

December 2018 Reflection

“Not about us without us!” This motto is a rallying cry that many in the Disability Community use to express their desire for *voice* as well as *intention*. It represents the yearning to choose one’s own destiny, rather than having it imposed by others. This is a great expression that serves as a reminder to all of us – that we are called to fully include the “voiceless” members of society in choices – especially those, who by virtue of their situation, often are not consulted regarding their opinions and ideas, even in matters that directly involve them.


One group that is sometimes voiceless is children. We are accustomed to expecting parents to speak on behalf of their children; certainly, this is right and proper, but this is correctly identified as the voice of parents, not children. As children age, it becomes the duty of every parent and teacher to help each child find his or her voice, and to gain skills to express that voice clearly and respectfully. One gift for this process is to support children in achieving skills in self-expression – spoken and written word, and also other forms of communication. Another gift is to nurture children in developing the ability to think clearly and deeply about important topics. These abilities usually take many years to acquire, however, and so most children have at least a period of time in their lives when they are, in fact, *voiceless*.

Mattie Stepanek was that rare gifted child who found his voice early, and who had the skills and encouragement to share his clarion voice with others. I have learned more about this young man as a Director for Mattie’s Guild. As a Catholic and a person of faith, I believe that Mattie’s voice was inspired by his close relationship with God. I love so much about what Mattie had to say, but foundationally, I love that he said it *himself*, as a child. My teacher heart tells me that other children will respond beautifully to Mattie’s work as they begin their journey to find their own voice.

This month, I encourage all readers to share Mattie’s voice with children, and to encourage them to think about and then speak about important and timeless topics such as this month’s theme, peace. Please visit the Guild’s website for our December theme message and poem on peace, and a “*Reflect, Respond, and Reach Out*” activity suggestion page.

Doreen Engel
Director, Mattie’s Guild

Blessing Lesson



Blessings ground us
When our dreams
Dawn with our destiny,
Blessings guide us
When our destiny
Dances with our desires.
Blessings grace us
When our desires
Duplicate our devotion.
Let us pray, then,
That our blessings grow
Into echoes that energize
Our earthly lives,
Daring us to be grounded
In our dreams,
In our destiny,
In our desires,
Granting us and
Guiding us as we
Grow in our devotion
Of what really matters
For living,
For love, and
For Life.

Mattie J.T. Stepanek
August 17, 2003
© In Reflections of a Peacemaker
AMP 2006

The Mattie J.T. Stepanek Guild
www.Mattie4Sainthood.org