



PLEASE MEET BARBARA BECK, A RESIDENT OF THE EASTMOOR AREA FOR 34 YEARS, AND A MEMBER OF ST. CATHARINE PARISH FOR 7 YEARS. OUR LIVES AND OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY ARE BETTER FOR BARBARA JOINING US!

THANK YOU!

We all have our embarrassing and humbling moments, and we would like to share our most recent such moment with you. Hopefully this story will give you some insight into the complexities of the various special needs in our own small community, and how we need to be constantly aware of these needs. It is only fitting that this story be told in our newsletter!

This is our 6th year for SPICE at St. Catharine, and we just hosted our 5th St. Patrick Party. Every year we have held the party in the School gym because "this is our home" and this is where great things are being done. We have talked about holding the party at a larger venue, but have always felt that

having it at St. Catharine is important because it is important for people to see the school. This year our party was a greater success than we could ever have imagined, and let me tell you why! The party was again another sellout, the food was more delicious than ever, the entertainment and music was worth more than the price of admission, fellowship filled the hall, Blarney filled the air, and yet the best part of the night was

that our fellow parishioner and neighbor, Barbara Beck, was in attendance.

The purpose of our St. Patrick Party has always been to raise awareness of special needs in our community and "to spread the good word" about what St. Catharine's is doing to meet these needs. Every year we talk about all the great things that are being done at St. Catharine and without too many spoken words show our pride in the efforts to address everyone's special needs at St. Catharine. However, this year there was an interesting and humbling turn of events!

Those of you who are familiar with St. Catharine would recognize our special guest this year, Barbara Beck – she is a member of the choir and a regular cantor at Mass at St. Catharine. Barbara is the one with the voice of an angel who sings from a wheelchair. Barbara and her mother Edith live just houses away from St. Catharine School

– in fact, so close that if Barbara were to throw a rock, she would hit the school. However, the problem is that Barbara can't throw a rock! She has a condition called Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva, or FOP as it is more easily labeled – a disease in which over time renegade bone formation, transforms the body's muscles and soft tissue into bone, leading to permanent loss of mobility. Barb is confined to a wheelchair, and a pretty nifty one at that!

As we mentioned before, the Becks did attend this year's St. Patrick Party. Actually, the Becks have wanted to attend for five years, but, ironically enough, St. Catharine School, the home of our party with the purpose of bringing about awareness for special needs, isn't wheelchair accessible. The Becks very politely mentioned to us that for years they have been listening to the music from their house down the street, but were not able to attend due to the lack of accessibility. For five years, we have had a great party to benefit special needs, and have been holding it in a facility that isn't accessible. The fact that it happened is embarrassing enough, but the fact that no one realized it until this year is even more

embarrassing.

Our party's chairpersons, Jim and Peggy Mackessy, heard that Barbara wanted to come, and quietly had another parishioner, Mr. John Swanson, build a ramp into the party room. A great night was had by all, and it was even better with Barbara and her mother in attendance. We apologize and, if it means anything, are a little smarter for it. To all the others that this may have affected in addition to Barbara, we also apologize.

Arrangements are underway and a permanent ramp giving accessibility into the school gym will soon be installed. SPICE has gladly volunteered to fund the construction of this improvement. *At the expense of not having Barbara at our party for the last 4 years, we hope that we have all learned a lesson – the world of special needs is vast, and always very close to home!*

Barbara, will you please sing Danny Boy for us at next year's party??

-Bob and Mary Ginn Ryan





Peggy and Jim Mackessy, St. Patrick Party Chairpersons

DOYLE FOUNDATION HONORS SPICE.

St. Catharine SPICE was honored in February at the Annual Doyle Foundation Dinner with a very generous grant. Thanks to George and Patty Doyle for all the great work they do with their foundation.

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



Bill and Peggy Diehl and their daughter and son-in-law Peggy and David Hemmer at this years St. Patrick Party.



The 2007 St. Patrick's Day Planning Committee, from left to right: Back row, Joy Hostetler, Cynthia Weiker, Peggy and Jim Mackessy, Mary Hettinger, Mary Ginn Ryan. Front row, Helen Burgess, CeCe Kanowsky, Liz Crossman. THANKS FOR A GREAT JOB!



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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.

THANKS TO THE CLEARY FAMILY!

Clare, Dennis and Martha Ryan Cleary hosted a benefit last fall at their Clintonville Home for all the SPICE Programs in Central Ohio. The General Guinness Band donated their performance, there was plenty of good food and drinks and hundreds of people. It was a beautiful day, a beautiful celebration and was a wonderful contribution to SPICE. THANKS!!

www.generalguinness.com

