

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

BARTLETT LEARNING CENTER INC.

1968 – 2004

- June 1968 Sister Rita Marie Malachinski, SSJ-TOSF, responded to her religious order's innovative idea to open a special education program in the former junior college building of Immaculata Convent. Information was disseminated to surrounding churches, and physical plant needs were donated. She fulfilled the roles of Administrator, Program Director, and Teacher. Her vision was to create a place where children with special needs could develop to their fullest potential.
- September 1968 Five students were initially enrolled. During the first school year, enrollment rose to nine students.
- 1968 The Knights of Columbus began their active support, which continues to the present day.
- 1969 – 70 Student enrollment doubled and faculty increased. Bartlett Learning Center administration worked together with area special education directors to provide education for Educable Mentally Handicapped and Learning Disabled children. School District U-46 and surrounding school districts began sending students to us. Increased interest and need prompted the introduction of a residential program.
- 1970 – 71 With escalating enrollment, more sisters joined the Bartlett Learning Center staff and members of the male Franciscan Community located in West Chicago were incorporated into the faculty. At this time, the roles of administrator and program director were split between two sisters.
- 1971 – 72 Steps to obtain accreditation with Illinois DCFS and the Illinois Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities were taken. Private placements were added to district placements. Members from other religious communities came on board. Staff completed the requirements for special education degrees to meet student needs. Day students ranged in ages 3 to 21 years; residential ages 6 to 21 years of age. Total day school enrollment was 85, with 22 full time staff. The total enrollment of the residential program was 44.

Student coursework was individualized and comprehensive including woodshop, music, art, sewing, speech therapy, perceptual development and vocational skills classes. The annual school Christmas Program and Spring Play productions began. Students participated in area Special Olympics. An active parent group was established with parent leadership. A Board of Trustees was organized and held their first meeting December 4, 1972.

- 1973 – 79 Enrollment swelled, including those students who were also enrolled in their home schools for mainstreamed classes daily. More school districts began to recognize Bartlett Learning Center as partner in providing a quality education to students with special education needs.
- 1974 – 75 Federal legislation, Public Law 94-142, was passed into law enacting numerous mandates for special education. Those mandates included Individual Education Plans for each student enrolled at Bartlett Learning Center, tougher standards for teacher certification and a system of accountability. This was done to ensure that the needs of students in special education were being met.
- 1980 – 81 Began In-House Employment Program for high school and vocational students.
- 1981 – 82 The community Job Program was created with job coach support for vocational students. Bartlett Learning Center students were employed by various businesses in Bartlett, Streamwood, Hanover Park, Bloomingdale, and Schaumburg.
- 1980 - 89 Inclusion of identified special education students in regular education programs resulted in a decline in enrollment at Bartlett Learning Center. Placement began to include students with moderate to severe disabilities. Staff had to be prepared for the more behaviorally involved student as well as a more functional academic curriculum.
- 1985 – 89 As a result of IDEA Federal Legislation, diversified special education programs in school districts and at Bartlett Learning Center were established to meet federal mandates.
- 1986 - 87 The Seratoma Club of Addison donated a van to be used for field trips and community outings.
- 1989 – 90 Support staff for classroom teachers was increased via introduction of 1:1 aides in addition to a classroom aide for each homeroom. Creation of a specially trained behavior team to support teaching staff in implementation of non-violent behavior management techniques.

