



Dear Parents and Guardians,

December 2017

During the week of January 16-19, the Joseph Maley Foundation will bring our disABILITY Awareness program to your child's school. The Joseph Maley Foundation (JMF) was established in 2008 with the mission, "serving children of all abilities." We accomplish this mission through seven programs dedicated to serving the whole child.

JMF was established in memory of Joseph Maley by his parents, John and Vivian. Joseph was born with a myriad of disabilities, but what stood out is how he accepted all without judgment and touched others with his resilience and spirit. His four younger brothers wanted a way to teach their friends and classmates about Joseph, and thus began disABILITY Awareness.

Throughout disABILITY Awareness, students will listen to stories, watch puppet shows, learn from visiting speakers, and engage in discussions and activities to better understand what it might be like to live with a disability. The core message of the program is acceptance through respect, empathy, and kindness by highlighting the diversity and abilities of all people.

The disABILITY Awareness program builds yearly as students progress from kindergarten to eighth grade. Students learn about the similarities and differences that exist between all of us through the following events scheduled for each grade level.

- Kindergarten "Everybody is Different" – Puppet show and presentation about differences
- First grade "Everybody Needs Help" – Puppet show and Speakers on assistive technology and service dogs
- Second grade "Blindness and Visual Impairment" – Puppet show and interactive stations about blindness
- Third grade "Living with a Disability" – Puppet show and speaker sharing about Down syndrome
- Fourth grade "Learning Disabilities" – Puppet show and speaker sharing about learning differences
- Fifth grade "Hearing and Communication Differences" – Speaker sharing about hearing and communication differences and interactive stations
- Sixth grade "Living with a Physical Disability" – Speaker sharing about physical disabilities
- Seventh grade "Living with Autism" – Video, activity, and speaker sharing about autism
- Eighth grade "Pulling It All Together" – Scavenger hunt while "taking on" disabilities

Look for "car work" coming home with your child. This will give you an opportunity to talk with your child about what he/she has learned outside of the classroom.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Joseph Maley Foundation and how you can be involved, please visit our website at [www.josephmaley.org](http://www.josephmaley.org) or contact me at [juliefriedman@josephmaley.org](mailto:juliefriedman@josephmaley.org).

Serving Children of all Abilities,

Julie Friedman, disABILITY Awareness Director  
Joseph Maley Foundation