



Special points of interest:

- The end of West Lake Special Ed Cooperative
- Unified Sports Days
- Grimmer Glam Gals
- 2019 Best Buddies Prom
- TAP Graduates

**SPRING
2019**

From the desk of Rebecca Gromala, Director of Special Education

When I first came to West Lake Special Education in 2007, it was as a school psychologist serving the early childhood program and the School Town of Munster elementary schools. The preschool students I worked with during my first year are now in high school and countless other students have already graduated and moved on to bigger and better things. As we move in to the final days of the West Lake Special Education Cooperative, the wonderful families and staff members I have worked with during my career are never far from my mind. Mrs. Cvitkovich and I have worked closely this year to create the smoothest transition possible for our students and families. While you may see some new faces around the table next school year, each district will continue their efforts to serve students of all abilities.

Enjoy the final issue of the West Lake Special Education Compass. On the following pages, you'll see all the fantastic things our teachers and your students accomplished during second semester. I wish you all a wonderful summer full of fun. Please remember that all of us, especially students and teachers, need time to recharge during the summer months. So, make time for fun in between therapy appointments, tutoring sessions, and preparing for the next school year.

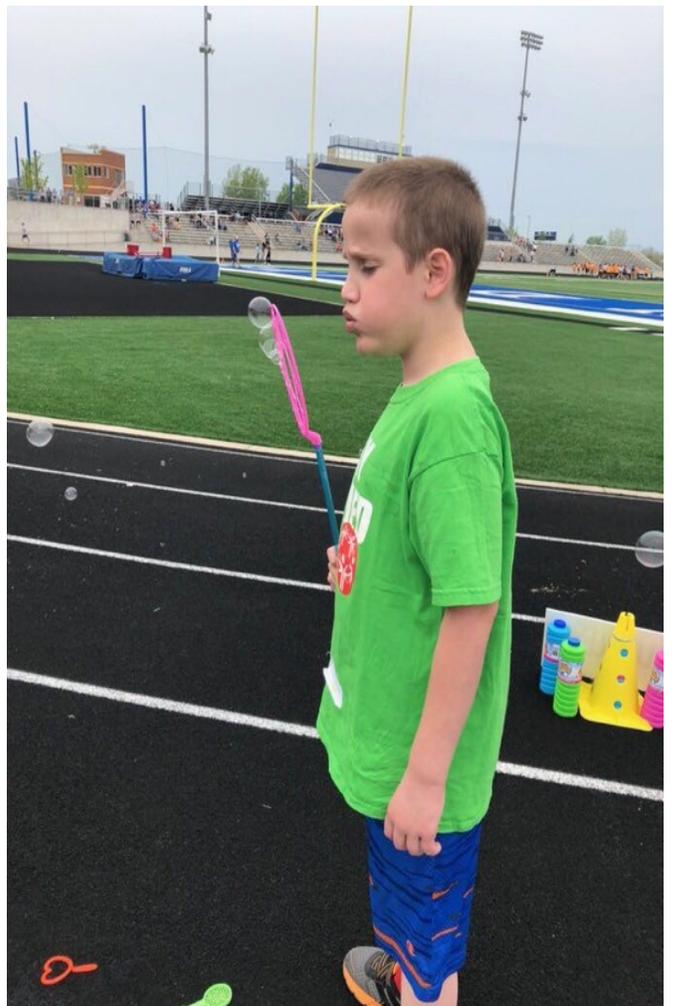
EVERY STORY
HAS AN END.
BUT IN LIFE,
EVERY ENDING
IS JUST A NEW
BEGINNING.

WWW.LIVELIFEHAPPY.COM

From the desk of Alison Mazurkiewicz, West Lake Supervisor

On May 16, Lake Central hosted their 2nd annual Special Olympics Unified Game Day. The event engages students in activities designed to promote school communities where young people are agents of change—fostering respect, dignity, and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities. Students from four Lake Central schools participated in a variety of track and field events. Prior to the big day, Mrs. Gruver, West Lake adaptive PE teacher, and general education teachers trained students in the events and measured their performance to ensure competitive match-ups. The final event was a huge success thanks to all the staff and students involved. Parents were invited to watch and many Lake Central High School students and staff also came out to the track to cheer on our athletes. LCHS student volunteers also helped run the events during the day. It was wonderful to see students of all abilities competing with each other. We are already planning for next year’s Unified Game Day!





