



The Uniquely Abled Academy

Training people with special skills for specialized needs in the workforce.



Presenters



Greg Wasko

Executive Vice President
Starn Tool &
Mecalby Starn



Dawn Bailey

Program Coordinator
UAA at Crawford Tech



Tacie Thomas

Program Coordinator
UAA at EC3



Once Upon a Time

About the Uniquely Abled Academy -
AND how it came to our region.

Greg Wasiko

Uniquely Able d Academy

A CNC machinist
training program
geared for
individuals with
level 1 autism



The Need

● CNC= Computer Numerical Control
(CNC) machining is a manufacturing process in which pre-programmed computer software dictates the movement of factory tools and machinery.

● Demand for CNC Machinists:
from a manufacturer's perspective

● UAA= unique solution to tackle shortage of CNC machinists
Dr. Ivan Rosenberg recognized that many of the sought after characteristics of CNC machinists matched young adults with high functioning autism

Video: [When Autism Meets CNC Machining](#)



UAA in NWPA

Meeting Ivan

Founder of Uniquely Able Project

Pulling Together

Convening community partners

Host School

Finding a school with capability and capacity

Funding

Grants for program logistics
Resources to cover tuition



More UAA Background

Tacie Thomas

UAA Benefits

Participants become employees:

- Filling a real need for manufacturing jobs
- Earning family sustaining wages
- Working in an exciting career with opportunity for advancement

Goal is no -cost to trainees:

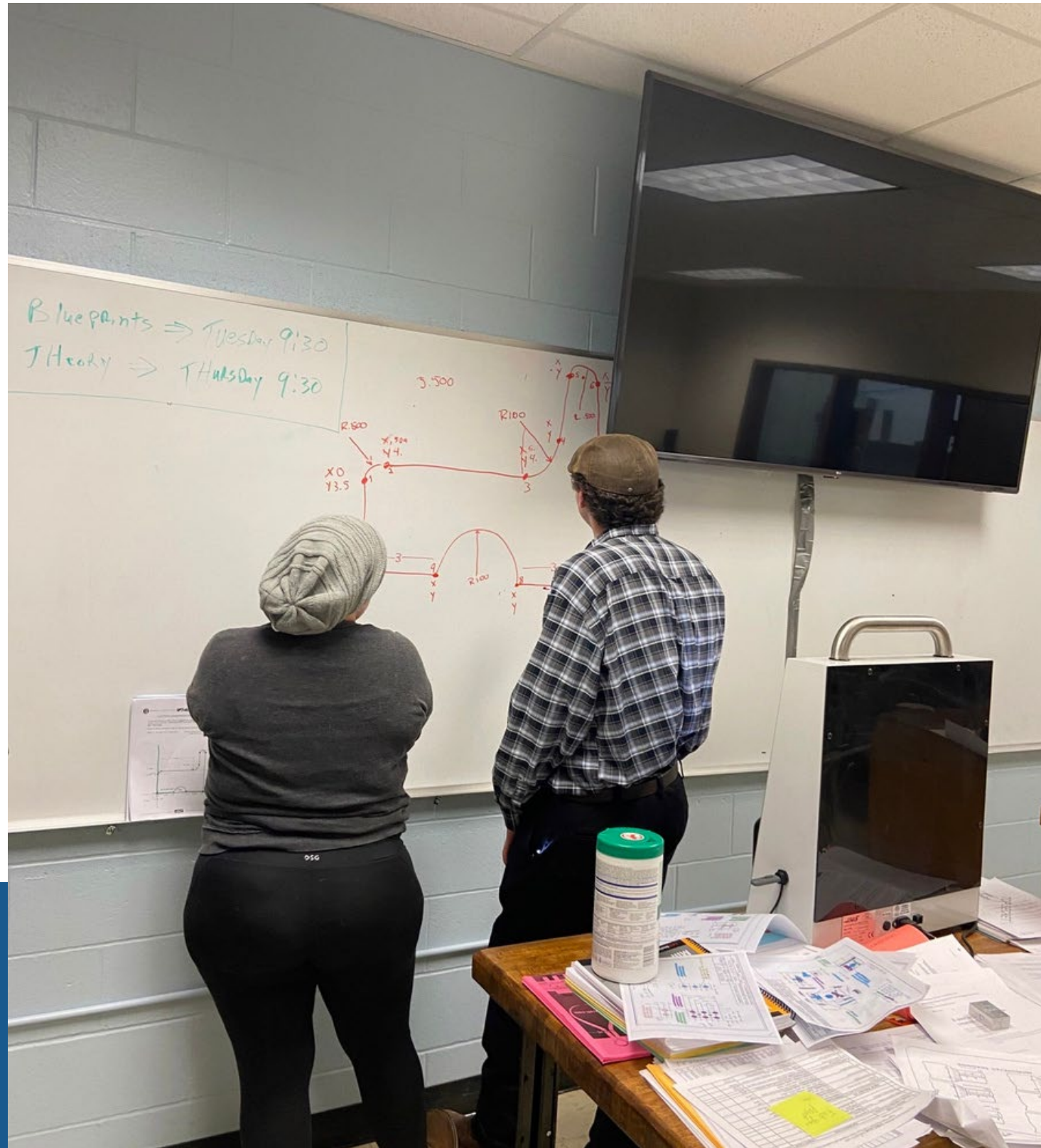
- Tapping into programs via OVR and Title 1
- Seeking grants and sponsorships to alleviate financial barriers



