



## **World Down Syndrome Day March 21, 2020**

### **Reflection by Bridget Brown**

My name is Bridget Brown and I live in a suburb of Chicago. I am 33 and I have lived in my neighborhood most of my life. I am thrilled that I was born in March - when we celebrate World Down Syndrome Day in March - because I have never let the fact that I have Down Syndrome limit me. I am a national inclusion advocate and public speaker. I have my own organization called "Butterflies for Change" and encourage people to always dwell in the possibilities. I believe in the sacred dignity of every person because they are a beloved child of God with gifts to share with the world.

My faith has always been very important to me and it continues to be the main part of my life.

I was the first person (with Down Syndrome) to be included in my school, church and community. I have always been included in my church and participated in CCD and all the sacraments right alongside my peers.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel opened their doors, minds & hearts so that I could have a full experience in our church community. People always asked "HOW can we include Bridget?" instead of asking "WHY SHOULD we include her?"

At my church I was an altar server when I was young. I was involved in CCD, High School Companions, youth activities, and I celebrated my First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

I made lots of friends and I learned about love. I learned that it is important to know that Jesus Christ died for my sins.

As an adult I got involved in ALPHA at our church and I am in a small Christian community.

I enjoy having and being part of my community.

I love to worship because it makes me feel like I am part of the community. I think God has called me to make a difference in the world and be a voice for those who don't have a voice.

I have learned that it is important for churches to include people of different abilities and make them feel welcome. See their abilities and not their disabilities and help them find a place to make a difference and serve God in their own unique way.

*Bridget Brown is a member of the NCPD Council on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities CIDD. A national public speaker, young adult leader and advocate for persons with Down syndrome from the Diocese of Joliet.*

[https://ncpd.org/resources\\_and\\_toolkits/happy-world-down-syndrome-day](https://ncpd.org/resources_and_toolkits/happy-world-down-syndrome-day)



[Butterfliesforchange.org](https://butterfliesforchange.org)



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