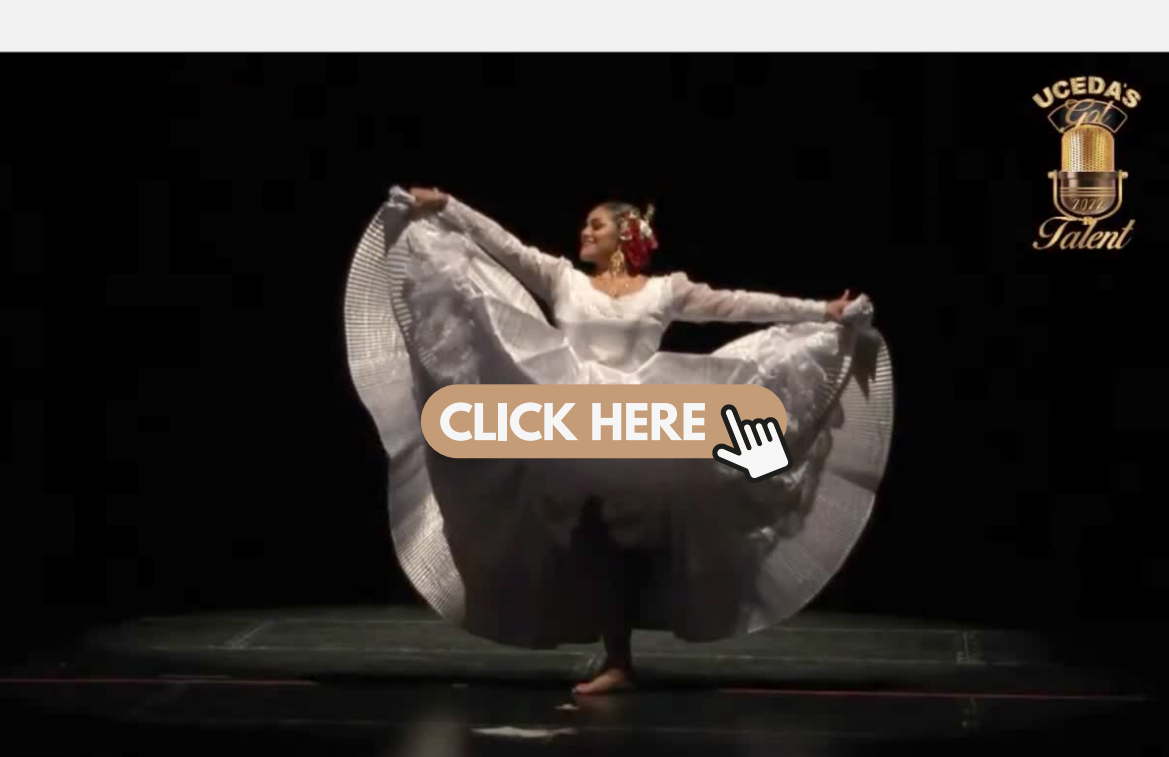
It is for this reason that in 2008 we organized our first talent show. The vision for this event came from a desire to publicly recognize, and honor the artistic talent of our students in a way that would benefit the entire community. Our vision gradually morphed into a cultural event that is today's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

In 2019 and in 2021, we hosted audiences of over 1,000 attendees, conducted over 70 auditions, had 40 finalists, and 6 winners with cash prizes worth over \$3,500. It has become an event that is anxiously anticipated by some, and where our students have an opportunity to shine.

This year, 2022, Uceda's Got Talent comes with new and exciting performances filled with passion, artistry, music, and romance. It is an evening to remember where dreams can come true. And an experience that could only happen with the collaboration, and participation of students and their families, staff, sponsors and the community at large.

Thanks to everyone who made this experience possible. Your talent, creativity, support, and dedication is forever appreciated, and we look forward to your continued support.





THE CULTURAL RICHNESS

OF UCEDA IS THE TALENT OF ITS STUDENTS

This is an event that greatly enriches Uceda, its students, and its community.

At Uceda, people from different nationalities, and from all walks of life, come together seeking to improve their chances of making their dreams come true by learning English. Each of them bringing their own unique experiences, traditions, and customs from their countries of origin.

Naturally, such a diverse gathering of people would yield artistic talent of all sorts; performing arts that are a special part of human expression, and the human experience. Talents that sometimes become representative of the identity of some. At Uceda the wealth of talent of our students is found in singers, dancers and performers of all kinds.

Recognizing the value of artistic expression, Uceda's Got Talent aims to acknowledge students' special gifts. It is an opportunity for students to socialize, recognize, and learn from each other's culture. This special event presents students with an opportunity to showcase abilities that they may hold near and dear to their heart. This is an event that greatly enriches Uceda, its students, and its community. This is an event that can become an unforgettable experience for someone as a first live experience on stage. And that is something that is invaluable.

Cultures, traditions, customs, and artistic expressions from all continents converge daily at Uceda.



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Program event



Heidy Peñaloza and Brauny González, hosts of the night.

FIRST BLOCK



MIKE MONTES (COLOMBIA) - NORWALK SCHOOL

Song: Tatuajes

Author: Joan Sebastian



THAIS VITERI (ECUADOR) - PASSAIC SCHOOL

Show: Heart on stage



MARIA TERESA ROJAS (PERU) - PORT CHESTER SCHOOL

Song: Amor de mis amores

Author: Sonora Dinamita



BELKIS GONZÁLEZ (ECUADOR) - FREEHOLD SCHOOL

Song: Mix de Vals

Author: Eva Ayllon

FIRST



BLOCK



IORELLA CHAVEZ (PERU) – PATERSON SCHOOL
Show: Marinera Norteña: Dulce y Bonita



JOSÉ MENDOZA (MEXICO) – DOVER SCHOOL
Song: Nadie simplemente nadie
Author: Alejandro Fernandez



DANIEL SANDOVAL (COLOMBIA) – SILVER SPRING SCHOOL
Song: Fuego
Author: MC Garra (emsigarraq)



XIOMARA CORDERO (ECUADOR) – PASSAIC SCHOOL
Show: Glimpse of Us



NATALY GUTIERREZ (COLOMBIA) – RED BANK SCHOOL
Song: I have nothing
Author: Whitney Houston



