

March 2024



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

The Halo Café: A New Recipe for Learning

At the heart of Saint Catherine Center, a new medium of learning has emerged—The Halo Café, a food cart run by the students of Mr. Jim's class. But this isn't just any café; it is a dynamic classroom project where students learn and practice essential life skills each step of the way.

"It's a fun way to practice real-life skills in a controlled and comfortable environment," said Jim Winebrenner. From creating a menu to setting prices, collecting orders and shopping to gather ingredients and supplies, every aspect serves as a lesson in practical skills.

The weeks before opening day, preparations were in full swing. Some students assembled bags complete with coffee K-Cups, cream, sugar, and stirrers. Others sorted the orders into piles and tallied the totals.

After weeks of anticipation and preparation, the grand opening of the Halo Café arrived on Friday, March 8th. The kitchen and hallways were busy as each student prepared for their job. Ian, Keona, and Anna aided staff members cooking breakfast orders. They gathered the eggs, cheese and rolls, then labeled the completed orders. "Order up!" staff and students exclaimed as they placed a completed order on the cart for delivery. Bradley, Frank, Ian, Luke, Melissa, and Nyah helped complete the orders by making the coffee and putting the premade coffee accompaniments with each order. Finally, the students split into two groups for delivery, receiving payment, and providing change. With each transaction, the student's confidence soared; their abilities validated by each satisfied customer. "I like the Halo Café, I had a ham, egg and cheese sandwich and coffee. It tasted good, I would order again," said Abby, an Adult Program participant and happy customer.

The Halo Café not only served coffee, but brewed a sense of community and self-



assurance. Here's to honing in on each skill one cup at a time. Next up, lunch is on the menu!



Enhancing Independence and Mobility

The Role of Physical Therapy at Saint Catherine Center



At Saint Catherine Academy, physical therapy (PT) plays a pivotal role in enhancing the lives of our students with diverse needs. With a focus on addressing mobility, range of motion, strength, endurance, coordination, balance, and safety, physical therapy promotes independence and essential skills used within the school environment and broader community.



Through tailored exercises, interventions, and modalities, our physical therapist works collaboratively with students, staff, and families to address specific challenges and achieve personalized goals. At Saint Catherine's, our dedicated therapist applies evidence-based practices to support students in reaching their full potential. "Physical therapy isn't a one-size-fits-all approach; it's a personalized journey for each student, tailored to their unique abilities. While the exercises and methods vary, the overarching goal remains the same; to enhance mobility, foster independence, confidence and promote essential life skills," says Stacy Richer, MSPT.



For Izzy, physical therapy focuses on stretching, safety techniques, and mastering motor skills. These exercises aren't only about physical improvement but gaining the confidence and autonomy to navigate daily activities. "With the new layout of our school, we are able to walk laps around the hallways with Izzy; this has helped him by calming his sensory sensitivity releasing built up energy and has greatly improved his focus in class," says Sabrina Rivera, Academy staff.

Keona's physical therapy journey encompasses many activities such as throwing and catching, balance, safely navigating obstacles, and riding a bicycle. Biking is a seemingly simple activity that holds many benefits including enhancing gross



motor skills like pumping one's legs, developing grip strength, coordination, balance, and sensory processing.

Many students have favorite exercises, for example Izzy enjoys balance and strength exercises on the trampoline and exercise balls. Vinny has been focused on improving coordination, balance, and core strength. He enjoys movement class and playing soccer with his friends at recess.



Luke has been working to enhance both his walking and wheelchair mobility. With practice, he is able to walk longer distances more confidently and navigate in his wheelchair with more independence. Along with targeted exercises focused on throwing and catching a ball, Luke's progress extends beyond the therapy room. His increased confidence in mobility has translated into more active participation with his friends at recess and movement class. "It has been so great to see Luke play more actively during recess and interact more with his peers. In movement class he wants to join in and participate in activities," says Danny Kovacs, Academy staff.



Each student's progress isn't measured in terms of big physical milestones, it is about the holistic development of their capabilities and confidence. At Saint Catherine Academy, physical therapy is a vital component of a student's journey toward independence and enriched quality of life.

Order of Malta Retreat

Making use of our New Community Room



On Saturday February 24th, Saint Catherine Center was proud to host over 40 members of the CT Order of Malta for a Mass and Lenten Morning of Recollection.

The event, led by Rev. Ian Jeremiah, was centered around the significance of personal prayer which fostered a sense of peace and reflection among all who attended. We were honored to provide a space for the gathering as it allowed us to welcome our community partners and utilize our recently renovated facility to foster connections and enrich spiritual experiences. Laura Grozier, Executive Director, offered attendees a tour of our facility.



Click [here](#) to watch a short slideshow video of recent activities our Adult Program held in our new community room!



Follow us on Facebook!

[Saint Catherine Center](#)
[Saint Catherine Academy](#)