



Office for Persons with Disabilities & the Deaf Apostolate
Parish Contacts/Advocates

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Sister Kathleen Schipani, IHM

www.opdarchphilly.org

Parish Contacts /Advocates

Who is a Parish Advocate?

- The Parish Contact acts on behalf of persons with disabilities to ensure that all are invited to share in the life of the parish.
- The contact serves as liaison between persons with disabilities and their parish and between the parish and the Archdiocesan Office for Persons with Disabilities.

Who are persons with disabilities:

Individuals with Disabilities

Categories of
Disability Under IDEA /Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)

AUTISM

1 in 59 or 1.7 % of the children
(1 in 38 boys/ 1 in 152 girls)

Intellectual Disability

Formally called MR.
1.5 %- 2.5%
Roughly 1 in 50

Traumatic Brain Injury

Ages 0-4 and 15-19 most at risk
In the fall of 2011, nearly 26,000 school-aged
children – Special Ed for TBI

Psychiatric Disability Mental Illness Behavioral Health

1 in 5 Children ages 9 to 17
1 in 4 adults (26%)
1 in 17 (6%) Serious Disorder

Children with Disabilities - IDEA

- The student must meet one of the 13 disability categories defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 (IDEA).
- The student must need special education; that is, the child requires specifically designed instruction to receive educational benefits

13 categories are:

- **Intellectual Disability** (ID formally MR)
- **Hearing impairment**
- **Speech/language impairment**
- **Visual impairment / Blind**
- **Emotional disturbance**
- **Orthopedic impairment**
- **Autism**
- **Traumatic brain injury**
- **Other health impairment**
- **Specific learning disability**
- **Deafness**
- **Deaf-blindness**
- **Multiple disabilities**

Get to know the Office for Persons with Disabilities / Deaf Apostolate

Fabulous coworker and volunteers

■ Deaf Ministry



■ OPD



Deaf Ministry /Deaf Apostolate

- Fostering faith and the full access into the life of the Church for the Catholic Deaf Community.



OPD / Office for Persons with Disabilities

- The Department serves as a **pastoral resource** for parishes, institutions, families and individuals in providing access and welcome to **persons with disabilities**.
- *About 18 -20 % or about 1 in 5 of our Catholic parishioners live with a disability.*



Physical Accessibility of Churches

- 206 of our 216 Parishes have Accessible Churches.- (95%)
- In 1991 when the office was formed less than 50% of Church buildings were accessible.

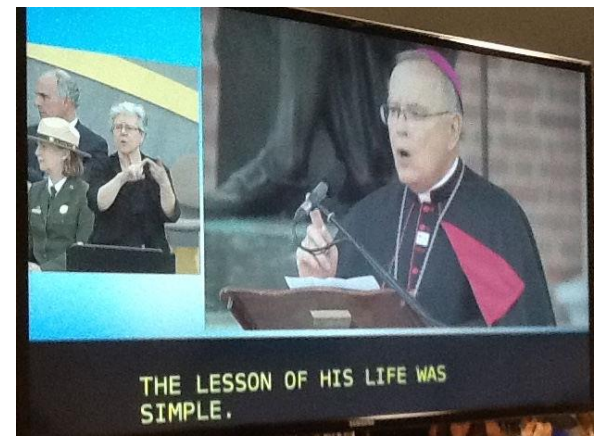
- *Let's take a look at access.*
http://archphila.org/parish_access/church/
p. 118 of the Directory

- *Beyond access to welcome, inclusion and belonging.*



Liturgies & Special Events

- Annual Archdiocesan Mass for Persons with Disabilities
- Parish Masses of Inclusion
- Collaboration with the Office of Divine Worship
- Access Issues for Archdiocesan Celebrations / Events



Faith Formation

- Collaboration with the Office for Catechetical Formation
- Assist with DRE Orientation related to PREP /Children with disabilities
- Serve as a resource for materials and best practices with children with disabilities



Intellectual Disabilities and Autism HELP-LINE

A Collaboration with

- Catholic Social Services / Developmental Programs
- OCE-Schools for Special Education
- Office for Persons with Disabilities

Assisting families to access service and supports provided by the Archdiocese and/or through their counties.



IDDhelp@chs-adphila.org



Lily's Gift www.LilysGift.org

A Collaboration with

- Office for Persons with Disabilities
- Catholic Social Services
- Office and Life and Family

Providing Support to couples who experience a Poor Prenatal Diagnosis of a fatal condition or significant disability.



Support Parish Contacts / Advocates

- Assisting the pastor in ministry with persons with disabilities and their families
- Sensitizing the parish to the needs and gifts of persons with disabilities
- Welcoming and making recommendations for accommodating persons with disabilities in Church life.



