



## **Worship Buddies Scope Report**

August 31, 2019

WILLIAMSBURG  
COMMUNITY  
 CHAPEL

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**Origin and Charter:** The Worship Buddies Initiative Team (WBIT) was chartered by the Next 40 Leadership Team. As one of three parts of the Next 40 Initiative, the WBIT was convened to establish the future scope of a Special Needs Ministry. The scope was defined as determining the mission of the ministry, the community needs, required facilities, equipment and a multi-year budget that includes all required costs to include staffing training and insurance. Key elements of the charter are outlined below, and the complete document is provided in Appendix A. The team was hand-picked for their complimentary expertise and experience in special needs. Small groups within the team focused on one of the four elements of the scope (mission, community needs, facilities/equipment and budget). The team met from April through August of 2019. The key points of the charter are outlined below and served as the tasking document and focus of the WBIT efforts.

*You who created my inward parts; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise You because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and I know this very well. (Psalm 139:13-14)*

**Objective:** As an initiative of the Williamsburg Community Chapel's (WCC) Next 40 campaign, we desire to expand the current Worship Buddies (WB) Program, enabling the Chapel to include more individuals and families with learning/physical differences in our disciple making process.

**Deliverables:** A document that defines the future scope of the WB program including its vision and mission, clearly defined and realistic program parameters (what we can and cannot do), recommended paid and volunteer needs for the program, facility requirements. The scope should be developed with the framework of the Chapel's "Square", the Next 40 budget and the needs of the Williamsburg community.

- a. Identify and define the needs of families with children/teens/adults with special needs in our community and the programs currently available to them.
- b. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current WB program.
- c. Identify potential local agency partnerships.
- d. Identify and interview experts/churches that lead or have similar programs (i.e. McLean Bible Church; Respite by Barnabas-Grace Church of Eden Prairie, Minnesota; Faith Inclusion Network of Hampton Roads, Ben Conner, professor, etc.).
- e. Work with HR to identify insurance requirements/limitations for the expanded Worship Buddies Program.

This report provides response to each of the items (a-e) either as part of the narrative or in more detail as an appendix.

**Team Composition:** The team was comprised of WCC staff from Children's and Student Ministries, leaders and volunteers from the current Worship Buddies Program, members of the church body who have children with special needs and several congregant/experts who are working in the special needs field. The team members include:

David Hartt  
Ray Hanson  
Colleen Wright

Isaac Goncalves  
Melissa Dallas  
Christy Morgan

Sarah Burton  
Mary Ruth Franklin  
Debbie LaPan

**Overview and Process:** The team developed a model to frame the WBIT work and formed teams with expertise and experience aligned with each of the four areas of focus:

1. Vision/Mission
2. Budget
3. Facilities
4. Community Needs

The team conducted an initial analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, Opportunities (SWOT) of the existing program to serve as a baseline in defining the current state of the program. The detailed results of the SWOT are provided in Appendix B. The team was then divided up into four groups (facilities, vision/mission, budget, community needs) to dive deeper into each of these areas. This included

facility visits, interviews with five other churches with special needs ministries that have gone before us, three nonprofit organizations, select members of the WCC family with special needs, a survey of WCC worship buddy community to include volunteers and families with special needs, and a face to face meeting with Dr. Ben Connor, Professor at Western Theological Seminary and author of *Disabling Mission, Enabling Witness*.

We used a method of triangulation to determine when we had collected enough information on a particular topic. For example, when the team heard the same data point or of piece of information from three different sources (e.g., interview, survey, focus group) that was justification that we had sufficiently explored the issue to produce a “finding”.

The final stage of the project consolidated all the data collected and synthesized it into a series of findings and recommendations. The remainder of the report will explore the findings and recommendations within the four topic areas.

**Mission Statement:** As we explored this task, we wanted to make sure anything we developed aligned and fit within the context of the existing WCC mission statement and the framework of *connect, grow and serve*. WCC does not have an overarching Vision Statement and therefore we did not think it was appropriate to develop an independent and separate vision statement.

### **Recommended Mission Statement**

*Creating a community in which, **Everyone Belongs, Everyone Serves** by:*

1. (connect) *Welcoming individuals of all abilities into a relational community of believers.*
2. (grow) *Making God’s Word accessible to all by providing a continuum of learning opportunities.*



3. *(serve) Encouraging meaningful participation for individuals of all abilities to discover and use their gifts to serve and foster unity and maturity in the Body of Christ.*

Our examination of Special Needs Ministry clearly revealed it is much broader than designated spaces and worship buddies for children. We want to partner with existing WCC ministries to remove barriers that may exclude or limit access to our community of believers. We learned that Special Needs Ministry is about **maximum integration and inclusion** in all activities, at all levels and for all ages.

1. We recommend **ACCESS** as the title for this ministry moving forward.
2. The term Worship Buddies should be replaced with “Faith Partners” as it applies to all ages and all ministries, PreK through adult.
3. **ACCESS** is best housed under the Connect Team with current staff in the Grow Team providing Faith Partners within their respective ministries and using Access staff as a resource to educate, adapt and include.
4. An independent logo and brand development should be explored as part of the ministry. This has proved beneficial at other churches who successfully grew a Special Needs Ministry.

**Community Needs:** The Community Needs team had the most significant amount of work and conducted extensive research and outreach in Special Needs Ministry. A complete list of churches and organizations we contacted is provided in Appendix C. Our research through triangulation revealed the following findings:

### **Findings**

1. The Chapel has a great foundation. The church was built to be fully accessible(physically): large hallways, bathrooms, reserved seating in the worship room, accessible parking spaces, elevator, etc. The church already offers large print Bibles and hearing amplifiers, as well as a hearing loop system. Additionally, the church currently employs one staff member with special needs and several individuals with special needs are already serving in various capacities (particularly in Children’s Ministry). We just need to build on what we already are doing.
2. Special Needs Ministry starts with prayer. This should be no surprise to WCC as we believe prayer precedes movement.
3. “Not about us without us” was a common theme. The voice and perspective of our members with special needs and their families must be a continuous part of the program. This was included in the WBIT efforts. We surveyed our WCC families and held an entire meeting dedicated to listening to the voices our special needs members and families.
4. Any ministry for special needs will require significant and ongoing education of the church body. A successful ministry for special needs requires a cultural shift in the hearts and minds of the church body.

5. In successful programs, the lead pastor sets the tone and priority for the entire church body.
6. A special needs program **is not** a separate program, but a fully integrated and inclusive approach to all aspects of faithful living. “Do not let anyone *age out* of church”.
7. Support should be individualized as much as possible for all ages and levels of need.

## Recommendations

1. **Pray:** As the Chapel grows this ministry, we must be intentional and pray over this ministry.
2. **Listen:** Take time to meet on-on-one with all staff to listen to their fears, thoughts, etc. on this ministry with and by individuals with special needs.
3. **Allocate** one full time staff to help build out the ministry. This person will guide the implementation and steer the strategic direction of ACCESS by educating the staff and equipping the congregation to become Faith Partners in the ministry. A Faith Partner is a congregant who worships, studies the word, and does life alongside an individual (child, teen, or adult) with special needs.
4. **Educate:** Using the graphic in Appendix D. *The 5 Stages: Changing Attitudes*, as a reference, a significant amount of the ACCESS staff’s time will be spent educating the staff to move from “building awareness” to “integrating” and “engaging”. This will start with the elders, pastoral staff, deacons and the leadership team. All must “be comfortable with being uncomfortable”. All church members will have responsibilities as Faith Partners, which will be modeled and emphasized from the pulpit and the elders to ensure the special needs ministry is integrated into every facet of church life.
5. **Welcome:** Current staff within all ministries must welcome and include individuals of all abilities. Children’s and Student Ministries should be trained to welcome, include and adapt activities for all abilities. This should include Adult Ministries and inclusion into small groups where an adult small group would include group members with special needs and not just a separate small group of individuals with special needs.
6. **Expand** current ministries to fully include children through adults of all abilities. This includes:
  - a. Inviting individuals of all abilities to discover and use their spiritual gifts in church.
  - b. Offering sermon notes for Student Ministries and main worship
  - c. Educating congregants with simple tips and suggestions to be more inclusive and welcoming...everybody is a Faith Partner.
  - d. Utilizing current resources in the church by providing special needs/inclusion training and education for all ministries such as Stephen Ministry, Agape, Missions, Greeters, Ushers, etc.
7. **Collaborate** instead of “partnering” with local churches/organizations. This is wisdom we received in talking to others who have gone before