- 1990 – 91 Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) approved Bartlett Learning Center Vocational Program and awarded a Structured Training Experience Program (STEP) contract to assist with job coaching.
- 1991 – 92 Began Vocational Workshop Program on campus, providing labor to complete a variety of assembly tasks for community and outside employers. Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll Drive involving students and staff, and became an annual activity.
- 1992 – 93 The PTO was reborn, promoting greater involvement by parents in school activities such as fundraising, special public relations events, staff support, and classroom equipment.
- 1990 – 93 New student eligibility categories in special education and more related services entered the field. Impact of increasing federal guidelines and more complex employment practices were experienced as challenges and met. Bartlett Learning Center received North Central Accreditation as the student body took on a multicultural face. The residential component was expanded to a seven-day year-round program. Cupertino Home, in Warrenville, Illinois, was established in 1991 as a Community Integrated Living Arrangement for adult developmentally disabled men. The Sons of Italy and Dee's Catering became primary supporters of the annual Spring Play. The staff at Bartlett Learning Center also took on a new face from predominately religious to predominately lay. Staff received comprehensive training in behavior management.
- 1993 – 94 Bartlett Learning Center celebrates it's 25th Anniversary. Non-violent Crisis Intervention training was introduced with certification of all staff by Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc. Creation of Development Director position to facilitate fundraising campaigns, maintenance of donor base, and appropriate grant applications.
- 1994 – 95 Curriculum Assessment Tool developed to chart student growth and achievement throughout educational career at Bartlett Learning Center.
- 1995 – 96 Creation of a 4-H Club in cooperation with the Extension Service of The University of Illinois. Bartlett Learning Center has one of the only two clubs in the State of Illinois serving special needs population. Residential students attended 4-H summer Camp Shaw-wa-na-see. Received Governor's Hometown Award 2nd place for being innovative in developing a Special Education 4-H Club. This accomplishment was featured in the Tempo section of the Chicago Sunday Tribune.
- 1996 – 97 Bartlett Learning Center residential program discontinued due to a shift in clientele needs away from original focus and mission. Junior High/High School students began participation in the community job program.

- 1997 – 98 Community Business Breakfast introduced to Community Job Program. Student workers honored their employers with plaques of recognition.
- 1996 – 99 New curriculum focus and new behavior methodology introduced to meet needs of a changing student body.
- 2000 – 01 Year-long staff development focusing on writing Judicious IEP's, Special Education Laws, and Functional Behavior Intervention Plans. Peer Tutoring and Peer Mentor revitalized.
- 2001 –02 Introduction of school-wide positive behavior intervention programs designed to reinforce student positive behaviors and improve student life. Bartlett Bucks, the Behave 'N Save Store, Student of the Week, all school assemblies and special events were initiated. Bartlett Raiders community football league partnered with us to create Bartlett Family Fun Day, kicking off our annual Homecoming Week. The Corpus Christi Knights of Columbus Council were instrumental in purchasing a new van for Cupertino Home.
- 2002 – 3 Staff development focused on the “FISH” Principles of creating a nurturing and positive work environment. Character Education Program initiated to foster desirable character traits in student body and provide goal-orientated behavior themes. Departments designed bulletin boards depicting motivational and character-building themes. Monthly Character Education assemblies began. Bartlett Learning Center earns approval from the Illinois State Board of Education to be an in-service provider for the new teacher re-certification mandates. Physical development of Clare Oaks Campus by SSJ-TOSF's initiating renovation and creation of new classrooms on the east side of the building. First Annual 4-H fair held during summer school.
- 2003 –04 Adoption of new name, Clare Woods Academy, and new school colors, green and yellow, and new school mascot. The 35th Anniversary celebration of Bartlett Learning Center Inc. brings together former and current students, parents and faculty to share and reflect upon the many events of faces of Bartlett Learning Center.

The celebration of our 35th Anniversary gave us the opportunity to review our history through a lens of appreciation. We saw again the faculty and staff, students and parents, board members and benefactors... EVERYONE who contributed to the founding and development of this very special school and who keep its spirit vibrant to this day.

**We are grateful beyond words.
THANK YOU**

Administrators 1968 – 2003

**Sister Rita Marie Malachinski, SSJ – TOSF
Sister Fidelia Gorcowski, SSJ – TOSF
Father Tom Luczak, OFM
Sister Katherine Marie Tomich, SSND
Russ Conrad
Samuela Bovelli**

Program Directors 1968 – 2003

**Sister Rita Marie Malachinski, SSJ – TOSF
Sister Barbara Niemeyer, OSF
Kathleen Liace
Sister Constance Szymandera, SSJ – TOSF
Sister Katherine Marie Tomich, SSND
Lynette Crockett
Linda Verzillo
Rella Peeler
Ann M. Craig**

Cupertino Home Directors

Joanne Donata
Cynthia Fowler
Julia Grigsby
Robert Weston/Dinah Cousar
James Memije