



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR
Special Needs

2017-2018



Respecting the dignity and diversity of each person through support and service



OUR MISSION

Rooted in Gospel values that affirm the dignity of every person, **Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs** fosters the educational, spiritual, and social well-being of people with disabilities through direct services at **Saint Catherine Academy** and our **Adult Day Program**, and support for faith formation in the parishes and inclusion in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

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.

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Fall 2018

Dear Friends,

Recently, a young woman approached Pope Francis with a request. "We want a world in which vulnerability is recognized as essential in the human. Far from making us weak, it strengthens us and dignifies us," she explained. "Vulnerability is a place of common encounter that humanizes us."

Saint Catherine Center is a place of "common encounters," where the vulnerability of those we serve is not seen as a weakness. Our mission is focused on establishing relationships, building basic skill competencies, and respecting each individual for who they are and what they are able to do—*not* defining anyone by what they are unable to do. In return, the young people we serve offer an opportunity to all of us to appreciate the human spirit. We continue to grow in this deep understanding, moving beyond the simple model of charity to a more engaging exchange.



The Center is growing in so many ways. We are now providing full-time programs for over 40 children and young adults. We continue to support parishes in the Diocese of Bridgeport to better serve people with disabilities in their communities. More than 150 adults joined us at each of our themed dinner dances, engaging adults in the community who have limited social activities. We completed the 10th year of our Peanut Butter & Jelly Project, in solidarity with our Malta partners and Merton Center clients, and we partnered with Panera Bread to involve our young adults in a community service project.



Thomas Merton reminds us that "the beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image." Our focus at Saint Catherine Center is to meet each individual where he/she is and begin together on the journey toward independence. Thank you for embracing our mission and traveling this journey with us—with your prayers, your time, and your financial resources. Your support makes all the difference.

Peace,



Charles F. Chiusano
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Helen C. Burland
Executive Director



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Whether it's playing dodgeball during gym, swim class, going for a session in the work-out room, or simply brushing teeth, physical activity and a focus on health and wellness is part of every student's plan. Those with mobility limitations benefit from scheduled physical therapy sessions.



ACADEMICS

Integrated, intentional learning is the basis of all we do at the Academy. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) help our certified teachers and assistants to meet each student where he or she is. Each of our classrooms is organized around students' specific needs and capacities, using technology to reinforce learning. This year we introduced Chromebooks to make writing and research more accessible.



LIFE SKILLS

The Center's welcoming and fully-equipped kitchen and Life Skills Apartment serve as a "life skills laboratory," where students and adults learn patience and teamwork—as well as how to set a table, empty the dishwasher, make a bed, and sort clothes—all skills that build greater independence.





COMMUNITY SERVICE

Helping out and giving back is part of the culture at Saint Catherine. All students regularly participate with community volunteers in service projects—such as monthly “PB&J Days,” where we prepare and package sandwiches for Merton House. With support and supplies from the Order of Malta, we estimate 30,000 sandwiches made over the past 10 years!

VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Volunteering in the community is a valuable experience in the world of work for our students. Supported by staff, students visit worksites each week where they stack pots, work with preschoolers, shred documents, sort clothes, clean and bus tables, and other tasks to develop organizational and interpersonal skills.



Our classes learned about safety and emergency preparedness in advance of an exciting visit from the Fairfield Fire Department—after which they got to wear the gear and sit behind the wheel!

“The Academy enables Philip to exert his independence in a safe and inspiring environment... He is truly “at home” when he comes to school.”

Karen and Phil Palilla, parents



Interacting and building relationships with other young adults is a primary objective of the Adult Day Program at Saint Catherine, which reflects our philosophy of intentional, integrated learning.

From simple tasks, such as collecting the mail or cleaning up the garden for planting, to preparing a meal and packaging bakery items for Merton House, we seek opportunities for our young adults to work together, learn to depend on each other, and feel a sense of belonging. Individual schedules and goals for each participant are developed together with parents or guardians.

