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2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games Honor Bestowed

Three women from Paul VI Catholic High School in Fairfax, VA have been chosen from thousands of applicants world-wide to attend the Global Youth Activation Summit this February in Boise, Idaho. The summit will take place during the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games. Attending will be junior Natalie Mills (Special Olympics athlete), junior Nicole Simon (peer mentor) and Mrs. Mary Jo Gregory (teacher/chaperone). The selection process was quite competitive, as only 50 athletes and 50 mentors worldwide were chosen for this honor.



Beginning in 2010, the 5th Global Youth Activation summit will bring together young people with and without intellectual disabilities from around the world who are committed to making a difference in their schools and communities through Special Olympics. The conference will include conferences, leadership training sessions, and interactive sports experiences. Participants will act as journalists,

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publishing their stories and photos daily on a variety of websites.

"What a wonderful experience this is going to be. We will have the opportunity to share with the rest of the world that the partnership formed between students with and without intellectual disabilities has created acceptance, dignity, respect and friendships throughout our community at Paul VI. The GYAS Delegates will have the opportunity to interview the athletes participating in the Special Olympics World Games and then broadcast on the Global Webinar. If you would like to be part of the Webinar contact mjgregory@paulvi.net for more information," said Mary Jo Gregory.



Chris Desmarais, Coordinator of the Options Program of inclusion for students with disability in Paul VI's Catholic High School in Fairfax, VA sent this article to share about the honor recently bestowed upon the two students, one with disabilities. If you would like to know more about the Options Program at PVI you can check their website. [Options Program, Paul VI Catholic High School](#). They are celebrating their 10th anniversary this year.



Special Olympics

Be a fan™

NCPD News and Tips



March for Life: NCPD staff and friends participated and provided leadership for some of the Jan. 22 March for Life activities in Washington, DC. We congratulate you for the ways you honored and recognized the value of life in your dioceses and parishes. Let us remain committed to efforts like this, which is one of the core values of disability ministry.

Following a liturgy for pro-life leaders celebrated by Cardinal Justin Rigali, NCPD development director Peg Kolm shared with him our belief that people with disabilities bridge the pro-life and social justice communities.



Executive Director's Presentation Draws Largest Mid-Day Audience to Date: Jan Benton, NCPD's Executive Director, was invited to present a talk entitled: **In God's Image: Considering the Life and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities** on February 5 at the Catholic Information Center in Washington, DC. Watch their website, www.cicdc.org, for a podcast of her presentation. Jan and other staff members are often asked to present at meetings or conferences, and are happy to do so

as scheduling allows.

Ministry Training Projects Underway: Final scripts are being written and two videos are in production that will be used to support two training programs already developed that will be piloted in the U.S. by NCPD in September-November, 2009. One will provide a foundation in disability ministry for those involved in Church ministry. The second will provide two levels of training for Church ministers, to support them in serving those with mental illnesses and their families. The Foundations in Disability Ministry project is supported by a committee of diocesan disability directors and is staffed by NCPD. The NCPD Mental Illness Council and NCPD staff are working together on the Mental Illness Ministry project. Thanks to the Our Sunday Visitor Institute and Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities for their generous support of the Foundations in Disability Ministry project.

NCEA/Catholic Daughters of the Americas Scholarships for Teachers of Children With Special Needs: Share this news with your (Arch)Diocesan Schools personnel or with a Catholic school principal or teacher you know who is interested in serving students with disabilities in their school. NCEA/Catholic Daughters of the Americas Scholarships for Teachers of Children With Special Needs Grants of up to \$1,000 are available to teachers who are pursuing advanced studies in special needs education. The teachers must promise to share the knowledge they acquired in their courses with the other teachers in the school and they must promise to remain at the school for at least one year following receipt of the scholarship. The Catholic Daughters of the Americas provide the funding for this project. [[2009 Application Form](#)]

NCEA Special Needs Conference: January 18-20, 2009, Lilly Rangel-Diaz, NCPD Board member from Miami, FL; Cheryl Hall, Coordinator and Special Education Teacher from Mount St. Joseph High School in Laurel, MD; Francesca Pellegrino, founder and president of the Catholic Coalition for Special Education, Maryland www.ccse.maryland.org; and NCPD staff person Dr. Nancy Thompson attended the NCEA Special Needs Conference in Charleston, SC as a group to collect resources and share experiences with others involved in inclusion of students with disability in Catholic schools.