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.  
(Ephesians 2:10)*

us. The thinking is that partnering requires more of a quid pro quo relationship that focuses on medium term activities and more formal arrangements and outcomes. Collaboration can encompass just about any activity and allows WCC more flexibility as it grows and defines this ministry. The following organizations would be a good starting point for local collaboration:

- a. Faith Inclusion Network (<https://www.faithinclusionnetwork.org/>)
    - i. Description: “We also want to help faith communities become more inclusive by connecting them with resources and providing networking opportunities at conferences and meetings throughout the year.”
    - ii. Contact: [faithinclusionnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:faithinclusionnetwork@gmail.com)
  - b. Young Life Capernaum (<https://williamsburg.younglife.org>)
    - i. Description: “Young Life is for everyone who wants to get the most out of life. Whether you are in middle school, high school or college; whatever your interests or abilities; no matter who you hang out with — Young Life welcomes you.”
    - ii. Contact: Caitie Maloney, [wmbg.capernaum@gmail.com](mailto:wmbg.capernaum@gmail.com)
  - c. Possibly the ARC of Williamsburg or Versability in Hampton, VA
8. **Add:** After the ACCESS Ministry has reached a desired and sustainable level of inclusion and maturation, the following programs could be added to the ministry:
- a. **Respite Care:** Providing rest and time for caregivers
    - i. Respite could also be started alongside educating the church to help the congregation start to build relationships and become comfortable around individuals of all abilities in a more relaxed setting.
    - ii. See Appendix D, [\*Community Resources Summary, 99 Balloons and Respite Care\*](#) for more details.
  - b. **Parent Support Group** with respite care provided. This group is designed to provide support in finding resources, parent networking, educational classes, one on one support, Bible study, etc.
9. **Space:** We recommend waiting to build out the space until we expand the current inclusion ministry and give the congregation a chance to build relationships with our members with special needs. We recommend waiting to ensure that everyone understands the designated space is not where individuals with disabilities belong, but instead a place where individuals can go to get their physical needs met and prepare their bodies and minds to learn alongside their age-appropriate peers. At the same time, it is important to remember that inclusion will look different for each and every person. For some people, it may look like sitting in the Cafe, for others it may look like pacing in the back of the large group room or sitting right next to the door and others may need a separate space to learn for part of the morning.

- a. When we shared that our church has graciously given us a large space to renovate to expand the ministry, we received lots of concern and words of caution. Special needs ministry should not be a separate demographic in a separate space, but instead part of the demographic in each space and ministry in the church.
  - b. It is important that all individuals are included in some aspect of worship “outside” a separate space.
  - c. Any designated separate space should be multi-purpose (reduce the number of permanent walls), but still provide room for a sensory space, smaller learning areas and an accessible bathroom with a changing table, etc. We expand on this later in Facilities.
  - d. Any built out space should accommodate the most severe needs: medically fragile, aggressive, wheelchair bound and built with a universal design in mind.
10. Additional Information: We collected a large amount of information on programs and building a special needs ministry that we believe is extremely valuable, but too detailed for the body of the report. In order to preserve this data, we have provided these notes and information in Appendix D.

**Budget (staffing, training, insurance):** The budget outlined in this section also includes the costs associated with space and equipment. This section provides the overall costs. Recommendations and costs for specific equipment are detailed in the Facilities section.

## Findings

1. Our current insurance coverage is sufficient for both the immediate ACCESS Ministry needs and future requirements. WCC has the following coverage:
  - a. \$5MM Umbrella policy
    - i. \$1MM molestation or abuse coverage per occurrence
    - ii. \$2MM lifetime limit.
2. Staffing: Most churches and organizations we talked to had at least one full time staff dedicated to their Special Need’s Ministry. The position was responsible for developing and implementing the program, developing and adapting curricula, serving as the initial point of contact for families as well as the primary trainer to educate the rest of the church staff to welcome individuals of all abilities. In addition, this position becomes a resource to help other churches start a ministry in the community. In conjunction with the pastoral team, this position is the change champion for inclusion throughout the church body.
3. Training of the entire church staff was an important part of setting the required emphasis on inclusion for several other churches. The inclusion aspect of this ministry will require a cultural shift in hearts and minds of church staff and the church body.



## Recommendations

1. Our recommended budget is provided below:

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Item Total
Advertising/Banners/Mailers/Web	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 7,500
Office Expenses	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 6,000
Consumable supplies (gloves, wipes, etc.)	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 750
Training	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 20,000
Travel/Perdiem	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 6,000
Volunteer Appreciation	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 6,000
Staff Salary (annual)	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 120,000
Staff benefits (annual)	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 36,000
Specialized Program Costs	\$ 4,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 18,000
Insurance (current coverage sufficient)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment Recapitalization	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ 500
One Time Costs				
Space Buildout		\$ 200,000		\$ 200,000
Equipment	\$ 6,000	\$ 10,000		\$ 16,000
<b>Total Ministry Costs</b>	<b>\$ 80,750</b>	<b>\$ 281,750</b>	<b>\$ 74,250</b>	<b>\$ 436,750</b>

This budget assumes buildout would not occur in year one and is based on the recommendation the culture of inclusion be given time to take hold throughout the church body prior to construction.

**Facilities (space and equipment):** Findings and recommendations in this section are based on interviews with the James City County Fire Marshall, directors from several churches including Faith Church, Dyer, Indiana; Stonebriar Community Church, Frisco, Texas; and Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church, Terre Haute, Indiana. In addition to these interviews, a visit to an established sensory space and discussions with experienced occupational therapists informed these findings and recommendations. A complete equipment list and cost is provided in Appendix E.

### Findings:

1. The chapel is already in a good place regarding special needs and inclusion requirements. The church is handicap accessible including ramps to and from the building, an elevator, accessible restrooms, reserved seating, and large hallways with sufficient space for those with mobility needs to maneuver. There are several family-style restrooms throughout the building which allow for higher level needs to be met. There is an intercom system to assist those with emergencies in a timely manner. Large print Bibles, hearing amplifiers, and a closed-loop hearing system are also available.
2. The emphasis on inclusion with sensory and quiet spaces in close proximity to the K-5 and preschool instructional areas allows children the opportunity to learn alongside their

peers, establish relationships, and benefit from the teaching to the maximum extent possible while having their needs met.

**Recommendations:** Our recommendations for equipment and build out are presented as a two phased approach to allow time for WCC to develop a robust culture of inclusion prior to spending significant funds on building out a separate space.

