



Hillside Understanding our Different Abilities (UDA)

1st Grade

Blindness and Visual Impairment

It is the mission of UDA to promote understanding, empathy, acceptance, and respect for all people regardless of differing abilities. Through the use of multisensory activities, speakers, and discussion, elementary students at each grade level, are introduced to a broad range of abilities, both visible and invisible, to reinforce that we are all different. Understanding and accepting those differences creates a stronger community.

Today in your child's class a group of parent volunteers presented a program which introduced concepts related to blindness and visual impairments. To find out more about your child's experience today, you may want to ask him or her these questions:

How might we be the same as someone who is blind? How might we be different?

What is Braille?

What would it be like to shop for food or go to a restaurant if you were blind?

How do people who are blind use their other senses?

How would you offer help to a person who is blind?

We encouraged the children to consider the following factors:

- We are all people first; we are all similar in many ways and different in many ways. We are all multi-dimensional individuals.
- Instead of thinking about people having DIS-abilities, we like to think of them of as being differently-abled. It is important to try hard not to define or judge people by a particular disability.
- People who are blind/visually impaired make individual choices regarding mobility. Some blind people use a sighted guide, a cane, or a dog guide. Most people who are blind/visually impaired are able to do many of the things that a sighted person can do by relying on other senses and/or with the use of adaptive aids.
- Visual impairments affect the lives of many people to varying degrees.
- It is very natural to feel curious about the experiences of someone who has a different experience than we do. It is important to ask our questions respectfully.

Recommended video:

Arthur episode – [Prunella Sees the Light](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bi0Lfmvh_so

For more information about the UDA program and the activities in your child's classroom, contact Vanessa Jones (vanessajones694@hotmail.co.uk) or Erin Travia (erinkellytravia@gmail.com).