Candidate Profile

- 18 years or older
- High school grad / GED
- Math and reading proficiencies
- Access to transportation
- Secure services / funding for tuition and other support
- Comfortable with training environment and manufacturing facility
- Positive attitude
- Family support





Successful Pilot Program

Dawn Bailey

Host-School & Logistics

- Host School is Crawford Tech
- Funding Support
 - America Works
 - Business Education Partnership Grant

100% supported by the Employment and Training Administration of the US Department of Labor as part of an award totaling \$60,320 and \$10,000 America Works Minigrant with 0% and \$0 funded from non-governmental sources.

- Program Coordinator
- Application Process
- Program Details



**The Uniquelyabled
Academy**

*Training people with special skills for specialized
needs in the workforce.*

Community Partners

Host-School

Partner and Grant Admin



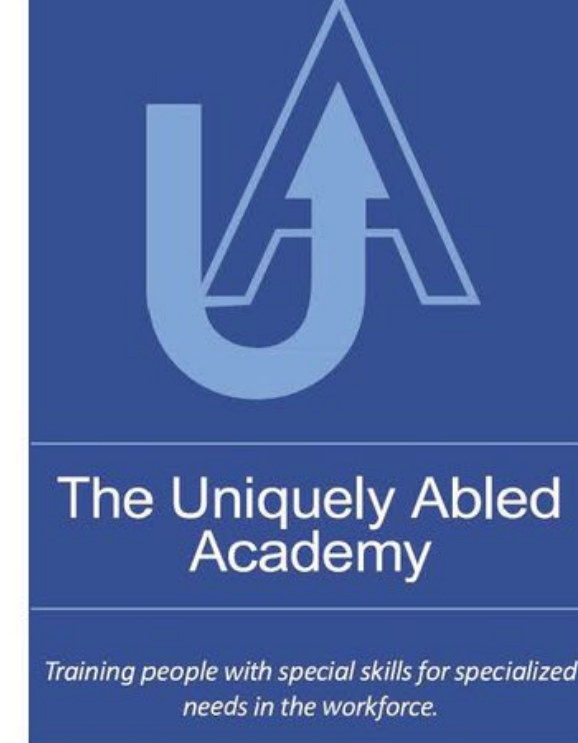
1st Cohort at Crawford Tech

- Sept 2022 -Jan 2023 | Mon - Thurs
- Evening program 2pm -9pm
- 4 Students (started with 5)
- Experience Days
- Job readiness training
- Training support (The Arc)
- Lessons Learned:
 - the day was too long
 - need to brush up on math and measuring
 - instructor assistant needed
- Graduation Feb 1, 2023 - [Video](#)
- Where are they now?



Fall 2023 Cohort

- Start Date: Sept 2023
- Orientation (held August 8)
- Job Shadows and Tours
- Design Your Future by PA CareerLink



A NEW PROGRAM FOR A NEW WAY OF THINKING

Because the words we use shape the way we think, when looking through the lens of the word “disabled,” we tend to think about what’s missing in a person. As a result, we often miss seeing the unique capabilities these people have. The mission of the Uniquely Abled Project is to shift the paradigm of thinking from “disabled” to “uniquely abled”. It starts with an innovative job-training program for the people with high functioning autism – **The Uniquely Abled Academy.**

CNC OPERATOR TRAINING UAA at Crawford Tech

Designed for individuals on the autism spectrum who are savvy with math and computer skills.