ELLEN CRUZ (BRASIL) – RED BANK SCHOOL
Song: Aquarela do Brasil
Author: Ary Barroso



ANNEL GUADALUPE VALDERRABANO (MEXICO) – LAKEWOOD SCHOOL
Song: Aires del Mayab
Author: Maria de Lourdes



BRIAN CASTRO CON LA BANDA DERAIZ (COLOMBIA) – ENGLISHLINE
Song: Conexión
Author: Original composition



MARIA FERNANDA BARRANTES (COSTA RICA) – FALLS CHURCH SCHOOL
Song: Yourself
Author: Idina Menzel (Frozen 2)



FABIAN RAMIREZ (COLOMBIA) – DOVER SCHOOL
Show: Aguanile



CAMILA HOYOS ALZATE (COLOMBIA) – FALLS CHURCH SCHOOL
Song: Estas conmigo
Author: Original composition



FRANCISCO CLEMENTE "STEFANEL" (URUGUAY) – FREEHOLD SCHOOL
Song: Inolvidable
Author: Luis Miguel



SOFIA PÉREZ (COLOMBIA) – PERTH AMBOY SCHOOL
Song: Sky full of stars
Author: Coldplay



RAFAEL CASADIEGO (COLOMBIA) – PATERSON SCHOOL
Song: Señora de Madrugada
Author: Tito Rojas, Aventurero de Yeison Jiménez y Lamento Boliviano de Enanitos Verdes



NICOLE RUIZ (ECUADOR) – DANBURY SCHOOL
Show: Just flow and be you



ALINA HERASYMENKO (UCRANIA) – NEW BRUNSWICK SCHOOL
Song: Amado Mio
Author: Pink Martini



HENRY CHAZY GUERRERO (COLOMBIA) – ENGLISHLINE
Song: Amor por ti
Author: Los Angeles Negros

SECOND BLOCK

SPECIAL GUESTS

PAL DANCE COMPANY
(Salsa show)
BICENTY
(Colombian Singer)

FIGURE
CHAVEZ

MEET THE WINNERS



WINNER OF UCEDA'S GOT TALENT 2022.

Her talent and
her legacy of
Marinera
Norteña.

By: Heidy Peñaloza



1ST PLACE

Fiorella Chavez and her brother Antonio during her performance at Uceda's Got Talent 2022

At first glance, Fiorella Ynes Chávez Iturre is a fun, cheerful girl with a big smile and special charisma. She was born in Lima, Peru, where her love for dance and the cultural legacy of her family began.

Fiorella is a professional makeup artist. She has also studied manicure and acrylic nails.

However, her most important career is being a dancer. "My job in Peru was to dance," she says. I've had complete artistic training; including contemporary ballet. My whole family dances. It's in our blood.

When I was four years old, my parents introduced my brother and me to the world of Marinera Norteña. It all started as a hobby, but then we really fell in love with the dance, and its art."

A year and a half ago she came to New Jersey to learn English at Uceda Institute.

She had been studying for a year at Uceda Paterson before signing up with her brother, Juan Antony, for Uceda's Got Talent where they performed a Marinera Norteña.

"I used to tell my classmates that I was a dancer, but many didn't believe me.

“*My whole family dances, it's in our blood*”

They thought that I was just another dancing girl. But the truth is that I am a professional dancer. When the registrations for Uceda's Got Talent opened, they encouraged me to sign up. I told my brother, and we auditioned," recalls Fiorella.

"I owe my passion for this dance to my family. I have videos and photos where my parents are dancing the whole time. They even got married dressed as Marinera dancers.

My uncles and their wives dance - everyone in my family dances! So that when my brother and I danced at the show, my whole family was dancing, too." Fiorella says that her family is her biggest inspiration for the dance.

The Marinera Norteña is, without a doubt, one of the most representative cultural manifestations of Peru. It is the product of a mixture of Spanish Fandango, African Zamacueca, and indigenous dances characterized by the agile rhythms between two dancers representing a conversation of love. It is a dance that expresses art and national identity based on elegance, strength, playfulness, and gallantry.

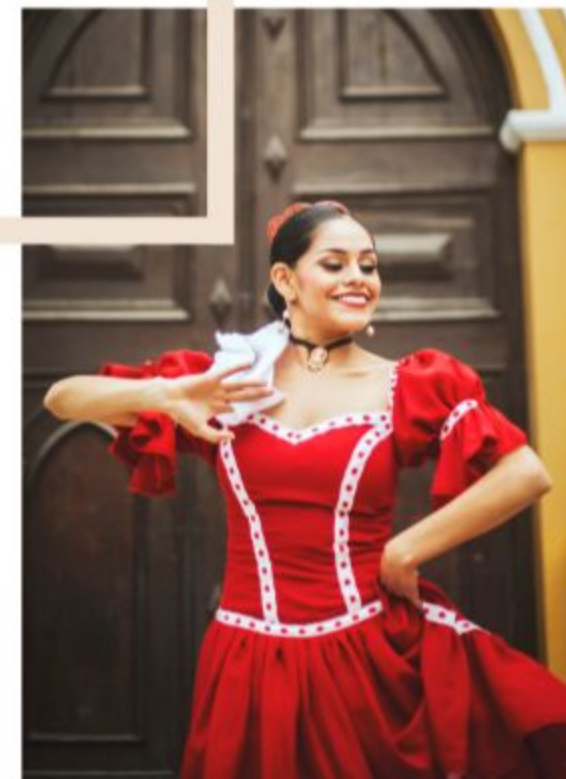
Dressed in the typical outfit of this dance, Fiorella highlighted her talent on stage waving a white handkerchief in her hand. Dancing with her partner, she performed tapping steps, and wide harmonious movements with her silk, white skirt. Maintaining an elegant posture throughout the whole dance, her fluid movements demonstrating excellent coordination and choreography, Fiorella put on her best show.

She expressed that being an artist implies many things, so the body, the mind, and the emotions must be worked on. "I honestly have great regard for myself as an artist. Thank God that my brother and I have always had the support of our parents. They have always encouraged us to continue growing beyond the dance. I have also done acting and singing, and everything else that could complement us, and inspire us to continue growing as artists".

