

# Shining light on Centerbased Learning

## Amazing teachers help kids keep from being invisible

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As the education system evolves, the knowledge of all different academic needs evolves with it. According to an ADA website, during the 2017-18 school year, 7 million students ranging from ages 3 to 21, received services from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This accounts for 14 percent of the student population that attended public schools.

These students are oftentimes considered invisible, a stereotype that the women of the centerbased department are determined to fix. By integrating the students into classrooms, the Centerbased Department has made these students visible in the eyes of the rest of the student body.

In order to improve the educational lives of high and special needs children, the Eaton School District established a Centerbased program that works specifically with such children. These kids range in many different ages from middle school to high school and all require intensive help either physically or mentally.

However, only 50 years ago, departments like this one were almost non-existent. In fact, Sue Mareno, a centerbased para at both EHS and EMS, graduated in 1949 and said that the Centerbased Department was "not at all prominent, but I'm not sure why. I guess it just wasn't a big issue." Special needs children were secluded to a designated building and were both completely out of sight and out of mind of the entire school body.

The newest versions of these amazing and innovative Centerbased departments now offer a completely customizable curriculum based on the needs of each individual student.

Women like Scotland Algino, Moreno, Natalie Hill, Tracey Ramirez, and Tiffany Schreiner make sure that they deliver a curriculum that provides each and every student an opportunity to learn at their own pace. It also promotes inclusion by integrating the students into traditional classes making these lives visible to the other students.

Many of the students within the district require technically advanced software such as eye recognition screens that allow non-mobile children to answer questions with only their eyes. It also provides a simplified version of the curriculum the rest of the student body receives. This inclusion-based curriculum has spread all throughout the country and only continues to grow.



**Scotland Algino**

who make up the Centerbased team all say they are driven by the many influential people each has encountered throughout their lives.

While Algino is very accomplished in her educational fields, she attributes a majority of the way she teaches to Lisa Lamb, her mentor teacher that she student taught for right out of college.

Algino said, "She was an amazing mentor, teacher, friend, and I still ask her questions when I have them. She's an amazing resource because she has done this for over twenty years." Lisa Lamb carried philosophies that Algino admired and then transferred into her own teaching style. This tall, red-headed woman is an assertive leader who many

go to for advice both in and out of her department, and she runs the department with a smile that is always ready for her students.

Moreno attributed her intrigue of becoming a teacher to the many fantastic role models



**Sue Moreno**

she found in her teachers growing up. She best expressed this, saying, "I have had several fantastic teachers, but my fifth grade teacher really stood out. She really cared about her students." Moreno said that her teacher always took the necessary steps to show that she cared, whether that be remembering their names or simply being a person that they could trust.

Moreno really showcases this ideal in the way she teaches the kids. On an average day you will find this soft spoken and kind hearted woman doing her best to show the students that she cares.

Hill did not attribute her appeal towards the Centerbased



**Natalie Hill**

Department to one person, but the many relationships that she has built throughout her two years of employment. Hill said, "I have helped the best I could through the relationships I have built with the students and other teachers." Hill is the type of person who knows who she is and how she deserves to



**Sue Moreno assists Louie as he works with new eye-recognition technology**

be treated. Her relationships with her students and her co-workers are built off a complete mutual respect. She can be seen most days assisting the students by making them more productive and focusing them in.



**Tracey Ramirez**

Ramirez said, "There is not really one specific person who influences me, I think we all work together." Ramirez is a very free spirited and easy-going person who finds great joy in both working with the kids and being around her co-workers. She is the person who will always find the good in a situation even if no one else can. Throughout a normal workday, Ramirez can be found simply trying to make the students, and the people around her in general, smile.

Schreiner considers many people within her life influences upon how she teaches, but two



**Tiffany Schreiner**

in particular stood out in her mind. Tiffany said, "Scotland teaches me every day, and Mason taught me to be patient. Overall the kids teach me, because if you are willing to listen, they will tell you what they need." Schreiner carries the caring heart she has learned from Algino and Mason with her as she handles every obstacle thrown in both her own and her students' lives. She has a heart of gold and truly cares about the well-being of every person she knows. As she proceeds through her day, she can be seen making every person she can happy.