Symposium to Foster Awareness for People with Disabilities

Saturday, March 13, 2010
Sponsored by:
The Office for Catechesis
&
The Office of Respect for Life

Diocese of Metuchen
St. John Neumann Pastoral Center
146 Metlars Lane
Piscataway NJ 08859
Dear Friends,

It is our privilege to welcome you to the 2010 Symposium to Foster Awareness for People with Disabilities. This Symposium is a way to deepen our relationships, network and learn how we can better serve the needs of our communities. We welcome quite a few presenters who are new to the Diocese of Metuchen, as well as some of your favorites. We are especially pleased to present Tony Melendez as our Keynote Speaker who will spiritually nourish us, and celebrate his story through his music. Bishop Paul Bootkoski will be present to lead us in prayer.

We ask God’s blessing on you, your families and your parish communities. Thank you for your participation, and please let us know how we can better serve you in the future.

Gratefully,

Cecelia P. Regan  
Cecelia P. Regan  
Diocesan Director  
Office for Catechesis

Jennifer Ruggiero  
Jennifer Ruggiero  
Diocesan Director  
Office of Respect for Life
**SCHEDULE OF THE DAY**

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<td>8:45 – 9:00</td>
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We are a single flock under the care of a single shepherd. There can be no separate Church for persons with disabilities.

Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities (USCCB 1999)
Carol Ann Norland has been a disabilities advocate at the Catholic Community of St. Matthias in Somerset since 1998. In 2009, she was recognized for her advocacy for inclusion by the NJ Coalition of Inclusive Ministries, an interfaith network committed to supporting faith communities in working to fully include all people with disabilities or special needs as valuable members in their communities.” Carol Ann has a severe to profound hearing loss and has worn hearing aids since she was 7 years old. She grew up in Bethlehem (PA) where she received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Medical Technology from Moravian College. Carol has worked as a Clinical Microbiologist in several hospitals and clinical laboratories and is presently retired. In 1998 she was commissioned a parish Disabilities Advocate by Bishop Breen and was later asked to be a member of the Diocesan Commission with People with Disabilities. Carol Ann has presently completed her fourth year on the parish Pastoral Council. She has served as a Eucharistic Minister and also assists with the religious education program. She is a member of the Silent Choir, a group of area women who sign hymns and songs to music.

Georgianne Cichy is a parish member in The Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi Metuchen, N.J. She converted to Catholicism in 1996. She is a participant in the Parish Prayer Tree Program at St. Francis. Georgianne has a rare neuromuscular disease named Friedreich’s Ataxia. It is a progressive disease that affects your mobility, speech, hand–eye coordination. It may effect your lungs, heart and spine. She has used a wheelchair since 1983. Georgianne earned an Associates Degree in Biology Technology and worked in the pharmaceutical industry. Since leaving work, she volunteers at Johnson Rehab at JFK Medical Center. Georgianne enjoys selling on ebay, a good book and enjoying life to it’s fullest with her husband Art.

KEYNOTE

Tony Melendez

It was an unforgettable moment when, on September 15, 1987, Tony Melendez played his guitar for Pope John Paul II in Los Angeles. Born without arms, he performed a touching song. When the Pope approached him from the stage to kiss him in appreciation, it seemed to reflect the sentiments of the entire country.

Those few moments changed Tony Melendez' life and brought his unrestrained abilities as a guitarist into national attention. It seems to be a fitting place for a man who has spent his life putting his faith and personal confidence above his handicap.

Since then, Tony has traveled across the world, telling his story of faith, performing and making countless television appearances. "Music has opened the door to my dreams and I will keep singing, continue to share my life, and keep making music for all who will listen."

A thalidomide baby, Tony was born without arms because his mother was prescribed, a drug used to help calm morning sickness during her pregnancy. He was brought to the Los Angeles area from Nicaragua to be fitted with artificial arms. He wore them until he was ten, when he disposed of them. "I didn't feel comfortable," he explains, "I could use my feet so much more."

Join us to share Tony's inspirational story and celebrate, through his music, his love of God, family, and life.
Inviting Everyone to the Lord’s Table!
Peg Breunig  Workshop 1

This workshop will demonstrate how to prepare people with disabilities to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church as validated by the Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities.