From the desk of Barb Kepchar, West Lake Supervisor

Grimmer Glam Gals

Submitted by Loren Raehl, teacher

Michelle Calhoun, 5th grade West Lake teacher at Grimmer Middle School, was recently nominated, along with colleague Donna Spivak, by fellow 5th grade teacher Susan Thompson for a Today Show “ Ambush Makeover ” in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week. GUESS WHAT.....the producers chose them!

On Wednesday, May 8th, Jill Martin, the show ’ s camera crew, the entire 5th grade, co-workers and administrators ambushed the two earlier at school. Michelle and Donna, along with family and three other Grimmer teachers, departed from school to head to the airport to fly to NYC where they received a makeover the morning of Thursday, May 9th.

Michelle Calhoun is the definition of dedication. She is a mother of two amazing young men, raising them with the help of her mother and a full time dedicated special education teacher. She is the type of person who will put whoever and whatever ahead of herself and make sure everyone else is ok. She works so well with her students and they love her so much. She is always taking on different things and duties during the school day. Her dedication is obvious. She is a great mom, teacher, colleague and friend. I speak for myself and others in saying we are truly lucky to have Michelle in our life as a colleague and as a friend. Michelle definitely deserves a day of pampering!



Kahler Unified Games Pep Assembly

Submitted By: Amy Alessandrini & Rita Velasquez



The Kahler Special Olympics Unified Team was given a wonderful send off at their first Unified Games All School Pep Assembly on Tuesday, May 14th. The assembly was part of the fundraising effort to raise money so that Kahler Middle School could become a partner school with Special Olympics. Students were encouraged to donate money or purchase raffle tickets to have a chance to participate in the pep assembly. The fundraising effort was a huge success and the students and families at Kahler were very supportive of their Special Olympics Unified Team. Everyone was very generous and helped to raise over \$2200.00 to donate to the Special Olympics. Now, Kahler will be considered a "Unified School" and will have a Special Olympics Banner to proudly hang in the gym as a symbol of their support.



The assembly was awesome! Athletes were announced individually in grand fashion. They made their entrance into the gym to great applause as they ran onto the gym floor while the school cheerleaders were cheering them on. After the introductions and well deserved gratitude to the student body was given, a "mini games" officially began. As part of the mini games, students from

the Unified Special Olympics Team were placed onto 2 teams, where they were joined by lucky raffle ticket winners from the student body across all grade levels. The school jazz band was playing while the teams competed in an obstacle course race and Hula Hoop Contest. Fifteen lucky students were picked to "pie a teacher in the face".



The pep assembly was a terrific opportunity for true inclusivity of all students at Kahler. It was a unique opportunity for both our athletes and our students as a whole. Kahler should be very proud of this awesome event and we look forward to continuing to be a partner school with the Special Olympics every year.



Read Our Writing

Submitted by Lisa McKinney, teacher at WWMS



We are published!!!! This year, we have written, illustrated, and published two classroom books. For each book, we chose a topic that we were learning about in science and nutrition class. Each student had the opportunity to write and illustrate a page of the book. We followed the steps of the writing process to create our book. The first book is titled, “If You Lived Under the Sea.” Our second book is titled, “Don’t Play with Your Food.” We are anxiously awaiting this book to arrive in the mail from the publishing company!

We had the opportunity to participate in a “Chopped” competition as part of our nutrition class. We made mini pear pies with a streusel topping. Our class won first place!



WWMS Direct Instruction Math

7th & 8th Graders Demonstrate 'Real-World' Application

This year teachers at Wilbur Wright Middle School attended several professional development meetings to brainstorm ideas for motivating and engaging students, implementing inclusion, and differentiating instruction. The end goal was to work toward standard based - student centered lessons that scaffold skill demonstration, utilize multiple student intelligences and abilities, and give ample opportunity for them to demonstrate their level of learning.

The math curriculum for the Geometry Unit generally is taught just before and right after Spring break. In past years, students were engaged in learning 2D and 3D shapes, solids, surface area and volume by measuring 2D shape nets and then constructing the 3D solid shapes from the nets.



This year students were given the opportunity to take their learning a step further and given choices for constructing a real-world structure based on the 3D solid figures in the unit lessons. Without hesitation, Mrs. Finch's direct instruction 7th and 8th grade math classes took on the architectural design challenge unanimously. Students were assigned to groups and allowed to brainstorm a design for their structure.

