

St. Coletta News

St. Coletta Day School of Milwaukee—A Nonprofit Program Educating Boys and Girls with Cognitive Disabilities Age 8 to 17

SUMMER 2004

FROM A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"True holiness consists in doing God's will with a smile."

Mother Teresa



Our son Tim entered St. Coletta Day School in Fall 2003. In October he brought home a script for a Christmas play and announced, "I'm going to be a tree first, and then turn into a kid!" We wondered, could he work on a group project like this, learn his lines, be up front on stage?

Throughout Tim's five years in the public school system, well meaning teachers tried to make him fit into their programs—squeezing, bending, stretching Tim hoping to adapt him for the right reading, math, or writing class. But "all of Tim" never did fit. Often the academic expectations

were too overwhelming. Sometimes he couldn't handle the social situation.

At St. Coletta Day School, a program is set up for his specific needs. He can learn at his own pace. Nearly every day we say a prayer of thanks for Bill Koehn and Sandy Reese, the teaching staff. This school year has been the very first time we've felt a true partnership—working together with Bill and Sandy, helping Tim everyday to do the best that he can academically, personally, and socially. Because of this I know that Tim will have a better chance to build the skills he needs for success now and in the future. We can see that his teachers believe in discovering the best about him and whether it's play practice, share time, Adventure Club or spelling lessons, this is a program that fits "all of Tim."

Did he learn his lines for the Christmas play? Oh yes, and everyone else's too! After too many Christmas programs standing in the back row Tim finally got his first chance this school year to shine on stage with his classmates.

Our son Manny is new at St. Coletta Day School this year, and we could not be happier with his progress! I cannot even begin to thank his teachers, Bill and Sandy enough for their gentle encouragement and extreme patience that they have demonstrated consistently with Manny. For the first time in his 10 years, Manny is actually reading, and his confidence has grown with his new found ability as well.

We are also grateful for the daily "life lessons" that are constantly being taught in the classroom, such as conflict resolution, and the concept of making "choices" in situations. Bill and Sandy allow the children to present their problems, and have the children brainstorm for solutions, and encourage the children to make the appropriate choice. This has helped our son manage his frustration and makes him feel more in control of his environment, which I believe helps to make him more independent.

More than anything, St. Coletta Day School has given us hope for Manny's

future. We are certain that Manny will be encouraged to develop to his full potential in a caring and respectful environment, where no one is labeling or limiting any of Manny's future possibilities, and for that we will do anything for our school! Thank you Bill and Sandy for everything you do. We appreciate you!



COLLETASCOPE 2004

Saturday, October 30
Michael H. Lord Gallery
772 North Milwaukee St.

Mark your calendars and tell all your friends. *ColettaScope*, our main fundraiser, will be held on **Saturday, October 30, 2004**. Michael H. Lord Gallery in downtown Milwaukee will again host this popular event. Watch for your invitations the fall of 2004. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer for this event or become a guest artist, please call Bill Koehn at (414) 453-1850.



☛ MAKE A NOTE OF IT!



WILLIAM A. KOEHN—Administrator
SANDY REESE—Teaching Assistant

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1740 North 55th Street • Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208 • (414) 453-1850

AND THEN . . . THERE ARE OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Every organization depends on good volunteers. We are blessed to have several devoted people who prove that they are what volunteers are all about.

This school year Sarah Kolman and John Meuler from Marquette University were back to help with math facts and spelling and the kids love them. "Grandma Mary", Manny's grandma, is with us every Monday morning. She even convinced a friend of hers, Lynn, to come to school to do an art project with the kids. I guess Lynn attended *ColettaScope* and had a great idea for a project! And most recently, Marina Pavlopoulos from Alverno College called us and asked if we could find room for her to help out. She started on a Wednesday and asked, after her first day, if she could come on Fridays as well. Who are we to turn away an extra pair of hands! Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers. The kids love you and we appreciate your talents very much.

ART PROGRAM ADDS A SPLASH OF COLOR

Pauline Werkmeister, (Art Education) and Natalie Haefele, (Art Therapy) are both students at Alverno College. They each spent part of the semester with us and assisted the students in some creative art expressions. Under their guidance, the kids were able to paint, design, sculpt and draw their way through the afternoon one day a week. Look for several of their creations in this year's *ColettaScope*. We are indeed fortunate to have such talented young women from Alverno work with our kids every week.