Peggy has been the coordinator and a teacher in the Holy Innocents Special Needs Program for 31 years. She has also been a school nurse for 17 years. She received her MS from New Jersey City University in Community Health Education in 2004. Peg has been a presenter at the Diocese of Metuchen’s Catechetical Congress and The Symposium at Rutgers University. Her most important credential is that she is the parent of an autistic son.

Round Table Discussion  Workshop 10

Jennifer Ruggiero, Director of the Office for Respect Life and chair of the diocesan Disabilities Ministry will moderate a round table discussion featuring some ‘real-life people’ who are faced with various challenges and are leading successful, contributing lives, as well as participating fully in the life of the Church.

NOTE: There will be a Q & A session after the presentation ~ if there are specific questions you would like addressed, please submit them with your registration form!

Tom Moore - The first indication that something was wrong with me was after Labor Day 1986. I noticed that my middle finger and index finger were not working properly so tasks like buttoning my shirt and writing were a little more difficult. In January I went to a neurologist who put me through a series of tests to rule out many potential diseases only to announce that I officially had Parkinson’s Disease. First there were little muscle movements that became full blown involuntary muscle movements that are called dyskinesia. These movements were so violent that they caused me to wear out a leather jacket. The next step for a surgical procedure called palindotomy ~ the results were dramatic, immediate, and I was able to move around symptom free. This freedom lasted about a year. Subsequently I had Deep Brain Stimulation whose benefits lasted about 3 years. I retired from NYC Transit in September of 2008 and in May 2009, moved into an assisted living facility. These are all the accommodations that I have made to the disease..
ACCESSIBILITY: ABILITY TO WORSHIP AND SERVE
Kenneth Phillips Workshop 9

An overview of accessibility issues and other barriers that might prevent persons with disabilities from exercising their right to full participation spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically, in the life of the Church. Elimination of physical barriers and adaptations for both physical and sensory impairments will be stressed.

Ken has been working with persons with disabilities for over 40 years and is retired from Lighthouse International in NYC. As the Director of Lighthouse in Brooklyn & Staten Island he was responsible for all rehabilitation programs and services for people who were visually impaired.

Ken completed his Masters and post-graduate doctoral study in Therapeutic Recreation & Rehabilitation from NY University. From 1983 – 1985, he served as a member and chairperson of the Metuchen Diocesan Council for Handicapped Persons. Ken is a parishioner of St. Luke Church in North Plainfield and is active in many parish ministries.

“...And the Deaf will hear”
God’s Word fulfilled in Ministry with the Deaf
Rev. Bismarck Chau Workshop 2

Fr. Bismarck will lead us through a brief history and development of the ministry with the Deaf in the United States; the challenges of the Deaf person in their social and spiritual lives; and the challenges the church faces in fulfilling God’s mission to bring (spiritual) hearing to the Deaf.

Father Bismarck Chau a native of Nicaragua was ordained to the priesthood in May of 2008 for the Archdiocese of Newark. He is currently the Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Mount Virgin in Garfield. His interest in the ministry with the Deaf grew out of his own experience with his deaf sister and his struggles to help her remain in the Catholic faith. Losing his sister to the Protestants made him commit himself to learn Sign Language and help other deaf Catholics learn and understand their Catholic Faith.

While in seminary at Immaculate Conception in South Orange, NJ, Father Bismarck received training in Sign Language from the Director of Ministry with the Deaf, Deacon Thomas Smith. Since his ordination, Fr. Bismarck has been celebrating Sunday Mass in ASL for the Deaf community of the Archdiocese of Newark at the Church of St. John in Newark. His hopes are to become fluent in ASL and to help train and empower the deaf parishioners of St. John’s Church to become active members in their community - not just execrators, but doers of God’s mission in their community.
Understanding Learning Disabilities: The F.A.T. City Workshop
Mary Clinton

Workshop 3

Anyone wishing to “walk a mile” in the shoes of children who are learning disabled will benefit from this workshop. The presenter will facilitate an edited viewing and discussion of the F.A.T. City DVD, an experiential workshop created in 1972 by Richard D. Lavoie, M.A. M.Ed., nationally known expert, lecturer and author on learning disabilities. Through viewing and discussion of the DVD, participants will gain insight and understanding into what it would be like to have a learning disability, and experience the Frustration, Anxiety and Tension (F.A.T.) of some young people with learning disabilities. A variety of themes are examined in the video, including: Inability to Process Language; Risk-taking; Visual Perception; Reading Comprehension; the Effect of Visual Perception on Behavior; Oral Expression, and Fairness.