### **Phase 1**

1. Designate an “Area of Refuge” for the second floor at the top of the stairwell near the worship buddies’ entrance. The fire department should be made aware of this area in the event of an emergency. Safety plans for everyone should be considered for all emergencies including tornadoes, intruders, and fire based on his/her needs. An emergency evacuation plan to assist these individuals down the stairs in the event that the fire department can’t evacuate them quickly enough should be considered. Stair chairs and a skid material can assist with evacuating wheelchair users more efficiently. Use common sense concerning the number of people that use wheelchairs on the second floor.
2. Preschool Sensory Space Recommendations
  - Child size rocking chair
  - Fold up tunnel
  - Body sox
  - Removable hanging wall mat
  - Floor mat
  - Bean bag
  - Weighted lap pads
3. Student Ministries Recommendations
  - Provide a space off the Student Ministries room for students who need a cool-down area. It could be set up and broken down for Sunday mornings. Recommended equipment includes: a rocking chair, bean bags, basket of fidgets, headphones and a foldable mat. A stationary bike would be ideal if it could be left in the space as it may be difficult to move weekly.
  - It will be beneficial to equip staff to educate and train peers in Student Ministries to become Faith Partners. If needed, volunteer coordinators could be provided to help oversee inclusion.
  - Provide adapted group activities or stations for students with physical needs to improve their level of inclusion and participation alongside their peers. Consider using balloons, beach balls, or foam balls; provide a Faith Partner to assist them; allow increased time to complete an activity; give them a special role such as time or scorekeeper; give them an option to remain at an alternate station. Also consider adding a variety of activities such as intellectual games/activities that are more inclusive for individuals with physical limitations.

#### 4. Adult Ministries Recommendations

- Provide a sensory friendly space in the sanctuary, close to a door for adults who may need to come and go throughout the service.

### **Phase 2**

As the inclusion ministry grows and funding becomes available, the designated space can be developed to accommodate those with more severe disabilities as necessary and provide for mid-week and respite activities. The designated space should include:

1. **A Sensory Space:** This space will provide an outlet to move and expend energy, meeting various sensory needs. It will need to be closely monitored for safety and upkeep of the equipment. It should consist of one padded wall to border the swing and trampoline areas and padded flooring. Recommended equipment includes a swing with ceiling hook up (2), foldable tunnel, trampoline, crash mat, river stones, sensory table, body sox, and therapy ball.
2. **A Quiet Space:** The quiet space will provide a calming space for those with high anxiety or sensory needs as well as a rest area for any student who needs a break from sitting in his/her wheelchair. It should feature dimmed lighting, a raised mat table, bean bags, a foldable mat which can be used as a temporary privacy screen or additional mat surface, and calming music. Additional items could include a bubble tube, and a projector.
3. **Restroom:** The restroom should be centrally located to allow volunteers to monitor two spaces simultaneously. Recommended equipment includes toilet rails and a hi/lo table to make transfers on and off less taxing.
4. **Instructional areas:** While inclusion is the preferred teaching area, a separate area for those who are not able to tolerate that environment should be considered on a week by week basis. It is recommended that it consists of three to four separate partitioned areas for PreK, elementary, and adults. Suggested equipment includes adjustable height tables, and a variety of seating to include typical classroom chairs, smaller chairs with armrests, ball chairs, bean bags, and bungee chairs. A small table on risers could also be included to allow students to stand while working. See Appendix E for a list of suggested instructional materials. A sink and countertop space would be useful during respite or mid-week activities for meal prep or art activities. Audio-visual equipment should also be considered as a teaching aid.
  - a. An adult pull-out classroom is recommended for adults who require an adapted curriculum or smaller environment than the main sanctuary.
  - b. An instructional area can be added to the cool-down space in student ministries for those who require a pull-out instructional area. Recommended seating includes ball chairs and bungee chairs along with typical classroom seating.

5. Recommend solid walls for restroom, sensory, and quiet spaces and partitioned sound-proof walls for instructional areas that can open into one large space as needed. Soft incandescent lighting should be used throughout the space.

**Conclusion:** There is a genuine need in our community for this ministry both physically and spiritually. If not WCC then who? But in order implement this ministry as we have learned it should exist and be structured, it is going to require a fundamental shift in the way our staff and church body thinks about special needs. Special Needs Ministry is NOT about providing a special and separate space where worship, for some, is conducted away from the rest of the church body. It is just the opposite. It is about inclusion in ALL aspects of church life and every single congregant from the youngest to the oldest, the Elder to the Café volunteer takes on the role of “Faith Partner”. Where possible, we worship, participate in small group and build community side by side. Inclusion means people of all abilities not only participate in worship, but they are also included in serving as greeters, ushers, choir members, volunteers and paid staff. We are doing well in some of these areas, but full inclusion will require a significant cultural shift, that must be championed from the pulpit.

We are excited to be part of a church that believes *Everyone Belongs and Everyone Serves* by welcoming individuals of all abilities into a relational community of believers, making God’s word accessible to all by providing a continuum of learning opportunities and encouraging meaningful participation for individuals of all abilities to discover and use their gifts to serve and foster unity and maturity in the Body of Christ. *Jesus said, Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 19:14)*

## **Acknowledgement**

Thank you to Gayle Justice for her support of this team during our work and thank you to WCC leadership for making this ministry a priority and trusting us to set the scope and future direction. We sincerely hope this report sets a clear direction for inclusion and makes Faith Partners of every congregant at WCC.

## **WORSHIP BUDDIES INITIATIVE TEAM (WBIT) CHARTER**

Approved by the Next 40 Leadership Team

**Objective:** As an initiative of the Williamsburg Community Chapel's Next 40 campaign, we desire to expand the current Worship Buddies (WB) Program, enabling the Chapel to include more individuals and families with learning/physical differences in our disciple making process.

**Deliverables:** The Worship Buddies Initiative Team (WBIT) will create a document that defines the future scope of the WB program including its vision and mission, clearly defined and realistic program parameters (what we can and cannot do), recommend paid and volunteer needs for the program, as well as recommend facility needs for program success. The future scope should be developed within the framework of the Chapel's "Square," the Next 40 budget, the intended physical space, and the needs of the Williamsburg community.

As part of the process of defining the future scope of the WB program, the WBIT will:

- a. Identify and define the needs of families with children/teens/adults with special needs in our community and the programs currently available to them.
- b. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current WB program.
- c. Identify potential local agency partnerships.
- d. Identify and interview experts/churches that lead or have similar programs (i.e. McLean Bible Church; Respite by Barnabas-Grace Church of Eden Prairie, Minnesota; Faith Inclusion Network of Hampton Roads, Ben Conner, professor, etc.).
- e. Work with HR to identify insurance requirements/limitations for the expanded Worship Buddies Program.

**Composition of the team:** The team will be lead by Dave Hart and composed of 9 people, including:

One Children's Ministry deacon

Two staff members from the Grow Team (CM and SM)

Two members of the current WB Leadership Team

One current WB volunteer

One parent with a child in the current WB program

One Chapel attendee currently working in the special needs field.

### **Assumptions:**

- All people are created in God's image and are of value in God's sight and in the church as well.
- God desires all people to know, love, and have a relationship with Him.
- God gifts everyone with talents and gifts that they are to use to serve God and His church.
- There are families with children/teens/adults with learning difference within our community that need support, resources, and sharing of the gospel in order to develop a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **Current Worship Buddy Program**

### **Strengths:**

- Children are fully included with their peers
- Families can worship (uninterrupted!)
- Families are so appreciative!
- Great leadership team!! Empowering volunteers.
- Adults with special needs can serve and use their gifts in Children's Ministry
- Children with special needs are given opportunities to use their gifts on Sundays
- Volunteers are provided with training to learn about spiritual gifts, behavior, teaching, sensory processing
- Memory verse is done with sign language (incorporating multiple ways of learning!)
- Good policies and procedures in place for our current structure
- Worship Buddy Celebration – LOVE!!!!
- Worship Buddy Parent Small group
- WONDERFUL, inclusive Children's Ministry staff – open and very receptive of how to work together to include all children.
- Great team that engaged in appropriate problem solving together
- Volunteers ranging from no prior experience to master's degree in Special Ed
- Some staff are starting to use lingo from the pulpit such as “stand if you are able” or “worship as you feel lead” which is more inclusive
- Wonderful volunteers
- Training provided for volunteers
- Communication between coordinators and volunteers is good
- WB is well planned and orchestrated each week
- Worship Buddies help children with special needs enjoy their time at church and make them feel loved
- Individualized treatment strategies and behavior boards to best help children with special needs participate to the best of their ability
- We try to look at each child individually for their needs and don't use a one size fits all approach
- We try to put the family/child first over the organization when possible. The Lords love can shine through this way.
- Good organizational structure for a volunteer led program
- Excellent materials created by Sarah-our handbooks, training materials, trainers/teachers, etc.-

### **Weaknesses:**

- No transportation for teens/adults with special needs (living in group homes, unable to drive, etc.).
- Need a good model/support for teens to be included in Student Ministry
- Need a way for adults with special needs to be able to learn about Jesus and to feel welcomed in the congregation
- Unable to meet the needs of children with more severe disabilities such as CJ, Gigi (as a result, they do not come frequently)
- Difficult to find appropriate placement for children/adults with discrepancy in chronological age vs cognitive ability
- Behaviors increase as children are unable to comprehend the lesson (especially as they move up grades)
- Need more training of leaders and volunteers to develop peer buddies
- Beyond Sundays – several families have asked about respite
- Need more education for staff (Student Ministry, Adult Ministry, etc.).

