

September 2019



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

Finding and Sharing the Goodness of Each Day: A New School Year Begins

With freshly painted halls, clean classrooms, and even a new picnic table in the playground, we welcomed students to a new school year at Saint Catherine Academy. [View some photos of the first days of school.](#)

“I like seeing my friends again. I like doing reading and writing and science—but not math!” said Anna Stowe from Sr. Cheryl’s class.

We welcomed two new students—Vincent from Rye, NY, and Antonio from Bridgeport, CT.

Patty Loh (pictured at far right with her colleagues, Sr. Cheryl Driscoll and Joanne LaPorta) joined the teaching staff. Patty is a certified special education professional with 23 years of experience, and has been associated with the Academy as a substitute teacher and volunteer at our vocational worksites. Patty also has advanced training in the Wilson Reading System, an intensive structured literacy program, and experience in TouchMath, both of which she intends to use in the classroom. “Setting concrete goals is important, so that each student can feel good about what they achieve. I want them to feel a positive atmosphere so that they can grow and thrive,” she said.

At the opening Convocation held for all Diocesan teachers and administrators before the first day of school, keynote speaker Dr. Tom Thibodeau inspired our teaching staff with his talk on “The Positive Power of Servant Leadership.” He encouraged all to express gratitude and appreciation to their students and colleagues frequently, and to find and share the goodness of each day.

“It’s been a wonderful year, and we will be building on our positive experiences,” said



Eric Spencer, Director of Education. "We're looking to further develop our social studies and science curriculum and create more life skills opportunities for our students. We'll also be creating a monthly newsletter to enhance communications with parents and the Saint Catherine Academy community."



Out and About in the Summertime

From dinosaur bones and giant minerals at the Peabody Museum to miniature golf at Norwalk Cove Marina (followed by ice cream at Overton's), participants in the Adult Program have enjoyed an outing in the community most every week this summer, as well as excursions to the movies and the mall. Good weather and a more flexible schedule than the regular year make this possible, as do the generous donations from Fairfield County's Giving Day, which help to underwrite the trips.



Other outings this summer included Beardsley Zoo; SeaQuest, the new aquarium in the Trumbull Mall; and picnics at Silver Sands State Park and Sherwood Island. Each excursion is an opportunity to learn new things, but more importantly to be out in the community with friends and peers. Simple social skills are developed through each experience, including getting ready for each activity and being attentive to each other's needs, waiting one's turn, holding a door for another, and sharing their experience.



Each outing requires planning that is handled by Laura Grozier, Assistant Director of Operations, along with Brady Cronin, Director of the Adult Program. "We have to decide on the activity, figure out availability, and make sure there's wheelchair accessibility—and negotiate discounts whenever possible. Then we try and find the right place in the schedule for the outing," said Laura.

"Of course having fun is a high priority when we plan these activities," said Helen Burland, Executive Director. "But each outing is also quite intentional. How will

going to the Peabody Museum, or the mall, benefit each individual? How will it benefit the group? The answer doesn't have to be complex. Sometimes it's as simple as gathering everyone together and experiencing a new setting. But we do want to ask the question."

[View some photos of this summer's outings.](#)



15% for Saint Catherine Center on September 26th!

Mark your calendars to do some shopping at J. McLaughlin, a premiere clothing retailer in Darien, and support Saint Catherine Center at the same time. On **Thursday, September 26, from 6 to 8 p.m.**, parents Margaret Smith and Sarah Kahn, along with Laura Grozier, are hosting a "Sip & Shop" event at the store, located at 1020 Post Road in Darien, and 15% of sales will benefit the Center! If you cannot stop by on the 26th, any shopping done on Wednesday, September 25th, will also apply if you mention Saint Catherine.

Thank you for your support!

...Reminders...

**20th Anniversary Mass
at Saint Catherine Center
Sunday, September 22, 2 p.m.
RSVP to Mass@stcatherineacademy.org**

Our 2018-19 Annual Report will soon be in the mail!

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