

February 2023



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR
Special Needs

Celebrating Catholic Schools Week
"Faith. Excellence. Service."

Every year, schools across the U.S. observe the last week in January with masses and activities that recognize the value of a Catholic education. "Faith. Excellence. Service." was the theme for this year's Catholic Schools Week. As communities of faith, Catholic schools instill in students their destiny to become saints. Excellence is at the forefront of Catholic education intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Finally, service is intended to help form people who are not only witnesses to Catholic social teaching, but also active participants through social learning.

Saint Catherine Academy celebrated our faith, excellence, and service by having a spirit week. Each classroom decorated their doors with things that make Saint Catherine Academy special. **Fabricio** and **Phillip** said they celebrate Catholic Schools week by helping and praying while **Antonio** celebrates by being kind. Staff and students had fun and got to know each other better by following the daily theme. These activities ranged from wear your favorite color, to show off some silly socks, to represent your favorite sports team. At the end of the week, the Academy and Adult Program came together to watch *Toy Story* and enjoy popcorn.

#CSW23





On favorite color day, **Jocelyn, Keona, Anna** and **Jacki** dressed in all pink while **Tanisha** wore every color in the rainbow.

At The Core: Building Interpersonal Relationships

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. We continue to share stories from the Saint Catherine community that show our Core Values in action.

Core Value #6: We seek to build interpersonal relationships in a nurturing community.

Building relationships takes time and practice, and one of our core goals is to foster interactions where students and adult participants can connect with their peers and staff. Some individuals are more outgoing than others but each has his or her own way of relating. Individualized attention from staff helps them develop the trust needed to build relationships with peers. We also try to structure activities to maximize interaction, such as music, movement classes, cooking, and going to worksites together. As individuals get to know each other, confidence grows and a community is built.

In Music class each week, students and adults learn to share instruments, sing together, and take a spotlight in front of their friends.

When you know each other, helping others comes naturally. **Fabricio** always takes the initiative in handing out folders to his classmates. **Tanisha** has made friends with Kari and likes to make her laugh. **Ellie** prompted the words to a book while **Tyler T.** read it aloud.

Occasionally dubbed the "mayors of Saint Catherine Academy," **Vinny** and **Philip** are both



outgoing. The camaraderie they generate is contagious. This year for the first time, they attended the Center's annual Joy & Gratitude Dinner where they enjoyed socializing with guests and feeling like adults.

Also see [December enews](#) for an article about how therapists work with students to practice the art of conversation.



Fairfield County Giving Day: Help Us Beat Our Record on Feb. 23rd



Saint Catherine Center will be participating in Fairfield County's Giving Day on **Thursday, February 23rd**. This is the last year Fairfield County's Community Foundation is hosting this annual giving event. The 24-hour online fundraising initiative provides an opportunity for local nonprofits to build awareness and raise funds for their causes. Each year, families, colleagues, and neighbors join together to support and show the power of giving.

This year, donations on Giving Day will support the Activity Fund for the Adult Program.

Activities both onsite and in the community

provide important opportunities for socialization and self-expression for the individuals in our Adult Program. When you see Ryan and Sarah take pride in their artwork, or Andy showing off his highest bowling scores, it is clear from their enthusiasm how much activities like these positively impact them.

Please [bookmark our Giving Day page](#), watch for our emails on February 23rd, and invite family and friends to join in supporting us.



Quote of the month from Patrick

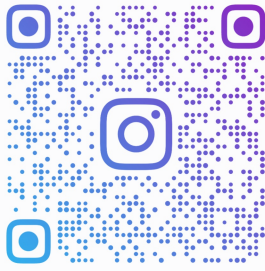
What do you call a small Valentine?

A Valen-tiny!

Happy Valentines Day!

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