All Are Welcome

Our Inclusion Journey at
The School of Saints Faith, Hope & Charity
Winnetka, IL
Where does it all start?

- All Are Welcome Video
- A vision that all students have a jagged learning profile.
- The belief that all are invited to a seat at the table.
- A personal reflection or encounter with special needs.
- The ability to think out of the box.
- The desire to do God’s work.
- What brings you here?
- What is your personal story?
- It all starts with YOU!
Identifying a Problem

• Red Cross Babysitting Certification (12-years old)
• Missy—cerebral palsy
• Spent time getting to know her and realized we were all the same on the inside.
• Why did she have to take a yellow school bus and go to a different school than all of us?
Holy Thursday, April 9, 2009

- My Personal Story Began
- Morning Prayer Service
- Business at Usual
- Check-in at Evanston Northshore Hospital
- Diagnosis of Down Syndrome
- Reaction to Doctor’s Questions
- Article about Burke Scholar Program at Notre Dame College Prep
Lessons Learned from Experience

1. Business as usual
2. No instruction manual necessary
3. Kids are the best at inclusion
4. Kids with special needs help all of us to be our best selves
5. Parents of children with special needs usually have very realistic expectations and just want a chance at a seat at the table to learn among typical developing peers in faith-filled setting
Patience, Tolerance, Acceptance, and an Eye for the Underdog

He has taught us that kids with special needs learn from exposure to typical developing peers.

He taught us that there is nothing we cannot do because of special needs.

Ryan has taught us the meaning of teamwork and good sportsmanship.

He taught us that he is worthy of the honor of being a ring bearer.

He taught us faith, hope, love, and loyalty.
Life Lessons
College Ready vs. Heaven Ready

• While not measured by any Common Core standard or on any college admittance test, they are the skills that will set our students apart and prepare them for something far greater than college.

• Our typical developing students will be better friends, citizens, college roommates, coworkers, spouses and parents.

• The chances of students in our schools today being affected in some way by special needs in the future is very real—are we preparing them?
PK3-Grade 8 Inclusive Catholic School
Where We Started:
School of SS. Faith, Hope and Charity
Learning Lab Profile

• Learning Lab started in 1999.
• Was privately funded by parents who wanted their children to be included, mostly LD and dyslexia
• 2 teachers who supported students in a pull-out program and a school nurse helped to monitor students with allergies, diabetes and cystic fibrosis. Proportionate share money was used to supply a speech and language pathologist.
• Eventually grew to 2.5 learning support teachers, 1 gifted and talented teacher, a reading specialist, school counselor and 2 speech and language teachers
• Catholic schools often have lower enrollment than their local public schools, so there is more teacher time.
• Enrollment can increase by allowing families to stay together in our school—parents at one time thought that if there was a learning challenge, they would not be welcome at our school
Where We Are Today:
The School of Saints Faith, Hope and Charity
All Are Welcome Program

• 339 total students
• 23 students with ICEPS
• 13 students with Accommodation Plans
• 1 student with Down Syndrome
• 4 medically complicated
• 27 speech and language issues
• Some that are likely on the spectrum, but not (yet) diagnosed
Getting Students on Board: We Choose Kind. We Learn about Differences.
Providing a Seat at the Table

• **Opening our doors to Dee**

• **Helping her parents provide the faith-based education she would be entitled to had she not been born with a disability**

• **Being realistic about what we could provide**

• **The support that we offer her and how it differs from public school**
How Did We Get Where We Are Today?

Engaging Stakeholders In Our Vision For Inclusive Education

- Special Assemblies and Programs (My Mary Cate, Jeff Hobbs, Nicholas James Vujicic, is an Australian preacher and motivational speaker born with Tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder characterized by the absence of all four limbs.

- New Trier Transition Program

- Misericordia Partnership

- Loyola University All Are Welcome Program /Leading Inclusive Catholic Certificate Program

- Aspire Partnership

- Teach Together Chicago  http://www.teachingtogetherchicago.org

Engaging Students

- Yearly Themes
- Celebrate Differences
- Choose Kind
- Kindness Matters
- No One Eats Alone
- Buddy Benches
- Second Step (SEL) Program - empathy training
- New Trier Students
- Miss Francesca - Teach Together Chicago
- Misericordia Art Collaborative
- House System - promoting strengths and acknowledging special attributes of fellow members
Misericordia Art Collaborative

- [https://fhcschool.smugmug.com/FHC-20152016-All/Videos/Misericordia-FHC-Art/](https://fhcschool.smugmug.com/FHC-20152016-All/Videos/Misericordia-FHC-Art/)
New Trier Transition Program Partnership
Engaging Faculty and Staff