Fiorella describes with genuine exhilaration how dance makes her feel. When she dances, musical notes seem to flow through her veins. She seems to pose a rhythm impregnated with the artistic legacy of her family. "When I dance, I feel my energy. I feel the energy of space. I connect my chakras and I can feel the energy of my body dancing. It is something very beautiful. Being on stage of Uceda's Got Talent, I realized that I feel much more comfortable dancing in the spotlight than dancing among people - at a party or something."



Fiorella is a professional makeup artist.



Fiorella dressed in a Spanish costume at a dance performance in Peru.

At 25, Fiorella has set for herself a very clear goal in the United States. She wants to become fully bilingual. "My dream is to dance. I danced for seven wonderful years in Peru. Those were the most beautiful years of my life. And it's something that I would like to live again. Currently, I am looking into how I can continue doing it from here, but my short-term goal is to completely master the English language. I want to feel safe and confident speaking it fluently, so that I can continue fulfilling my other objectives."

This talented young woman captured the audience and the judges at Uceda's Got Talent; winning first place and \$ 2,000. "I decided to spend that money with my family, and enjoy it one hundred percent. Because it is not easy to leave your country and show the rest of the world what you are; demonstrate with art and dance how culturally beautiful my country is. I am proud to represent it with pride and better still, I am proud to honor the legacy of my family".

After her success at Uceda's Got Talent, Fiorella is ready to encourage other students to participate, and show their talents. "Take a chance. You lose nothing," she says. "It's a little nerve-wracking, but you lose nothing by trying. If you go to the finals, it will be a new experience for you. I advise you to take advantage of the opportunity, it could be a unique experience in your life. I made a lot of new friends at the show. So, enjoy it!"



Fiorella Chavez dancing 'Marinera Norteña', one of the most representative dances of Peru.



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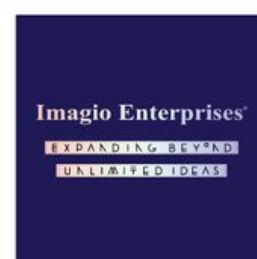
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Rafael Casadiego singing at Uceda's Got Talent

**RAFAEL
CASADIEGO**

2ND PLACE

*The Versatile
Voice Of A Music
Lover.
His Dynamic
Voice And His
Ability To
Interpret Any
Genre Of Music
Led Him To
Second Place At
Uceda's Got
Talent 2022.*

By: Heidý Peñaloza

Rafael José Casadiego was born in Barranquilla, Colombia; a city on the Caribbean coast where Shakira, Sofía Vergara, and former baseball player Edgar Rentería are also from. At 37 years old, he began to study English at Uceda Institute in Paterson, New Jersey. This father of one is an industrial engineer, but his real vocation is singing.

Rafael's desire to sing began when he was 12 years old. However, it was in high school watching friends sing and play the guitar, that he really felt drawn to music. Later, when he entered university, a classmate heard him sing and suggested that he audition for the school's orchestra. "I did, and I performed Carlos Vives' 'La Cartera'. I was chosen, and remained the singer of the orchestra throughout my entire college career.

I began to perform on many different stages, and it was something that truly began to enrich my life as a singer. I am very grateful to the director of the orchestra, Julio Garavito, because he believed in me more than I believed in myself in those days."

Most of Rafael's musical training comes from all his years of singing on stage. This, in spite of being an industrial engineer. "In Barranquilla, I was always singing in different places and in musical groups," he says. When I graduated from high school, I wanted to study music, but my dad didn't like the idea and I ended up studying industrial engineering."

"As a music lover, I have been listening to music all my life. I love all kinds of rhythms and genres. I listen to everything from rock to cumbia, champeta, llanera music, rancheras, and everything else. As a kid, I looked up to young salsa singers like Salserin, Servando, and Florentino. I used to dream that I could be like them. They awoke in me the desire to be a singer. As the years went by, I learned to put aside my fears and any mental barriers, and decided to give my singing all my best; even if others sang better than me", affirms Casadiego.

Rafael José claims to be a versatile singer - able to sing in various rhythms regardless of cultural origin. He says that he believes in love, and in offering his very best to everyone he meets. He believes in the power of music and the balance that it brings to everyone's life. "I have always thought of music as the axis of my life," he says. It is the place for the desires of my heart. Music means tranquility, inspiration, enjoyment, and happiness to me. Music has always been there for me. It has always been part of my life. In my work as an industrial engineer, I get stressed. But in my work as a singer, I de-stress. It is amusing to me that I get paid for doing something that I love to do."

After living the U.S. for about a year and a half, Rafael found in Uceda's Got Talent the perfect opportunity to share his talent with others.



Rafael enjoys singing in all kinds of rhythms and genres

In addition, his participation served him as a way to break the ice at school and the people he has gotten to know there. He said, "I chose to perform three songs because I wanted to show the versatility of my talent and my voice. It is difficult to sing three different rhythms at accelerated tempos, and from three different cultures. I sang Tito Rojas' Puerto Rican salsa, 'Señora de Madrugada'; the popular Colombian song 'Aventurero' by Yeison Jimenez'; and the Spanish Rock 'Lamento Boliviano' by the Argentinian group Enanitos Verdes."

However, Uceda's Got Talent was not Rafael's first appearance in the United States. In 2019, when he first came to the U.S., he participated in a singing contest in Queens, New York. "A friend invited me to the event," he recalls. "When we arrived, he told everyone that he was my representative. One thing led to another, and next thing you know they're asking me if I would like to sing. It turns out that one of the finalists was not going to make it, and they needed to fill his spot. I jumped at the opportunity and said, yes. I sang, and I won."

At Uceda's Got Talent final show, the reaction of the audience was evident during Rafael's presentation. He is sure that that was a plus with the judges, and that it helped him win second place. "Their reaction was excellent. They were connected with every part of my performance. I love singing like this - to feel the people connected to what I'm doing on stage."

As for his \$1,000 prize, Rafael decided to invest it in sound equipment. He says that he gained more than that from the experience and the opportunity to showcase his talent. "That money came from music, so I give it back to music." Of the contest he had this to say: "If you have a musical talent that you would like to demonstrate, sign up for Uceda's Got talent. It's worth the effort and the experience, even if you don't win. Taking that bold step to perform before an audience makes you win. The prize doesn't matter. By participating, you may be breaking a paradigm that could help you improve, and take your life to another level."

