

Mission Statement

*Called and sustained by God and commissioned by the Bishop, the Department for Persons with Disabilities, within the Secretariat for Catholic Education of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, is committed to making it possible for Persons with disabilities to fully participate in the life of the Church. Our vision of a church where **all** People can worship together inspires us to offer educational and catechetical services and resources that encourage:*

- † **Awareness** -
of the gifts and religious needs of Persons with disabilities.
- † **Accessibility** -
and accommodations for Persons with disabilities.
- † **Advocacy** -
for and with Persons with disabilities.
- † **Acceptance** -
of Persons with disabilities.

CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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Ministry for Persons with:

Cognitive Disabilities

Hearing Loss/Deafness

Physical Disabilities

Vision Loss/Blindness

www.diopitt.org



PARISH ADVOCACY



**Department for Persons
with Disabilities**

**Secretariat for
Catholic Education**

Diocese of Pittsburgh

Parish Advocacy Program

The Parish Advocacy Program is sponsored by the *Department for Persons with Disabilities*, Secretariat for Catholic Education of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

The Department for Persons with Disabilities invites volunteers from each parish to work as advocates on behalf of their fellow parishioners who have disabilities. The parish advocate is a caring compassionate friend who is sincerely interested in the well-being of People with disabilities and in their inclusion in the life of the parish.

The **goal** of the program is to make it possible for Persons with disabilities to *fully participate in the life of the Church*.



Role of the Parish Advocate

The **role** of the parish advocate is to follow the example of Christ the Good Shepherd, to seek out parishioners who have disabilities; and together determine their spiritual, religious and ministry needs. The parish advocate will be recommended to the program by the pastor of their parish.

The Parish Advocate will work with the pastor of the parish to welcome and include Persons with disabilities in a parish by:

1. Working to sensitize the parish to the needs and gifts of Persons with disabilities.
2. Welcoming Persons with disabilities and their families into parish life and parish programs.
3. Making referrals to appropriate agencies and diocesan offices when needed.
4. Proceeding to make all aspects of a parish accessible.

Support for the Advocate

The Department for Persons with Disabilities will provide training, information and support services on a continuing basis for the fulfillment of the parish advocates' responsibilities. The training will focus on the vision of parish ministry for and with people with disabilities, strategies for identification and inclusion, and ways to make parishes accessible.

For more information on becoming a Parish Advocate, please contact

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