



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR
Special Needs



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE CAMPAIGN

Community. Life skills. Relationships. Purpose.

Everyone wants to learn, belong, and celebrate their abilities and successes. This is what we offer our students and young adults at Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs. Rooted in values that affirm the dignity of every person, Saint Catherine Center fosters the educational, spiritual, and social well-being of people with disabilities while helping them progress to the greatest level of independence possible.

Often the most vulnerable among us are able to teach us the most about the importance and value of caring for others. In this spirit, a small group of individuals came together over 20 years ago with a vision to create a faith-based educational program that would welcome children whose learning needs were special. From a small school with four students occupying two rooms at the Catholic Center in Bridgeport, Connecticut, to our comprehensive Center in Fairfield serving 40 students and young adults, Saint Catherine Center has remained rooted in our founding principles while growing to meet the needs of the young people in our community.

There has been an evolution of expectations of what young people with disabilities can accomplish and their place in the community since Saint Catherine Center opened its doors. Advances in assistive technology, a comprehensive focus on wellness, and the need for meaningful, authentic experiences calls us to reimagine programming with an expanded footprint to create an appropriate, welcoming, and inspiring learning environment for all.

Today, Saint Catherine Center is comprised of three programs:

- **Saint Catherine Academy**, founded in 1999, offers an individualized alternative educational program for children ages 5 to 22. Small classes allow for integrated learning with a focus on academics, the development of life skills, and vocational experiences.
- Recognizing the need for continuing support after completing a school program, the **Adult Services Program** was opened in 2015, offering opportunities in a supportive environment to develop skills and build relationships with peers.
- Through **parish and community support**, the Center encourages the spiritual growth and inclusion of people with disabilities in schools and parishes and offers social opportunities for individuals and their families.

The **Building for the Future Campaign** will provide the resources needed to transform the learning experience, strategically expand our physical footprint, and build upon a solid financial foundation that will ensure Saint Catherine Center continues to thrive in years to come.

OUR CORE VALUES

We respect the dignity and diversity of each person.

We serve people of all races, ethnicities, faiths, and economic backgrounds.

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

We create a supportive and welcoming atmosphere, where each person feels a sense of belonging.

We celebrate the abilities and successes of each person.

We seek to build interpersonal relationships in a nurturing community.

We bring hope and joy to our students, clients, families, staff, and community partners.

EVOLVING PROGRAMS – \$2,000,000

Integrated, intentional learning is the basis for all activities at Saint Catherine Center. As the needs of our students and adults have evolved, so has our vision for the Center's future. This vision includes:

Reimagined social enterprise programs that focus on learning and executing real-world business operations.



Imagine young people working together to grow vegetables and flowers in an onsite greenhouse, or making baked goods in a commercial kitchen.

New after-hours programming that features social and spiritual activities and skill-building programs.



Imagine young people gathering in the evening for movies or games, or families meeting to exchange ideas and support each other.

A new transition program for older students at Saint Catherine Academy.



Imagine students ages 18 to 21 engaging in meaningful preparation of life beyond school.

Expanded vocational and volunteer opportunities for all participants.



Imagine more volunteer worksites throughout Fairfield County, with more opportunities to build skills and interact in real-world settings.

A newly established Reserve Investment account to support our current program needs and modifications while protecting the long term vision and sustainability of the Center.



Imagine the freedom to respond to needs as they arise in the future.

“We support Saint Catherine's because we believe in its mission to respect, support, and love each child as a unique and valued gift, and to encourage each person's potential. Over many years as a volunteer, I have witnessed the loving, caring, and respectful community that is Saint Catherine's. It is a joyful, happy, and fun place to learn and grow!”

