

April 2024



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

Saint Catherine Academy Commemorates Holy Week

At a prayer service held at Saint Catherine Academy, Sister Cheryl Driscoll, RSM, led students and staff in a reflection in honor of Holy Week, a time of deep significance in our Catholic faith.

The service followed the narrative of Jesus at the Last Supper. She explained that, "Holy Thursday was the night Jesus gathered his friends like we are gathered here today." Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and then told his friends to go out and do the same, exemplifying servitude, humility and love. Academy teachers, Sister Cheryl, Sister Marilyn, Jim Winebrenner, and Principal Eric Spencer proceeded to wash the hands of students and staff, mirroring Jesus' act of love and service.

After the washing of hands, all were prayerfully reminded that on Holy Thursday at the Last Supper, Jesus took bread and wine, gave it to His friends and said, "when you eat this bread and drink this wine, remember me."

The service further explored Jesus' moments of prayer in the garden before his arrest, highlighting his acceptance of his impending sacrifice. Students participated at the end of the ceremony, respectfully carrying a wooden cross, reminding us of Jesus' journey and death.

This service was a wonderful opportunity to provide this significant learning lesson to the students, emphasizing the importance of the events of Holy Week, and embodying the spirit of love and compassion exemplified by Jesus. Through reflection and participation, students gained a deeper understanding of the significance of this sacred time, instilling the timeless teachings of Jesus Christ.

[Click here for more pictures.](#)



Volunteer Appreciation Month An Attitude of Gratitude

At the heart of Saint Catherine Center a is dedicated force of unwavering commitment, selflessness and compassion—**our volunteers!** Their dedication enforces our mission, enriches the lives of those we serve, and fortifies the foundation of our organization.

Volunteers are heroes to non-profits like ours, helping turn ideas, events, and programs into successes. Our monthly peanut butter and jelly sandwich service projects would not be possible without the help of our volunteers. Through their hands-on involvement, volunteers assist students and staff in making 300 PB&J sandwiches to be donated to Merton House, a local food pantry each month.

Beyond our Center, our volunteers also extend their reach into the community, assisting our young adults at jobsites. They take time out of their day to ensure our students and young adults live fulfilling lives.

Our Board of Directors stand as leaders guiding the strategic direction of Saint Catherine Center. Their commitment, care, and efforts ensure the success and sustainability of our programs. We are grateful for each board member for bringing their expertise to build a future filled with promise and possibility.

Our volunteers also help make each event we host possible. From the annual gala, where critical funds are raised, to our annual Mass celebrating individuals with special needs, to the Christmas pageant and many more, each occasion would not be possible without the team of volunteers supporting our mission. It is their unwavering commitment that transforms these visions into reality.

To each and every one of our volunteers, we extend our deepest appreciation. Your dedication and selfless contributions make a lasting positive impact on our organization.



Occupational Therapy A Journey to Independence

At Saint Catherine Academy, occupational therapy (OT) guides students toward independence, self-discovery and empowers individuals with diverse



abilities to thrive in their daily lives.

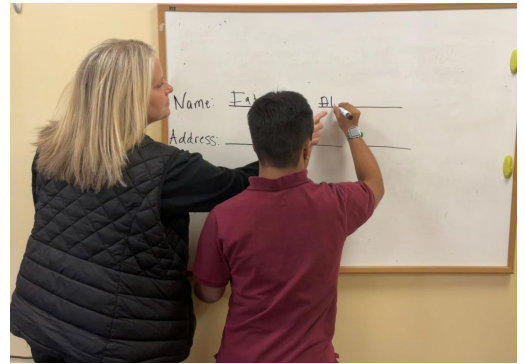
Occupational therapy is a holistic approach aimed at helping individuals develop or maintain the skills needed for activities of daily living and working. It encompasses a wide range of exercises tailored to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social challenges. At Saint Catherine Academy, our occupational therapist uses personalized interventions to empower students to overcome barriers and embrace their full potential and foster growth and resilience.



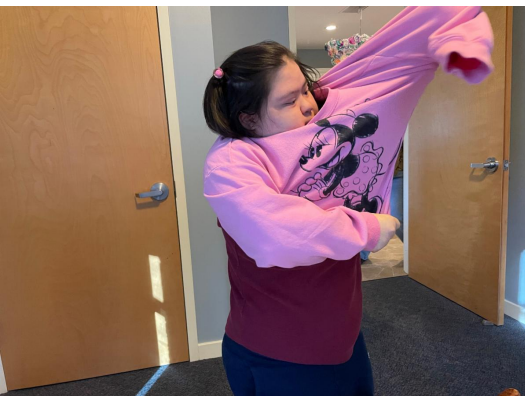
Each student at Saint Catherine Academy embarks on a unique journey guided by our dedicated occupational therapist who tailors interventions to suit individual needs and interests. “Every student has a different OT journey; activities each day can vary depending on the student's focus and attention on tasks presented. Each student has the ability to participate whether it's play-based therapy to the ultimate goal of structured independent activities,” describes Cindy Kydes, COTA/L, occupational therapist.



Henry's play-based participation in therapy is centered on identifying functional and preferred objects. During sessions, Henry is presented with pairs of familiar items, such as a toothbrush and toothpaste, and is encouraged to select one of the items. This simple yet purposeful activity enhances Henry's object identification skills as well as his ability to listen and follow directions with joint attention.

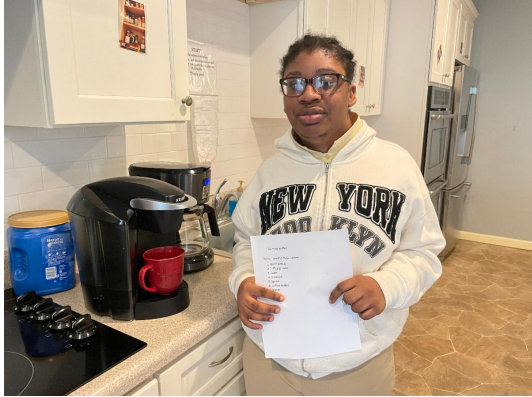


Connor's and Fabricio's occupational therapy goals are focused on enhancing vocational skills and fostering independence in daily life skills. Both students practice sequencing tasks and following directions. Some activities include: following a recipe for a cooking activity, making a bed, following personal hygiene routines, and learning safety skills. “Like many other students, Connor and Fabricio benefit from visual supports and written instruction that serve as a valuable therapeutic approach to increase sustained attention,” explains Cindy. Fabricio is also improving his writing skills by practicing his name, phone number, and address while Connor is working on becoming more comfortable clipping his own fingernails. Through these tailored interventions, they develop skills necessary to navigate daily routines with proficiency.



In Tanisha's OT sessions, her focus is on developing her essential life skills such as writing and typing her name. Additionally, Tanisha practices orienting clothing and mastering zippers, snaps and buttons to dress herself in sequential order. With repetition, Tanisha gains familiarity, independence, and confidence to perform these daily tasks with more ease.

While each student's OT journey is unique, they all share a common goal—fostering independence and



achieving personal growth. Whether it's mastering fine motor skills, enhancing vocational abilities, or improving self-care routines, occupational therapy is an essential service that encourages empowerment and independence for students to navigate the world with more confidence.



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