Informed by the Gospel

- *Pastoral Statement of the United States Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities, 1978, 1989*
- *General Directory for Catechesis 1997*
- *National Directory for Catechesis 2005*
- *Revised Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, 2017*



All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have the duty to provide it. *Catechesi Tradendae*

Advocate Parish Inclusion

Build Life Listen Don't presume Spirituality individuals relationships Faith Be-a-model Involve open Community Formation Education involved Liturgy Support Church power Welcome Ministry Inclusion integration communication decision-making training resources Awareness Offer Roles Know Keep relationship service assistance

- 15

General Principals - GCS 2017

- Full accessibility should be the goal for every parish, and these adaptations are to be an ordinary part of the liturgical life of the parish.
- The creation of a fully accessible parish reaches beyond mere physical accommodation to encompass the attitudes of all parishioners toward persons with disabilities. All members of the faith community have a role to play in the invitation, welcome, and inclusion of people with disabilities.

Parish Contact/Advocate

What are some ways your parish may need to prepare and plan?

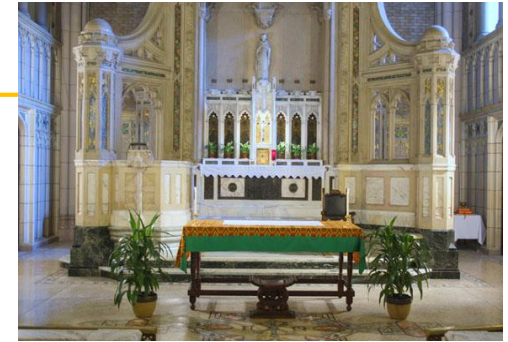
■ Planning



If the participation of persons with disabilities and their families is to be real and meaningful, the parish must prepare itself to receive them (1978 Pastoral Statement #19)

I do believe my role and also having a Parish Advisory Committee on Disabilities makes the parish more aware of the needs of Persons with disabilities.

- Awareness
- Helping to identify individuals and families
- INVITING
- Building access - gradual improvement
- Transportation issues
- Increasing Participation and Service
- Integral part of Parish decision making



Janell Lavender
St. Martin de Porres Parish
Philadelphia, PA



Parish Contact/Advocate

Strategies:

- Build relationships
- **Identify who are the families and individuals**
- Keep communication open...listen.
- Involve individuals in decision making...don't presume you know what is best.
- Offer resources, training and assistance / be a model of inclusion
- Be involved in the liturgy; it is where you'll reach the most people.



Kathy Ross

St. John the Evangelist

Moresville, PA



From my perspective my greatest influence has been on the Parish Religious Education Program. Children with disabilities are in the mainstream, in smaller learning support programs, instructed at home when necessary . Their needs are met in a variety of way.

- **A resource to families and to the parish staff**
- **Assisted in navigating access to the Sacraments**
- **Physical changes– pew cuts and a ramp to the Lounge**
- **Bringing needs to the Parish Council**
- **Sometimes just listening and offering support ,understanding**



Physical /Architectural

- Accessible entrances / doors
- Pew Cuts
- Parking
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Accessible Sanctuaries, choir area, confessionals
- Large Print / Braille



Attitudinal / A culture of belonging

- Ministry of Hospitality
- Children and Adults with IDD/ASD / MI feel welcome and accepted
- Accommodations are not a problem
- Recognition of the gifts and blessings of persons with disabilities.



Models of Engagement in Catechesis

In classroom with supports...
catechist aide or peer tutor/adapted materials



Within the typical classroom
with peers



In Learning Support Classroom
with small group learning and adapted curriculum



With Individualized Instruction;
joins with peers for prayer, liturgies & special activities



Liturgy and Sacraments



Office of Worship



Agents of Evangelization

- All members of the Body of Christ are uniquely called by God by virtue of their Baptism...the Church seeks to support all in their growth in holiness and to encourage all in their vocation.



National Organizations /Resources

■ Catholic

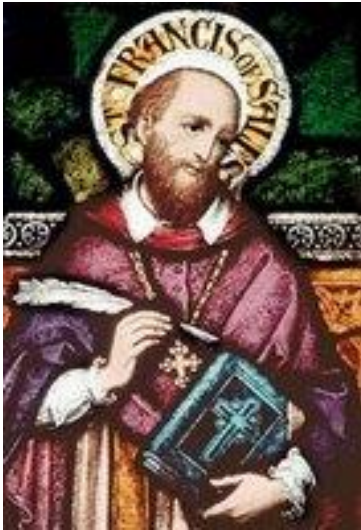
- **NCPD** National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities www.ncpd.org
- **NCOD** National Catholic Office for the Deaf www.ncod.org
- **Xavier Society for the Blind**
www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org

■ Interfaith

- **Collaborative on Faith and Disability**
www.faithanddisability.org / www.faithability.org

Heartfelt Gratitude ...

to each of you



*It is to those who have the most
need of us that we ought to show
our love more especially.*

St. Francis De Sales