BRIAN CASTRO



Brian Castro playing with his band, DeRaiz, at Uceda's Got Talent 2022

3RD PLACE

"I'm not just a musician. I'm an artist": Brian Castro Uceda's Got Talent 2022 Third Place Winner

According to Brian Castro Rangel, he discovered his talent and good ear for music when he was a boy in his native Colombia. He worked at his parents record store where he would play LP's and cassettes for customers. Listening to all that music, he felt that he could hear and identify the instruments in each song. "It was a magical world for me," he says. "When I finished school, I enrolled at the ASAB (Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá) where I studied guitar and composition."

Additionally, Brian has studied photography and video editing. He has specialized in music, audiovisual production, editing, and 2D animation for many years. Two months ago, he began his studies of English at Uceda through its virtual program EnglishLine, which led him to sign up with his band, DeRaiz, winning third place at Uceda's Got Talent 2022.

"I thought it was wonderful to be able to show my musical talent at the school where I am studying. I saw that it was a great opportunity for me and my friends. I am very happy with everything that has happened to me at Uceda. It has been very good to learn English because I need it for my music, my connections, and my life", he affirms.

Brian had previously entered and won other contests in the United States. In Los Angeles, he participated with the group "Son Batá" on a reality TV show where Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, and Jaime King appeared as judges. He has also participated in the production of songs, soundtrack and sound effects for several television programs in Colombia such as the Netflix series 'Rosario Tijeras', and the soap opera 'La Reina del Flow'.

By: Heidy Peñaloza

"I define myself as an artist. I am an artist because I understand the art of music, photography, video, graphic illustration, and dance. I love to dance. I have also done oil painting. So, I can't say I'm just a musician. I'm an artist, a creative director," he adds.

Brian feels that music allows people to connect regardless of language or culture. "Music transmits emotions and breaks down barriers. Music means a lot to me. At the age of 13, I picked up my guitar and ever since then, music has opened doors for me wherever I go. I have traveled a lot, and I have found myself through my music. It is something spiritual for me. I ask God to allow my music to heal people who are lonely or anxious. Music is a very powerful thing that allows us to heal and transform."

Brian's musical career has been inspired by his parents whom he thanks for all the support he's had. "My father was a composer from a very young age. My mother is a very special person whose life has always been filled with music. My parents are the ones who have supported me, and have shown me a path through education, sacrifices and respect. I sing for God, for myself, for my parents and for the world. I want to bring joy to people through my music. All I ask of God is to allow me to reach big audiences, and help me inspire future generations."

At Uceda's Got Talent, Brian's band opened the second part of the show with their own composition titled, 'Conexion'.



Brian playing his guitar on a late night talk show in Colombia

"We wanted to represent the Latin American beat. We wanted to transmit our joy to the audience. We wanted to highlight our folklore with this salsa fusion composition," explains Brian.

"The judges were very fair, and I think they made a good decision. We are very grateful to Uceda. Uceda's Got Talent must continue to be promoted year after year because while this time it was an opportunity for me, tomorrow it will be an opportunity for someone else. And I am sure that many of the those who get the opportunity to shine on this stage will become great artists in the world. It's not about the prize; It's about making our dreams come true. Participating at Uceda's Got Talent and giving our best performance was spectacular. My bandmates and I really enjoyed it. Coming in third place was a great reward and an encouragement to continue working in our music," he stated. They've decided to invest the \$500 they won in the production of their next album and a music video.



Brian has worked in audiovisual production, editing, and special effects for television programs

ANGELINA HERASYMENKO

4TH PLACE



Angelina singing "Amado Mio" at the final show

The voice of Ukraine at Uceda's Got Talent 2022

Angelina Herasymenko was born in 2000 in the Ukraine. At 22 years of age, she could have never imagined living through the cruelty of a war that would become one the hardest experiences of her life. Leaving her family and friends, and traveling to the safety of America has been one of the most difficult things she has ever done. Despite all the things she's had to endure, Angelina is able to use music as a refuge, overcome the pains of her ordeal, and move on with her life.

"When the war started in Ukraine, my world came crashing down. It was only thanks to music that I was able to find the strength to get up and move on," she says.

Angelina has been studying English at Uceda Institute for two months. When she learned about Uceda's Got Talent, she decided to enter as a singer.

She started singing when she was a little girl. She went to music school for 8 years, and studied to be a choir director for 4 years. She then began her studies at the Musical University of Ukraine, eventually completing 6 years of specialization in solo singing.

"To be honest, I can't imagine what life would be like without music", she says. Music is a very important part of my life. Music is my oxygen; my support. I have a deep, velvety voice. From a very young age, I sang on Ukrainian stages; participated in various competitions and won prizes. I have never given up. My teachers and my friends have always encouraged, but my parents have been my biggest fans. Now, I would like to continue with my career, but, here, in the United States", says Angelina.

By: Heidy Peñaloza

At the auditions, she performed a Ukrainian song called "Oy verche" qualifying her for the finals at Uceda's Got Talent. "When I found out that I was a finalist, I felt extremely happy," she said. "I began to prepare a new song and my outfit for that night. This was my first competition in the United States and I was very excited and nervous."

The night of the grand finale, Angelina won fourth place and a cash prize of \$250 with the song "Amado Mio". "It's a song about passion and love. And it's a song in which I could identify the feelings that the songwriter was trying to convey," she said. "I was so surprised to see the reaction of the audience. There was a tremendous show of support; a lot of posters, and balloons. It was an incredible show".

Angelina says that she finds inspiration in creative people who never give up and work hard to achieve success. She sees herself, in the future, speaking better English and getting ahead. "I have this vision of myself as a successful woman; able to find my place in the U.S., building a strong family, and overcoming the language barrier. Never give up. Believe in yourself and that your day will come. You can win at life. Dreams can come true."



