

November 2019



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

St. Augustine Medal to be Presented to Joe and Carrie Sindelar

At the annual Mass Celebrating People with Special Needs on November 17th, Bishop Caggiano will present Joe and Carrie Sindelar of New Canaan with the St. Augustine Medal for outstanding volunteerism. (The couple was unable to attend the presentation service in October.)

A longstanding member of the Board of Directors, Joe never passes up the opportunity to talk about Saint Catherine Center. Carrie has volunteered her time and expertise in numerous ways, including reading in the Library Program and organizing tables for our annual "Joy & Gratitude" Dinner. "Both Joe and Carrie have been outstanding advocates for our students and young adults," said Helen Burland, Executive Director. "They always respond to whatever is needed. We are so grateful for their service and dedication."

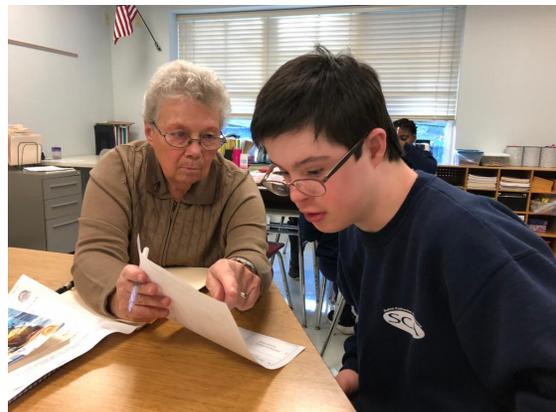
All are welcome at the Mass, which will be held this **Sunday, November 17, at 2 p.m.** at Holy Cross Church in Fairfield, adjacent to Saint Catherine Center. Please RSVP to Mass@StCatherineAcademy.org.



An Individualized Approach to Reading

There are a variety of ways our teachers in the Academy approach reading, but common—and key—to each approach is the intensive, individualized attention that each student receives.

On a recent morning, four students worked at their own pace under Sr. Cheryl's guidance. Fabricio was identifying words on a list; Philip read paragraphs aloud to Sr. Cheryl and answered questions. Anna



read from "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" and completed a comprehension worksheet, while Antonio laid out the letters of the alphabet and practiced writing "U" and "E" with his finger on an iPad app called WetDryTry. Goals are established in each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

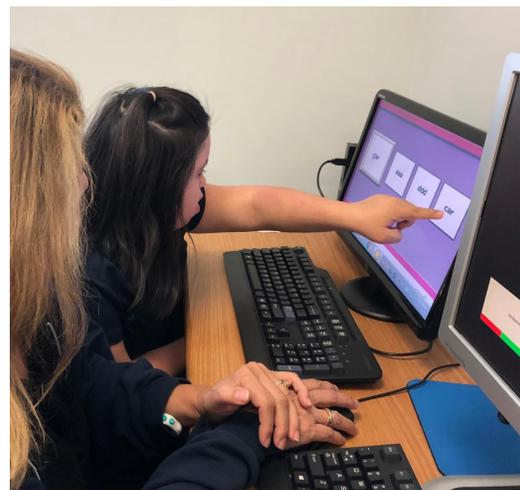
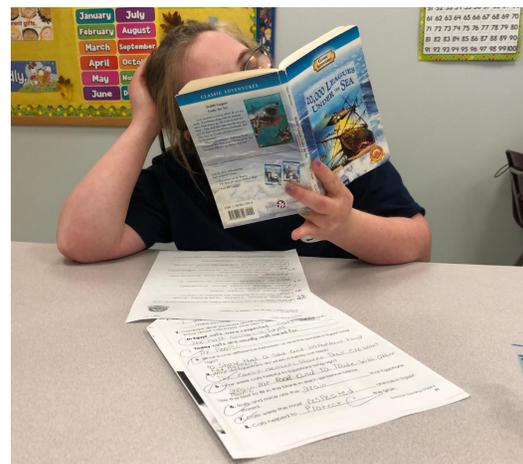
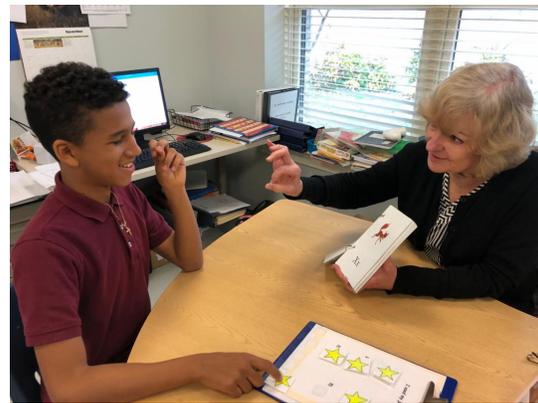
Reading skills are reinforced with iPad and computer applications, such as Edmark, a whole-word, interactive program. On a beginning level, students are directed to identify a word and match it with an object. In more advanced levels, they listen to short paragraphs read aloud, focusing on identifying particular words. Other programs, such as Start to Finish, help students focus on memory and comprehension. Occasionally the class also enjoys the friendly competition of Bingo, matching a named object to the picture on their card and then using the word in a sentence.

