

Special points of interest:

- Unified Game Day
- Care packages for our military
- Best Buddies Prom
- Another TAP graduation
- A great year for West Lake sports

**SPRING
2018**

From the desk of Rebecca Gromala, Director of Special Education

Here we are at the end of another school year! While parents are preparing for summer with their children, teachers and related service providers are focusing on final goal updates, those last few annual conferences, and preparing for extended school year services. Our administrative team is working on wrapping up staff evaluations, planning classes for next year, and filling staff vacancies.

As we move toward the next school year, our focus will continue to be on improving outcomes for all students. Staff within the School Town of Munster spent this past year reflecting on co-teaching practices and developing a common rubric for evaluating co-teaching practices. We will begin the school year with professional development lead by staff from the Indiana IEP Resource Center for our co-teachers and administrators. We will also be implementing the same process within the Lake Central Schools during the 18-19 school year. We will also be partnering with Project SUCCESS for the 18-19 school year to provide professional development to our teachers working with students on the Certificate of Completion path. We will be working with the academic standards aligned to the new alternative assessment to ensure all students are receiving appropriate academic instruction.

The 2018-2019 school year will be the final year for the West Lake Special Education Cooperative. This transition year will be exciting and Lake Central and the School Town of Munster plan for the future. I look forward to the opportunity to work with Ms. Jo Cvitkovich, the new Director of Special Education for the School Town of Munster.

Enjoy your summer! Don't forget to visit our West Lake website for information regarding fun summer activities for your students!



On May 10, Lake Central hosted their first annual Special Olympics Unified Game Day. This event was designed to engage 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. **179 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 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. Several staff members have said they are already looking forward to next year's Unified Game Day!



From the desk of Barb Kepchar, West Lake Supervisor

Discovery Music Program



On Friday, April 27th, Clark Middle School had a Discovery Music Program led by Mrs. Christina Arroyo. Mrs. Arroyo started the Discovery Music Program for the life skills and structured learning classes of Clark Middle School. The students meet for music class once a week throughout the year to prepare for the program. The Discovery Music Program featured songs, rhythms and dances performed by the students.

Room B9: Honorary Seaman! By Lisa McKinney Wilbur Wright Middle School

A tradition in Mrs. McKinney's classroom is to send holiday cards and gifts/ supplies to the military. This year we made cards, snowman ornaments out of paper that we recycled in science class, and sent gum, and candy. We chose to send our package to the Navy this year. We sent our package in time for holiday delivery. When we returned to school in January after break, we received a care package of our own! Enclosed were commemorative medals. These medals inspired us to research different types of patches and what they represent. We created a list of ideas and pictures that represent our classroom. We voted on our favorite ideas and worked together to design our own classroom patch. The symbols on the patch include a top to represent the fact that we are top-notch kids, a book with a pencil to represent learning, a cloud to represent dreams, a happy face because we are a fun class, and a red and black M to represent Munster Mustangs. We glued our patches on to white baseball caps. Not only did we learn about symbolism, the kids discovered what a strong and caring team they are!