SHARED LIFE EXPERIENCES

Each spring, St. Coletta Day School and Marquette University High School partner to give a senior student an opportunity to work with our students. This year, through the Senior Shared Life Project at MUHS, Eamon Holahan recently spent two weeks with us. Every day, Eamon would attend our school instead of Marquette to gain a "better understanding of our shared humanity" according to Terry Kelly, Project Director.

In Eamon's words, "For me, the experience has been very meaningful. Many times people have this preconceived notion that people who have disabilities are not really people. It's sad, but many people believe that. I found, through my work with each of the kids, that all of them have a purpose and that all of them have the potential to use their talents. Thanks for your time and thanks for allowing me to step into your lives for two weeks."

Thank you, Eamon, for sharing your time with us and for being a friend to all of our kids.



A field trip to the Farmer's Market was something to smile about.



Rehearsing for the annual Christmas Program is hard work.

WELCOME SCOTT SUVAKA



In September 2003, as another school year was starting, we were in need, once again, of someone to supervise our lunch/recess program.

At the same time, Dawn, one of our students, was working hard to strengthen her muscles so she could realize one of her goals . . . to walk.

Then an answer was provided to fill both of those needs. His name is Scott and flexibility is his middle name. Scott works with the St. Sebastian PAL program. Since we needed someone only part-time and Scott needed more

hours to round out his day, we were able to work out an agreement to hire him part time. Scott supervises the students at lunch and recess and also helps Dawn with her therapy at school.

It is a unique situation which helps everyone. In fact we were able to offer Scott additional hours to assist the kids with their academic work as well. Scott was able to load several new programs onto our computers and he facilitates our "computer lab" which we are developing.

We are really happy that Scott is part of the St. Coletta Day School team. When you meet him, ask him about a certain cookie jar!

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and companies for their financial and in-kind support:

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- Carol Zippel

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IN HONOR OF

- Linda Kenney (Happy Birthday!)*—
Dan Austin
Bill Koehn

St. Coletta News



THE PARENT GROUP OF
ST. COLETTA DAY SCHOOL
OF MILWAUKEE

1740 North 55th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53208

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an academic curriculum designed to meet the special learning needs of each student that will help prepare the students to realize their full learning potential and to become productive and contributing citizens as adults.



A New Standard of Education

For Students with Cognitive Disabilities

- Ages 8 to 17
- Full Academic Program

FALL 2004 ENROLLMENT

We are currently accepting applications for fall enrollment. Please have anyone you know who may be interested in learning more about the program contact administrator/teacher Bill Koehn at (414) 453-1850.

ADVENTURE CLUB AT ST. COLETTA DAY SCHOOL

For our new students this year, Tuesday mornings were a bit like going to the zoo. Lisa Gildersleeve, with the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee, would arrive with . . . well, let's see: In addition to her two dogs, we met Toni the cat, Sara the gerbil, birds and mice.

Caring for these critters is the main objective behind our **Adventure Club**. The students learn to work together as a team to care for and make decisions about the different animals that visit. Sara, the gerbil, became a classroom pet and spent a few of months with us. The students had to establish a feeding routine as well as a schedule to clean her cage. With the right amount of teamwork, Sara became another member of the St. Coletta family. She'll spend this summer at camp and return in the fall.

Lisa has all kinds of surprises in store for the students next year. But nothing will top the trip we made to the YMCA to sail our boats made from recycled materials. The students would love to repeat that trip!

Did you know that you are able to designate your United Way pledge *directly* to St. Coletta Day School? Just call us at (414) 453-1850, and we will gladly give you our Donor Choice number.



CLASS-A MOTTO

Today is a new day.
Today *I will try* to get along with everyone.
Today *I will try* to follow the rules.
Today *I will try* to do my best.

Every day, students at St. Coletta Day School of Milwaukee discover their unique abilities by being challenged to achieve their best in a safe environment of respect.

► **Please help support St. Coletta Day School.**