Holy Childhood will expand its innovative community-based transition education this fall, doubling the opportunities for students getting ready to graduate.

In September, Holy Childhood’s second Community Classroom will be up and running at the Genesee Valley Regional Market on Jefferson Road in Henrietta, joining the already established Community Classroom that opened its doors there more than three years ago.

From the beginning, Holy Childhood wanted to build on its capacity to provide students important community-based experiences so they’d be prepared for what comes after graduation and into adulthood. We hear a lot about the national movement which subscribes to the idea that all people—regardless of any disabilities—are capable of using their talents to contribute to their communities through employment and participation.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Just a few weeks ago, we said farewell (but not goodbye!) to Holy Childhood’s Class of 2016. As always, it’s a sight to behold—that moment of recognizing and acknowledging tremendous personal accomplishment; of anticipating and celebrating what is to come next for these wonderful graduates of our School Program. And, that’s why I say—not goodbye. Because, not only will Holy Childhood always remain part of the fabric of our graduates’ lives, we’ll also be there in the form of important individual supports, and making connections for what our graduates need most to realize their dreams and achieve what they desire in their community.

For many, it will be going to work. Even before completing their time in Holy Childhood’s School Program this year, nearly half of this year’s class had a job waiting for them in our community—competitive employment. Others are close to getting hired. That’s a milestone worth mentioning, because it is at the heart of the development of our ability as an organization to assist transitions at multiple touch-points in the lives of the people we serve. From life skills to work readiness; from training at Holy Childhood to employment and other meaningful activities in the community—including retirement—it’s all part of how we strive to serve.

So as we transition from one school year to the next, stay tuned, because we’ll have some important news in the coming months about transition in the form of expansion at Holy Childhood! These are exciting times.

Cordially,

Donna M. Dedee
President & CEO

The 3rd Annual School’s Out for Summer 5K and Fun Walk

What a great evening for a Holy Childhood fundraiser!

On Friday, June 3rd, nearly 200 families, friends, staff and volunteers joined us here on the grounds of Holy Childhood for our 3rd Annual 5K and Fun Walk to benefit the programs and services we provide to students and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Racers and walkers were wholeheartedly embraced by the neighborhood families surrounding our agency as they cheered on our runners and walkers from their front lawns, holding signs. One exceptionally nice neighbor provided a sprinkler for everyone going by!

After the race, awards were presented to the top finishers during the post-race party and participants enjoyed live music, food and a whole lot of fun! Nearly $6,500 was raised by our generous supporters.

Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers, our presenting sponsor, Project Lean Nation and our generous in-kind donors: Air Affair, Amiels, Dunkin Donuts, Jims Sound & DJ, Morgood Tools, Inc., Percon Electric Company, Read’s Homemade Ice Cream & Custard, Rochester Rotary Sunshine Campus, Sahlen’s, Salvatore’s Pizza, Tiny Fish Printing and Wegmans. We are grateful for your support—we couldn’t do this without you!

Mark your calendar; we’ll see you back here again next year on Friday, June 2nd, 2017!
Holy Childhood Opens Second Community Classroom
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The Holy Childhood team, however, has known that from the beginning. Holy Childhood’s Community Classroom staff has always believed that this program, for 18 to 21 year olds, provides the much-needed training in living, learning and earning, in the settings in which they are most likely to occur, and gives students the best chance at a seamless transition from the School Program to adulthood. The first Community Classroom has provided the data to prove that out. This year all twenty-four students located at the Community Classrooms are participating in the Work-Based Learning Program. All of the students currently intern or volunteer throughout the week at seventeen different establishments, such as Lifetime Care and The Friendly Home. Both of those organizations have specifically requested students from Holy Childhood’s Community Classroom to return for another year of service based on their dedication and level of work while on the job. Also worth noting, related to this year’s graduating class; 4 of them are already established at jobs within the community, 1 is attending Life Prep classes at Nazareth College and another student is awaiting her ARC College Experience acceptance letter from Finger Lakes Community College.

The curriculum of the Community Transition Classroom is based on the Life Centered Career Education (LCCE) modified program. Materials are pulled from a wide variety of resources and are adapted to meet the different needs, learning styles and abilities of each student. Staff in the Community Classroom includes two teachers (Mrs. Diane Gyle and Mrs. Lisa Deyo) along with 2 classroom aides and volunteers from local colleges.

“Most students are very excited about their transition to the Community Classroom at the Genesee Valley Regional Market this September,” said Mrs. Deyo as she reflected on her students’ upcoming move to the new classroom. “They’re ready and eager to learn the skills and training to help them become the independent, confident, job-seeking adults we are preparing them to be.”

The Community Classroom includes five separate stations at which students spend about an hour each day. Additionally, the program links students with adult vocational services, including Holy Childhood’s Employment Services which offers a variety of opportunities for competitive employment and work exploration. It is also important that students receive training in how to navigate transportation to and from the classroom and work. Assessments in Community Safety and Awareness, Living Skills and Vocational Skills help to determine their readiness for community experiences.