Angelina loves to practice yoga and sports



**THAIS
VITERI**

4TH PLACE



Thais performed her "Heart on Stage" at Uceda's Got Talent

*The Brave and
Free Soul of a
Dancer
Uceda's Got
Talent 2022.
Fourth Place
Winner*

Thais Alexandra Viteri Pérez was born in Madrid, Spain, but grew up in Ecuador. She is a professional dancer that recently began to study nursing. Thais studied six months at Uceda Institute in Passaic, New Jersey, improving her English, in preparation for nursing school. Thais, performed her "Heart on Stage" at Uceda's Got Talent tying in fourth place with Angelina Herasymenko.

In October 2021, Thais came to the U.S. to study English for a month. Of this, she says, "My cousin had studied at Uceda and convinced me to register there. Then, I went back to my country to get my F1 visa. My initial plan was to study at a college, but since my DSO didn't have an advanced level of English, the only alternative I had was to go to an English institute. That is how in February 2022, I returned to study at Uceda."

She trained as a dancer at the Ecuadorian Chamber Ballet and the Metrodanza College of Arts. However, Thais assures, her mother was the one who really introduced her to dance. "My mom discovered my talent for dancing when I was 6 years old. She saw that I could develop as a dancer."

"Dancing connects my soul to the rhythm of the music and allows me to let off steam. For me, dancing is freedom. I dance not thinking about judgement. I don't worry whether I'm dancing right or wrong. For me, dancing is life," says Thais.

This young dancer considers herself a brave and passionate woman; a woman free to do whatever she wants, and who believes in herself. "For a long time," she says, "my inspiration was the ballet dancer, Natalia Osipova. But I realized that by looking at other people, I was only minimizing my talent. So, I decided to be my own inspiration."

By: Heidý Peñaloza

Thais is no stranger to dance competitions. After being away from the stage for a while, she decided to return by competing at Uceda's Got Talent 2022. "What motivated me to participate was my family and friends who, in spite of the distance, continue to support me," she says. "They are my number one fans. I had been away for about a year, and I needed to get back on stage and prove to myself that I can only solve my fears by facing them."

Regarding her preparation for the final event, she says that it was a process of great dedication. "There were very stressful days when I couldn't come up with anything. It was very difficult for me to choose the music, the choreography, the costumes and the hairstyle."

But thanks to the support of my friends, everything came out all right in the end. I decided to dance hip-hop, reggaeton, and ballroom. I wanted my performance to be captivating, and be able to hold on to the audience the whole time, and I think I succeeded. The entire time I was on stage I could feel their energy and their support."



Thais trained as a dancer at the Ecuadorian Chamber Ballet

Thais plans to use her \$250 prize toward her nursing studies. "I have a lot of expenses for school," she says. "I have to buy books and other supplies." Winning fourth place in the U.S. adds another accomplishment to her artistic career. "It is something I can put in my resume," she declares. "My advice to other students is to go for it, take a chance, and believe in yourselves. Show the world what you are capable of doing. The very act of having the courage to display your artistic talent in public, makes you a winner."



NATALY RUIZ & GABRIEL QUIMBAYO

1ST PLACE

VIRTUAL LEARNING PROGRAM
EnglishLine by Uceda Institute

*"Mother and Son Ruiz",
Nataly Quiñones and Gabriel Quimbayo
Virtual Online Winners of Uceda's Got Talent 2022*

Nataly Ruiz Quiñones and her son, Gabriel Leonardo Quimbayo Ruiz, are the virtual online winners of Uceda's Got Talent 2022. Nataly, 37, and Gabriel, 16, have been studying English online using Uceda Institute's Englishline program since May of this year when they first decided to improve their English.

This Colombian mother and son currently live in the city of Campinas, Brazil. Nataly is a doctor in genetics and molecular biology. She works for IBM, but she also curates a collection of microorganisms of agricultural importance. Gabriel is studying a technical course in computer science and finishing high school.

Nataly says that she began to sing in the school choir at the age of 6. She sings in church, and she has sung in the choir of the University of Tolima in Colombia, and the Ziper na Boca Choir of the State University of Campinas, Brazil. "Gabriel has been singing in the Canarinhos Choir since he was 10 years old. And while at home, during the pandemic, he started learning how to play the guitar," says Nataly.

She says she likes to sing to unwind. "It's a way to relax and have fun. Music means joy to me." Gabriel, on the other hand, likes the way the sounds of different instruments mix to form a perfect melody. "Music means dedication and coordination," he says.

"We had always sung in different choirs, but this was our first time singing together for a contest", volunteers Nataly. "We chose 'The House of The Rising Sun' because it's a classic rock song. And also, because it has an iconic guitar intro. The idea was to highlight the best of both, that's why we chose it and it worked for us". The duo went by the name of "Mother and Son Ruiz" and they managed to impress the judges. They won Online Best Performance by a duo in the singing category. To date, they still haven't decided how they are going to spend their prize money, but they say they're carefully thinking about it so that they can enjoy it wisely.