Mary Clinton currently serves the Diocese of Metuchen as Assistant Director of the Office for Catechesis, with a focus on Adult Lifelong Faith Formation. Prior to coming to the diocese, Mary served as Pastoral Associate for Catechetical Ministry at Our Lady of Peace in New Providence. Mary holds an M.A. in Pastoral Ministry from IC Seminary, Seton Hall, an M.S. in Reading Education from Herbert H. Lehman College and an undergraduate degree in English and Economics from Manhattan College.

As the mother of a child who has journeyed with learning disabilities, Mary is passionate about continuing to raise awareness of the struggles of such children and their families, especially in Catholic Church settings.

Understanding the ‘Mumbo Jumbo’ of the IEP Meeting
Ellen Mackie

Workshop 8

During this workshop we will discuss the importance of the IEP meeting and how to understand the meaning of the terminology used at these meetings. We will also learn how to effectively prepare for the IEP meeting, who should attend the meeting, how to know what services to request for your child, and what steps to take if the IEP does not meet the educational needs of your child.

Ellen is presently the PCL at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Dunellen and has been a catechist and DRE for over 15 years in the Dioceses of New Orleans and South Carolina. She is a retired educator who worked as a teacher, school administrator, and a Director of Special Education. She received a Masters Degree in Administration and Supervision from the Citadel in Charleston, a Masters Degree in Religious Education from Gannon University and a Bachelors Degree in Elementary Education from Seton Hall University. Ellen also completed post-graduate study in Special Education at Harvard University and Exeter College in Oxford, England. She presently volunteers as an advocate for children with special needs.
DARE 2 DREAM
Larry Jacobs, Ed.S., M.S.  Workshop 7

You are in for a lively, musical, and interactive seminar. Dare 2 Dream inspires you to take a risk, to believe, and to live your dreams with the help of Christ. Discover how the power of your attitude is amazing. Build your self esteem and be motivated; understand how to best utilize disabilities and self-advocacy; and use creative strategies of communication skills with your students and children. Larry will help you see how you can use the gifts God has bestowed upon you!

Dare 2 Dream was created by an educational specialist and motivational speaker with a unique perspective. Born deaf, Larry Jacobs will show how anyone can work with what appears to be limitations. Larry is currently the Assistant Director of Career Services at Rutgers University, as well as a professor of Psychology at Rutgers and Montclair State Universities. He also holds an Ed.S. (Educational Specialist) and Master degrees in Education and Psychological Counseling. He and his wife, Laura, are Pre-Cana and Marriage Encounter facilitators.

Legal Aspects of Lifespan Services: Special Education, Adult Services, Guardianship & Trusts.
Amy E. Duff, Esq.  Workshop 4

This session will provide an overview of the legal aspects of services for people with special needs. It will address what is necessary to secure these services and what is necessary to preserve eligibility.

Ms. Duff comes to us courtesy of the law firm of Hinkle, Fingles & Prior based in Lawrenceville, New Jersey.
Seeing is believing!
Tracey Frost  Workshop 5

This workshop will provide attendees with handouts as well as some interactive exercises to foster awareness that sight includes accurate listening skills; and that professional and personal life successes are totally possible without sight through technology and extensive training.

Ms. Frost has a vocational high school background. She has functioned in the highly competitive field as a multispecialty medical transcriptionist for over 35 years. Her other endeavors include patient advocacy as well as advocacy for the disabled. Tracey’s trusty companion is Coral.

Seeing God in All Our Children..Yes, Even When They Have ADHA or Aspergers!
Laura Jacobs  Workshop 6

God said for all the children to come to Him, not just the well-behaved ones. This workshop will cover ways of recognizing different needs, and how you can tap into that difference to learn and create innovative ways to teach.

You will benefit whether you are a parent, teacher or catechist in becoming a better support for children’s needs. You will be able to recognize God in yourself, as well as how to care for yourself to prevent ‘burn out’.

Laura is a first grade catechist in her home parish, in addition to being a Pre-Cana team member. She is currently employed by Catholic Charities of Metuchen as a Therapeutic Foster Care Advisor. Laura also volunteers in Parent Helping Parent, soup kitchens and Women Aware. She is mom to a 19-year old son with Aspergers. Laura holds a BA in Psychology (majoring in Special Needs Child Development) and is continuing on to get a MA in Psychology. She speaks at Middlesex College to prospective teachers and at schools throughout New Jersey.