By the time they turn 21 and complete the program, each student leaves with a personal electronic portfolio, transition notebook, and has the knowledge to be successful in the community and how to advocate for his or herself. “For the students, paid employment in the community is the ultimate goal,” comments Transition Teacher, Diane Gyle. “All of the academics we teach are employment based; the internships give them valuable experience, putting them on the right path to employment. When their time in the Community Classroom is over, they are very well prepared for the world of work.”

Subject areas the students will cover include: Personal Social Skills (interpersonal skills and self-awareness), Community Skills, RTS Transportation Tour and Training, Daily Living Skills, Occupation Guidance and Preparation, Vocabulary, Project-Based Learning (planning, math, time management, budgeting and phone skills).

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Holy Childhood Night at Frontier Field

It was a beautiful June evening at the ball park on June 15th as forty of Holy Childhood’s Out and About participants took part in a mini-clinic on the field with Rochester Red Wings players before game time. The clinic was followed by a picnic supper at the stadium pavilion. During the National Anthem, our Out & About group had the honor of holding the American flag on the field, and Sean threw out the first pitch! Afterward, nearly 180 of our friends and families enjoyed a great game of baseball - and all that goes with it... $1 hot dogs, popcorn, and yes, some fried dough! Lucky families in our section caught 2 foul balls, (and no one got hurt) and we all witnessed the amazing grand slam in the 3rd inning—that was exciting! Thank you to the generous staff at Frontier Field and the Red Wings players for their time and generosity, we look forward to this event each year.

Holy Childhood Opens Second Community Classroom
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Here’s what some of the current Community Classroom students are saying:

• “I like the stations to learn different stuff, I hated math before, but now I like it!”
• “This was a good classroom for me to come to, so I could try to go out and work.”
• “I like to work because I like being busy”
• “My job is amazing!”

Students will also participate in an Employment Services class, where they will work with our existing Work-Based Learning School Program and have an opportunity to be paid for their work. Students will train with Employment Partners, a division of Holy Childhood, which provides supported employment services to job seekers looking for employment within the community, earning at least minimum wage.

“The opening of the second classroom will offer more of our students a community based experience,” said David Halpern, Director of the School Program. “This experience, along with the integrated curriculum, will assist in preparing the students for their lives after the school bus no longer comes to the door.”
Holy Childhood Graduation 2016

Here at Holy Childhood, graduation night is a proud and inspirational occasion, full of many happy tears. It is attended by family members, friends and Holy Childhood staff, and every year, it’s standing room only. This past June, thirteen young adults received their diplomas and are ready to embark on their next adventure in life. Congratulations to all of this year’s graduates and our very best wishes to you!

Student Speaker, Ashlee addressed the audience with this speech she wrote:

“Hi, my name is Ashlee. I am graduating this year from the Holy Childhood Community Classroom. When I first started in the Community Classroom I was nervous and didn’t want to come here but I got used to it and now I love coming here. I like hanging out with my friends and going out in the community.

Five students in the community classroom have paid jobs and that is a great thing for us to be out working in the community. We also moved to a new classroom at 900 Jefferson Road.

A couple of new things that we have done over the past year: On May 20th, we had our Under the Sea Prom. Our class worked so hard to order the decorations and the food. We worked hard making the decorations too. The Community Classroom has helped me and the other graduates be successful in the community.

We would like to thank Mrs. Gyle, Josh, Jessica, and Li. Also Mr. Halpern and Kathy Miller and all of the Holy Childhood staff for helping us out over the years.

I wish all the graduates good luck in their future. I will see you all at next year’s prom.”

Bravo, graduates – we wish you all the best!

25th Annual Golf Tournament

What an awesome day we had on June 20th at Midvale Country Club for the 25th Annual Golf Tournament to benefit Holy Childhood! We are extremely grateful to our presenting sponsor, Prudential and all of our Holy Childhood friends, sponsors and golfers who participated. Your continued support and generosity warms our hearts! We extend our appreciation to our golf co-chairs Dave Mattucci and Mike Seaman along with the entire golf committee for the time and dedication they put into this tournament each year. To our sponsors, the golfers, dedicated volunteers and WBEE’s Steve Hausmann for being a fantastic emcee each year, you have our gratitude. And finally we thank the entire staff at Midvale Country Club for their hospitality. This year’s tournament raised nearly $30,000 to support the programs and services we provide to students and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities! We hope to see you again next year!

In May, Holy Childhood Employment Specialist, Leigh Anne Elliott accompanied a group of our Pathway to Employment participants around town for a Makeover Day. The ladies received instructions on how to make a positive first impression, learned about appropriate attire for work by trying on various outfits and got makeup and hair styling tips from the experts. All very useful information as they explore competitive employment opportunities in our community! We thank Legacy at Willow Pond, Blue/A Goodwill Boutique, Sephora at The Marketplace Mall and Pi Craft for their generosity, time and talents.

Learning to Become Work-Ready
Did you know that Special Touch Bakery is participating at the Greece Ridge Mall Farmer’s Market every Thursday? Stop by, say hello and take home your favorite Special Touch Bakery pie – Pineapple Strawberry or Peach Raspberry make a great summertime treat! Pick one up for yourself, your next picnic or as a delicious gift for the host or hostess! You can also pre-order your favorite variety and pick it up the following week. Visit us each Thursday, until September 29th, from 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. on the Long Pond Road side of the mall, in front of Sears.