Weekly bowling and swimming outings keep participants physically active, and hands-on activities in the community, such as visits to Stew Leonard's, Silverman Farms, and the Maritime Aquarium, are both fun and stimulating.

Volunteer work at various sites in the community builds skills and enriches the daily schedule.



“ We knew that this was the right program for Patrick. We jointly developed a program to address his health in body, mind, and spirit. Every activity sets him up for success and celebrates his growth. ”

Bob Ross, parent





There were several excellent fishing days at the pond at Gilbertie's Herb Farm.



Participants enjoyed entertainment and camaraderie from the "Annie, Jr." theater crew from St. Joseph School in Danbury.

WE'RE GRATEFUL to our community partners who provide valuable vocational experiences for our students and adults: Gilbertie's Herb Garden, Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University, Marshalls/TJ Maxx, Chip's Family Restaurant, Fire Engine Pizza, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Merton House, Caroline House, Adam's House, Main Enterprises, St. Ann School, and Vazzy's.

"Everybody likes to cha-cha-cha!" Mr. Matt brings out the best of everyone in his weekly visits, funded by a grant from the New Canaan Community Foundation. Music, art, and movement classes offer a way for students and adults of all capacities to express themselves.





“Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs and its ministry is central to the mission of the Church and to our Diocesan community.”

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport



At the annual Mass to Celebrate Persons with Special Needs, Anna, an Academy student, received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Msgr. Thomas Powers, Vicar General.



Dinner dances hosted every November, March, and May bring together adults of all ages from all over the Diocese for fellowship and fun.

We are so grateful each year to Knights of Columbus chapters throughout the state, who support us with much-needed fundraising drives and even a visit from Santa.

Through Saint Catherine Center, the Diocese of Bridgeport provides support for the inclusion of special needs individuals and their families in spiritual formation. From preparation for the sacraments to strategies for inclusion, the office provides resources for families and parishes. Visit our website—StCatherineCenter.org.



2017-18 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Support and Revenue (rounded to nearest 100)

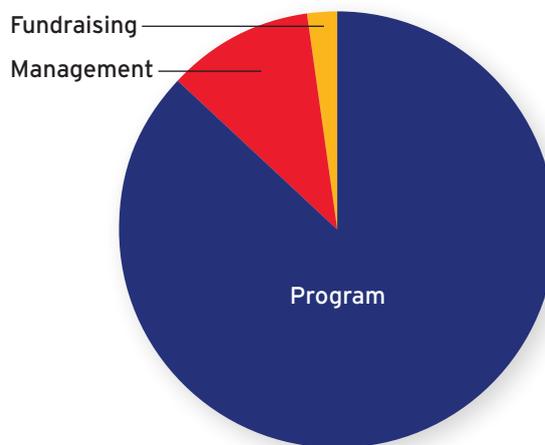
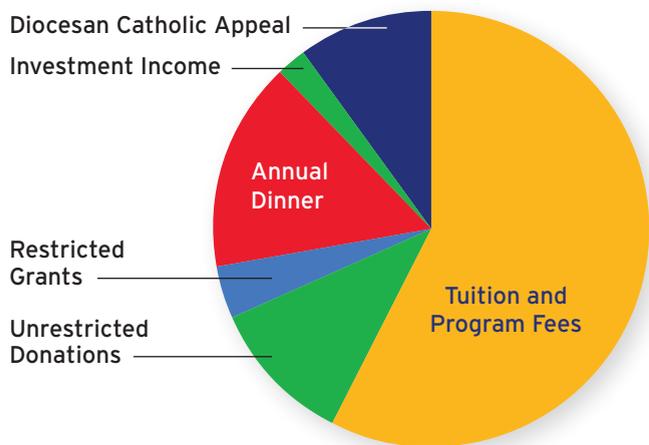
Tuition and Program Fees*	\$1,469,500
Unrestricted Donations	274,500
Restricted Grants	99,700
Annual Dinner	394,800
Investment Income	58,300
Diocesan Catholic Appeal	250,000
Total Revenue	\$2,546,800

*Awarded \$202,200 in scholarships

Expenses

Program	\$1,790,800
Management	220,000
Fundraising	43,000
Total Expenses	\$2,053,820

Audited financial statements and IRS 990 report will be available at StCatherineCenter.org by 12/2018.



