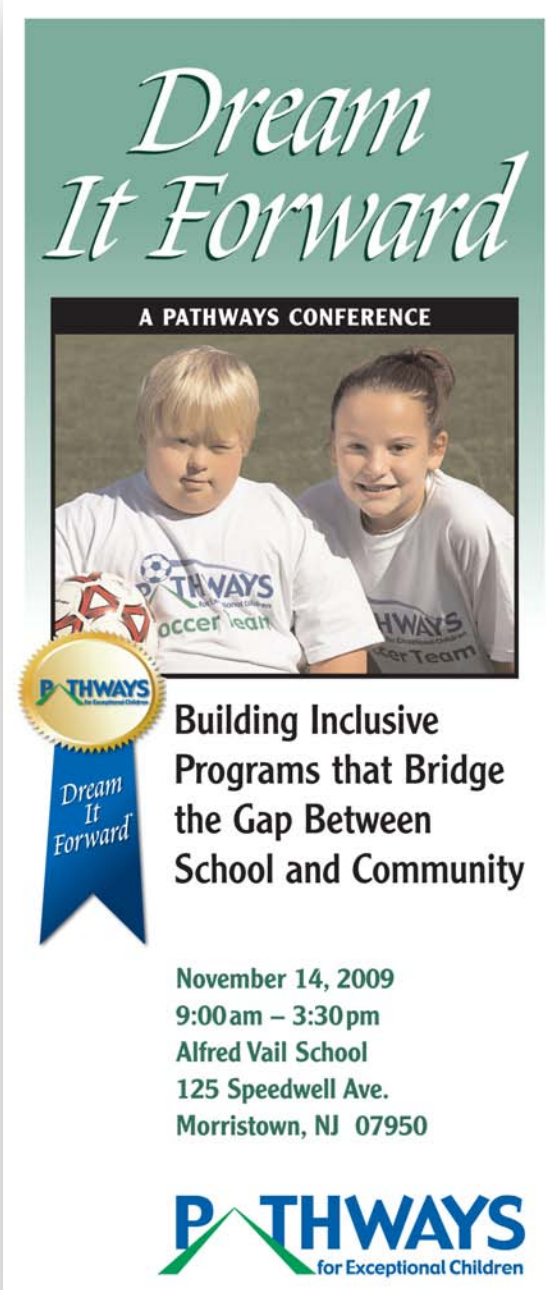


A Special Invitation To You

PATHWAYS for Exceptional Children has received three prestigious awards in 2009 from the New Jersey Recreation and Parks Association, New Jersey Department of Consumer Affairs, and Family Resource Network in recognition of the quality, inclusive, after-school and recreation programs we have developed in the areas of sports, literacy, life skills, and employment. The hallmark of our success can largely be attributed to the emphasis we place on the *Children Teaching Children* model, which is our mentor program. Our mentors are children ages 8-18 who volunteer their time to help children with disabilities to participate in our programs. In reality, we have found that there is no better way to motivate children to learn than by giving them the opportunity to play, imitate, and develop a true sense of belonging with their peers.

The Lead Mentors of Pathways are a group of young adults ages 12 and above. As members of this program, we are very excited to announce our new initiative called *Dream It Forward*. Our dream is to promote the inclusion of children with special needs throughout the United States, beginning in the state of New Jersey. Our challenge is to get school districts and community-based programs to motivate children to get involved in helping to support children with disabilities and their families. To kick off this challenge, we have designed a conference slated for Saturday, November 14, 2009 where the mentors of Pathways will be speaking about their dream and how they plan to make inclusion a reality for every child. The conference will detail how to build inclusive programs and to learn how to effectively use the *Children Teaching Children* model in schools and communities. The *Magic of Reading* and *Magic of Writing* programs will



Dream It Forward

A PATHWAYS CONFERENCE

Building Inclusive Programs that Bridge the Gap Between School and Community

November 14, 2009
9:00 am – 3:30 pm
Alfred Vail School
125 Speedwell Ave.
Morristown, NJ 07950

PATHWAYS
for Exceptional Children

be highlighted, and mentors will be speaking alongside program instructors about the critical role they play as “reading buddies.” Children with special needs and their peer job coaches will be speaking about *Project Win-Win*, our

employment program for children 12 and above. The young adults who participate in this program will be our disc jockeys at lunch, where everyone will have the opportunity to join in as they play the role of “Masters of Ceremony,” with the possibility of putting your feet in motion with a little dancing!

