



## *Special Success: Meet the Athletes!*

A willingness to try new things has brought about some exciting new experiences for two young women in our Adult Program.

### ***Cheering with the Stars***

For the past four years, Tierra has spent Sunday afternoons with her teammates on the [CT Stars Inspiration Team](#) working on their cheer routines. “I like the dancing part,” Tierra says, “especially when we jump up in a ‘V!’”

Tierra’s mother, Nicole Latimer-Livingston, is assistant coach of the team, as well as president of the CT Youth Spirit Conference and its local association, Bridgeport Charge, which has won four national championships. “Tierra would attend practices and competitions with me and would always ask if she could do cheerleading as well,” Nicole says. So when American Youth Cheer (AYC) created the Inspiration Division for young people with cognitive or physical disabilities, Nicole got Tierra involved. She participates in three to four events a year.

Early this past November, the CT Stars Inspiration Team travelled to Kissimmee, Florida, to show off their skills in the AYC National Championships. Tierra enjoyed staying in a hotel and eating out in restaurants. When asked about the performance, she said, “I wasn’t nervous because I was happy.”

Her mom concurs. “Tierra absolutely *loves* cheering.”

### ***Triumphing with the Team***

In September, Sami competed in her first triathlon—the Westport Tri—with help from members of [myTeam Triumph](#), a nationwide program that brings volunteer athletes together with people with disabilities to help them compete and enjoy endurance events like triathlons and



road races. MyTeam Triumph pulled Sami in an inflatable boat on Long Island Sound, then moved her into a special chair which was first pulled by a bike, and then pushed over the finish line. The event, Sami's 9th competition, was featured recently in Dan Woog's "06880" [blog](#).



Although Sami is nonverbal, her mother Lori can tell she likes participating in the events from how animated she becomes when she sees her new "angel" friends. "One of my most important goals for Sami is that she is an active participant in her community," Lori says. "This group has been heaven-sent to us...Sami has made new friends whom she now runs into all over town. She has a whole new community of love and support."

*Parents: If you have a Special Success story to share about your Saint Catherine student or young adult, contact [Virginia Weir](#) at the Center and we may include it in an upcoming e-newsletter.*



## *The Christmas Pageant: "God Wanted This Amazing News to Get Around"*

*"Who would have guessed that the King of Kings, Jesus the Christ, would be born upon the hay in a stable? God wanted this amazing news to get around."*

Saint Catherine Academy welcomed Christmas with music and a lot of love in our annual Christmas Pageant, "The Message of an Angel," on December 21st. More than 200 family members and friends attended, including Bishop Caggiano, who remarked, "This pageant is the finest homily to show the meaning of Christmas."



There was a role for everyone in the script written by Sr. Eileen Boffa, directed by Sr. Cheryl Driscoll, and assisted by all the Academy teachers and assistants. The Angel Gabriel (Anna) narrated the beloved story, joined by Philip, Jack, Luke, and Ron as shepherds; and Donte beaming as both shining star and one of the three

kings along with Fabricio and Frank. The band of angels (Lizabeth, Nyah, and Lindsay) brought tidings of great joy to Mary (Jennifer), Joseph (Jaheim), and the newborn Jesus (beautifully “performed” by Ella).

Each student presented their own personal “gift” to Jesus—including “joy,” “helping,” “kindness,” “singing,” “smiling,” “affection,” “friendly,” “a loving heart”—and a rousing “Enthusiasm!” exclaimed by Ron.

The event was followed by a reception and visit from Santa, hosted by members of the Order of Malta, and the Knights of Columbus.

At the conclusion, Helen asked guests to consider what *their* gift to Jesus would be this Christmas. “Each of us is an innkeeper,” she said. “You have to decide whether you will make room for Jesus.”

It’s a consideration not just for the Christmas season, but for all year.

[View more photos.](#)



## Reflecting On What's Important

As we start the New Year, a time of “resolutions” and new beginnings, it’s a good time to remember our “Core Values,” driving what we do and how we do it. Each value speaks to the individualized attention that makes [Saint Catherine Center](#) special.

***We respect the dignity and diversity of each person.***

***We serve all races, ethnicities, faiths, and economic backgrounds.***

***We focus on the total well-being of each individual we serve.***

***We create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere, where everyone feels a sense of belonging.***

***We celebrate the abilities and successes of each individual.***

***We seek to build interpersonal relationships in a nurturing learning***



**community.**

***We bring hope and joy to our students, young adults, families, staff, and community partners.***

Thank YOU for supporting us! We're looking forward to another wonderful year, helping every student and young adult in our programs progress to the greatest level of independence possible.



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