

October 2022



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

Joy & Gratitude Abound at 2022 Annual Dinner

There was a western flair to the evening as guests sported cowboy hats and boots at our 2022 “Joy & Gratitude” Dinner on Sunday, October 2. More than 250 guests came out to support the Center and enjoy each other’s company at the McClinch Family Center at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Trumbull.

Following the Western theme, tables were decorated with arrangements of sunflowers and zinnias, and blue bandanas for napkins. An active Dinner Committee secured a variety of items for the Live and Silent Auctions, donated by vendors from all over Fairfield County. “The whole event was a wonderful group effort on behalf of a great cause,” said Margaret Smith of Darien, who, with her husband Dan, chaired the event. “I’m so glad that Dan and I were part of it.” [View photos of the evening.](#)

Several participants from the Center’s Adult Program attended, as well as three students from the Academy who attended for the first time. Anna said she liked getting dressed up, and was pleased to see her pastor, Fr. Krzysztof Kuczynski of St. Lawrence Parish in Shelton, at the event. Philip and Vinny both enjoyed socializing with their teachers and meeting other guests. Philip summarized: “Having fun is always good.”

Rev. Robert Kinnally, Vicar General and Pastor of St. Aloysius Parish, offered the invocation. In remarks following dinner, Executive Director Helen Burland compared Saint Catherine Center to a three-legged stool, supported by a dedicated staff, families and participants, and friends and supporters of the Center. “If any one of the legs is shorter or longer, the stool will not stand,” she said, offering thanks to all the guests and sponsors, the Dinner Committee, and Fr. Joseph Marcello and St. Catherine of Siena Parish for providing the venue.

Two individuals from Fairfield were honored at the event (pictured at top): Anne McCrory, Chief Legal and Real Estate Officer for the Diocese, and Charles “Jerry” Hemenway, pediatrician and Center Board member. In presenting him with the Volunteer Service Award, Helen thanked Hemenway for offering his “considerable pediatric



knowledge and community associations” to the Center for more than 20 years, and for being a “steadfast and ardent advocate for children with special needs.”

Anne received the Leadership Award for her role as a key resource and advisor to the Center. Helen thanked her for her “quiet, steady support” and guidance in the incorporation of the Center, ensuring that its growth was accompanied by proper governance and organization. “We are so grateful for her professionalism, compassion, and unwavering support.”

Board members Tony Minopoli and Michael LaBella took on the role of auctioneers for the Live Auction and the Call for Charity, when the generosity of the crowd was shown as donors raised their bid numbers to support the Center’s programs.

Bishop Frank Caggiano could not attend the event, but sent his greetings. “Every day, St. Catherine Center gives witness to the dignity of all God’s children. These young people...have gifts to give us and our community that perhaps you and I don’t have: an innocence of heart, a generosity of spirit, and a deep sense of gratitude for the little things that are done for them.”

“Tonight is a reminder of all that is good around us,” Helen said. “Thank you for bringing your joy to share.”

[View the presentation](#) from the evening



At The Core: Serving all Races and Faiths

When Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs was formed in 2014, the Board of Directors and staff came together to create a set of [Core Values](#) to describe what is important to us and to guide us in our work with young people with disabilities. Over the next months, we will continue to share stories from the Saint Catherine community that show our Core Values in action.

Core Value 2: We serve people of all races, ethnicities, faiths, and economic backgrounds.

If you [look at the faces of our students and adult participants](#), you see a very diverse group of individuals. Likewise, our staff represents a variety of ethnicities, races, and faiths, all of which promotes a culture of acceptance and inclusion. Our community is richer and stronger for the unique perspective that each individual brings.

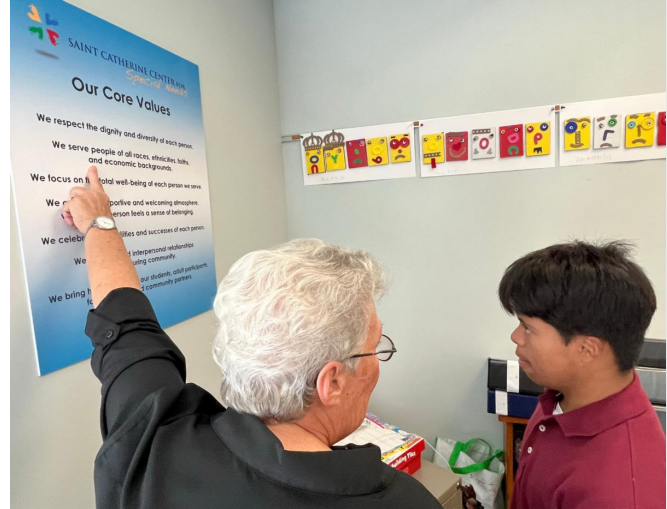
Recently, Sr. Cheryl’s class took some time to

talk about the Core Values. They talked about how everyone is different—they look different, go to different churches. Their family might even speak a different language at home. “We want to be like Jesus and do what he did, which is to love everyone.” Sr. Cheryl said. “So how do we do that?”

“We say nice words to others,” Anna said. “And play with everyone,” Fabricio added.

While Saint Catherine Academy is a Catholic school, both the Academy and our Adult Program welcome individuals of all faiths. Last week, Eve celebrated Yom Kippur with her family. The next day the group enjoyed hearing about her day. “We ate hallah souffle and bagels, and Dad read from the Torah,” she reported.

In the Christmas Pageant last year, Kari, who is Hindu, played the role of the Star of Bethlehem. Her parents were pleased that she was included.



Next month's Core Value: We focus on the total well-being of each person we serve.



Join Us

Saint Catherine Center hosts **Mass to Celebrate People with Special Needs**

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport, *Celebrant*

Sunday, November 6, 2022

2 p.m.

**Holy Cross Church
750 Tahmore Drive, Fairfield**

Adjacent to Saint Catherine Center

*All are welcome,
but reservations are recommended.*

Please call 203-540-5381.

Saint Catherine Center in The New York Times

When *The New York Times* requested stories from readers about how organizations had helped them during the pandemic, Devon's father Doug Jacoby didn't hesitate to respond about how Saint Catherine Center had quickly responded to set up remote contact with our students and adults and open the Center to in-person services as soon as it was safe. *The Times* interviewed him for an article, and in August a photographer took photos of Adult Program staff along with Devon. [View the article](#), which was published on October 2.



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