



**Hillside Understanding our Different Abilities (UDA)
3rd grade**

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.

In 1st grade, we addressed blindness and visual impairments and in 2nd grade, deafness and hearing impairments.

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

- Tell me about the people in the videos you watched today (we've included the links for you on the other side of this page).
- How accessible/inaccessible is Hillside for someone with a physical disability?
- What would it be like to move around the cafeteria in a wheelchair?

At a later date, students from Olin College of Engineering in Needham will work with 3rd graders to develop prototypes to assist people with spinal cord injuries and other physical challenges. After they complete that activity, ask your child what they invented and how it would help people with physical challenges with everyday tasks.

We encouraged the children to consider the following factors:

Physical ability and disability affect the lives of many people to varying degrees.

It is important to look at people's abilities and not to define or judge them by their disabilities or differences.

The important thing to remember about a person with a disability/difference is that they are a person first, with feelings, interests, and challenges.

People with disabilities/differences may need assistance from other people or from special tools or equipment. It's important to have conversations with people and not just assume that they need help because they have a physical challenge or disability.

The videos shown during today's workshop were:

Nicolai Calabria – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1oGSarjM0M>

Lacey – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jbkvvjTksA> (Stop at 4.40)

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