

Kellen Ehrenhardt, of Eureka, Illinois, has enjoyed many inclusive opportunities throughout his educational journey in CUSD #140. Prior to transitioning from middle school to Eureka High School, Project CHOICES provided invaluable technical support and training to the high school administration and special education staff. The delivery of special education services was improved and the inclusive culture in the school has grown.

Kellen, who has Down syndrome, participated successfully in inclusive general education settings with support as needed. His life has been enriched by his participation for four years in the marching band, concert band, cross country, track, and basketball. Kellen moved from freshman basketball manager to varsity manager, where his team advanced to sectionals his senior year. Three of his four years in marching band yielded first place trophies at the Class 1A State competition. As team captain in cross country and track, Kellen exemplified the value of dedication and teamwork, improving his times and occasionally outrunning other competitors. Kellen was the keynote speaker for the 2008 Corn Belt Conference Leadership Workshop for student athletes.

As a valued participant of C.A.P.T.A.I.N.S., Kellen assisted with school-wide benevolent initiatives. He performed in school musical productions and won first place awards in two talent shows. He danced the night away at each Homecoming dance and Prom. Kellen's senior classmates selected him as having the "Best Personality" and

Kellen was a full participant in many activities at Eureka High School and was supported by the staff and peers in ways that built his confidence and gave him a true sense of belonging. He flourished when the focus went from disability to possibility!



PROJECT CHOICES

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"As the parent of a student receiving special education services, I want the people who are working to support my child to have the information and support they need to feel confident in helping him achieve his goals. Project CHOICES is available to provide the technical support schools need to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in general education. We all want the same thing – positive outcomes for our children."

Deb Fornoff



Children Have Opportunities in Inclusive Community Environments and Schools

*An LPE Initiative of the Illinois State Board of Education
and Partner in the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center*



Are you satisfied with the opportunities your child has in school?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Does your child attend the school that he or she would attend if he or she did not have a disability?
- Does your child receive supports in the general education classroom to learn the general education curriculum?
- Is your child learning social skills that promote friendships?
- Does your child receive support to participate in extra curricular and school activities outside the classroom?
- Do you as a parent feel that you are a valued member of your child's educational team?

If you answered no to one or more of these questions, consider talking to your school district administration about contacting Project CHOICES for assistance in expanding opportunities for children and youth with disabilities in general education classrooms and curriculum.



Kurtis (R) has been fully included since kindergarten. He participates in grade-level curriculum with supports and modifications. Kurtis and Patrick (L) became good friends in first grade and remain so despite attending separate third grade classrooms and Kurtis's need to communicate non-verbally.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We work collaboratively with school districts (children & youth ages 3 - 21) to ensure:

- All children have access to general education curriculum.
- All children and youth are assigned to general education classrooms and are treated by all staff as full participating members of the school community.
- Schools address social emotional development as a key part of academic outcomes.
- Schools develop and use data for decision making and problem solving.
- Schools make a concerted effort to involve family members.
- School districts are committed to system change and developing an effective educational system for all students.

TESTIMONIAL

"I have been wonderfully impressed with the mission and philosophy of Project CHOICES. As I travel throughout the country, I am often distressed to see the contentious and combative attitudes that schools hold about parents...and vice versa. Project CHOICES encourages cooperation and collaboration among all of the adults in a child's life and provides parents and professionals with an opportunity to share ideas, information and inspiration.

And who is the ultimate benefactor of this collaboration? THE CHILD."

Richard D. Lavoie, M.A., Med.
Consultant, Author
Visiting Lecturer, Harvard
University

