

Special needs center gets grant for sensory equipment

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Students enjoy spending time in the Snoezelen room at St. Vincent's Special Needs Services. We are grateful to the Hoffman Foundation for helping us bring this unique therapy to students with autism and other developmental disabilities.

St. Vincent's Special Needs Services has received a \$10,000 grant from the Maximilian E. & Marion O. Hoffman Foundation, Inc., allowing the organization to purchase and install sensory equipment in several classrooms at its special education school program.

The school, located at the Feroletto Children's Development Center, provides alternative education for children with complex medical and developmental disabilities.

The multi-sensory equipment is based on the Snoezelen concept developed in the Netherlands over 30 years ago. A Snoezelen multi-sensory environment employs colors, lights, textures, and music to illicit a variety of responses from individuals with Autism and other special needs.

The equipment will be used to address sensory needs, develop fine and gross motor skills, de-escalate inappropriate behaviors, and increase desired learning behaviors.

"Our goal is to outfit each classroom with multi-sensory equipment based on the individual needs of the students in that room," Raymond Baldwin, President/CEO said. "The new Snoezelen equipment helps us to fulfill our mission by providing a stimulating environment where each student is encouraged to achieve the greatest independence possible. This grant together with another generous grant from the Constance O Putnam Foundation received earlier this year, puts us closer to our goal of having multi-sensory equipment in each classroom.

St. Vincent's Special Needs Services has been a trusted provider of lifelong education and therapeutic services for 60 years. A special education school is an alternative placement option for children, ages 3-21, with developmental disabilities, special health care needs and students with autism spectrum disorders. Physical, Occupational, Speech/Language and Aquatic Therapy are all offered as part of each student's individualized education plan. Daytime recreational programs, supported employment and work services programs for adults with disabilities are offered from two locations in Stratford and Norwalk. Parent education, transition support services and residential placements are also available.