## Appendix B.

- One thing that I think would be helpful is if the Buddy(s) and parent could catch up by phone, maybe twice a year. Just to touch base and see if there is anything that the parent would like for the Buddy to work on with the child or if the Buddy needs some advice on what works best with the child. Sunday is always so crazy, there is never really any time to chat, especially with the child around. This would just help to keep everyone current on what is going on in the child's life and on the same page.
- Limited physical space; the sensory rooms are tight if multiple kids need to use the space.
- Improved communication between parents and Worship Buddies.
- Not having an administrator - difficult to plan our WB Celebration using the chapel admin.
- We could use a way to provide more hands on, developmentally appropriate lessons to the kids with special needs so they can get the point of the morning. It would be nice to have an organized lesson like this for the kids that need it in the new space.
- It is hard not having a leader of the program who is on staff due to the time commitment involved and the resources provided with being on staff.
- We need more support for families in terms of small groups and respite, making sure these activities are Christ centered and not just activities that can be found elsewhere in the community. This has been hard to implement and maintain as it is a big time commitment and the volunteers are already at capacity.

## Churches and Organizations Contacted

Name: Calvary Community Church  
Location: Westlake Village, CA  
Title/Bio: Gina Spivey, Special Needs Pastor  
Contact: [gina.spivey@calvarycc.org](mailto:gina.spivey@calvarycc.org)

Name: First Christian Church  
Location: Canton, OH  
Title/Bio: George White - Disability Ministry Pastor George White  
Contact: 330-456-2600 X2530

Name: Grace Church (Respite by Barnabas)  
Location: Eden Prairie, Minnesota  
Title/Bio: Karen Anderson, Special Needs Ministry Director  
Contact: [Karen.Anderson@grace.church](mailto:Karen.Anderson@grace.church)

Name: Liberty Baptist  
Location: Hampton, VA  
Title/Bio: Hampton Campus- King's Kids Director  
Contact: 757-826-2110

Name: Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church  
Location: Newport News  
Title/Bio: Christa Blomstrom, Director of Evangelism  
Contact: [cblomstrom@olmc.org](mailto:cblomstrom@olmc.org), 757.595.0385 ext.107

Name: 99 Balloons (Respite)  
Location: Online Organization  
Title/Bio: Rebecca Wall, Program Director  
Contact: 214-850-4432

Name: Faith Inclusion Network  
Location: Hampton Roads  
Title/Bio: Karen Jackson, Executive Director  
Contact: [faithinclusionnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:faithinclusionnetwork@gmail.com) , 757-282-8000

Name: First Norfolk (Recharge Respite)  
Location: Norfolk  
Title/Bio: Kristina Foster, Director of Recharge Respite at Hope Haven  
Contact: [rechargerespites@gmail.com](mailto:rechargerespites@gmail.com), (757) 553-6958



**Churches or Organizations that would be good to contact:**

Name: Ashland Special Needs Ministry- Respite

Location: Ashland, OH

Title/Bio: Christina Teevan - Executive Director of Ashland Special Needs - Respite expert

Contact: Go to Contact Us page and submit email

Name: Nathaniel's Hope - Respite

Location: Orlando, FL

Title/Bio: Marie Kuck - Co-Founder/Executive Director Nathaniel's Hope (Respite Program for churches that provides structure, training and forms)

Contact: [MarieK@NathanielsHope.org](mailto:MarieK@NathanielsHope.org)

**Questions for special needs ministry leaders:**

1. What is the scope of your special needs ministry? Who do you serve?
2. How do you provide for those with special needs on Sunday mornings?
3. Do you provide services in addition to Sunday morning?
4. What specialized equipment do you have?
5. Do you have a sensory room or chill out room? What sensory items/equipment does it have? How big is it?
6. Are their pictures online of your sensory room(s)? If not, could you send us some?
7. What does your current leadership structure look like? How many paid staff do you have and what are their titles and responsibilities?
8. What training background or qualifications does the primary special needs minister have?
9. How do you go about recruiting volunteers?
10. How do you train your volunteers?
11. If you use any hands on methods for handling challenging behaviors, what training curriculum do you use? How often do you review that?
12. What is your process for replicating volunteers? (Making sure you always have volunteers)
13. What curriculum do you use for those with special needs to make learning about Jesus accessible for all?
14. How do you educate ministry leaders, volunteers and congregants to be welcoming? What methods have you used to create a sense of belonging for families with special needs?
15. How do you evaluate program effectiveness and how often?
16. What have been/continue to be some of your challenges? What solutions have been helpful?

## Special Needs Ministry Notes and Information

### Survey Data:

The team created a short 10 question survey and sent it out to all 30 Worship Buddies families and 57 volunteers. The full survey can be viewed at [worship buddies survey](#) . The survey link was mailed out all 87 and followed up by two reminders several weeks apart. The response rate was a disappointing 20.7%.

1. Respondents:
  - a. Parents: 33% (6)
  - b. Volunteers: 67% (12)
2. How well does the current ministry meet the needs of our families?
  - a. Extremely well: 33% (6)
  - b. Very well: 56% (10)
  - c. Moderately well 11% (2)
3. How well does our current ministry meeting the needs in the community?
  - a. Extremely well: 22% (4)
  - b. Very well: 44% (8)
  - c. Moderately well: 28% (5)
  - d. Not well at all: 6% (1)
4. How could the ministry better welcome individual families who currently are unable to come to church?

• Staff support to help more complex needs on Sunday and beyond:	3.11 (mean score)
• Self-contained classroom:	2.83
• Accommodation for ambulatory persons:	2.61
• Specialized equipment:	2.56
• Nursing care:	2.11
• Transportation:	1.72
5. How could the ministry better include teenagers and adults with special needs in worship and church events?

a. Provide opportunities to serve in worship (greeter, usher, reading scripture, etc.)	89%
b. Providing sermon notes/outline to help follow	78%
c. Educate congregants with simple tips/suggestions to be more inclusive and welcoming	72%
d. Separate class during the sermon that provides a more interactive Bible lesson	56%
e. A separate section of the sanctuary to worship, that is not as populated for people who don't like crowds.	50%
6. List any challenges or struggles with the current Worship Buddy ministry.
  - a. None (6)
  - b. Consistency of buddies (3)
  - c. Paid/full time staff to organize/coordinate (2)
  - d. Training (2)
  - e. Safety equipment/practices (1)
  - f. Making the lesson accessible (1)
7. What are the most helpful community resources currently available to your child and/or family?