They could build anything they desired but it had to include all shapes from the lessons, fit on the supplied base, and they had to calculate total surface area and volume for the completed structure. Once each group had collectively decided on their structure, they crafted their net shapes and began to mold their ideas. Surprisingly, each group went above and beyond the required amount of shapes, even asking to include additional solid shapes that were not a requirement.

This was allowed if they could calculate the surface area and volume of each. The level of research, critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity that each group displayed was astounding.



Top: "CAT"anical Garden Complex

Middle: Medieval Castle

Bottom: "Sweeet" Parade Float

The next step was to color the shapes, re-assemble the structures, and add the finer details. Students were given photos of their original ideas and allowed to tweak their design as necessary.



The last phase of the project involved students measuring the finished shapes with a ruler or tape measurer and recording the data on a chart. After all measurements were checked by the teacher, students completed a final measurement packet that included both total surface area and volume calculations for their structures, as well as a group participation rubric for their selves and group peers.

When asked if they enjoyed the project, they all agreed it was one of the best projects they had ever done. All indicated that they had learned something new (especially when calculating square units versus cubic units) and most conveyed that they hoped to do something similar in the future.

"CAT"anical Garden Complex

Total Surface Area: 1,615.6 in.²

Total Volume: 1,365.5 in.³

Medieval Castle

Total Surface Area: 1,850.2 in.²

Total Volume: 1,433.08 in.³

"Sweeet" Parade Float

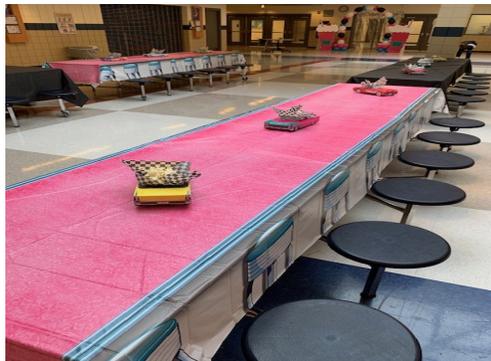
Total Surface Area: 4,254.87 in.²

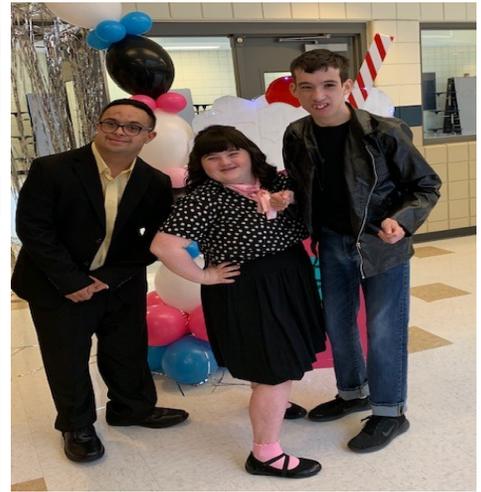
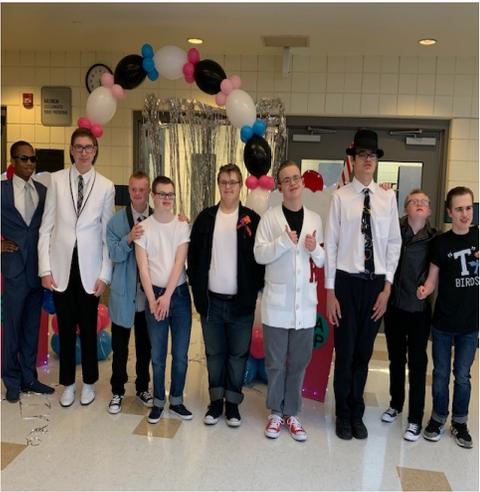
Total Volume: 2,932.97 in.³

From the desk of Mary Rebey, West Lake Supervisor

Best Buddies' Prom Steps Back in Time

Students from Lake Central High School and Munster High School gathered for the **Best Buddies Prom** on May 3rd at Lake Central High School. The students and chaperones had a great time. A special “thank you” to Karen Brann, Matt Williams, and the parents, staff and peers who helped make the event hopping good time!





Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP)

Congratulations to our TAP graduates!
Good luck in your attempts to conquer the world!



From the desk of Kim Beach, West Lake Supervisor

The School Town of Munster held their 1st annual Unified Sports Day and it was enjoyed by all. They are anxious to see what fun next year brings.