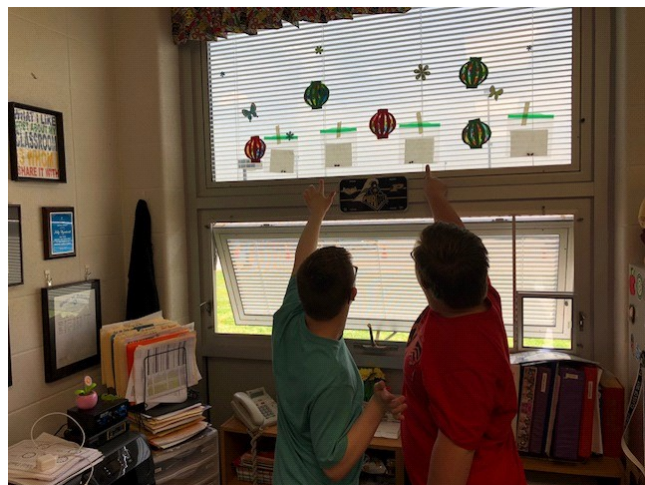
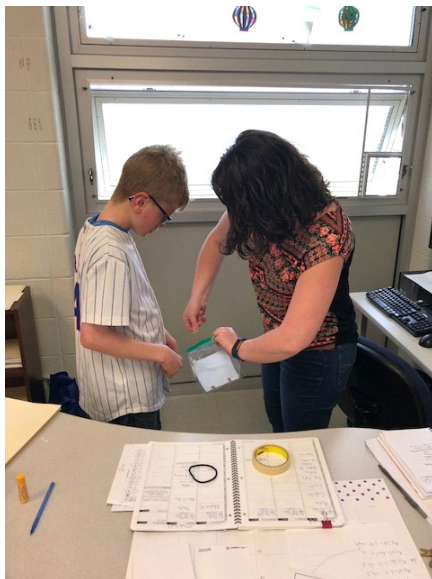
We are thankful to the Navy for their generosity and inspiration!



Ms. Kelly and Ms. Stephanie's students in the Functional Skills Program at Clark Middle School made Gardens in a Bag. The students planted different types of seeds to see which of the seeds would grow the best. They will be measuring the plants as they grow, and recording the data on their charts. We sure hope our seeds grow!



The students put the beans in paper towel in a Ziploc bag. Then they added water.

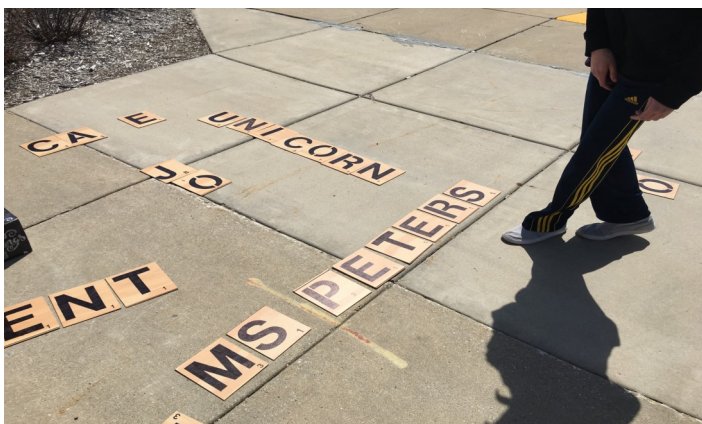


The students then taped the bags to the window to get plenty of sunlight.

From the desk of Mary Rebey, West Lake Supervisor

Ms. Baird's Career Awareness continued to grow this year with a few new aspects to her class. Selling items from Albanese is definitely a new feature that staff around the building have appreciated. Students have been portioning, bagging, promoting and selling (and sampling) some delicious new treats. In addition to the new treats on the snack cart, Ms. Baird received a grant to purchase a Silhouette vinyl cutter from the Lake Central Education Foundation to teach students the skills involved in making a customized item. Students have been tapping into their creative sides by practice using the software, designing and creating items like stickers, shirts, mugs, etc.