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- a. Unknown
  - b. One Child Center for Autism programs and respite care (8)
  - c. Not sure/unknown (4)
  - d. Worship Buddies (3)
  - e. Dream Catchers (1)
8. What are the most needed resources in the community?
- a. Respite care for families (4)
  - b. Advocacy for children with special needs (2)
  - c. Resources for teens and adults (2)
  - d. Parent support (2)
  - e. Access to church and recreation and socialization, affordable therapies' (1)
  - f. Unknown (1)
9. In addition to Sunday morning, what programming/activities would be helpful at WCC?
- |  |      |
|--|------|
| a. Parent support group with childcare provided that includes help finding resources, parent networking, educational classes, one on one support | 3.44 |
| b. Respite   | 3.89 |
| c. Modified interactive curriculum to engage all   | 4.33 |
| d. Parent Bible study/small group  | 4.50 |
| e. Special events (dance, beach day, zoo, etc.)  | 5.33 |
| f. Marriage mentoring for families with special needs children/teens/adults  | 5.61 |
| g. Help teens with special needs gain employment or advanced education   | 5.72 |
| h. Sibling ministry/group  | 6.00 |
| i. Play group  | 6.17 |
10. Is there anything else you would like the team to know or consider in the expansion?
- a. As the program grows and there are more buddies available, it would be nice to give the special needs kids a choice in buddies if possible.
  - b. You probably shouldn't use these responses due to total inexperience and new to this
  - c. I think it would be helpful to know what the community already offers for special needs families and kids. I do not think a church can handle all the issues alone and should work with the community to meet needs. It is important to find the niche not being met and start there.
  - d. I hope the Chapel will continue to remain as inclusive as possible with their ministry to individuals with special needs. Thank you for all of your hard work to continue to expand Worship Buddies!
  - e. Educating peers about special needs, developing a peer mentor program
  - f. I've wondered if it would be a good thing to have a volunteer chip card to increase safety/security to gain access to children's areas, especially the preschool area.
  - g. More in depth training for volunteers so we can be more helpful.
  - h. The encouragement and consistent care given those I love has made the Chapel one of their favorite places
  - i. Everything stated in question #9 is absolutely everything I had ever prayed for. Families are starving for these things. They feel left out, guilty, their marriage is struggling, finances, siblings are struggling for attention in the household and in able to meet new friends due to the parents being overwhelmed with caring for their special needs child. Having a special (safe) place to come to is extremely important. Training and educating not only staff, but the church congregation about special needs children and adults is also important. We all want to feel love, and connections and I think we can learn so much about Gods special love for us when we learn how special these amazing kids are.

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- j. medical oversight for more severely handicapped kids
- k. Just want you all to know what a wonderful program Worship Buddies is and there is no doubt that the expansion will be amazing and something that nowhere else (locally) has offered! Love, Prayers and Thanks to you all!
- l. No

#### **Identify and Define the Needs of Families with children/teens/adults with special needs in our community:**

##### **Survey Results concluded that:**

Families want for children, teens, and adults with special needs:

1. Provide opportunities to serve in worship (greeter, usher, reading scripture, etc.)
2. Providing sermon notes/outline to help follow
3. Educate congregants with simple tips/suggestions to be more inclusive and welcoming

The church could be more welcoming by:

1. Staff support to help with complex needs and beyond
2. Self-contained classroom
3. Accommodation for non-ambulatory persons

Families would like to have the following in a church:

1. Parent support group with childcare provided that includes help finding resources, parent networking, educational classes, one on one support
2. Respite
3. Modified interactive curriculum to engage all

Families need the following resources (from church or community):

- Respite
- Advocacy
- Resources for teens and adults
- Parent Support

For more detailed information on survey results, please see *Appendix Survey Results*

For more information on programs currently available in the community see:

- *Appendix: WJCC Essential Resources*
- *Appendix: Current Community Resources for Families with Special Needs*

#### **Assess Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Program**

Strengths:

1. Children are fully included
2. Families can worship uninterrupted
3. Training for volunteers
4. Policy and Procedures
5. Organizational Structure (Leadership team)

Weaknesses:

1. Teen and adults are not fully included

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2. Curriculum is not accessible to individuals of all learning levels and abilities
3. There is no space to meet the needs of children with more severe disabilities
4. No staff for current special needs ministry (aside from admin)
5. Need education of all staff, congregants, and volunteers

### **Identify potential location agency partnerships:**

- Faith Inclusion Network
  - Description: “Our goal is to connect people with disabilities and their families to faith communities that are welcoming and genuinely want to include everyone.
  - We also want to help faith communities become more inclusive by connecting them with resources and providing networking opportunities at conferences and meetings throughout the year.”
  - Contact: [faithinclusionnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:faithinclusionnetwork@gmail.com)
  - Website: <https://www.faithinclusionnetwork.org/>
- Young Life Capernaum
  - Description: “Young Life is for everyone who wants to get the most out of life. Whether you are in middle school, high school or college; whatever your interests or abilities; no matter who you hang out with — Young Life welcomes you.”
  - Contact: Caitie Maloney, [wmbg.capernaum@gmail.com](mailto:wmbg.capernaum@gmail.com)
  - Website: <https://williamsburg.younglife.org>

*\*\*Note: Based on feedback from other churches, we want to limit partnerships to a few key ministries and focus on collaboration with other churches and organizations instead\*\**

### **Interview Experts and Churches**

*Appendix: Experts in Special Needs Ministry*

*Appendix: Churches and Organizations*

### **Key Information from experts and churches:**

#### **Repeated Words of Wisdom from interviews:**

- Start with prayer!
- “Not about us without us.” Talk to individuals with special needs and their families throughout the whole process
  - See *Appendix: Interview notes from individuals with special needs* to hear directly from individuals of varying ages and abilities at the Chapel.
- “Begin the process of educating the church. Very important, but it’s a slow process. Keep going and don’t stop!” – Katie Anderson, Grace Church in Eden Prairie
- “Trust God to change hearts.” – Gina Spivey
- Lead pastor sets the tone for the congregation: “We no longer have a special needs ministry. If you see a need, you don’t need to contact the special needs ministry director (unless the person has just walked through the door and needs to get connected), do what you can to connect, minister, walk alongside, befriend, help, etc.” – Lead Pastor from Stonebriar Community Church

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- Continue to individualize the process of support for ALL ages of people with disabilities.
  - Do not let anyone “age out” of church

### Words of Caution

- Church is NOT Therapy
  - Be reasonable with equipment purchases: enough to make environment safe and for children’s bodies to be ready to learn
- Value parent input but do not let parents dictate programming
- Separate Space: Shouldn’t be a separate demographic in the church, but instead a part of the demographic of each ministry.
  - Set clear boundaries that all individuals are included in some aspect “outside” the separate space.
  - Want to build space to accommodate the most severe needs: medically fragile, aggressive, wheelchair bound with universal design, responsive design in mind.
  - BUT also consider Universal Design, “What if we didn’t need to retrofit our planning to be accommodating to persons of all levels of ability and disability, but planned them that way from the start?” - Barbara Newman
    - For more information on Universal Design see Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (Barbara Newman)
- Before adding a respite program or any other program, strengthen Sunday morning inclusion for all abilities first

### Education/Awareness Ideas

- Annual Special Needs Sunday: service lead by individuals with special needs alongside family members and volunteers.
- Disability Etiquette for congregants and volunteers
  - See Grace Church Disability Etiquette Appendix for sample
- Ongoing education process for everyone (elders, pastors, staff, congregants)
- Educate pastors on different learning styles

### Ideas to be inclusive of adults with special needs:

- Faith Partners Ministry: people committed to sitting with people with special needs in church and inviting them into their lives.
- Small Group: cap at 6-8 people, half with disabilities
  - Meet during the week or Sunday at 9am so they can attend together at 11am
- Provide sermon outline (with visuals)

### Training for Church Staff

- Meetings with individual staff to simply listen to fears and concerns
- Follow-up by a training addressing concerns
- Educate through relationships, sharing videos, testimonies, success stories
  - Bring in self-advocates, and others from outside the church

### Training for Volunteers

- Peer Buddies: training and equipping peers (starting as young as Kindergarten)
- Quarterly vs yearly trainings