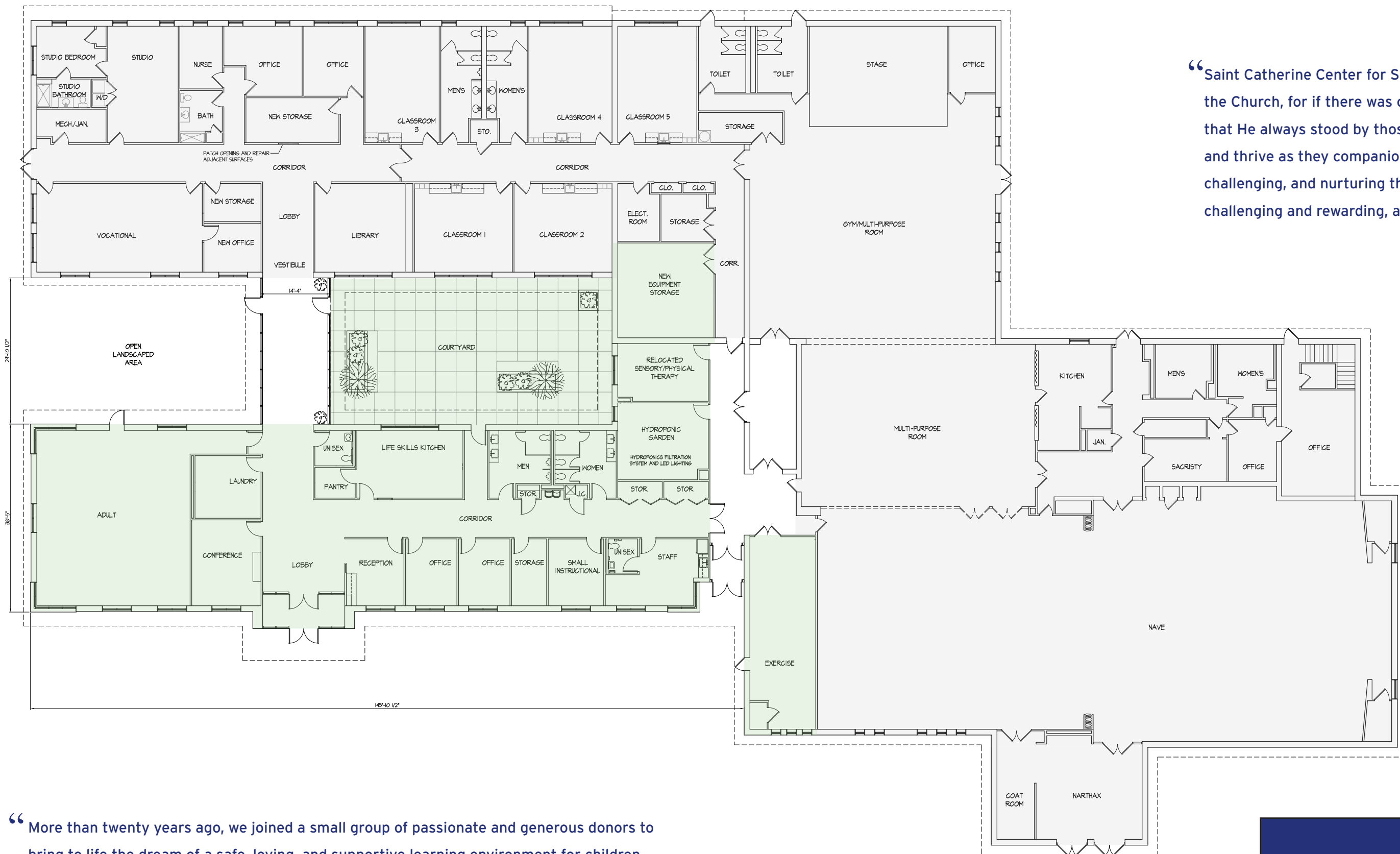
Virginia Dwyer-Aoyama, Volunteer and Donor

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

EXPANDING OUR FOOTPRINT – \$3,000,000

This vision calls for an expansion and renovation of our current space, more than doubling our current footprint. Opened before the Adult Services Program was conceived, we have outgrown the current home on the grounds of Holy Cross Church. Originally designed in 2007 for the needs of Saint Catherine Academy, the space no longer meets the needs of the current programs. With more than twice as much space, the Center will have room to grow into the future:

- Additional room to intentionally **increase enrollment in both programs** without sacrificing our commitment to each individual we serve.
- Authentic learning spaces that will provide **real-world vocational experiences**.
- Flexible space for **expanded evening and weekend social activities**.
- Additional space for **small group instruction, activities, and collaboration**.
- **Redesigned parking** to accommodate Center vehicles.
- **Storage spaces** for adaptive devices like wheelchairs and standers, and for records to meet program compliance requirements.
- Renovated and new areas to accommodate more **exercise and independent living activities**.
- **A courtyard** for outdoor classroom and contemplative activities.



“Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs is at the very heart of the mission of the Church, for if there was one thing that characterized Our Lord’s Ministry, it was that He always stood by those who were vulnerable. I have watched the Center grow and thrive as they companion children and young adults with disabilities, teaching, challenging, and nurturing them to become as independent as possible. It is both challenging and rewarding, and I look forward to this new phase of growth.”

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport

Current Building	6,200 square feet
New Building	6,500 square feet
Total New Footprint	12,700 square feet

“More than twenty years ago, we joined a small group of passionate and generous donors to bring to life the dream of a safe, loving, and supportive learning environment for children with special needs. The early years required steadfast support. Knowing today that this was a wise and beautiful investment is heartwarming. Now we are called to look forward, to plan for the future, to guarantee that the efforts of the early supporters will continue to flourish. We have been touched by the stories of the children, young people, and their families—and we are called to walk with them in their journeys. We support the mission of this campaign.”

Britta and Denis Nayden, Donors

NEW / RENOVATED SPACES	
Instructional Space ▶ small instruction rooms; large project room	1,600 sq.ft.
Life Skills Learning Environments ▶ kitchen with pantry; laundry room; hydroponic greenhouse	800 sq.ft.
Exercise and Therapy Rooms	750 sq.ft.
Courtyard ▶ Outdoor classroom and contemplative area	1,700 sq.ft.
Storage areas	700 sq.ft.
Bathroom Facilities	400 sq.ft.
Administrative Space ▶ staff room; meeting space; offices, lobby	950 sq.ft.

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

To realize this vision for the future, Saint Catherine Center is dedicated to raising \$5 million through the **Building for the Future Campaign**, which will be applied in the following way:

- \$3 million to finance the construction of the new facility and renovation of some existing spaces.
 - \$2 million to expand programming and establish a reserve investment fund.
- ▶ *Imagine a solid financial base that will allow the Center to thrive for years to come.*

WILL YOU JOIN US?

This is a defining moment in the history of Saint Catherine Center. Our Building for the Future Campaign is the driving force to a more meaningful and authentic experience. With a goal to open the new Center in 2023, your participation will provide transformative support for the young people and families who come to us to learn, grow, and thrive. Join Saint Catherine Center in charting a bold course forward to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young adults with special needs.

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