Submitted by Bridget Baird, LCHS Teacher

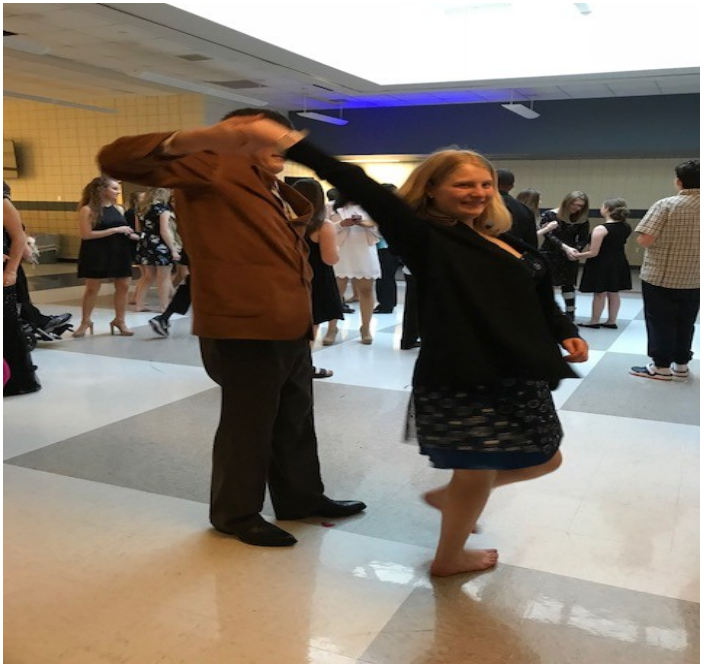


Hollywood Meets High School

Students from Lake Central High School and Munster High School gathered for the **Best Buddies Prom** on May 11th at Lake Central High School. The students and chaperones had a great time. A special “thank you” to Karen Brann, Kathryn Clark, Matt Williams, Brent Barton and the parents, staff and peers who helped make the event as magical as the movies! See our website for a picture slideshow. <http://westlake.lcsc.us>







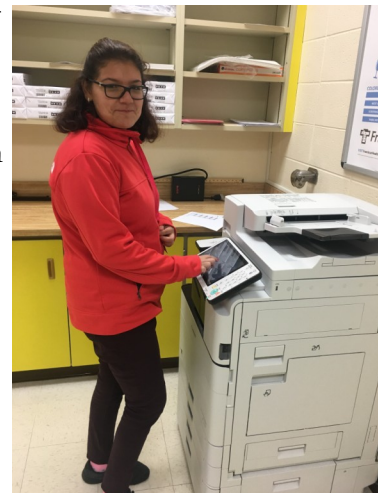




Students at the **Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP)** gain vocational experience on a daily basis at a variety of local schools and businesses within the community. Watson Elementary is one of the program's favorite job sites. Our students assist the teachers and aides in each of the early childhood classrooms by making copies, completing die cuts, setting up for snack

time, assisting with projects, and helping supervise the students during recess. It has been such a wonderful learning experience and we truly enjoy working with the staff and students at Watson.

Submitted by Dana Hopper, teacher at TAP



Congrats to our TAP Graduates!

The Transition to Adulthood Program held its Graduation Ceremony on Thursday, May 17, 2018. 62



Back row standing: Nathan Matthews, Zahra Moreno, Lucas Phillips, Nick Redman, Krysta Rietveld

Front row seated: Jamie Kraii, Katie Kleszynski, Christian Huber, Michelle Gergets, Erin Flynn, Jeremy Dunne

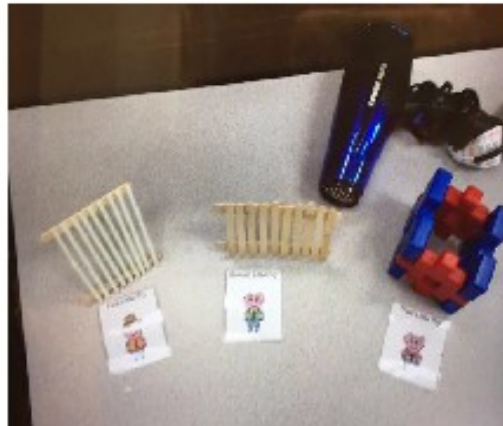
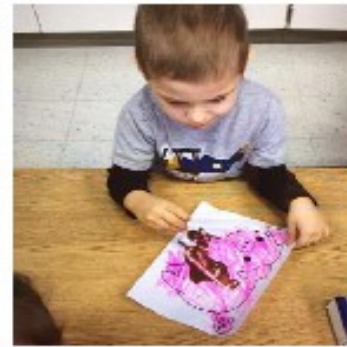
*Best of Luck to
all graduates!*



From the desk of Alison Mazurkiewicz, West Lake Supervisor

Make-Believing in Ms. Kepchar's Class!