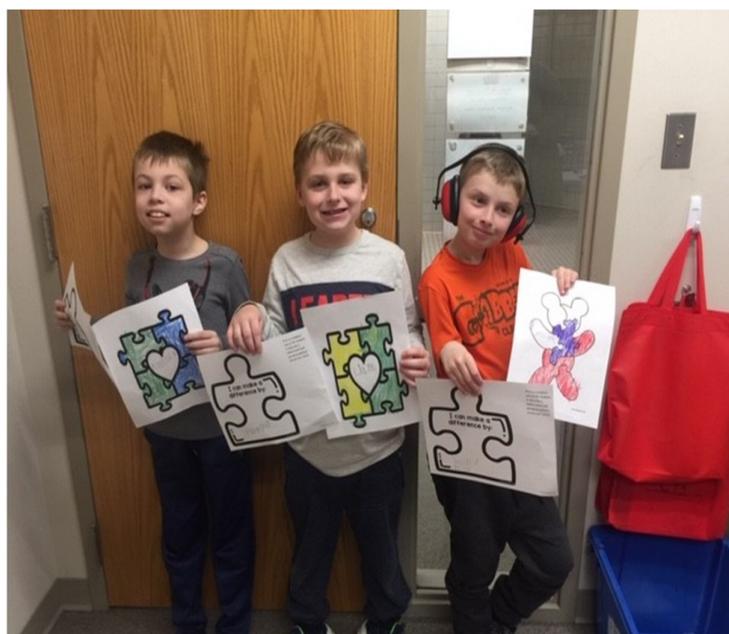
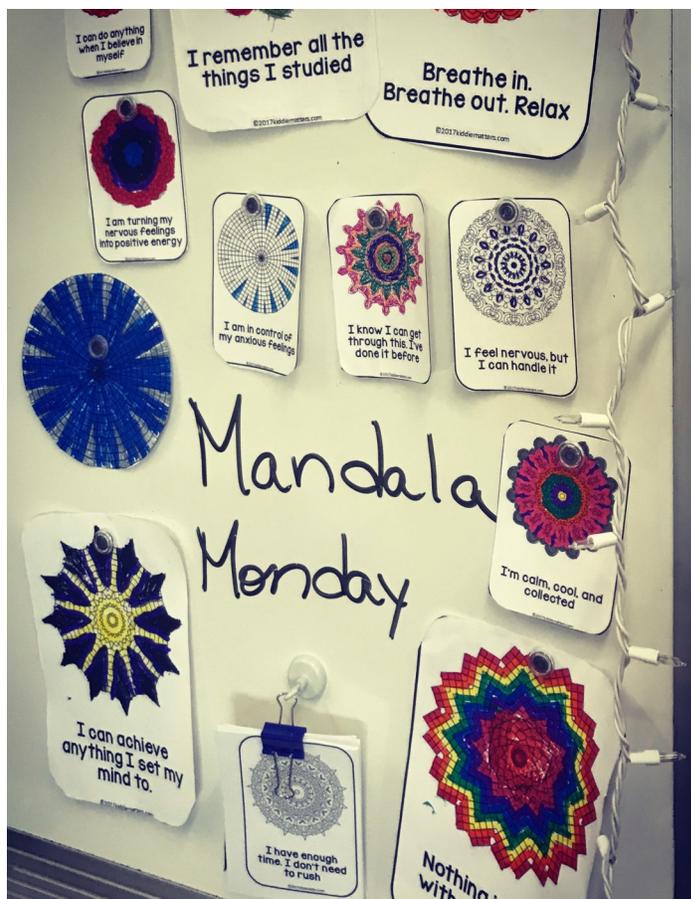
The Mandala Mantra

Submitted by Lisa Rudy, teacher

This school year, Lisa Rudy provided a short weekly activity every Monday to prepare for a positive week ahead. Due to the standardized testing season, Mrs. Rudy introduced a coping skill for test anxiety. The mandala mantras gave the students an opportunity to reinforce positive self-talk for the duration of the standardized tests.

The students chose a mantra that was meaningful and repeated the mantra as they colored the design. They read aloud their mantra as their peers repeated it. The students taped their mandala mantra near their testing space and read aloud each mantra prior to testing.

Students were more focused and calm during their testing sessions. If a student started to escalate, Mrs. Rudy pointed to their mantra and they relaxed. The students responded well to the activity and continue to recall their mantras during their daily activities.



