



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

The Art of Conversation

We believe that every individual, regardless of their abilities, deserves the opportunity to develop their voice. The art of conversation holds incredible importance on fostering meaningful connections and enhancing social interactions. For our adults and students, conversation is not just about communication; it's about empowering them to gain confidence and form genuine connections.

Practicing conversation is a vital and natural aspect of daily learning at the center. From greetings and introductions, to sharing interests and problem-solving scenarios, we meet each individual where they are to comfortably practice these skills.

Through conversations, individuals learn the crucial skill of building self-expression. They need to learn to articulate their thoughts, feelings and needs in order to boost their self-esteem and self-advocacy. Engaging in conversations helps forge bonds with peers, caregivers, teachers, and the broader community. These connections promote a sense of belonging, support, and well-being.

Each individual communicates differently. For some it is through their augmentative communication devices, and for others it is more unique approaches to find their voices.

Tyler T has expressed his voice through music. He often sings to articulate his thoughts and emotions.

Izzy and **Nyah** use their iPad to communicate their wants and needs. Through specialized apps, they can use symbols, pictures, and text to convey their thoughts and feelings. These devices serve as powerful tools to support and enhance their ability to express themselves.

Ryan and **Francisco** use their own signs and gestures to communicate with others.

We recognize the transformative power of practicing conversation. These skills extend far beyond the center, empowering individuals to form genuine connections, participate in their communities and authentically navigate their world. As we continue to prioritize the art of conversation, we are committed to equipping our individuals with



the tools they need to thrive.



Summer Activities



The four-week extended summer school session provided a more casual environment with no uniforms and shorter days with plenty of activities. While classes still focused on maintaining skills, the students also had time for summer fun with trips to the bowling alley, walks in the community, and a classic summer BBQ.

Our summer student interns played a vital role in the classrooms and adult rooms. Lucas Crowell, Patrick Dineen, Michael Pinedo, and Sarah Sportini acted as mentors and role models for the students and adult participants, helping in the classrooms, playing games and making meaningful connections. "This experience has brought some of the best laughs and biggest smiles. There is a contagious sense of joy that is truly special," says Patrick.

With the Academy finished for the summer, this relaxed atmosphere provided opportunities for the adult program to utilize the gym and kitchen. They hosted a carnival day and a BBQ at the Center and took trips to the beach and movies. We look forward to future outings in August and will end the month with our annual luau.

To see more photos of these fantastic activities, [check out a short video!](#)

Introducing Angeline Rosario

We are delighted to announce the newest addition to our administrative team, **Ms. Angeline Rosario**, who will be taking on the vital role of Operations Manager. We extend our warmest welcome to Angeline as she joins our dedicated staff



in serving our community.

Before joining us, Angeline showcased her commitment to education through working in school operations in the Bronx for over eight years. "Her experience and kind spirit will undoubtedly prove invaluable in enhancing the quality of our services. We are so happy to have her join our staff," said Laura Grozier, Executive Director.

"My passion is working in a place where your work matters and I am fulfilled knowing this work is making a positive impact on the community. I am so excited to join this amazing team where we share a common purpose with something I

also love to do," said Angeline.

We are excited to have her on board and can't wait to see the positive impact she will have at Saint Catherine Center.

Please join us for the blessing of our new building



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

**Friday, September 15, 2023
10:30am**

PLEASE RSVP BY

*Wednesday, September 13th to
ahite@stcatherineacademy.org*

Joy and Gratitude

Annual Dinner | Sunday, October 8, 2023
GROW WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED



Invitations will be in the mail soon! Be on the lookout



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