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- Proposed Agenda for Yearly Training: Devotion, Testimony, Notebook with Articles/Videos, Teaching, Case Studies for application

### Curriculum

- Canned Curriculum: not ideal for fostering faith
- Instead, use same material as parallel ministries
  - Differentiate teaching through delivery, handouts, props, etc. so that individuals of all ages and abilities are learning the same thing

### Transportation

- WATA
- Idea of Faith Partners (referenced above)

### Respite

- Things to consider:
  - Mission (reaching people inside or outside the church)
  - Frequency and duration
- Volunteer Ideas:
  - Utilizing small groups
  - Incorporate families
    - Peer buddies starting with Kindergarteners
- Canned Programs:
  - Buddy Break through Nathaniel's Hope:
    - Description: "Buddy Break is a FREE Parents' Day Out/respice program where kids with all types of special needs (VIP kids) have FUN while their parents get a BREAK. At Buddy Break, VIP kids and their siblings make new friends, play games, do crafts, hear children's stories, enjoy music, and more! Meanwhile, parents get a break from their ongoing care-giving responsibilities, usually for three hours on a Friday night or Saturday morning."
    - Website: <https://www.nathanielshope.org/>
  - Recess by 99 Balloons
    - Description: "Much time, energy, and effort has gone into making recess a model that can travel to any community. 99 Balloons has developed volunteer training, policies and procedures, event software, and an ever-growing community of people who engage their community through respice. rEcess is never the end game, but it works well as a tangible starting point for many. rEcess is changing the story of disability, loving people, and empowering others to serve families experiencing disability in their communities."
    - Website: <https://99balloons.org/>
    - For more information see *Appendix: 99 Balloons STEPS TO BUILDING A RESPITE* and *Appendix: 99 Balloons 12 Steps to befriend*

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- Respite by Baranabus
  - Description: Baranabus exists to glorify God by sharing the love of Jesus Christ and the truths of His Word with children and adults with special needs while supporting and encouraging their families through participation in the church body.
  - POC Karen Anderson, Special Needs Ministry Director,  
Karen.Anderson@gracechurch.org
  - <https://grace.church/special-needs/>
- Churches in the area offering respite
  - Church: Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Newport News
  - Church: First Norfolk (Recharge Respite in VA Beach)
- Current Respite in Williamsburg
  - KIDS Night through One Child Center for Autism
    - Note: Offered monthly at the WISC. Accepts approximately 100 kids and registration fills up within hours of opening. There is always a waitlist of families.
    - Cost: Free for children with special needs and \$5 for siblings
  - We Rock the Spectrum
    - Description: “Respite & Break Time Care and One-to-One Attendant Care. Our Respite & Break Time Care is designed to provide a break for families with children with special needs. We understand how difficult it is to balance the needs of siblings, spouses, or yourself, so this service is designed with you in mind. Children without a special needs diagnosis may also use this service. For children who require constant care and who have behavioral or safety concerns, we’ve created a more intensive level of support with our One-to-One Attendant Care.”
    - Cost: \$12/per hour

#### Individuals willing to help lead trainings for staff/congregants/volunteers/etc.):

- Ben Conner, Western Theological Seminary
- Karen Jackson and/or Michelle Munger, Faith Inclusion Network
- Caitie Maloney, Young Life Capernaum, Williamsburg

#### Individuals willing to use their spiritual gifts:

- Debbie LaPan (lapanclan@gmail.com): desire to lead Parent Support Group
- Allen Keil ([awkeil@outlook.com](mailto:awkeil@outlook.com)): desire coordinate a group of individuals to translate the service in Sign Language, when needed.



## **Current Community Resources for Families with Special Needs**

### **Recreation:**

**Greater Williamsburg Network of Care Website** – Disabilities Social/Recreational Programs, which includes:

**Buddy Art** is a program designed to provide art activities for children with special needs and/or physical disabilities. The program is free and is sponsored by the Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center in cooperation with the College of William & Mary and James City County Parks & Recreation.

**Buddy Ball** is designed for children and young adults, ages 5-young adult, with special needs who are not able to participate in the established Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth Leagues. We have players with a wide range of disabilities, including players in wheelchairs. Play is adapted to each player's needs, and each child is assisted one-on-one by a volunteer.

**Challenger Little League - Newport News** - Fun filled baseball specifically geared for children with developmental and/or physical disabilities ages 5 - 18 (or until completion of high school)

**Colonial Behavioral Health: Opportunities Unlimited - Day Services** - The Day Services program provides personal, social, and behavioral skills training for individuals with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, in order to help them improve the quality of their daily lives.

**Dream Catcher's Therapeutic Riding Center** - Improves the quality of life for individuals with physical, emotional and developmental needs by providing evidence-based therapeutic riding, equine assisted activities and advancing effective practices through professional education and research.

**James City County Department of Parks and Recreation: Inclusion & Therapeutic Services** - Inclusion is a service that provides accommodations to persons with disabilities for participation in recreation programs, facilities and leisure activities offered to the community. Inclusion also includes community/staff trainings, disability awareness programs, and accessibility of park trails and recreational facilities.

**SMART-One, Inc.** - A non-profit, parent run corporation in Newport News. "SMART" offers information on resources and services as well as a variety of programs for physically and/or mentally challenged individuals ages 2 years through adult.

SMART-One provides the special needs community with the same choices and opportunities as everyone else;

**The Special Motion Club at WISC** - It offers excellent opportunities for the growth and development of children and young adults with special needs. We are dedicated to assisting our students in physical activities designed to promote sensory integration, strength skill acquisition, self-confidence, and body awareness.

**Special Olympics Virginia - Area 22** - Newport News - We are a social movement built on inclusion, where every single person is accepted and welcomed, regardless of ability or disability. We are helping make the world a better, healthier and more joyful place. Our program, however, is about more than just sports. We envision a world in which people with intellectual disabilities lead healthy, vibrant lives grounded in ongoing

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sports and physical activity, sound nutrition and a deeply held conviction to improve, compete, achieve and demonstrate their personal best to themselves and their community. Our current strategic plan is focused on continued programmatic growth, program quality and increased funding.

**McCormack-Nagelsen Tennis Center** - William & Mary, will launch ACEing Autism this summer one family member at a time. We are sports, community, education, and health. ACEing Autism is a non-profit organization that brings recreational tennis programs to children on the autism spectrum, and the MNTC is currently the only facility in Virginia offering the program. The specially designed tennis clinic will be offered every Sunday June 25-July 30 from 3 to 4 p.m. for children under 10 years old and 4 to 5 p.m. for children 11-18.

**We Rock the Spectrum Gym** - We Rock the Spectrum is not just a kids gym. It's a place that your child can discover, learn and play, in their own way and at their own pace. It's a place where parents can come together and talk about the struggles, the challenge of finding adequate services, and the development breakthroughs. It's a place that you can drop off your little one for a few hours and have the peace of mind that the person watching your child understands them. I cannot think of a better business to own or raise my son around.

**William & Mary Buddy Ball** - A baseball league for children and teenagers with disabilities.

### **Local Therapy Services, Education and Support:**

**One Child Autism** - Providing services and support to children and families affected by autism and other developmental differences in their individual journey regardless of financial circumstances. Provides various types of therapy and respite.

**CDR (Child Development Resource)** - Non-profit local organization that is a comprehensive resource for physicians, teachers, and parents.

**Colonial Behavioral Health** - recognizes the unique challenges military service members face as they serve our country and work to reintegrate after returning from deployment. We provide services to help with a variety of adjustment concerns, which could affect the members' quality of life and work performance.

**Young Life Capernaum** - Youth groups, monthly events and camp for Bible study, fun and fellowship for those with special needs.

**The Arc of Greater Williamsburg** - Pam McGregor Executive Director - Serves young adults with disabilities as they age out of public-school education and services.