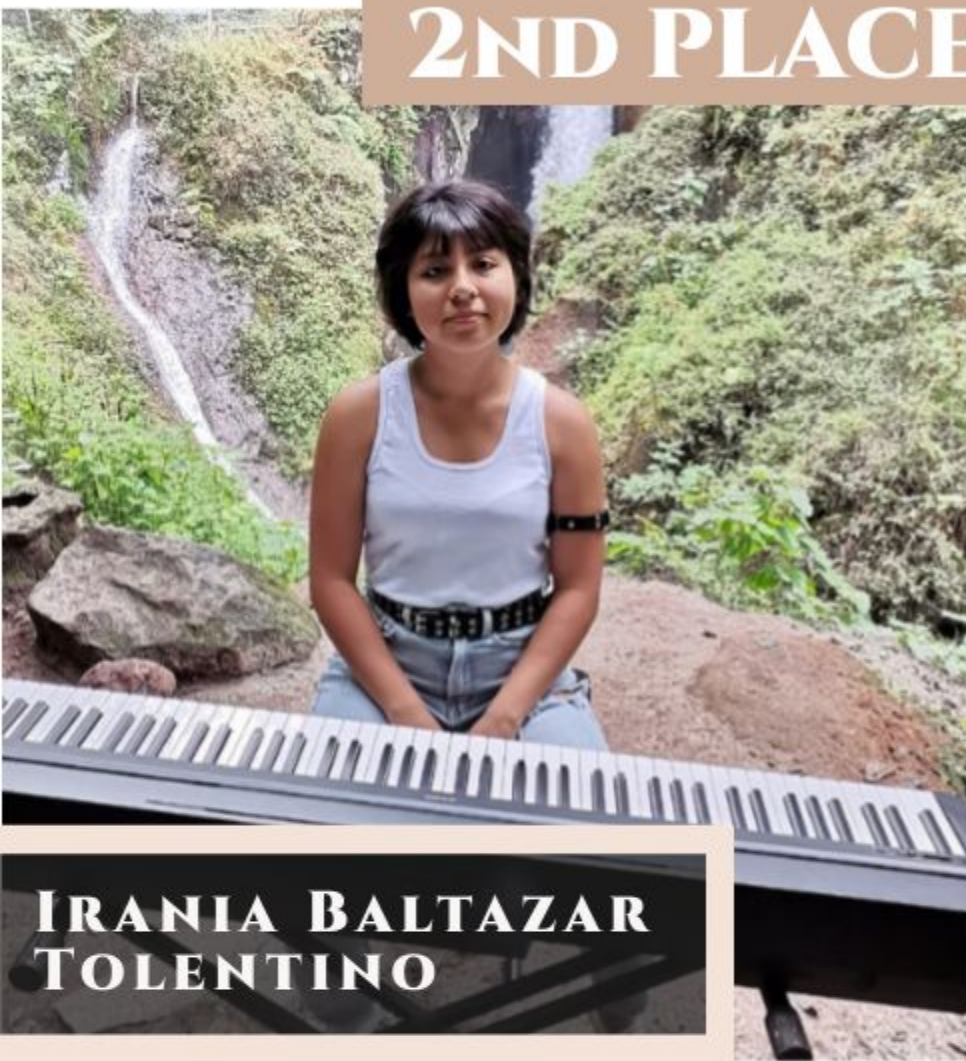
In the future, Nataly would like to conduct microbiology research at a large institute. Her son, Gabriel, is currently focused in his studies of architecture and computer science. "I want to be knowledgeable, rich and powerful," he volunteers. "Just like my mother says."

"Taking risks is necessary. In life, there are two kinds of people; those who take chances, and those who don't. Everybody has talents and ideas. But only those who dare to go for their dreams and work on their projects are the ones who will be remembered by history," concludes Nataly.

By: Heidy Peñaloza

2ND PLACE

VIRTUAL LEARNING PROGRAM
EnglishLine by Uceda Institute



**IRANIA BALTAZAR
TOLENTINO**

*A Promising
Young Pianist
Second Place
Virtual
Participant of
Uceda's Got
Talent 2022.*

Connecting all the way from Altotonga, Veracruz, Mexico, Sixteen-year-old Irania Baltazar Tolentino participated, and won second place at Uceda's Got Talent via virtual mode. Irania has been studying English online for more than a year and a half using Uceda Institute's Englishline program.

"My dad had a band, and I became interested in piano. I have been singing since I was a little girl. I currently study music at the Universidad Veracruzana. I have also studied with professional music teachers. My dad is the one who motivates me to sing and study music. It's something that I love and enjoy doing, but I also do it for him," she states.

Music means a lot for Irania, and it's something that allows her to express her feelings. "I like the emotions that music can provoke, and the things one can express with it."

For me, music means happiness, peace, tranquility. It is something with which I can express everything I feel - even if it's something I haven't lived yet."

Irania dreams of being a famous piano teacher someday. Her discipline, her desire to learn everything about music, and the proper interpretation of the piano is what drives her to become the best at her school.

"What I like the most is playing for others. I have participated in more than ten contests, recitals, and concerts. I have been on various stages, but I decided to participate virtually in Uceda's Got Talent because regardless of the medium, I enjoy demonstrating my talent."

Irania captivated the judges with her rendition of Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. "I chose this song because I like this band, and the melody suits my range of voice. It's a song that I have been practicing for a while; always improving it and modifying it," she admits.

Irina invested her prize money on her piano. "I spent it tuning my acoustic piano," she said. "I had to hire a professional to do it. I also bought a microphone and a tripod with the money that was left."

Irania thinks that taking risks costs nothing, and that many more young people should take advantage of opportunities like Uceda's Got Talent and demonstrate their artistic abilities. "Any student who would like to demonstrate his or her talent must take a chance; nothing is lost by trying. It doesn't matter if you win or lose. The experience is what counts. And the more experiences you have in your life, the better. Take a chance and show everyone what you can do," she concluded.

A DREAM COME TRUE



MEET THE 6. FINALISTS



MIKE MONTES
COLOMBIA
UCEDA NORWALK
(SINGING)

"Being one of the finalists at Uceda's Got Talent made me a winner. Appearing at the grand finale along with other contestants who gave their best, made a winner. That night - with my guitar, I performed with the talent that I inherited from my paternal grandmother who taught me how to sing and play the piano when I was 8 years old."



MARIA TERESA ROJAS
PERÚ
UCEDA PORT
CHESTER (SINGING)

"I discovered my talent singing at school when I was 10 years old. My parents encouraged me when they realized that I truly loved music. I am now a professional musician. I love music and I hope to continue singing until God allows me to. One of my dreams is to record my own music."



BELKIS GONZÁLEZ
ECUADOR
UCEDA FREEHOLD
(SINGING)

"Ever since I was a little girl, I've liked to sing and play the piano. I studied at a conservatory in the city of Machala, in the province of El Oro in Ecuador. I sang while I was in high school and participated in different events. At Uceda's Got Talent, I performed a mix of some of my favorite songs by Eva Ayllon. I sang 'Huye de mí', 'Nada Soy', and 'Cariñito' with which I was able to show my talent and represent my school."



JOSÉ MENDOZA
MÉXICO - UCEDA
DOVER (SINGING)

"I am an amateur singer. My love for music started when I was a kid. My family has always been involved in the music businesses. Music has always been a huge part of my life and it's a way for me to freely express myself. When I am singing or playing a musical instrument, I feel truly free. I am really grateful for the opportunity to have participated in Uceda's Got Talent."



