



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR
Special Needs

*Celebrating the Season
with Simple Acts of Kindness*

While the pandemic has interrupted many of our traditions, the Christmas spirit is ever present at Saint Catherine Center. We are finding new ways to celebrate and recognize the many gifts around us.

This month, we've been highlighting "simple acts of kindness" that happen every day at the Center. When staff see individuals being kind or helping each other, they have been writing a note on a star which is then posted on our bulletin board. "Anna got paper towels for Kari"; "Nyah picked up Luke's coat for him"; "Sami shared her book with Mr. Terrell"; "Vinny held the door for his classmates"; "Natalie helped her friend Eve"; "Patrick N vacuums our classroom every day!"; just to name a few. Noting these simple acts is an easy way to represent important growth in social engagement and independence for our students and adults. This recognition helps to sustain our community that is founded on kindness and caring.

The bulletin board is filling up with stars. It is the simple things in life that usually bring us the most joy.



*Inspiring Creativity and
Building Relationships*

When the Center reopened to in-person services in July, the Adult Services Program was separated into smaller cohorts to allow for more social distancing. "At first we were worried it might be an isolating experience," said Helen Burland, Executive Director. "But we've discovered that this has fostered stronger relationships."



Staff and participants have the opportunity to get to know each other better and offer more individualized programming. “We’re learning new things about each individual,” said Brady Cronin, Director of the Adult Services Program. “For instance, since Tyler has been able to stretch out on a special mat during yoga, he’s become more involved both physically and verbally.” Ronald, who transitioned to the Adult program this fall, has also become more engaged as the members of Team 3 learn new things every day about his skills in multiplication, reading, puzzles, and exercise.

Staff have collaborated in smaller groups, resulting in a burst of creativity. The holiday decorating is the most recent evidence of this. From a “Selfie with an Elf” door to garlands of paper light bulbs and personalized ornaments, staff have engaged with our adult participants to “deck the halls,” making each room, door, and bulletin board at the Center festive, unique and fun.

“What started as a response to the pandemic has emerged as a powerful lesson in the value of remaining flexible and hopeful in a time of change,” Helen said.

[Enjoy a gallery of our holiday artwork!](#)

Donors Respond to Giving Tuesday

The outpouring of generosity on Giving Tuesday, December 1, led by a match challenge from the **Valerie Ann Luff Foundation**, was inspiring.

We are so grateful to all who partnered with us to meet the match and more! This support showed solidarity with our mission and will be designated toward our operating costs, such as transportation, scholarships, and our activity fund.

We also wish to thank **J. McLaughlin** in Darien for sponsoring a November “Holiday Sip & Shop” with hosts Margaret Smith and



Laura Grozier. Fifteen percent of proceeds raised were donated to the Center.

There is still time to [make a donation before year end](#).



Christmas Pageant Paused in 2020

While there will be no Christmas Pageant this year, we invite you to [enjoy some photos of years past](#) as we look forward to being together next year!

**We wish you and your family a Christmas
filled with *Joy & Gratitude!***