OUR STUDENTS AND PARTICIPANTS come from the towns of Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Madison, Monroe, New Canaan, Newtown, Norwalk, Stamford, West Haven, Weston, and Westport.



*"I have learned about responsibility, and how to work."
Natalie Massaro graduated and we celebrated with a special Mass and reception.*



This year, the Academy received renewed approval as a private special education program for the maximum of five years from the State of Connecticut Department of Education.



In September, Board member Msgr. Robert Weiss and Nancy McClinch dedicated our library in loving memory of her daughter, Catherine.



The annual, much-anticipated Christmas pageant is another way in which students learn to work together as they recreate the Nativity setting with music and scripture and present it to the community.



Cold and blustery weather didn't deter our students from marching in the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Bridgeport!





Our Art Program this year—led by volunteers Gina Barber and Mary Claus—focused on the work of sculptor Dale Chihuly. Students melted plastic bottles and decorated them for table centerpieces, and even a chandelier for the Annual Dinner (and our kitchen)!



At the Center's annual "Joy & Gratitude" Dinner on June 10, 2018, Board member Michael LaBella (top, center) was recognized with the Leadership Award. Steve, Moreen, and Michael Donahue (above) also enjoyed the evening, which brought together 300 friends, family members, and supporters of the Center. Visit the website to see our photo gallery: StCatherineCenter.org.



Recognized as "a champion for people with disabilities," Helen Burland, our Executive Director (left), was honored in March by the Connecticut State Council of the Knights of Columbus with the Father Michael McGivney Award, given annually to a person who has made significant contributions to their state, Church, or country.





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“**Saint Catherine's is one-of-a-kind when it comes to adult day programs in the area. It has given Sami the individualized support that she needs, while also giving her access to the community with meaningful activities.**”

Lori Leskin, parent

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Ms. Marilyn Terzano &
Mr. Ronald Schulman
Mr. George Thiel
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Thomas
Mr. Edgar Tolo
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Tomcho
Ms. Sheila J. Toner
Mr. & Mrs. George Toth
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Tower
Ms. Helen Townsend



“Anna is starting to read and comprehend much better than she ever has... St. Catherine Academy provides her with the right level of teaching, direction, and encouragement to succeed.”

Dave and Jill Stowe, parents

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Mr. Mark Tragianese
Mr. & Mrs. John Tuccio
Mr. John Ulatowski, Jr.
Ms. Marie Valim
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Vandemark
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Vartuli
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Ms. Judith Wren
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Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Xavier
Mr. & Mrs. James Young
Ms. Patricia Zaccone
Monsignor Dariusz Zielonka

* Board member 2017-18

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize for any errors or omissions.



Our thanks to Catherine Ross-Eberhart, sister of Patrick in our Adult Program, and her husband Michael, who asked guests at their wedding in May to make a contribution to the Center in lieu of a gift. Contributions in honor or in memory are a meaningful way to recognize a loved one and support us at the same time.

SAVE THE DATE

Saint Catherine Center is proud to host these special events:

Mass to Celebrate People with Special Needs

Bishop Frank Caggiano,
celebrant

Sunday, December 2, 2018
2 p.m.

Holy Cross Church
(adjacent to
Saint Catherine Center)



Christmas Pageant

Friday, December 21
10 a.m.

Saint Catherine Center

Make plans now to celebrate 20th Anniversary “Joy & Gratitude” Dinner

Sunday, June 9, 2019



760 Tahmore Drive | Fairfield, CT 06825
203-540-5381

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