DANIEL SANDOVAL
COLOMBIA
UCEDA SILVER
SPRING (SINGING)

"My artistic name is MC Garra. I began to pursue music when I was 16 years old while I was still in school. I got interested in improvisation, and freestyle in Rap competitions. I enjoy reading and practicing sports. My appearance at Uceda's Got Talent was a risky musical proposition; as it was the first time, I had ever done a Reggae composition with bits of freestyle lyrics."



XIOMARA CORDERO
ECUADOR
UCEDA PASSAIC
(DANCING)

"For me, dancing is like escaping from the real world. It moves me to a place where I am completely happy. Dancing is more than a hobby for me. I joined my first dance academy when I was 6 years old. I was in a dance group, and we performed in different venues; stages, theaters, and sometimes, even on the streets. Throughout the years, my love for dancing has continued to grow. That is why I have started to train as a professional dancer at an academy. At Uceda's Got Talent I performed a contemporary dance titled: Glimpse of Us."



NATALY GUTIÉRREZ
COLOMBIA
UCEDA RED BANK
(SINGING)

"I have liked to sing and dance since I was little. In my house, they played the music of Elvis Presley and Madonna. When I was 11 years old, my mom told me that she wanted me to learn to play an instrument, and sent me to a music academy. There, I discovered my love for music, and I found that what I loved to do the most was sing. I would like to become a professional in music and specialize in voice performance. My goal is to become an expert in voice and earn my living singing."



ELLEN CRUZ
BRAZIL
RED BANK (SINGING)

"The song I sang at Uceda's Got Talent is a love poem to my incredible country: Brazil. It's about our culture and beauty. My story with music started at home; listening to my mother who sang beautifully. I started singing in church and then with friends. I sang in a rock band and also in a choir for over 10 years. Music is a special and important part of my life! Participating in this festival was a special tribute to my country, and my people whom I love so much!"



ANNEL VALDERRABANO
MEXICO
UCEDA LAKEWOOD
(SINGING)

"At Uceda's Got Talent, I performed the song 'Aires del Mayab'. It is a ranchera with which I wanted to represent my family, and my beloved country of Mexico. My father taught me everything I know about the world of music. I started singing when I was 17 years old. And although it was difficult at first because I was very shy, and I would panic singing in front of people, it became what I am most passionate about. I also enjoy drawing and doing makeup."



MARIA FERNANDA BARRANTES
COSTA RICA
UCEDA FALLS
CHURCH (SINGING)

"My love for music started with a song that caught my attention when I was 6 years old. After my mother heard me sing, she enrolled me in opera singing lessons. Now, my life is music. I like the feeling of being on stage, and participate in events like Uceda's Got Talent. I want to dedicate my life to music. And I would like to continue having opportunities like this, where I can move hearts to the sound of my voice."



FABIAN RAMIREZ
COLOMBIA
UCEDA DOVER
(DANCING)

"I am a dancer, choreographer, and director of the dance studio 'Azucar Dance USA'. I have 22 years of experience in the world of dance. I have won different world competitions. I have been a finalist in American's Got Talent 2014, and Show Time Apollo Fox 2016. My talent in dance is thanks to my family who are also artists. Thanks to this gift, I have been able to trained children to appear on Broadway, and joy into their homes. One of my goals is for my dance studio to be well known worldwide, and to continue transmitting my love for dance to more millions of people."



CAMILA HOYOS
COLOMBIA
UCEDA FALLS CHURCH
(SINGING)

"In Colombia, I am artistically known as Camaila. I love to sing, and I hope to touch many hearts with my music. At the final show, I performed a song composed by myself entitled: 'Estás conmigo' with which I wanted to send a message of love to the audience of that great night. I also enjoy playing sports; getting to know new places and spending quality time with my family and Friends."



FRANCISCO CLEMENTE
URUGUAY
UCEDA FREEHOLD
(SINGING)

"My stage name is Stefanel. I've always wanted singing and music to be part of my life; my way of life. Singing is like walking or breathing for me. It makes me feel alive. From a very young age I always sang on special occasions. I wish I had more opportunities to sing like I did at Uceda's Got Talent."



SOFÍA PÉREZ
COLOMBIA
UCEDA PERTH
AMBOY (SINGING)

"I am 18 years old, and all my life I have dreamed of being a singer. I have been studying music for 5 years; the last of which I've spent learning how to play the guitar. My goal is to continue working on my singing, and be successful at what I love to do. Singing 'Sky full of Stars' by Coldplay at Uceda's Got Talent, was an experience that I really enjoyed."



NICOLE RUIZ
ECUADOR
UCEDA DANBURY
(DANCING)

"I have liked to dance since I was a child. In Ecuador, I entered a dance academy called 'Hypnotic'. This experience changed my life as I was able to discover and explore my talent. I want to continue growing professionally in dance. I want to continue participating in shows, competitions, and other events - evolving, growing, and reaching stages where I have never imagined being on."



HENRY CHAZY
COLOMBIA
VLP (SINGING)

"I discovered my talent for singing when I was in my second year of high school. I began to learn everything about music and singing. Soon, I realized that singing was my vocation and that it could be the course of my life. I have a degree in Art Education from the University of Tolima in Colombia. I worked in Cali, Colombia, as a music and dance teacher for 25 years where I developed several artistic projects. Now, my next goal is to open my own music and dance academy in Plainfield, New Jersey."



ENGLISHLINE FINALISTS



DYLAN DE LOS SANTOS
PERÚ
(SINGING)



JULIETA BONIVENTO
COLOMBIA
(DANCING)



CAROLINA RAVERA
CHILE
(SINGING)



MIRIAN MONES
REPUBLICA DOMINICANA
(SINGING)



JOSE MANUEL BERMUDEZ
Venezuela
Singing



MARÍA PAULA RODRÍGUEZ LEÓN
Colombia
Singing



VALERIE SEJNAUI CACEDA
Perú
Dancing



SHEYLA CADENA
Ecuador
Dancing



ANGINE TAMARA - JEAN LOUIS
Haití
Singing



SHARIS MUNOZ
Colombia
Singing



► Meet The JUDGES



01 TATO MARENCO 🇨🇴

2021 Latin GRAMMY Nominee with his album JEMAS, versatile professional musician, composer and producer with extensive background in performing and teaching. Poised and charismatic soloist and ensemble performer who quickly masters new repertoires in a broad range of musical styles. Has worked side-by-side with Carlos Vives, Shakira, Major Lazer, Nicky Jam, Maluma, Totó La Momposina and Paulino Salgado "Batata" - his mentor and teacher of Afro-colombian drum called Alegre. Also a session musician for "Encanto" - Disney's new film about Colombia.

