

May 2006 Issue V

Help for Special Needs Student Ends up Helping All!



Carol Rearick has been the Kindergarten Teacher at St. Catharine School for eleven years. Mrs. Rearick has witnessed the benefits of having students with special needs in her classroom. As so often in life, what we think may be a burden, often ends up being a blessing.

Five years ago I was introduced to an occupational therapist who worked with a special needs student in my classroom. Little did I know that that meeting would inspire me to better prepare my students by focusing on all of their fine motor and handwriting skills. SPICE funding enabled me to attend handwriting workshops and made it possible for the occupational therapist to work in my classroom on a regular basis. With the help of SPICE, we purchased

materials to support the *Handwriting Without Tears* program used in the classroom and at home.

Throughout the years we have offered parent workshops on handwriting readiness skills for parents of both current and incoming students. Our occupational therapist has been an integral part of the spring screening program for incoming kindergarten students and she continues to work in the classroom on a regular basis, thanks to SPICE.

SPICE funding has enabled me to expand my teaching strategies, continue to work closely with our occupational therapist and purchase materials to help the kindergarten program support students in developing their fine motor and handwriting skills both in the classroom and at home.

"The most effective way to cope with change is to help create it" L. Lynett

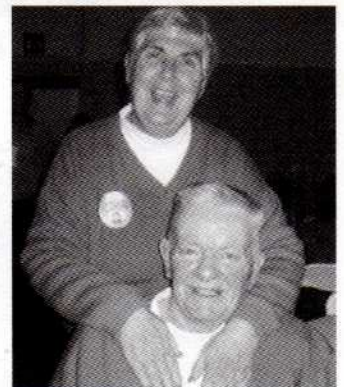
"BE GOSH AND BEGORAH!"



Our 4th Annual SPICE St. Patrick day Dinner and Dance was another huge success. "Sure it was like a morn in spring" for all those attending – great food, entertainment, lots of Blarney and Irish Spirit, and even a solo of Danny Boy by our Pastor Fr. O'Weyls. Many thanks to Jim and Peggy Mackessy for the great job of chairing the event, and to Deanna Maynard and Liz Crossman for their culinary phenomena!

SPICE Mission Statement

St. Catharine SPICE Program recognizes that each of our parish children are unique individuals with different learning needs. The SPICE Program supports serving the educational needs of these children. We believe that children have different learning styles that provide diversity in the classroom environment. Working together with the support of the SPICE program, the parish community, pastor, administration, teachers, and parents can help to provide understanding, information, creativity and willingness to address special educational needs.



Peggy and Bill Diehl, Longtime Parishoners, Supporters of SPICE, and good examples to us all!

"You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great."
Zig Ziglar

OUR BOARD IS NOT BORED!

At a recent SPICE Advisory Board meeting, the contents of an article for this newsletter were discussed. A possibility was to have a parent of a child with special needs write an article about their feelings and experiences. However, it was unanimous that this would have too many ramifications for the child. So the article won't be written, but we will share comments made at the meeting.

"SPICE hasn't changed what great things St. Catharine has been doing for its children with special needs, SPICE has just brought an awareness of what St. Catharine is doing to meet the needs of all its students and to help with the

funding of these endeavors."

"The awareness of people's special needs is rapidly increasing, not only at St. Catharine, but throughout society."

"Parents of children with special needs recognize 'the look' in other parents of children with special needs. SPICE is breaking the barrier and making it easier for people to talk about these special needs and to realize that they are not alone."

"The Professionalism at St. Catharine is Outstanding! They really care about the kids."

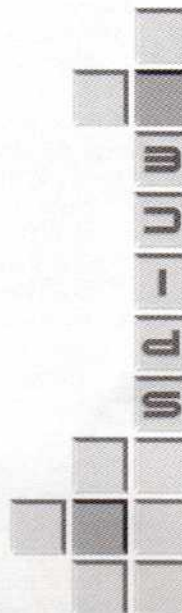
We wish to thank our board for their time and invaluable advice and support.



Peggy and Jim Mackessy, St. Patrick Party Chairpersons



"A perfect parent is a person with excellent child-rearing theories and no actual children." Dave Barry



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What SPICE is Providing

Additional funding for:

- classroom aides, tutors & interpreters
- speech and occupational therapists
- teacher and staff continuing education
- classroom support materials and software
- individual grants for summer tutoring and specialized programs
- interpreter for Parish School of Religion

An awareness that special needs exist with students in our parish.

An atmosphere that supports these students' needs.

Creates a model for other parishes within our Diocese and beyond.



Bob & Mary Ginn Ryan, Co-Founders of SPICE, are presented a check by the Daughters of Erin. God Bless the IRISH!