For the month of April, Elliott Elementary School recognized Autism Awareness Month. SLP Taylor Watrobka and SSP Anita Ilic conducted a social language group with the children pictured. They were teaching these students all about Autism. The students created puzzle pieces that expressed how they could make a difference in the lives of their peers. This lesson was worked on with them throughout the month of April. The puzzle pieces were colored and laminated to help decorate the school for Autism Awareness month. Here is a picture showcasing their work.

STEM Education in Early Childhood at FHH

Submitted by Janice Bales, teacher

Students in Miss Janice's classroom participate in STEM activities throughout the year. STEM promotes science, technology, engineering, and math while allowing students to independently explore and solve problems with hands on activities. In this activity, the students were little engineers by constructing their own designs with jelly beans and toothpicks. STEM is one of the many fun activities we like to do in the classroom to promote higher order thinking.



FHH D.A.R.E.s to Make Good Decisions

Submitted by Tammy Katalinic, resource teacher

The Frank Hammond 5th grade students recently participated in D.A.R.E with Officer Ghrist. The students were able to meet some former Frank Hammond students, that are currently in high school, to discuss how they have successfully used the D.A.R.E decision-making model as a strategy in middle school and high school. The 5th grade students are working hard on their essays for Officer Ghrist and will participate in D.A.R.E. graduation in May. Good luck to all our 5th graders as they move on to Wilbur Wright Middle School. We will certainly miss them!

Physical Therapy Can Be Fun

Submitted by Sandy Kurowski

Madison works on pedaling a tricycle during her physical therapy session. Working on the tricycle promotes coordination and motor planning.



Ms. Andja's Early Childhood Class News

Happenings:

Ms. Andja's Early Childhood Class has been celebrating Spring by participating in a variety of both indoor and outdoor learning activities. Our morning class enjoyed practicing their skills in the areas of following directions and fine motor by making their own "bunny ears".

Our afternoon students learned about graphs by sorting, counting and tracking different color jelly beans. They also assembled their own visors during "Vv" week. And in preparation for Unified Game Days, both classes enjoyed learning about and practicing relay racing.

Our themes in April have been emotions and making friends. Students have enjoyed discussions and books on these topics.

Upcoming Events/Reminders

Our end of the year plans are full of exciting events. In addition to our Unified Game Day, we also have the Frank Hammond Field Day and our class end of the year party. In addition, students transitioning to kindergarten will be visiting their schools to get familiar with the building and meet the staff.

I would also like to remind parents that unless they have been informed otherwise, morning students who will be transitioning to kindergarten the following year will be moved into the afternoon class (1:00 to 3:30).

Tips

I would like to share some ideas for those interested in helping their child continue to learn during the vacation months.

Pre-Academics

- Read to your child
- Take regular visits to the library
- Impromptu games are a great way to incorporate learning into your daily routine. While driving, ask child to see how many items he/she can see that are red, blue...or square, circle. While in a store, ask your child to count out five items that are yellow.
- There are also several free, on-line sites which your child can get added practice in all areas such as "starfall" and sesamestreet.org.

For OT skills (strengthening hand/finger):

- Encourage your child to play with silly putty
- Cut, roll and squeeze play-dough,
- Practice zippers, buttons, hooks,
- Put paper clips onto paper-practice pre-handwriting and handwriting skills focusing on proper hand position and/or even coloring in the lines.



Thank you for all your support throughout the year and have a wonderful summer!

Ms. Andja Marich, Mrs. Bev, Miss Michelle, Miss Theresa and Ms. Claire



Helping in the Greenhouse

We have been assisting the biology students by helping to water plants in the school greenhouse. They have been watering carrots, radishes, and tomatoes. We have also planted our own bean and marigold seeds.

Celebrating “Abilities” Awareness Month

Mrs. Kutemeier’s class designed and sold T-shirts in March to bring staff and students together to celebrate Disabilities Awareness Month. Students have been learning how to fold t-shirts using a folding form they made in functional skills class after watching a video and folded all of the t-shirts they sold. They also helped to tie them with a ribbon and deliver them.

PROTECTING OUR PLANET

Earth Day is April 22nd and students in Mrs. Kutemeier’s class have been learning about recycling. Our class activity with Ms. Sanders, Speech Path, incorporated learning about different types of products to recycle and how they can be used to make other items like park benches. We also collected items to sort according to their material. It was a fun hands on activity that the students all enjoyed doing!