- Shared Learning from LU’s All Are Welcome Program
- Sharing personal stories—Katie’s son, Dan Carpenter—inclusion assistant
- Moved from a pull-out to push-in /pull-out model, normalizing extra support across all curricula
- Professional Development from Aspire—OT and Speech Red Flags, Behavior Report Cards, CICO
- Strengthened the foundation (curriculum, instruction, behavior, assessment)
- Flexible Seating
Engaging Parents

• Weekly Blogs
• Positive Parenting Workshops
• Parent Ambassador Training
• School Board
• PTO

• Shared inclusion stories of how students are bringing out the best in each other
Stakeholder Fears and Misconceptions

- Fear of the unknown
- How to react appropriately to situations
- How to deal with parents of student with special needs
- How to implement special accommodations to be effective
- How to measure progress
- Fear of failure to engage student in successful learning
- Fear of failure to engage classmates with student in academic and social activities
- Fear of failing to meet set standards and goal
- Fear of having adequate resources
Where Do You Begin?

- Strengthen your foundation—Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Behavioral Supports

- Think out of the box—Who do you have in your building who can help? No resource teacher—librarian? PE teacher?

- Let go of fear

- Preach the message

- Realize the value of inclusion on typical developing students and prioritize it as a budget item

- Expose stakeholders to differences
Exploring and Visiting Other Schools With Successful Models

- The Benefits of Networking
- Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE)
- Visit from Mary Brogan
- St. John the Evangelist, Silver Spring, MD
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Bethesda, MD
- Thoughts on both schools
- “Catholic school teachers teach with heart.”
Understanding the Catholic Social Justice Teachings

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PheU7uiluCk
Catholic Social Justice Teaching

As Catholic Schools, we are called to build the Kingdom of God, which includes all His children, regardless of their abilities, challenges, or physical condition. We are required to look at children with the eyes of Christ, and to love and accept the beauty of their differences.
Inclusive Catholic Schools

• There can be no separate Church for people with disabilities. We are one flock that serves a single shepherd.
  • USCCB Pastoral Statement 1978

• No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.
  • Pope Benedict XVI
Each one of us has a treasure inside.

Pope Francis

Let the children come to Me.

Jesus

A bruised reed He will not break.

Matthew 12:20

Our Call to Create a Just Society
Inclusion is an effort to make sure that diverse learners—those with disabilities, different languages and cultures, different homes and family lives, different ways of learning—are exposed to teaching strategies that expose them as individual learners.

Inclusive schools ask teachers to provide appropriate individualized support and services to all students without the stigmatization that comes with separation.
All Are Welcome

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat;

A banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;

As we share in Christ the feast that frees us; all are welcome in this place.

Marty Haugen
The severity of one’s disability does not determine their level of potential. The greatest barrier persons with disabilities have to overcome are not steps or curbs, but expectations.

Karen Clay
The Benefits to Typical Developing Students are Immeasurable
A Real-life Story of Inclusion

http://www.fullinclusionforcatholicschools.org/preview/patricks-inclusion-journey/
We are the Catholic Church. We are the body of Christ. When one hurts, we all hurt.
We are the Catholic Church.

We believe that all have a fundamental right to life, nourishment, shelter, health care, education, and employment.
We are the Catholic Church.

We believe that we have a moral obligation to provide a preferential option for the marginalized.
We are the Catholic Church. We believe in the dignity of the human person. All people are created in the image and likeness of God and do not lose their dignity due to disability, poverty, age, lack of success, or race.
Go to fullinclusionforcatholicschools.org to meet Gretchen, Patrick and Cristina and discover how their schools see these children through the eyes of Christ!
For stories of Catholic Schools that have said, “YES!” visit National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion on social media.
Catholic School Teachers Teach with Heart!

They are some of the most talented, resourceful teachers.

They are equipped to thinking out of the box and meeting students’ needs with limited resources.
A win-win situation!
We give 100%, and receive 200% in return.
Acceptance starts with you.

Can we count you in?
Trees

When you go out into the woods and you look at trees, you see all these different trees. And some of them are bent, and some of them are straight, and some of them are evergreens, and some of them are whatever. And you look at the tree and you allow it. You appreciate it. You see why it is the way it is. You sort of understand that it didn’t get enough light, and so it turned that way. And you don’t get all emotional about it. You just allow it. You appreciate the tree.
The minute you get near humans, you lose all that. And you are constantly saying, “You’re too this, or I’m too this.” That judging mind comes in. And so I practice turning people into trees, which means appreciating them just the way they are. Ram Dass
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