(Editor's Note) Many of you and your constituents ask us about inclusion in Catholic schools and we will attempt to provide better information and resources for you in the future through our upcoming webinars on inclusion in Catholic schools and pieces like this one. Chris Desmarais, Coordinator of the Options Program of inclusion for students with disability in Paul VI's Catholic High School in Fairfax who was mentioned in the article above on Special Olympics, is available to discuss how inclusion can and does work in Catholic secondary education. You can contact her at 703.352.0925 Ext. 333, and read the story she sent to share.

Diocesan/Partner News

We are pleased that Fr. Joe McNulty, long time advocate and leader in disability ministry from the Diocese of Cleveland continues to get stronger and is gradually resuming some ministerial duties on a modified schedule. He uses the phone and the internet sparingly, so send cards to St. Augustine Church, 2486 W. 14th St., Cleveland, OH 44113, if you want to let him know of your prayers and encouragement. It will be great to have him back to full throttle as he continues to re-cooperate.

Welcome and Inclusion Initiative for the 30th Anniversary Year: Bill Fleming, Coordinator of Catechesis for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Eileen Colarusso, Director of Deaf Ministry in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have made a concentrated effort to implement a "Welcome and Inclusion Initiative for the 30th Anniversary Year." Their plan was conceived and developed by

Bill and Eileen with the assistance of a committee their vicar bishop, created for the purpose of seeking ways to make Baltimore an inclusive and welcoming archdiocese. ([read full article.](#))

Tips for Inclusion Ministry: Today we begin a monthly series of Tips for Inclusion Ministry that will be written by Marsha Rivas, Equal Access Ministry, Diocese of Toledo, OH. This first in the series that is being featured in the NCPD E-News is entitled: "Universal Design for Learning." Marsha creates and distributes these monthly in her diocese and has agreed to let us spread her good work to you and to store copies on our website. Be watching each month! Thank you, thank you, Marsha, from all of us! [Click here to read tips.](#)

Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation: The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) is a growing initiative at the University of Dayton, to offer adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere via the internet. The goal is to support the church's professional ministry of religious education and faith formation in cyberspace. They offer a catechist certification process, including some offerings related to disability ministry and are planning to offer more. The VLCFF is coordinated and sponsored by the [Institute for Pastoral Initiatives \(IPI\)](#) at the [University of Dayton](#) - a Catholic Marianist Institution. For more information about joining in the rapidly growing online Catholic learning community, go to <http://vlc.udayton.edu/> or contact Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MSHS, D.Min., angela.zukowski@notes.udayton.edu, or (937) 229-3126.

Annual Mass of Celebration Emphasizes Theme of Disability: The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is preparing for their annual mass of celebration that emphasizes the theme of disability. Their invitation flyer has been added to the Disability Ministry Toolkit as a model. It is something that can be produced "in house", yet is very inviting, informative and looks great. Sr. Kathleen Schipani and Janell Levander sent this flyer to their parish advocates and others, asking them to spread the news. It is a great technique we are all using more and more, as it saves printing, paper, postage and staff time all around. [Check out their flyer here.](#)

NAfIM Board Member Passes: The National Apostolate for Inclusion Ministry (NAfIM) Executive Director Barbara Lampe reported that their Board Vice-President, Deacon Rod Szymczyk, died between Christmas and New Years. His funeral was on December 31. Rod is well known in the disability ministry community and had recently celebrated his 25th anniversary in the diaconate. Join with NCPD in extending your condolences through Barbara at qnafim@aol.com.

Another NAfIM announcement: **SAVE THE DATE:** The National Apostolate for Inclusion Ministry (NAfIM) will hold its Annual National Membership Meeting on Saturday, Aug. 1, 2009 at Rivers Edge Retreat Center, Cleveland, Ohio. To reserve a room at Rivers Edge call 216-688-1111 ext. 255 indicating you will be attending the National Apostolate Meeting on August 1. Members and non-members welcome. More details in the March issue of E-NEWS.