Mrs. Loh uses the Wilson Reading System (WRS) with her students, a research-based program that starts with matching sounds with letters. Students learn to break word sounds down by tapping out each sound with their fingers and thumb. Students also learn to recognize "high frequency" words, building confidence and making sentence comprehension more fluid.

Mrs. Loh works individually with each student, using sound cards, helping them recognize different letters and their sounds, then identify objects that begin with that letter. "I tweak it to meet the students' needs," says Mrs. Loh.

In her class, Mrs. LaPorta uses a combination of Edmark and WRS, supplemented with internet resources, such as an alphabet rap song that the students love. A word-of-the-day is repeated throughout the school day. "I send word lists home with the students," she says, "and the repetition at home makes a big difference."

A weekly session in the library at the Center, organized by volunteers from the Order of Malta, reinforces skills learned in the class, and promotes the pleasure of reading. "The kids come back excited," says Sr. Cheryl. [See more photos.](#) [Read more about the Library Program in next month's enews.](#)



Helping Out with Everyday Tasks

Each week there are many everyday tasks that our young adults assist with at the Center, each of which builds life skills and also contributes to keeping the Center running smoothly.

"Would you like to hear the joke of the day?" Patrick R calls out jovially most every morning to whomever is working at the front desk as he hands over the attendance sheets he and Tommy and Mr. Pat have gathered from the classrooms. While Patrick relays the joke, Tommy helps Mr. Pat distribute the mail they have collected from the mailbox. The interaction is an important part of a satisfying morning ritual.

Sorting and bagging the Center's recycling is one of Emily's favorite tasks, but it takes a team to sort through all the bottles and load up a van to take the recycling to a facility in Stratford. Refunds from the bottles and cans are used for activities in the community.

Ryan enjoys the interaction with employees at the bank each Friday when staff takes a small group to make a weekly deposit for the Center.

Working in the garden is another activity that involves everyone over the seasons. Recently Ms. Sonia had assistance from Jacki, Ryan, and Jack to harvest the last crop of herbs and put the garden to bed for the winter. Participants learn how to use basic garden tools and how plants grow.

A lot of time is spent in our vans as we transport participants to and from the program and to all of the daily activities and worksites. Keeping the vans tidy has become an important Center job. Over several afternoons this fall, Mr. Pat organized an enthusiastic crew to clean and vacuum the vans.

There is satisfaction in each of these activities, and especially in working together for the benefit of each other and the Center. [See more photos.](#)





Halloween inspired some creative costumes and was lots of fun. [See Adult Program photos.](#)
[See Academy photos.](#)



The dance floor was filled at our Fall Fling Dance in October. [See photos.](#)

Join Us!

Mass Celebrating People with Special Needs Sunday, November 17, 2 p.m.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Principal Celebrant
Holy Cross Church | 750 Tahmore Drive | Fairfield
Adjacent to Saint Catherine Center
RSVP to Mass@stcatherineacademy.org

2019 Christmas Pageant
Friday, December 20, 10 a.m.
Saint Catherine Center

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