Meet Bobby Veros – a UCLA "superfan" who enjoys all things sports and eventually would like to become a sports broadcaster. Bobby was introduced to the Head Coach of the UCLA Women’s Basketball team in fall 2015 during the Health & Athletics themed Three-Pillars, One University (3P1U) event sponsored by the UCLA Volunteer Center. A few months later when Bobby joined the staff of the UCLA Women’s Basketball team as an equipment-manager intern, he was a bit intimidated. “I was shy at the beginning, and so I started out slow,” he says. The Pathway at UCLA Extension student soon got comfortable, and established a routine working directly with Head Coach Cori Close.

“The coach always knows what she needs, because it’s her team.” Veros recalls. “Every morning, I’d go to her when she was writing at the whiteboard, and I’d ask her, ‘What am I doing today?’ And she’d tell me, ‘This, this, and this.’”

Close, for her part, appreciated his energy and enthusiasm. “Having Bobby with us this season was a great addition,” she says. “He brought energy, passion, and dedication to his duties as a manager, and we got more out of having him around our program than I can possibly describe. I love partnering with Pathway.”
Pathway at UCLA Extension is a two-year college program for students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, offering a blend of educational, social, and vocational experiences. On campus, Pathway students attend classes and participate in the many social, recreational, and cultural activities of a major university.

Decades ago, higher education and meaningful employment opportunities for special education students were relatively non-existent. Many have helped pave the way to demand equality and advocate for policy change. With the support of a dedicated Advisory Board, founding Director, Eric Latham, launched Pathway’s first set of classes in 2006, making UCLA a pioneer in the field of post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities, and the first of its kind at a major UC research institution.

A lot has changed since the inaugural days as the program continues to evolve and move toward the goal of full-inclusion, emulating that of a typical college experience. Work experiences like Veros' internship with the basketball team are an integral part of the Pathway experience, says Rachel Grazer, Vocational Services Coordinator with Pathway.

Veros is the first student to intern with the UCLA Women’s Basketball team, and has held a diverse array of other internship positions, including stints at the John Wooden Center, the UCLA Lab School, and the Special Olympics World Summer Games. He has also done a job shadow with the Pac-12 Network, which led to some contracted opportunities providing technical assistance at select games.

Grazer, who has been working closely with Bobby on his journey to independence shares that, "He's had a phenomenal experience, and I have enjoyed working with him and being an observer of all his successes."

As these jobs might indicate, Veros has a passion for sports, and hopes to build a career in sports broadcasting. Grazer and the rest of the Pathway team have sought to create work situations that line up with Veros' goals – as they do for all Pathway students.

Veros, a spring 2016 graduate, says he's enjoyed the Pathway experience. "I've been learning a lot, and just being on campus is cool," he says.

In addition to everything else he learned, his time with the women's basketball team taught him a lot about basketball. "But my shooting's still not very good," he admits with a smile.

For more information about Pathway at UCLA Extension, visit the website at: education.uclaextension.edu/pathway