

November 2023



## SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

### *Four Individuals Receive Sacraments at Annual Special Needs Mass*

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano presided over the annual Mass for People with Special Needs, held at Holy Cross Church adjacent to Saint Catherine Center on Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>.

[View photos of the event](#)

There were four individuals who received sacraments. Maria Lazo (St. Mary's Church) was baptized, received First Holy Communion and was confirmed. Patrick Dunleavy (Church of the Assumption) received First Holy Communion and was confirmed. Jayden Palaez (St. Peter's Church) and Fabricio Almeida Jr., a student at Saint Catherine Academy, were also confirmed.

The celebration gathered the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard, Center board members, staff, as well as friends and families who joined together to commemorate this special day. Board Chairman, Mike Labella and Academy staff, Sr. Maureen Ulatowski, SSND, played key roles in delivering the readings for the Mass. Fabricio Almeida Jr., accompanied by his cousin, Amanda Vieira, offered the Prayers of the Faithful. Academy student, Philip Palilla, along with his parents, Karen and Phil Palilla, participated in the offertory procession. "It was very inspiring to see what was taught in the classroom carried out at Mass," said Sr. Maureen, a teacher at the Academy.

In a meaningful moment, as he prepared to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to four young individuals, Bishop Caggiano encouraged the congregation to reflect on "who truly are the teachers among us?"

Bishop Caggiano expressed his delight in sharing this day and extended gratitude to those who played the vital role in the development and faith of these young people. "These individuals came before God with no ego or pride; only with an open heart." Drawing inspiration from the gospel, he emphasized the humility displayed by these individuals stating, "if you humble yourself, you will be honored." These are the profound lessons we



learn from those among us who may not articulate the law of the faith but, with their open hearts, teach us the most about Christ's love.

Today, we honored these young people as they received sacraments of initiation," said Laura Grozier, Executive Director. "This is a very special day for these families and all of us who participate in this joyful occasion."

*Each year, Saint Catherine Center offers the opportunity for young people with special needs to receive one or more Sacraments of Initiation outside of the typical faith formation program. For more information, contact the Center at 203-540-5381.*



## *Caring for Individuals with Special Needs*

### **Advice from Katy O'Brien, RN**

As the healthcare coordinator for Saint Catherine Center, I understand the importance of providing compassionate care to students with special needs. These individuals require unique attention and support to ensure their well-being and successful integration with their community. Here are some essential things to keep in mind when caring for such individuals:

**Seek knowledge and educate yourself:** Take the time to understand the specific conditions that an individual is facing. Understanding their unique challenges and strengths will empower you to lend better support. Knowledge empowers you to provide confident care enabling you to address their needs effectively.

**Develop a personalized care plan:** Work closely with the individual, parents, teachers, and other healthcare professionals to create a personalized care plan. This should outline their medical needs and any other information or accommodations required to support their learning and daily activities. Working together ensures their needs are addressed holistically.

**Foster Inclusivity:** Encourage an inclusive environment. Promote empathy and understanding among peers to build a welcoming and accepting community for all.

**Communicate effectively:** Clear and open communication is vital when caring for someone with special needs. Maintain regular communication with the individual's family, teachers, and therapists to stay updated on their progress or changes.

**Respect Individuality:** Each person is unique, even people with the same diagnosis can be very different. Recognize and respect their individuality, preferences, and strengths. Be flexible and tailor your care approach accordingly to foster self-esteem and confidence.

**Be patient and empathetic:** Caring for individuals requires great patience and empathy. Understand that progress



may take time and setbacks are normal. Each person grows at their own pace, offer encouragement and support during challenging moments.

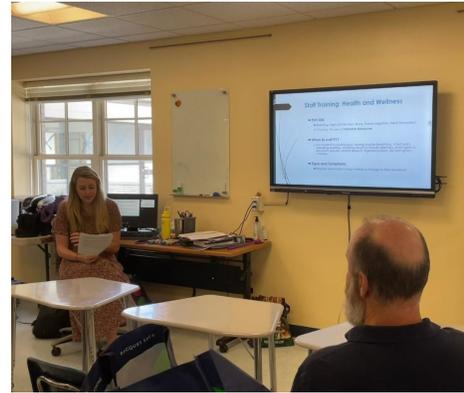
**Observe and report:** As someone caring for an individual with special needs, you play a crucial role in observing health or behavior. Regularly report your observations to the appropriate people so they can address any issues promptly.

**Emergency preparedness:** Develop a clear emergency plan for a variety of scenarios. Ensure all relevant community members are familiar with the plans and their roles in case of emergency.

**Training:** Educate peers on how to interact and support effectively.

**Sensory Sensitivity:** Understand and respect sensory sensitivities. Create a sensory- friendly environment and provide designated quiet spaces.

Caring for individuals with special needs is fulfilling and important responsibility. By following these tips, and being compassionate, flexible and well-prepared, you can help create an environment where all students and young adults feel valued and supported, helping the thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Together we can build an inclusive community that celebrates unique strengths of each person!



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## GIVING TUESDAY *is November 28h*

Giving Tuesday, on November 28, is a worldwide initiative to celebrate generosity in all its forms. We experience this generosity every day in the most ordinary of activities at Saint Catherine Center.

The day is also an important fundraiser for Saint Catherine Center. Tuition and program fees cover only about 75% of our costs. The rest is raised through events like our annual "Joy & Gratitude" Dinner, private grants, and individual donations. #GivingTuesday reminds us how important your support is to the "everyday" at Saint Catherine Center.

[Click here to give](#)

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# RALPH LAUREN

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FOR CHARITABLE SHOPPING IN SUPPORT OF

## ST. CATHERINE CENTER FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14  
5:00PM—7:00PM

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FIFTEEN PERCENT OF THE PURCHASE PRICE OF ALL PURCHASES MADE BY CUSTOMERS SHOPPING ON BEHALF OF ST. CATHERINE CENTER FOR SPECIAL NEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO THEIR MISSION TO FOSTERING "THE EDUCATIONAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH DIRECT SERVICES AT SAINT CATHERINE ACADEMY AND OUR ADULT SERVICES PROGRAM, AND SUPPORT FOR FAITH FORMATION AND INCLUSION IN THE PARISHES AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT."



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