

August 2018



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

State Approval Renewed for Academy

We're thrilled to officially receive our renewed approval as a private special education program for the next five years by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The intensive process included a one-year self-study and two site visits—and the Academy was approved with flying colors!

Executive Director Helen Burland noted that the site reviewers felt that the existence of the Adult Program at the Center enhanced the Academy, and vice versa. "I think the reviewers had a greater appreciation for what needs to happen at the school level to provide for an effective transition to adulthood. And the Adult Program benefits from a deeper understanding of where students come from and how we might have to make adjustments to ease their entry into the program. It's a win-win situation."



CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

"Patience, a Sense of Humor, and a Loving Heart": A Typical Day in the Adult Program

On any particular day in the Adult Day Program at Saint Catherine Center, what you'll notice is a sense of purposeful activity—and beneath that, a feeling of warmth and respect.

"Consistency and a calm atmosphere are key to having a 'great day'," notes Brenda DeMattio, Director. "A lot of factors go into maintaining that—starting with staff. Patience, a sense of humor, and a loving heart are required—all things you can't teach. Our staff work really



well together. They are awesome.”

The Day Begins

Staff arrive by 7:30 a.m. to review the day’s schedule and coordinate transportation runs for the day. Five vans, two of which are wheelchair-equipped, head out each morning with two staff to pick-up sites in Westport, Weston, Trumbull, Bridgeport, and Fairfield. **[Read the full story on the website...](#)**



Academy Welcomes New Principal

Eric Spencer joins us this month as Principal of Saint Catherine Academy. He has a long history in education and mental health, most recently as Principal of Nathan Hale-Ray High School of East Haddam & Moodus, Conn. Eric earned a Master’s of Education in Counseling from the University of Massachusetts (Boston) and his administrator certificate from Sacred Heart University.

“I’ve been interested in working in a Catholic school environment for a long time,” Eric says, “and I’m excited to come on board at Saint Catherine. I look forward to meeting all the teachers and students and getting back to school.”

Stay tuned for more about Eric in the coming months.



School starts Thursday, August 30th!

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Saint Catherine Academy

Saint Catherine Adult Day Program