It’s been observed that jobs requiring a high degree of focused attention to detailed repetitive processes, and following clear instructions, are well suited for a person with high functioning autism. These characteristics are a perfect match for operators of CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machines, which are used to shape and cut materials for manufacturing. Today, the manufacturing industry is in short supply of CNC operators. The Uniquely Abled Academy will help meet the demand with a new source of talent.

This Uniquely Abled Academy (UAA) at Crawford Tech program is 100% supported by the Employment and Training Administration of the US Department of Labor as part of an award totaling \$60,320 and \$10,000 AmericaWorks Minigrant with 0% and 50 funded from non-governmental sources.



Crawford County Career & Technical Center

For more information, contact Program Coordinator, Dawn Bailey at: dbailey@nwirc.org





A New UAA Program

Tacie Thomas

Host-School & Logistics

- Host School is Erie County Community College (EC3)
- Funding Support
 - Erie Community Foundation
 - Business Education Partnership Grant

Supported in part by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor as part of an award totaling \$60,320.00. 37% (\$19,000.00) with federal funding, which is 34% of the total award, and 63% (\$32,000.00) funded by non-governmental sources via a grant from the Erie Community Foundation.

- Program Coordinator
- Application Process



ERIE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PA



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Partner and Grant Admin



Driving Impact for Manufacturers



**Autism
Society**
Northwestern
Pennsylvania



The Erie
Community
Foundation

Helping today... Shaping tomorrow.

Fall 2023 Cohort

- Start Date: August 21
- Training facility at Erie County Technical School
- Job Shadows and Tours
- Job readiness training
- Other supports

The Uniquely Abled Academy at EC3

WHO: Designed for individuals, ages 18+ with level one autism, (or 18 years old by program completion).

WHAT: Students will learn to program, set up, operate CNC machines, use quality control instruments, perform shop mathematics, and blueprint reading. Graduating with both college credits and a CNC Operator/Machinist certificate, students will qualify for several entry level positions, including machinist and CNC operator.

WHEN: Monday – Friday, from 3:00 PM – 7:15 PM
August 21, 2023 – December 15, 2023
January 15th – May 31st, 2024
(2 semesters) with a winter break

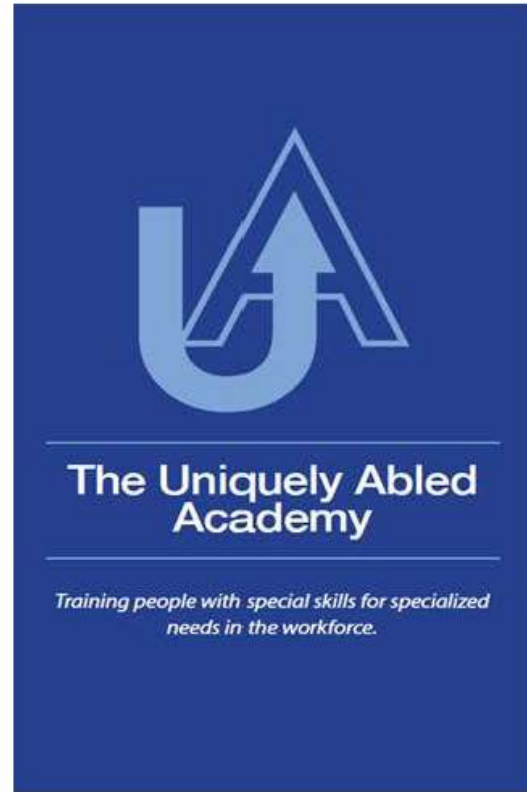
WHERE: Erie County Community College (EC3)

WHY: A New Program for a New Way of Thinking: The mission of the Uniquely Abled Project is to shift the paradigm of thinking from “disabled” to “uniquely abled.” It starts with an innovative job-training program geared towards individuals with high functioning autism – The Uniquely Abled Academy.

HOW MUCH: Your Cost: **\$1,735 TOTAL** (tuition and fees) possible** out-of-pocket expense
Typical Cost \$3,175 (tuition & fees)

*Currently, Erie County residents will have tuition covered by the EC3 Empowerment Grant, which is expected to continue through the FALL 2023 semester, however **students are still responsible for applicable fees.**

**Additional funding may be available for qualified candidates through the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). Call us for more information if cost is a barrier. We can help make this possible for eligible students.



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Call to Action!

- Think about previous students who might be good candidates and how to reach them
- Start talking with students about a manufacturing career path as they are doing career and transition exploration
- Distribute info about the UAA programs





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QUESTIONS?