02 AARON DE JESUS 🇺🇸

Aaron de Jesus was born in New York City. He attended Brigham Young University, and has a background in music, dance, and theater. He has appeared on Broadway and Las Vegas, standing out in performances of Disney's The Lion King, and Wicked, the Musical, among others. He currently appears as Frankie Valli in Jersey Boys.



03 IVONNE JOFRE 🇦🇷

Singer songwriter from Perth Amboy, NJ. Ivonne has performed with Perth Amboy Show Choir and Gospel choir at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and Universal Studios. She has been both, a member, and a featured artist for multiple bands and choirs, such as Tequila Bamboo, Skyline Salsa Band, De Luna y Miel, Orquesta Lunar, Sesiones de Reggae Instrumental, Kuyuy, Middlesex County College Choir, Perth Amboy Community Theater, and more.

She has participated in various city festivals, and fundraisers. Ivonne has portrayed her original music at Análogo Collective, a music and art exhibition that celebrates local, innovative and eclectic artists.



04 ALFREDO CARABAJAL 🇦🇷

Originally from Mendoza, Argentina, Alfredo moved to the US when he was 14. His musical perspective changed after seeing his first live salsa orchestra. He concluded that in order to progress in music, he had to have an understanding of music theory; in the process discovering jazz as his guide. Alfredo has been playing with different bands including his own project for over 15 years. As a Latin bassist, Alfredo has

performed with: Descarga Latina Salsa Orchestra featuring pianists Nito Carrasquillo and Alex Velez, NJCU Salsa Orchestra directed by Cuban pianist Ariacne Trujillo, and Jersey City's Skyline Salsa Band.

05 CAROLINA BAEZ 🇵🇷

Carolina is the owner of NJ Dance & Show studio. Originally from Paraguay she began dancing at a very young age. She received her degree in Musical Theater, and has studied all types of dances including ballet, jazz, pointe, folk, contemporary, and ballroom. She has participated in professional dance competitions in South America and the United States. She continues to train at the Peridance Capezio Center in New York.





DANIEL CRIADO 🇨🇴

Daniel Criado is an award-winning musician, composer, and educator who has performed internationally, across the United States, Europe, South America, Asia, and is endorsed by the renowned percussion brands Bosphorus Cymbals, and CANOPUS Drums. Mr. Criado has collaborated with notable Grammy Award-winning musicians including Corey Glover, Joe Ferry, Brandon Lee, Manuel Valera, and David DeJesus among others.

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OF THE UCEDA'S GOT TALENT 2022



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National Anthem by David & Carlos Cheng



JUDGES

AARON DE JESUS FROM THE UNITED STATES, ALFREDO CARABAL from ARGENTINA, IVONNE JOHNS from ARGENTINA, TATO MARINCO FROM COLOMBIA, CAROLINA BALZ FROM PARAGUAY, AND DANIEL CRIADO FROM COLOMBIA.



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SECOND PLACE WINNER

Rafael Casadiego



1st place: Nathaly Ruiz and Gabriel Leonardo Quimbayo from Colombia. 2nd place: Irania Baltazar from Mexico.



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RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS



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RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS



FIRST PLACE UCEDA'S GOT TALENT 2022

GALLERY

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Danbury - CONNECTICUT
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NY PORT CHESTER



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11.

Our PROGRAMS



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

We have been teaching English as a second language since 1988 thus making us specialists in our field. Our pragmatic methodology allows us to teach English in a way that our students learn to use it as a tool in the industries and businesses that move the world's economy.

ESP (English for Specific Purposes)

We have a program of short-term courses designed for individuals who wish to improve their English in specific areas. These courses are accompanied by UCEDA proprietary textbooks dealing with topics such as:

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

TOEFL Preparation

Our TOEFL Prep courses prepare students for the TOEFL iBT test in all the areas of the test. This course exposes students to the type of content-rich material, questions and tasks on the TOEFL. High-interest listening selections help students understand a wide variety of styles and topics. Students sharpen their 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. Students learn to skim, scan, and identify, as well as paraphrase, compare and contrast main ideas and details.



UCEDA International

With a federally accredited program, UCEDA INTERNATIONAL welcomes F1 students to study English in the United States. With over 30 years of experience, UCEDA INTERNATIONAL offers the highest quality of education while maximizing affordability. We have an intensive language program that can help you meet your needs, regardless of your level of English. If you are interested in living and studying in the United States, then UCEDA INTERNATIONAL is your best option.

We are authorized under federal law to enroll F1 international students.

B2B (BUSINESS TO BUSINESS)

English training for companies and other institutions

If increased productivity, safety, and improved communication is what your company needs, then UCEDA is the answer. With customized instructions and highly skilled professionals, UCEDA can help you get the most out of your workforce. We teach English and, or Spanish to help you meet your needs.

GED

(General Education Development)

Uceda offers preparation for the General Education Development test (GED). This exam allows people to obtain a certificate equivalent to a high school diploma.

At Uceda, we provide all the training, and support necessary to take the GED whichever state the student lives in. Our program covers all the basic requirements of math (geometry, algebra, graphs, and functions), as well as basic concepts of science. We help students strengthen their reading comprehension, and writing skills. We cover topics on civics, government, US history, and economics. We welcome students of all ages, as there is no age requirement to take the test.



American Citizenship Classes

For many years we have been helping immigrants from all over the world become American citizens. Our teachers work with the latest version of the citizenship test, and provide our students with all the tools necessary to have a successful interview and attain their American citizenship. Our American citizenship classes are available in person or online.

Spanish

We also teach Spanish! In addition to all our other programs, we also offer Spanish. Our program is designed to help people desirous of learning Spanish communicate orally and in writing.

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Best moments



OF THE NIGHT!

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