



Villa Maria School

Making Success A Reality



Villa Maria School

161 Sky Meadow Drive
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www.villamariaedu.org

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Directions

From Merritt Parkway: Take Exit 35. Turn left and travel 2 miles north on High Ridge Road (bear right at fork). Turn left onto Sky Meadow Drive. Villa Maria is located at the top of the hill on the right. Use the driveway on the west (far) side of the property.

From Pound Ridge: Take Route 137 (High Ridge Road) south to Stamford. Turn right onto Sky Meadow Drive, about 1.3 miles south of the Long Ridge Fire Department.



www.villamariaedu.org

Identity & Purpose

The Villa Maria School is a private, co-educational day school serving students with learning disabilities in grades kindergarten through nine. Villa Maria makes success a reality for emotionally sound bright students who are motivated to learn but have not met the demands of the assigned curriculum in their regular classrooms. The program emphasizes the mastery of reading, writing and mathematics skills necessary for academic achievement and a return to a mainstream setting.



Goals:

- To master academic skills
- To foster self-confidence, self-esteem, and a lifelong desire for learning
- To develop strategies to improve opportunities for success
- To encourage students to become self-advocates
- To prepare students to return to the academic mainstream



Transition Placement

Villa Maria is a transitional school and our goal is to remediate academic weaknesses. Generally, students leave Villa Maria after two or three years and return successfully to a more traditional school setting. After leaving Villa Maria, data indicates that students have done very well in both public and private elementary and secondary schools. Students are equipped to reach academic and lifetime goals and most follow a college preparatory program in high school.

Parents

Parent involvement is a vital component of the Villa Maria experience. Because the school values communication with parents, every teacher has a voicemail and email account. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled three times a year and extensive midterm and end of the year narrative reports on each student's progress are provided. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meets monthly, hosts student and family events throughout the year, and supports school field trips and enrichment activities. The PTO also supports annual fundraising efforts.



Facilities

Villa Maria's modern, well-lit, comfortable classrooms allow students to learn without interruptions or distractions. Each room is designed to meet the needs of its students, including computers, and audiovisual equipment. There is also a well-equipped library and computer lab, a multi-purpose room functioning as an auditorium, assembly hall, theater and gym, as well as a large playing field with sports equipment and a playground.

Faculty, Staff and Support

The Executive Director and teachers are qualified, dedicated educators. As a state-certified school, teachers are required to have Connecticut State Certification in Special Education. Villa Maria's teachers have experience and expertise working with students with learning disabilities. Support staff includes a speech and language pathologist, social worker, librarian, and tutors. Private pull-out sessions with additional experienced speech and language pathologists, and physical and occupational therapists are also available, when deemed appropriate.



Admissions

Admissions policies are non-discriminatory in terms of race, color, creed, ethnicity or national origin. The admissions process involves these steps:

- Parent interview
- Completed application
- A recent psychological evaluation
- School records for two years
- A two-day school visit at Villa Maria

Additional information is available on our website:

www.villamariaedu.org

There is limited financial aid available for families who demonstrate appropriate financial need. Awards are made on an annual basis in the spring. A monthly tuition payment plan is available.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to develop the full potential of students who are learning disabled. We do this by providing an education that will help children who learn differently acquire knowledge, develop skills, and increase the self-acceptance and self-esteem necessary to become responsible adults; by advocating for and promoting understanding of learning disabilities; and by working to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. We believe that education for those with learning disabilities must be patient, compassionate and creative, affirm the dignity and giftedness of each person, and promote the acceptance of diversity.

History

Villa Maria was first opened by the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters in 1965 as an after school and summer program for students in the Stamford area. In 1973, it was established as a full-time day school. Villa Maria, located in a residential area in North Stamford, CT, has been accredited as a school for students with learning disabilities by the Connecticut State Department of Education since 1980.

In January of 2009, Villa Maria was awarded certification by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools with a ranking of "exemplary" in nine out of fourteen measured categories, and "fully in compliance" in all other areas.



CT Assoc.. of Independent Schools President Dr. Douglas Lyons presents Villa Maria Executive Director Sister Carol Ann Nawracaj with the official CAIS certification

Academic Program

Because the child's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs are interrelated, Villa Maria promotes the growth of the whole child, providing small, highly structured classes where instruction is personalized. A social worker, speech pathologist, and occupational therapist work collaboratively within each classroom, helping teachers incorporate a variety of instructional methodologies. Morning classes focus on development of reading, math and language arts skills. Students are grouped according to their abilities and skills in these subjects. Teachers employ an eclectic approach, adapting and modifying methods of instruction to meet individual student needs. Lessons are multisensory and address the multiple intelligences of the students.



Reading

Instruction uses a variety of materials and incorporates the Lindamood-Bell processes for decoding and comprehension. Orton-Gillingham strategies are employed for reading and spelling. Story grammar is used to help students understand narrative elements.

Language

Grammar and mechanics are the main focus. Learning about sentence structure and expanding sentences begin in first grade. Students use structured outlines to organize simple paragraphs and longer compositions. Grades 4 through 9 have writing labs with networked, online computers available.

Mathematics

Instruction is multisensory. Students work at the appropriate skill level, while teachers provide remediation necessary to bring achievement to grade level. Knowledge of basic facts is reinforced and strategies for calculations, conceptual understanding, and problem solving are taught.



For afternoon classes students are grouped by grade level. The curriculum includes science, social studies, study skills, art, music, keyboarding, word processing, language development, motor perception, and religious or ethics instruction. Visual and auditory perception instruction is integrated into the younger students' curriculum. The physical education program emphasizes individual goals, self confidence, and all facets of visual motor development.

A formal social skills and guidance program is incorporated into the curriculum. The school social worker conducts social skills classes and also meets with individual students as well as small groups of students who share similar issues. In conjunction with the Student Council, the program provides opportunities to develop citizenship, leadership, responsibility, and moral standards of behavior.

