



Children Having Individual Learning Differences

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2022-2023 End of the School Year Report

C.H.I.L.D. Board Members:

Kristen Donohue and Siobhan Meyer, Co-Presidents

Susan Nogales, Vice President

Dawn Sconzo, Treasurer (now retired)

Denise Verzella, Secretary (now retired)

Michelle O'Neill (board member at large)

Fred Tempesta (board member at large)

The 2022-2023 school year was a busy one for C.H.I.L.D. as we added a few new fundraisers to our calendar, funded student scholarships and teacher grants, had new opportunities for social connections for our members, and launched Inclusive Schools Week in partnership with Verona Public Schools. The following information summarizes C.H.I.L.D.'s focus areas and results for 2022-2023.

Advocacy:

- Communicated information about compensatory education, discussed the role of case managers and paraprofessionals, and advocated for more vocational training and career guidance for students who are not planning to attend college.
- Advocated for more inclusive programming at all levels.
- Continued to offer a virtual participation option during our Open SEPAC meetings, demonstrating our commitment to inclusivity through accessibility.
- Co-Presidents attended the Inclusion Leadership Conference in December given by NJCIE (New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education).
- Requested staff development for sensory room training and other disability-related issues.
- Attended our district's DEI meetings to advocate for greater inclusion, acceptance, and understanding.
- Advocated for more clarity and coordination between school counselors and case managers at Verona High School.

- Advocated for increased communication and explanation regarding VoTech opportunities for students.
- Advocated for more consistent and efficient reporting systems.
- Offered a parent workshop on post-high school transition plans for students with IEPs/504s, given by Monica Ahearn, parent advocate.
- Successfully launched Inclusive Schools Week, in coordination with Verona Public Schools.

Fundraising:

We had several successful fundraisers this year and are thankful to the public for their support.

(1) Fair in the Square (2) Parkside Social/Lakeside Dinners (3) 50/50 Raffle

Funds raised go toward our scholarship awards, teacher grants, presentations, and donations of teaching tools and materials. This year, we awarded two scholarships to seniors, three monetary gift awards to HBW 8th-grade students, and three mini-grants to Verona staff members for initiatives that will enhance the learning environment for special education students.

Support/Social Engagement:

We also facilitated monthly Parent-to-Parent Support Group meetings and had three social gatherings. One at Parkside Social, another at the Community Center for a fun craft night, and our annual Wine and Cheese Social, where we pulled the winning tickets for our 50/50 raffle.

Future Business - 2023-2024 School Year:

- Starting in September, our **Parent-to-Parent Support Group** meetings will alternate between in-person and virtual. In-person meetings will be held in the Conference Room at the Verona Community Center at 7 p.m. A Zoom link will be sent out prior to each meeting.

Dates: *September 27th (virtual), October 26th (in-person), November 30th (virtual), January 25th (in-person), February 22nd (virtual), March 21st (in-person), April 25th (virtual)*

- The first **social event** of the year will kick off on ***October 11th (rain date: October 12th)***. Parents are invited to join us for a backyard gathering with drinks/light apps. Details to follow.
- **Open SEPAC meetings** are scheduled *for October 4th and March 6th*. Meetings will be held in the Learning Commons (VHS) at 7 p.m.
- If you are a caregiver or staff member and would like to be added to our email distribution list or are interested in volunteering, please send a message to childverona@gmail.com
- Two of our Board members, Denise Verzella and Dawn Sconzo retired this year. We are so thankful for all their hard work and contributions over the years and will miss them greatly!