During the month of February, Ms. Kepchar's structured learning class put on their thinking caps and explored the wonderful world of make-believe. The class studied different types of homes that animals lived in versus what types of homes people have. The students learned that spiders live in webs, fish live in water, bears live in caves, and people live in houses. Then, the students explored *The Three Little Pigs* and what types of homes the pigs created for themselves. While reading the story, students pretended what types of homes the pigs had while the Big Bad Wolf (hair dryer) was blowing them down! There was lots of sensory exploration with pigs rolling in mud and making our own homes out of straw, sticks, and bricks. Everyone loved using their imagination!



Mint to Be Friends

Submitted by Beth Dallman, teacher at Peifer Elementary

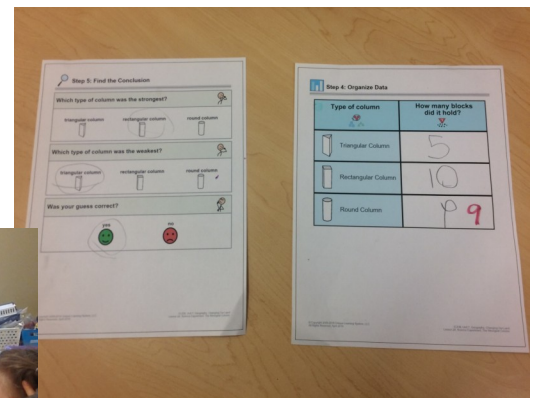
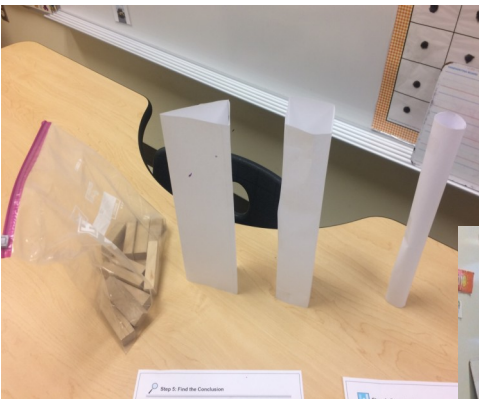
Like many children, the students in Mrs. Dallman's class enjoy those pretty little red and white twisted candy canes that become plentiful during the holidays. But for these curious students, the sweet mint candies opened a door to a whole new area to explore. The students discovered that the origin of the flavor came from a green leafy plant. They were surprised to discover that those plants are an actual agricultural crop. Even more exciting, they learned that the crops are grown in an area about an hour away from their homes. As a class, the students planted and are caring for a mint plant. The plant is growing and filling the pot. Students plan to separate the plant so that they can each have a plant of their own to take home. The class researched about planting mint as a crop and have made up little books that share what they have learned. They wrote to a mint farmer, who answered their questions about raising mint. His family shared how mint is harvested and the oil collected. The mint committee shared a sample of mint oil with the class so students were able to sample some of their own homemade minty treats too. They also learned about many more uses for the mint. The class is hoping to arrange a visit with the farmer. They are excited to hear that there is even a festival to celebrate and enjoy the mint! The best part is all the new friends that the class has made in members of the mint festival and in their correspondence with the farmer. Their picture is going to be on the Mint Festival booklets and or letters. It truly is sweet when you realize we were just "Mint to Be Friends".