West Lake Basketball

Our West Lake All-Star teams had another successful basketball season. This year we played Crown Point, Lowell and each other. Thank you to coaches Karen Brann and Michael Brandner, the peer helpers and supportive families. It was fun for all!





Another season of West Lake track in the books. We had some weather issues again this year, but we did get to participate in the big Valpo meet for Special Olympics.

Special Olympics provides year round athletic competitions in a variety of Olympic-type sports for persons with intellectual disabilities with our students participating in bowling and track and field.

Special Olympics players generally need to be 8 years of age and older and currently be in our special education program. **For those students who have graduated, contact Teresa Parker, Lake County Coordinator at 219-613-7284 or solakecounty@yahoo.com to participate at the county level.**

Please note that new players & some former players will need a physical to participate. If your son or daughter meets the above criteria and would like to participate in one of our events next school year, contact Kimm Maznaritz in our special education office at 365-8507 x2947.65





Camp Millhouse - A camp for all ages and all abilities located in South Bend - www.campmillhouse.org

Indiana Resource Center for Autism - link to list of summer camps in Indiana - <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/summer-camps-and-programs>

Shady Oaks Camp - <http://shadyoakscamp.org/>



Our special education pre-school program still has openings for peers for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year . All students must be screened so please contact our office for available screening dates. Call 365-8507 x2946

As more and more technology becomes available we are always on the look-out for donations of iPods or iPads that you are not using.

Thank you!

Cooperative Special Recreation Initiative (CSRI) Events

C.S.R.I. is a cooperative venture seeking ways to increase recreational opportunities for individuals of all ages who have special needs and abilities. By working together toward a common goal we are able to provide more events to a larger amount of people than any one agency alone. The following agencies are proud to be a part of CSRI:

- ◆ Hanover Central HS Key Club
- ◆ Hammond Parks & Recreation
- ◆ Lake County Parks
- ◆ Merrillville Parks & Recreation
- ◆ Whiting Parks and Recreation
- ◆ Crown Point Parks & Recreation
- ◆ Hammond Port Authority
- ◆ St. John Parks & Recreation
- ◆ Munster Parks & Recreation
- ◆ Whiting Family YMCA
- ◆ Dyer Parks & Recreation
- ◆ Highland Parks & Recreation
- ◆ Schererville Parks & Recreation
- ◆ Lowell Parks & Recreation

Upcoming Events

- June 5th: Free Bike Parade at 6:00pm at Pheasant Hills Park, 2301 Hart St, Dyer, 219-865-2505
- June 17th and July 22nd Pool Party at Munster Community Pool from 7pm-9pm, \$2 at door, 219-836-7275
- July 19th Special Needs Day at Festival of the Lakes, Wolf Lake in Hammond, 219-853-6378

Call host agency for fees, FULL details and how to register!

Join the CSRI email group by emailing csri2004@yahoo.com

Helpful Links

IN*Source / Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs - www.insource.org

Indiana Department of Education - Article 7 and other informative information - <http://www.doe.in.gov>

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community - Providing Hoosiers with disability-related information and services from birth through older adulthood - <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu>

Autism Support Network - Designed as a place by those living with ASD, for those with ASD and those seeking social connection, peer guidance and a feeling of community with those that understand - www.autismsupportnetwork.com

GRASP - The Global and Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership - grasp.org

Down Syndrome Association of NWI - Serving Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Jasper and Newton Counties - 219-3838-3565 or dsaofnwi.org

National Down Syndrome Congress - Public awareness, language guidelines and other information - www.ndsccenter.org

AccessAbilities - Focusing on the provision of services that emphasize best practice, comprehensiveness and overcoming possible barriers between human potential and physical or cognitive abilities - www.accessabilitiesinc.com

Center for Possibilities - Their mission is to improve the quality of life for children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families - www.centerforpossibilities.org

Innovations in Learning - Dedicated to implementing best practice standards in helping consumers achieve their individual potential throughout the developmental life span - www.innovationsinlearning.net

Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) - serves as a central resource of information and products to the community of Parent Training Information (PTI) Centers and the Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), so that they can focus their efforts on serving families of children with disabilities. <http://www.parentcenterhub.org>

Hannah's Hope - Aiming to assist children with special needs obtain various therapies and costly medical equipment. - <http://www.hannahshope.org/>

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