Legislation

Mexico City Policy Decried by Chair of USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities: Let us stay vigilant in our efforts to support laws and initiatives that support life. In a Jan. 26 article, the Zenit news agency reported that Cardinal Justin Rigali called President Barack Obama's decision on day 3 of his presidency to reverse the Mexico City Policy to be "very disappointing." There had been an 8-year ban on U.S. funding of organizations that perform and promote abortion in developing nations. President Obama has insisted during his electoral campaign that he wasn't for abortion but rather for reducing the number of abortions without making abortion illegal. The Mexico City Policy had prevented the diversion of U.S. funds to groups that promote abortions.

Cardinal Francis George, president of the USCCB, and longtime Board member and Episcopal Moderator of NCPD until recently, wrote to Obama before his inauguration urging him to retain this policy: "The Mexico City Policy, first established in 1984, has wrongly been attacked as a restriction on foreign aid for family planning. In fact, it has not reduced such aid at all, but has ensured that family planning funds are not diverted to organizations dedicated to performing and promoting abortions instead of reducing them.

Resources

Easter 2009 Resources: Check out Pflaum Publishing's Easter 2009 resources and Year of St. Paul materials to adapt or use as models for use with children with disabilities. The materials on Paul are found at the Family Page. Go here to sign up. It is free. [Pflaum Family Page Sign-up](#). The Guidebooks for the journey to Lent called "*Totally Lent!*" can be found at [Totally Lent Preview Pages](#). Each day of Lent features a new page of age-appropriate reflections and activities at each of three levels.

Fundsnet Online Services

A comprehensive website dedicated to providing nonprofit organizations, colleges, and universities with information on financial resources is available on the Internet. Click on "Disability" to go to a list of 20 grantors for the topic of disability. There may be something there that can assist you in your outreach efforts.

Internet Resources

Vatican on YouTube: Internet Technology usage continues to rise in the Church world-wide. January 23, 2009 the Vatican launched a channel on YouTube that will provide video news clips on the Pope's activities, currently in four languages, including English. One or two video clips will be provided each day at www.youtube.com/vatican.

John Paul II: Development of a Theology of Communications, published by the Vatican publishing house on February 4, credits him as the first pope to develop a theology of communication. As computer and internet usage continued to grow in the world, John Paul II urged Catholics to not avoid or fear internet technology but to become immersed in it...to become the programmers and developers and bring it into holy use for the Kingdom of God. We see some of the fruit of his prophetic call coming in to play. The participants of the symposium on the theology of communication which accompanied the book's release "agreed that while the seeds of such a theology have always existed throughout Church history, its development only began to bear fruit during Pope John Paul II's pontificate," in a press release quoted by the Zenit news agency.

Parish advocates and parent groups have become active on YouTube, blogs and websites of their own. The Vatican, most dioceses, diocesan offices, Church organizations and many parishes have their own websites. A wealth of information can be gained through them. (Check out NCPD's at www.ncpd.org.)

Baby Thomas Highlights the Story of Many Families: We want to share one blog with you that offers an intimate look at a young Catholic family. Baby Thomas was born at 25 weeks plus one day of his mother's pregnancy, weighing 1 lb, 10 oz. A little more than 6 months later, January 30, 2009, at 11 lb, 1 oz. this wonderful little boy joined his loving brother and sister, mom and dad at home at last. Beginning with Thomas' birth and even now, Thomas' mom and dad have kept friends and

family informed of his progress through a blog. They have especially invited you as those who minister in the Church, to take a look at their story to help you understand the reality of parents whose children are in your religious education programs and schools. Your parishes each hold stories of families with children who are medically fragile or disabled in some way. This site provides a rare look into the struggles and joys (complete with wonderful photos) of one such family. The insight you gain can be very helpful to you in your own ministries. [Baby Thomas](#)