Science Experiment on Columns

by Cassie Cauffman

Essential Life Skills @ Protsman Elementary

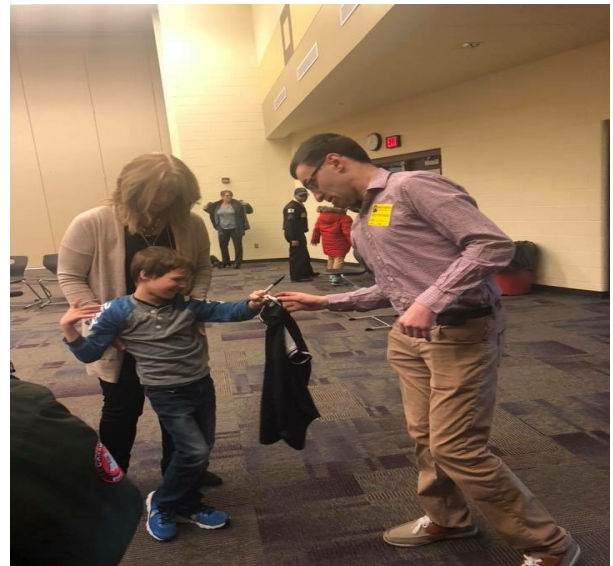
This month our theme focuses on geography and how our land changes through our natural environment and man-made buildings, etc. We did a science experiment about columns (all 3 columns were made from printer paper, and were triangular, rectangular, and round- shaped). Students were taught that people use columns to build things such as bridges and houses, and that they help make these structures strong. Students were asked to make a guess/hypothesis on which column they felt would be the strongest after we put up to 10 wooden blocks on top. One of my students recorded the amount of blocks each column held before falling over, and then recorded the results. It turned out that the rectangular column was the strongest, and the triangular column was the weakest! Interesting.....



Meet and Greet and Protsman

Submitted by Marianne Orfanos, Dean

Jason Benetti, announcer for The Chicago White Sox, visited Protsman on February 12th. Students loved learning about the behind the scenes action that takes place in baseball. Jason spoke about the importance of school as a gateway to making goals a reality. Students were eager to share their hopes and dreams for their future careers. Students with physical disabilities throughout the district had a “Meet and Greet” with Jason, who has Cerebral Palsy. It was wonderful way to make connections and build a network of support.



From the desk of Kim Beach, West Lake Supervisor

To celebrate our 100th day of preschool, the preschoolers at Frank Hammond in Ms. Sandy's class dressed like they were 100 years old. We had a day full of fun literacy and math activities. We also made a friendship snack mix with 100 pieces of different goodies (M&M's, goldfish, gummy bears, etc.) The kids had a blast counting to 100 by 1's, 5's, and 10's.

Submitted by Sandy Will-Brum, teacher



Autism Awareness Month

Submitted by Mrs. Young, Elliott Elementary School

During the month of April, our structured learning class celebrated Autism Awareness Month by decorating our door, selling ribbons, and participating in activities with general education peers. Our Dr. Seuss loving students helped cut, spell, and glue the question, "Why fit in when you were born to stand out?" to beautify our classroom door. Students sold colorful puzzle piece ribbons to students and staff to spread awareness. General education peers joined social group and circle time in our classroom, which increased student interest and social interaction. April was a month filled with school-wide participation to bring awareness to all.



Mrs Needles Munster High school Class went to Buona Beef for lunch on May 4, 2018. We just finished a unit in math on calculating prices, sales tax and tip. This lunch gave us a chance to practice these skills in the community. The students had a great time at this new restaurant in our area.

Submitted by Teresa Needles, teacher



The FUNCTIONAL LIFE SKILLS class at Munster High School has been very busy completing “Job Activities” throughout the school. Our class has been asked to help in the greenhouse. Students are working on caring for the flowers and vegetables that had already been potted by the Botany teacher, Mr. Coil. Mr. Coil also gave bean and marigold seeds for our class to plant as a class project. We are watching them sprout and will soon repot them to encourage their growth.

Our class also volunteered to help with the Project X club drive “Caps for Chemo”. Our students are counting the plastic caps that have been turned in using numbered templates 1-20. They are also using tally marks for each 20 caps counted by them. They are having fun seeing all the different sizes of caps that were saved by students and families.

As we approach the end of the year, students are looking forward to summer vacation. Just a reminder to keep working on reading and math skills such as money, shopping, and making purchases in the community.

