



**Hillside Understanding our Different Abilities (UDA)
5th 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. In 3rd grade, we discussed physical challenges and in 4th grade, learning differences.

Today in your child's class a group of parent volunteers presented a program which introduced concepts related to developmental differences.

To find out more about your child's experience today, you may want to ask him or her these questions:

- Tell me about Megan, Bobby, and Annie in the video you watched today (we've included the link for you on the other side of this page). What do you have in common with them?
- Tell me about Ian in the book you read. How is his experience on the walk different from his sisters'?
- What are some examples social skills? Does everyone develop these skills naturally? Tell me about Jason's experience in the book you read when he was in the library with his class.

Other themes from the program:

Developmental differences affect the lives of 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.

Chances are, people with developmental differences are more like you than you think. For some people, it is very hard to figure out the more subtle social rules and you might think that person is awkward or different. Taking one extra minute out of your day to show compassion for someone who is different from you can make a huge difference and help make them feel included!

Resources:

National Down Syndrome Society Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejPeIU7VWac>

Recommended books:

Ian's Walk, by Laurie Lears

Anything But Typical, by Nora Raleigh Baskin

Tru Confessions, by Janet Tashjian

The Junkyard Wonders, by Patricia Polacco

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).