



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

Practice, Patience & Perseverance

Authentic vocational experiences enhance the quality of life for young people with disabilities by creating a stronger sense of purpose and independence as well as developing transferable skills to be used in the community and daily life. Students at Saint Catherine Academy over the age of sixteen attend vocational worksites with partnering organizations and businesses. The goal is to prepare our students to be productive, independent, and participating members of the community to the extent that each individual's abilities allow. Students participate in a variety of jobs and settings such as office work, sorting and packaging, assembly line activities, cleaning, baking, assisting a preschool and more.

Our students take pride in their work. They are dedicated to improve their skills and motivated to be valued contributors. At one of our partnering worksites, Vazzy's Italian Restaurant in Bridgeport, students assemble pizza boxes, wipe down tables and chairs, prepare the silverware and other assorted tasks. **Anna**, a student in Saint Catherine Academy, enjoyed her vocational programming during school so much that she was offered a position to work at Vazzy's Restaurant on Saturdays as well. "I practice a lot to help me be a good worker. I like it when I work there because it makes me feel good and happy," **Anna** said.

This week, **Tanisha** joined some classmates at Vazzy's for her first time. Before starting a new jobsite, teachers and job coaches introduce workplace vocabulary, different job opportunities, and hands-on work experience within the school environment to prepare the students for work. Tanisha practiced skills in the classroom then applied them in a real world experience. She did a great job and will continue to practice both at the Academy and at worksites.

Each student is focused on practicing work skills to do their best work. When **Phillip**, an



Academy student, was asked about working he said, "I learned to be careful and slow down. When we do that, we work hard to do a good job." They strive to do their best even if it might be difficult at first.

Mary Claus, a volunteer assisting students at job sites recalls "Phillip had a hard time in the beginning, but with persistence, practice and listening he has really gotten it down." The students gain a sense of accomplishment for the work they do.

Having success at the jobsite carries over to other aspects of their program as well. Darlene Jacobacci, Vocational Coordinator, explains, "Weekly repetition of tasks allows the students to gain tremendous growth in endurance, focus and confidence. With practice, students become happier and efficient workers that continue to develop skills that grow a greater sense of independence."



The Original
Vazzy's
Est. 1993

Expansion Update: Truss the Process



The construction progress for the *Building for the Future* campaign to double the square footage of the Center has been moving along smoothly. The excitement for the completion date has been growing as it quickly approaches in early fall. The structure is expanding as exterior framing take shape.

The flooring has been leveled out and metal reinforcing was placed along with a vapor barrier. A thick level of concrete was then poured for the sturdy foundation of the building floors. Plumbing and draining have continued to be installed. The transformer was relocated and power was switched to a generator with the oversight from representatives from United Illuminating.

Large wooden trusses are being placed as part of the process of constructing the roof. Heavy machinery and a tall crane lifted the trusses high up to be put in place.



Students and Adult participants have enjoyed watching the workers operate the machinery. "I like watching the process and witnessing the changes each week. It is so fun to envision the



new building and all the opportunities that come with it," says Cindy Kydes, Occupational Therapist for the Academy. Anticipation grows as ways to utilize new features of the building are discussed. "I am looking forward to spending time in the new courtyard and being able to use the outdoor space in creative ways," mentions Branden Jackson, Adult Program Team 3 Leader. Other exciting new features include a fully accessible playground, commercial grade kitchen, hydroponic garden, and increased classroom space.



We continue to be flexible during this time and look forward to settling into the new expanded location.

To see more project updates: [View photos of the ongoing project](#)

Joy and Gratitude

SAVE the DATE

Sunday, October 8, 2023

Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs



Make plans now to join us
at the McClinch Family Center at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.
Invitations will be mailed in August.

Congratulations Helen! 2023 Honoree



Foundations in Education recognizes excellence in education and generosity in philanthropic support of Catholic education each year. Congratulations Helen Burland for being the 2023 Honoree! Thank you for being a tireless advocate for students with disabilities.



A Message of Gratitude

**THANK
YOU,
TEACHERS!**

We appreciate
everything you do
today and everyday.



Happy Teacher Appreciation Week! We recognize our amazing teachers and teaching assistants for their hard work and dedication.



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