



## **A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CHAIR OF THE BOARD**

### **International Day of Persons with Disabilities December 3, 2016**

*Blessed are those who see God in every person and strive to make others also discover him.--Pope Francis*

International Day of Persons with Disabilities encourages us to look beyond the differences and to celebrate the unique beauty and talents of each individual in our community.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is committed to creating positive, caring and inclusive working and learning environments for persons with disabilities. We believe that everyone in our system should feel accepted, valued and supported for the unique gifts and talents that they bring to their classrooms and places of work. Our dedicated professionals demonstrate their steadfast support for those with learning, neurological, psychiatric or physical disabilities, or with hearing or visual impairment, by ensuring that our schools and offices are inclusive, respectful and welcoming environments.

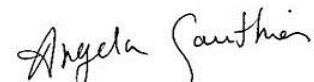
This day reminds us to renew our commitment to The Accessibility for Ontarians Act, which compels us all to work towards ensuring that everyone has access to the facilities, information, programs and services that they need.

Beyond what is legislated, our Catholic faith always calls us to respect the rights and dignity of people living with disabilities, and to show compassion, and offer support and friendship to everyone, regardless of their abilities. We thank each and every member of our Catholic school board community for the role they play in celebrating the different abilities of our staff and students. Learning, development and opportunities for growth are made possible when staff and students are given opportunities that meet their individual needs.

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, let us pray for those living with disabilities, and those who support and care for them. We ask God to give them the strength to overcome any hardships they may face, and to know that there is an entire Catholic community supporting them.

Let's celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities by working to break down barriers and ensure that all students, staff and families feel welcome and know that they belong.

Sincerely,

  
Angela Gauthier  
Director of Education

  
Angela Kennedy  
Chair of the Board