Coming Events

Upcoming Webinars

Tuesday, March 10, 2009, 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT *Access to Liturgical Spaces: Welcoming ALL to this Place*, NCPD webinar in partnership with the Georgetown Center for Liturgy/Envision Magazine and others. We will explore what constitutes an accessible liturgical space and how to achieve it. Presenter: Robert Habiger, architect and liturgical design consultant, Albuquerque, NM. Moderator: Dr. Anne Koester, Associate Director, The Georgetown Center for Liturgy and Editorial Director, EnvisionChurch.org, Washington, DC. Go to www.ncpd.org to download a flyer. [Click here to register.](#)

Tuesday, May 12, 2009 1:00-2:30p.m. EDT *Access to Tools in Addressing Suicide: Pastoral Supports and Prevention Strategies*, NCPD Mental Illness Council webinar and others. We will feature noted columnist, teacher and theologian Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI; Dr. Thomas Welch, a forensic psychiatrist with a Masters Degree in Pastoral Ministry who is a member of the NCPD Council on Mental Illness; and Claire Woodruff, Religious Education Coordinator for the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon. Claire serves as the Board of Directors Chair, Small Group Facilitator of the Suicide Bereavement Support Organization (SBS)

Wed., July 15, 2009, 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT *Access in Liturgy: Making Liturgical Ministries More Accessible to People with Disabilities*, NCPD webinar in partnership with the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) and others, will describe ways to make liturgical ministries more accessible to those with disabilities.

Tues., October 13, 2009, 3:00-4:00 p.m. EDT *Access in Catholic Education: Catholic Elementary Schools*, NCPD webinar in partnership with the USCCB Secretariat on Catholic Education and others, with Marie Powell, Director, serving as moderator.

Tues., February 16, 2010, 3:00-4:00 p.m. EST
Access in Catholic Education: Catholic High Schools

We look forward to producing these webinars for the support of your ministry in the Church. Thank you to all who have helped make the previous webinars so successful and through whose suggestions the present schedule has been developed. Contact Dr. Nancy Thompson at nthompson@ncpd.org with questions.

Other Events

February 22-25, 2009

Catholic Social Ministry Gathering

"Christ Our Hope: Healing a Broken World"

Join NCPD staff, board, and other advocates to bring a

disability perspective to social action directors and members of Congress.

Partner Organizational Meetings - February 19-22

NCPD Wrap-around - February 22, 1-3:00 PM

Core Meeting- February 22-25

Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill - Washington, DC

www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org

Sunday, March 22, 2009, 2:30 p.m. EDT

Archdiocese of Philadelphia Annual Disability Mass, Principal celebrant and homilist: Cardinal Justin Rigali. Sponsored by the Respect Life Office, Department for Pastoral Care for Persons with Disabilities. Reception follows. Parishioners, family, friends and other interested persons invited.

Invitation flyer here. Location: The Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul 18th St. & Benjamin Franklin Parkway Philadelphia, PA. To volunteer or ask questions, contact Janell Lavender

jlavende@adphila.org or Sr. Kathleen Schipani SRCHIPA@adphila.org

Monday, April 27 through Thursday, April 30, 2009

National Conference for Catechetical Leadership Annual Conference

NCPD will host a Liaison Group Session relating to catechesis and disability on Wednesday April 29, 2:00 - 3:30 PM. Join us!

Dearborn Michigan Hyatt, Archdiocese of Detroit.

To register or for additional information contact NCCL at www.nccl.org.

Thursday, July 2 to through Sunday July 5, 2009

Celebrating 35 Years of Handicapped Encounter Christ

Interested in a Journey to the Heart of God?

Held in Mount Kisco, NY

Contact John L. Keck at Keck.j@worldnet.att.net (914) 737-6889

Our Mission:

Rooted in Gospel values that affirm the dignity of every person, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) works collaboratively to ensure meaningful participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the life of the Church and society.

Visit our Website: www.ncpd.org

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Our goal with NCPD E-NEWS is to be brief, timely, and relevant. We trust that you'll look forward to these postings, read them, and pass them on. We count on your feedback. NCPD Director of Programs, Nancy Thompson, edits NCPD E-NEWS. Please submit items for consideration to her at nthompson@ncpd.org any items you want considered for inclusion, using the phrase "E-NEWS Submission" or "E-NEWS Response" in the subject line.