**The College of William & Mary - Next Move** - A Richmond-based non-profit organization, partnering with William & Mary and local businesses to create guided internship experiences for young adults with disabilities.

### **State:**

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services:** Supporting Virginians' efforts to secure independence, inclusion and integration

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**DARS' mission:** to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families.

**Autism Society Central Virginia (Autism Speaks)** - Information and Referral, Support, Advocacy, Educational Workshops, monthly newsletter, weekly emails, Scholarship Program, Teen Social Group, Adults with Aspersers Interest Group, multiple support groups for parents, recreational and social activities, Sibshops (sibling support)

#### **National:**

**CARD (Center for Autism and Related Disorders)** - World's largest Autism treatment provider - Closest center is in Newport News

**AAIDD (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)** - Includes a large division on Religion and Spirituality - "Working to foster opportunities for spiritual growth with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities."

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### **Experts in Special Needs Ministry**

Name: Vinnie Adams

Title/Bio: Special Needs Ministry Director - Faith Church

Location: Dyer, Indiana

Contact: [vadams@wearefaith.org](mailto:vadams@wearefaith.org)

Note: Both Dr. Erik Carter and Dr. Ben Conner said that this church does inclusion and belonging very well.

Name: Jess Berryhill

Title/Bio: Student Ministry Director at Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church

Location: Terre Haute, Indiana

Contact: [jessberryhill@gmail.com](mailto:jessberryhill@gmail.com)

Name: Erik Carter

Title/Bio: Cornelius Professor of Special Education at Vanderbilt University, extensive research on inclusion and belonging in schools and churches

Location: Nashville, TN

Contact: [erik.carter@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:erik.carter@vanderbilt.edu)

Note: He would be helpful answering questions related to building a welcoming congregation that provides a sense of belonging to all, ways to seek out and draw in people with disabilities and ways to begin to change the way we look at people with disabilities.

*Appendix: Carter, Place of Belonging and Carter, Barriers to Belonging*

Name: Ben Conner

Title/Bio: Author and professor at Western Theological Seminary (started Graduate Certificate in Disability in Ministry at Western and also started Younglife Capernaum in Williamsburg)

Location: Holland, MI

Contact: [Benjamin@westernsem.edu](mailto:Benjamin@westernsem.edu)

Note: Formerly attended the Chapel prior to moving to MI, great resource and is familiar with our church and congregation.

Name: Joel Dillon

Title/Bio: Jill's House President & CEO

Location: Vienna, VA

Contact: 703-639-5660

Note: Overnight care for families with special needs children. Resource for questions related to respite.

Name: Jackie Mills-Fernald

Title/Bio: Former Director of Access Ministry at McLean Bible Church, Therapeutic Options trainer, 20+ years in special needs ministry

Location: McLean, Virginia

Contact: [jacquelynkmills@gmail.com](mailto:jacquelynkmills@gmail.com)

Note: Excellent resource for questions related to improvements to training, adding a self-contained classroom, insurance and liability.

Name: Barbara Newman

Title/Bio: Director of Church Services, Teacher Consultant, and Author - **Check this website!** It offers many different resources for training, support and curriculum. [clcnetwork.org](http://clcnetwork.org)

Location: Wyoming, MI

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Contact: [info@clcnetwork.org](mailto:info@clcnetwork.org)

Note: They are about to change their name to All Belong.

Name: Jillian Palmiotto

Title/Bio: Family Ministry Special Needs Coordinator, Mount Paran Church

Location: Atlanta, GA

Contact: [jillianp@mountparan.com](mailto:jillianp@mountparan.com)

Note: An excellent resource for reasons for both inclusion and self-contained environments, marketing and branding, and developing a plan for expanding for the next three years.

Name: Meaghan Wall

Title/Bio: Special needs pastor at Stonebriar Community Church

Location: Frisco, TX

Contact: [meaghan@stonebriar.org](mailto:meaghan@stonebriar.org)

Note: Excellent resource for volunteers: recruiting, training, replicating

### **Other Experts to Contact in the future:**

Name: Terry DeYoung

Title/Bio: Coordinator for Disability Concerns - RCA (Reformed Church in America)

Location: Grand Rapids, MI

Contact: [tdeyoung@rca.org](mailto:tdeyoung@rca.org) or 616-541-0855

Note: Church where everybody belongs, and everybody serves (AIM - Accessible, Inclusive, Missional)

Name: Dr. Steve Greevich

Title/Bio: President and Founder of Key Ministry, Psychiatrist and author

Location: Chagrin Falls, OH

Contact: (440) 543-3400

Note: Excellent resource for mental health inclusion

Name: Marie Kuck

Title/Bio: Co-Founder/Executive Director Nathaniel's Hope

Contact: [MarieK@NathanielsHope.org](mailto:MarieK@NathanielsHope.org)

Note: Respite Program for churches that provides structure, training and forms.

Name: Jolene Philo

Title/Bio: Author, speaker, blogger

Location: Different Dream Living

Contact: [jolenephilo@me.com](mailto:jolenephilo@me.com) or [www.differentdream.com](http://www.differentdream.com)

Note: Jolene Philo is the daughter of a disabled father and the mother of a child with special needs.

Name: Amie Shannon

Title/Bio: Special Needs Director - The Creek or Indian Creek Christian Church

Location: Indianapolis, IN

Contact: [AmieShannon@thecreek.org](mailto:AmieShannon@thecreek.org) or 317-862-6430

Note: Excellent resource for curriculum

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Name: Mark Stephenson

Title/Bio: Director Disabilities Concerns - CRC (Christ Reformed Church)

Contact: [mstephenson@crcna.org](mailto:mstephenson@crcna.org)

Note: Recommended by both Dr. Conner and Dr. Carter

Name: Katie Wetherbee

Title/Bio: Co-owner of Hope Educational Consulting, author and speaker

Location: Offices in Ohio and Michigan

Contact: [info@hopeforlearning.com](mailto:info@hopeforlearning.com)

Note: By providing services to churches, we can teach easy-to-implement strategies that will create welcoming church environments. Services include: workshops for pastors, children's ministry directors and volunteers, site visits to assess ministry spaces and programs, in-person or skype/phone consultations, curriculum selection and modification, Sunday morning presentations to congregation

Name: Ryan Wolfe

Title/Bio: President of Ability Ministry

Location: Louisville, TN

Contact: 303-806-9420 [www.abilityministry.com](http://www.abilityministry.com)

Note: Curriculum, Coaching/Consulting for ministries

#### **Would still like experts in the following areas:**

Sibling Ministry for families with special needs

Mentoring for families with special needs

Caring for parents and caregivers

**Discussion with Henry, Nathan, Grace, and Wes**  
**Individuals with Special Needs at the Chapel**

7:30pm-8:00pm

What do you like about coming to church?

- Breakfast and drinks :)
- Is church supposed to be fun? (Henry)
- Hanging out with friends in SM
- Fellowship with friends
- Leading/serving
- Worship expecting the holy spirit to move and change lives - ROCK their world!

What are your favorite things to do?

- Being a part of the bible story
- Safe place to hang out during the week
- Praise and worship!

What's hard for you to do?

- Inconsistency in large group
- Inconsistent teachers/buddies = different expectation, makes coming to church stressful
- Having to learn with no break
- Playing games - not physically accessible (feeling left out), awkward (feel like he has to make up excuses)
  - Having a role to still participate
  - Variety of activities such as mental activities - crossword puzzle races, mazes
- Worship can be hard when you are dealing with difficult things - need someone to talk to
- Not able to go on ski trips- physical activity
- Getting a chance to participate in large group
- Going to large group/new activity when you don't know anyone
- Not having friends - "But I've gotten used to it"

If you could do or be involved with anything at the Chapel, what would you want to do?

