

relationships

SPRING
2013

CITIZEN
ADVOCATES
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

"MAKING A POSITIVE
DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES."

VOLUME 9 NO. 2



A middle school Community Partners get together at Silverbrook School in West Bend.

It is very cool. It is changing lives.

Do you remember middle school? Many of us look back on our middle school days and have fond memories of making new friends, becoming more independent, joining in the clubs and activities that we enjoyed and mostly just getting to hang out with friends.

But if you are honest with yourself, middle school was hard. There were new people to make friends with, classrooms to find, crowded hallways to navigate. We had to figure out who we were for the first time without our teachers and parents checking our every move. Those bullies that were in elementary school joined forces with more bullies and life became very

difficult if you were in their target. And do you remember the lunch room? There were the 'cool' tables, the not so 'cool' tables and then there were the tables you just plain avoided.

Middle school students haven't changed much from when we were that age. Except the world around them has changed. Technology has made bullying more widespread, drugs have found their way into the lockers of the middle schools and teachers have been asked to do more with less. The lunch room is still just as scary for those sitting at the not so cool table.

After struggling to get the high school programs going in some schools, we began talking to a teacher at

Silverbrook Middle School. We wanted to know how do we keep the special education students involved in the school community as they transition from elementary school to middle school? It didn't take long for the teacher to bring up the lunch table full of students who sat quietly with the teachers aides. These students only a few years back in 5th grade would have been included in the classroom lunch table with their peers

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It is very cool. It is changing lives. (continued)



Since beginning our Community Partners program in 2009 we've worked exclusively with High school students. 2012 marked the beginning of our efforts in the Middle school.



that they had been in the classroom with for 6 years. How great would it be for the students at that table (the not so cool table) to be interacting with their peers, to be invited to sit with their peers at the lunch tables?

We quickly set up a time to do an orientation with some peers. Not sure what to expect, we began the orientation. I was sure that these students would be worried about what their peers thought if they hung out with the kids from the special ed classes. Instead I was happily surprised to sit with them and see them get it .. they understand how important friendship is, how it feels to not be

included. They were excited to get the program going.

Since then we have had a pizza party and an ice cream party. To sit and watch the students eat together, visit, play games, help each other out, it has been amazing! If you hung out by the boys you would hear conversations about sports and video games. They are talking about movies, books and music. The fact that one student needs help carrying his plate of pizza or pouring a glass of soda doesn't even faze the peers.

Often other students walk by the classroom and look in, curious as to what is happening and you can often hear them saying, "I wish I was a

part of that." Teachers and administration walk by and when they stop to ask what is going on, their response is usually "that is so cool."

It is very cool. It is changing lives. The special education students are getting to know their peers again, they are being accepted for who they are. The regular education students are being reminded that the students they knew and considered their friend in elementary school, are still there, still craving to be accepted and loved for who they are.

Jessica Frederick
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(LEFT) Dr. Thomas Albiero. Each year Citizen Advocates awards a **Business Investor of the Year** award to a business that best epitomizes a commitment to the Citizen Advocates program through their "generous financial investment in advocacy as well as their continued support of our program through a spirit of volunteerism and civic support." In 2012 that award went to Germantown Dental Professionals. Accepting the award for Germantown Dental Professionals was Dr. Tom Albiero. We thank Germantown Dental Professionals for their past support and continued efforts to make our advocacy program a success.

Celebrity Dancers Announced

Ten Area Celebrities Set to Dance on May 10th.

Citizen Advocates is excited to announce 10 area celebrities who will be dancing at this year's Dancing For A Difference: Gala 2013 at the Hartford Chandelier Ballroom on May 10th. The 10 dancers were introduced at The Schauer Arts & Activities Center, Hartford on Wednesday, February 20. Each dancer is paired with a professional dance instructor donated by the Fred Astaire Studios of Southeastern Wisconsin. This will be a fundraising event for Citizen Advocates and five other area nonprofit programs. This is the only cooperative fundraising event in Washington County. Last year the event raised over \$5,500 for programs in the county.

Help support Citizen Advocates, The Albrecht Free Clinic, The Volunteer Center of Washington County, United Way of Washington County, The Schauer Arts & Activities Center, and Habitat for Humanity. Tickets are available at www.cawash.org/gala2013, or call: 262-334-3384. Ticket prices are \$75—Tables are available. Catering by Zilli's. This is a sit-down, family style dinner with open dancing, a silent auction and a Fred Astaire Pro Show.

To reserve your tickets today, scan this QR code or go to:



www.cawash.org/2013gala-html

Tickets are \$75. Send your check to:

Citizen Advocates - PO Box 582 - West Bend, WI 53095



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There's still time to order tickets!

Call 334-3384 or go to:

www.cawash.org/2013gala-html

and place your order online.

We're Looking For A Few Good Men and Women!

[Your Church or Civic Group May
Make a Great Advocacy Team!](#)

An advocate is a person that cares about others and who builds a relationship with someone that has a disability. This same definition applies to advocacy groups as well. We are currently recruiting groups of individuals, church organizations and civic groups, to advocate for group and apartment homes in Washington County.

No special degree needed, only the desire to make a difference.



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Citizen Advocates

Creating relationships that make a positive difference in the lives of those with disabilities.

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