This conference is about the children and how adults can empower them to lead inclusion into the future. It is our belief that we, the next generation, hold many of the answers to finding “authentic” inclusion. We will be the next teachers, politicians, advocates, attorneys, commissioners of education, employers, and leaders of tomorrow who will improve the outcomes for people with disabilities in the future. We strongly believe that inclusion does not happen passively through osmosis, but is an active process of helping people to understand each other and bringing them together to spend time appreciating the differences that make each of us unique.

Dr. Mary Shea, Program Coordinator for “Kids Included Together,” based out of San Diego, will be our keynote speaker. She has over 35 years of experience training and assisting people across the nation to make modifications that effectively include children with disabilities. The conference is designed for both children and adults, and our hope is to inspire everyone to get involved. The conference brochure is on our website, www.PathwaysKids.org. Please feel free to distribute the brochure and invite children in your community and schools to the conference to see the opportunities for mentoring and how they can get involved and make a difference!

— Stephanie Jennis (age 13),
Rusty Van Riper (age 18),
Lead Mentors of Pathways

Pathways Expands Early Intervention Programs

Pathways has always placed great emphasis on early intervention and providing a continuum of quality services that gives all children opportunities to learn from each other. Our *Magic of Reading* and *Magic of Writing* programs have been a major success, giving assistance to all children ages 4-10 who need a jumpstart in literacy.

Pathways and the Montville Recreation Department are very excited to announce the addition of some wonderful new teachers to our staff

who will be developing additional programs that focus on building basic motor, social, and communication skills for children ages 3-7 in a variety of settings.

Mrs. Judy McNabb (top left photo) will be teaching our *Social Games and Activities* class. She has been teaching for 31 years, has a BA in Elementary Education, an MA in Early Childhood Education, and a certificate as a Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant. She taught pre-school children with disabilities for



22 years in the Butler and Lincoln Park public school systems. She is known for her love of watching young children learning new things about the world around them. She has been married 35 years and has three children, one with disabilities.

Russ Van Ness and Jason Neuhof (top right photo, l-r) have joined us from 1 on 1 Athletics. Both are state certified Physical Educators

and Personal Trainers with years of experience working with children with special needs. They have always been drawn to these children, motivating them to cultivate their love of sports and collaborative play. Jason and Russ will be working with us to develop sports programs, specifically the *Introduction to Team Sports with an Emphasis on Building Social Skills*. Visit their website at www.1on1athletics.net.



Pathways Recognized for Collaborative Efforts

Pathways for Exceptional Children developed an innovative program four years ago called *Learning Through Life*. It was designed as an after-school program where academic skills such as reading, writing, and math were integrated into functional life skills needed to help children with disabilities achieve independence. The Family Resource Network received a grant to pilot *Learning Through Life* in eight schools in Cumberland and Atlantic Counties. Pathways shared ideas and visited several times to provide mentor training. The Family Resource Network implemented the program using three curriculums: a) Community Resources & Healthy Choices, b) Money Management, and c) Vocational Skills and Choices, and effectively serviced a total of 182 students. The *Learning Through Life* program has now been adopted and funded by two of these school districts as a part of their curriculum.

As a result of these efforts, Pathways for Exceptional Children was chosen by the Family Resource Network as the 2009 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. This award was presented to Pathways on September 22, 2009 in recognition of our collaborative efforts in many communities, making possible full inclusion of children with special needs in society. A special thanks to the Family Resource Network for allowing Pathways to share in this outreach! Visit them online at www.familyresourcenetwork.org.

Recreation Programs: Upcoming programs are posted on our website at the beginning of each month. You can visit www.PathwaysKids.org and click on "Children's Programs," or the Recreation Department's website: www.montvillenj.org. Click on Municipal Services, then Parks & Recreation, then Forms & Flyers.



My "Dream It Forward" Challenge!

My name is Steven Dinallo. I am 13 years old and I am going into the 7th grade at the Craig School in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey. I started volunteering in the *Magic of Reading* program last spring. My friend Nicole told me about the mentor program at the Montville Township Library and asked me to go with her one day. I loved it from that day on. I am dyslexic myself and realized that as I helped the kids with their reading, I was also becoming a stronger reader. By working with the kids, I have learned so much about living with the learning disabilities.

I get a lot of enjoyment and pride each day that I take part in the *Pathways Mentor Program*. I mentor two days each week and plan to continue this Fall. My goal when I am an adult is to be a special education teacher. I like to give back and to help others. This June, I had my 13th birthday. Instead of receiving gifts, I asked my friends and family to make donations to the Pathways' Program, which reached over \$1,000.00. I hope it benefits all the great kids I met this year. —Steven Dinallo



Dream It Forward



Redefining the future for people with disabilities