- Get baptized (didn't know what to do)
- Small groups - spiritually grounded
- More leadership opportunities - to help during the week and on Sundays
- Be able to articulate his faith more
- Building robots
- Serving in the tech in the youth service (too many obstacles to serving)
- Serving in the cafe
- Have options for activities instead of sitting out

What have you learned about God?

- He loves us more than our minds can comprehend
- Our heart has to get it first and our heads have to catch up - you can miss heaven by 18 inches
- Loves me unconditionally and will be there for me in whatever situations I face
- You have to have faith
- Creator of you and me

How do you learn best?

- Having someone help me understand how to write sermon notes
- Small groups - opportunities to ask questions, work together

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[99 Balloons 12 Steps.pdf](#)

[99 Balloons 12 Steps to Building a Recess.pdf](#)

[Respite Care.pdf](#)

[The 5 Stages of Changing Attitudes About Disability.pdf](#)

[WJCC Essential Resources.pdf](#)



## **Worship Buddies Equipment Lists and Costs**

### **Phase One: \$2520.23**

#### **Preschool and K-5 Sensory Rooms: \$1616.24**

Rocking Chair: White Woven Child Rocking Chair: Cracker Barrel 809117 \$119.99

Fold-up tunnel: Streamer Tunnel: Flaghouse L41021 \$29.25

Body Sox: Small: Southpaw 2207 \$48 Medium: Southpaw 2208 \$50 Large: Southpaw 2209 \$54

Removable Hanging Wall Mat x 2: Flaghouse L623460 \$482

Floor Mat x 2: 1' Panel Rainbow Mat L15348 \$430

Bean Bag: Tear Drop Bean Bag Chair x 2: Flaghouse 40216 \$292 (total for 2)

Weighted Lap Pad x 3: Flaghouse L37606 \$111 (total for 3)

#### **Student Ministries Cool Down Area: \$903.99**

Ladder back Walnut Rocking chair: Cracker Barrel \$224.99

Tear Drop Bean Bags x 2: Flaghouse 40216 \$292 (total for two)

4'x8' ft. Foldable Mat: Flaghouse 627480 \$248

Marcy Recumbent Exercise Bike with Resistance: Amazon \$139

### **Phase Two: \$9208.69**

#### **Sensory Room: \$3087**

One padded wall bordering the trampoline and swing areas- May be more aesthetically pleasing to have the wall built with padding. Another option is the Deluxe Removable Hanging Wall Mat System (Variety of colors and sizes) from Flaghouse

ie. 6ft. x 12ft. \$577/mat L623612

Padded flooring 1 to 1.5 inches thick throughout, additional padding/mat under swing

Swing- Position at least 8ft. from the wall

See additional information on swing matting, maintenance, and training requirements at <https://www.southpaw.com/safety-tips/>

## Appendix E.

For suspension from the ceiling:

If an I-beam or H-beam ceiling: Southpaw eye bolt 7000-1 \$13.95

If steel beams or joists: Southpaw Prefab Joist Installation Kit #7051 \$267-\$327

Southpaw Suspension and Height Adjustment Kit 410001 \$190.00 (Although it comes with the kit, recommend not using the rotational component as spinning motion can induce seizure activity)

Hammock Swing: Awesome Hammock: Southpaw 220020 \$237

---Variable Axis Swing and Footrest: Southpaw 4602 \$687.00 (Provides additional support for kids with higher needs- this doesn't need to be ordered right away. It can be added if it's needed.)

Jump Sport Fitness Trampoline: Flaghouse L18216 \$270.00

Heavy-Duty Crawl Tunnel: Flaghouse 4319 \$56.50

Crash mat- Abiliations Spacewalk: Abilitations 5-031551-393 \$431.99 (Nonskid material should be placed underneath when used as a crash mat. It can also be used as rest area/ calming space.)

Activity Table: Southpaw 854020 \$537- Fill with rice, beans, water. Avoid play pellets and orbeez as they shouldn't be ingested

River Path Complete Set: Flaghouse L39485 \$256

Therapy Balls: Flaghouse L36772 \$35.50 and L36773 \$41.50

### **Quiet Space: \$1611.80**

Tear Drop Bean Bag Chair x 2: Flaghouse 40216 \$292 (total for 2)

1" Panel Foldable Mat 4ft.x 8ft.: Flaghouse L702480 \$323 (Can be used as an additional padded floor surface or as a privacy screen when stood upright)

Mat Table: Enrichment Medical, Clinton Upholstered Mat Platform Model # 240-57 \$607.55- Rest area. Makes transfer on/off easier for people with mobility needs.

Light Filters: Flaghouse 42603 \$36.25- comes with 4 filters; Variety of colors

Classical/calming music

Music player

Sand in Motion: Flaghouse L42664 \$22

Laser Stars: Flaghouse L37969 \$206/ Projector also available from Southpaw for ~\$1000

Bubble tube: Amazon Sensory LED Bubble Tube \$125

Dimmed lighting feature

## Appendix E.

### **Restroom: \$1420**

Hygiene items (Gloves, disinfecting wipes, cleaning supplies)

Hi-lo changing table: Enrichment Medical, Oakworks 68767 PT100 Hi-Lo Flat Top Table \$1420: Allows for easier transfers onto the table in lowered position. It can then be raised to prevent caregiver from bending over when assisting. This model also has an open base if a Hoyer lift is ever needed.

Built-in Toilet rails

### **Instructional Areas: \$3089.89 +**

3 separate partitioned areas for K-2 students and 3-5 students; Possible preschool pull-out

Adjustable height tables x 3 (each seats ~6 with a space for instructor) \$914.97 (total for 3)

Horseshoe tables: Classroom Direct 6-1334868-460 (Adjustable from 22 inches to 30 inches for K-5 and 15 inches to 24 inches for PK to K)

Classroom Select Contemporary Chair with Ball Glides: Classroom Direct 12 to 16-inch chairs \$24 to \$29 each ~\$450 for 15 chairs

Keekaroo chairs x 3: Amazon \$495 (total for 3) (Allow students requiring minimal seating support to be brought up to the same height of those using wheelchairs)

12" Childshape chairs x 4: Community Play Things J212 \$360 (total for 4) (Provide armrests for additional supports for PK to Grade 1-2 depending on size)

Audio-visual equipment

Rolling Stool x3: The best stools we've had are from office chairs with the back removed and without armrests.

Musical Instruments:

Sound shape set: Flaghouse 39026 \$133

Rainbow maker: Flaghouse 34276 \$36.50

Wrist bells set: Flaghouse 5436 \$21.50

Handbells: Flaghouse 18251 \$55

Flex ring: Flaghouse 8266 \$7.75

Crystal bead ball: Flaghouse 34215 \$7.75

Bins of Play doh, Duplex blocks, Moon sand

Visual Timer: Time timer: Amazon \$28.76

## Appendix E.

2 Bean bag chairs: Flaghouse 40216 \$292 (total for 2)

2 Bungee chairs: Amazon Bunjo Bungee Chair \$89.66 (total for 2)

2 Ball chairs child size: Flaghouse L42387 \$198 (total for 2)

Sensi-pal.com has a variety of fidgets and sensory items at good prices

Personal weighted vest and blankets can be brought in by families for their child. Rule of thumb is the weight should be 10% of their body weight. It is effective for 30 minutes. It isn't harmful to leave it on longer, but the body will acclimate to the additional weight.

**Total: \$11,728.03+**

### **Other Recommendations:**

Individualized Worship Plan- Faith Church's questionnaire for parents on their website ([wearefaith.org/reflectors](http://wearefaith.org/reflectors)) that gives the staff valuable information (grade, disability type, strengths, mode of communication, motor abilities, challenges, preferred activities, goals, hopes and dreams, health concerns, toileting needs/permission, behavioral supports). They have a lot of other great information on policies/procedures/waivers on their website.

Consider a two-buddy rule: two sets of adult eyes on each child at all times for safety and liability.