By: Michele Kutemeier, Functional Life Skills, MHS



Best Buddies Looks to End the School Year Strong

By: Brent Barton, teacher MHS

Best Buddies has had a great second semester thus far. If you are unfamiliar with Best Buddies, it is a student-run friendship club. It fosters friendships between students with and without intellectual disabilities. In February, we held our annual Valentine's Day Dance, complete with a DJ (sophomore, Dominick Reda). We were lucky to have many members from Lake Central's Best Buddies Chapter attend the dance. It was a fun time and a great chance for the two chapters to get to know each other better.

On April 25, Munster Girl's Softball Team, along with Best Buddies, hosted our 3rd Annual Autism Awareness night during the Munster vs. Griffith softball game. This event was a great success. Not only were we able to bring more awareness to Autism and its effect on people and families, we were able to raise almost \$200 for this year's Friendship Walk.

Best Buddies has a very busy May ahead of us. May is traditionally a busy month for our chapter, but this year we are going all out as we have three major events planned. On May 11th, Lake Central has invited us to its annual Best Buddies' Prom. We are looking forward to a fun night with our fellow Best Buddies at LC! On Saturday, May 12th, we will cosponsor the 8th Annual Best Buddies Friendship Walk along with Lake Central High School, Griffith High School, Crown Point High School, Highland High School and the new chapter from Purdue Northwest-Hammond. We are raising money to help support the Best Buddies program and, specifically, Best Buddies Indiana. Check-in and registration will be held at Wicker Park beginning at 9:00 am. The walk is about two miles in length and will begin shortly after check-in at 11:00 am. There will be snacks and refreshments available to all who participate. So far, the preregistration for the Friendship Walk has gone very well. Lake County has raised over \$9,500 toward our goal of \$13,000. We are off to a great start and are hoping to pass our fundraising goal before the Walk on May 12th!

Our final May event is our 3rd Annual Potluck/Kickball Game. This event has become a tradition within our chapter. We get together on a Sunday afternoon, enjoy lots of good food, hang out with friends and have a fun game of kickball. We also use this time to honor our graduating seniors. It is a time to look back at the past year and to look forward to next year. Everyone enjoys this last event of the year!



West Lake Basketball

Our West Lake All-Star teams had another successful basketball season. This year we played Crown Point, Lowell and each other. It was fun for all!





This year weather did not permit our big Special Olympics track meet in Valparaiso but we had plenty of fun competing at Hanover Central and Wheeler Middle School.

Special Olympics provides year round athletic competitions in a variety of Olympic-type sports for persons with intellectual disabilities with West Lake 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 West Lake 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 at the West Lake Office at 365-8507 x2947.





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/> Most recent newsletter <http://shadyoakscamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/March-2018.pdf>



Our West Lake Preschool program still has openings for peers for the upcoming 2018-2019 school year . All students must be screened so please contact Sara Pietrzak in our West Lake office for available screening dates. Call Sara at 365-8507 x2946

As more and more technology becomes available we are on the lookout 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 | ♦ Crown Point Parks & Recreation | ♦ Dyer Parks & Recreation |
| ♦ Hammond Parks & Recreation | ♦ Hammond Port Authority | ♦ Highland Parks & Recreation |
| ♦ Lake County Parks | ♦ St. John Parks & Recreation | ♦ Schererville Parks & Recreation |
| ♦ Merrillville Parks & Recreation | ♦ Munster Parks & Recreation | ♦ North Township-Wicker Park |
| ♦ Whiting Parks and Recreation | ♦ Whiting Family YMCA | |

Upcoming Events

June 6th: Free Bike Parade at 6:00pm at Pheasant Hills Park, 2301 Hart St, Dyer

June 12th & July 10th: Free Special Needs Day at from 11:00-11:30 at Wicker Memorial Park. 2215 Ridge Rd, Highland

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

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

Visit them via http://lakecountyparks.com/activities/great_outdoors/special_recreation.html

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/>

West Lake Special Education Cooperative

8410 Wicker Av

St. John, IN 46373

Phone: (219) 365-8507

Fax: (219) 365-6641

Web Site: <http://westlake.lcsc.us>

LISTSERV@: listserv.westlake.lcsc.us