



The Belle Center

A nonprofit serving children with disabilities
and their families



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Hi Belle Supporter,

At [The Belle Center](#), we're touched by the loving friendships that children—with and without disabilities—develop at our programs.

Read a moving story that shows how ALL kids can learn and play together. We've also included an Alumni Success Story that proves that people with disabilities can achieve the loftiest goals. Get inspired!

Regards,
Belle Center Staff

p.s. Are you a new Belle family? Check out our [new video](#).



1. An inspiring friendship

London is a toddler who attends The Belle Center's [preschool program](#), which is partnered with University City Children's Center (UCCC). Due to her vision impairments, it is hard for London to recognize people. She also requires a feeding tube, and cannot speak. Although she cannot communicate the same way as other children, London is loved by her classmates.

London's typical friends always include her in their games. One little boy, Aidan, plays hide-and-seek with London. He hides behind her special feeder seat, and then pops out in front of her. Sometimes he even gently kisses her forehead so that she knows he's there.

London's classmates see her as a friend first, and don't think twice that she cannot walk, talk or even eat the same way they can.

Want to provide a quality preschool education and therapies for kids like London? [Donate](#) to Belle today, and help needy families afford crucial services for their children.

2. Gratitude for our funders

This year, The Belle Center received more than \$160,000 in generous grants from the following foundations & corporations. Only through their support are we able to serve more than 300 kids with disabilities every year, many of whom come from needy families.

Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation • Cardinals Care • Children's Trust Fund • Dana Brown Charitable Trust, U.S. Bank Trustee • E.A. Sander Charitable Trust • Employees Community Fund (ECF) of Boeing St. Louis • Enterprise Rent-A-Car • Express Scripts Foundation • Lakshmi Foundation • Missouri Foundation for Health • Moneta Group Charitable Foundation • Rubin Family Foundation • Stranahan Foundation • Suburban Journals • The Forrest & Frances Lattner Foundation • The Tilles Fund • Variety the Children's Charity of St. Louis

Interested in learning how your company can support kids with disabilities and their families? Contact Angie Wuelling, Development Director, at angie@bellecenter.com or 314.821.5230.

3. Alumni Success Story

Caitlin Dowe, a 21-year-old Belle alumna, became the first person with special needs—other than attorneys and students—to volunteer at an U.S. Attorney's Office in the entire country! Caitlin recently began performing clerical work at the St. Louis office a few months ago. Her parents, Jean and Brian Dowe, attribute her success to Belle.

"Beginning at a young age, Belle's preschool and therapies provided Caitlin with a leg up in development," says Brian Dowe. "Caitlin gained valuable social skills, understood rules and thrived throughout school. Belle also taught us how to advocate for her rights."

According to Cindy Brown, Caitlin's job coach with St. Louis ARC, "She proves that people with special needs can achieve great things in the workplace. People have learned that Caitlin is not that different than them."

"Seeing Caitlin here and contributing gives me great joy," says Tom Mehan, U.S. Attorney and a father of a Belle alumna. "She had the staying power to endure the [rigorous, high-security] process to assist us in our office."

Belle is very proud of Caitlin for setting a new precedent for Americans with disabilities. To learn how our programs create a bright start for people like Caitlin, learn about Belle's [unique programs](#).



4. Trivia Night & Silent Auction raises over \$13,000 for kids with disabilities

The Belle Center thanks everyone who made our Trivia Night & Silent Auction a big success! This includes our sponsors (National City, St. Louis Neurological Institute, and World Wide Technology), as well as those of you who donated auction items and attended the June 28 event. Belle also thanks [Step Up St. Louis](#) for volunteering at the event.

This important fundraiser defrays our programs' costs, enabling more kids to receive Belle's crucial services. To discover how YOUR support of this event improves kids' lives, [read what families say about Belle](#).

About The Belle Center

The Belle Center is a nonprofit organization that provides early intervention services for children with disabilities and their families. Founded in 1984, Belle's preschool program is the Midwest's first full inclusion preschool where children with and without disabilities learn and play together. Our mission is to ensure that all children with disabilities are fully included in school and community life. Belle's three programs annually serve more than 330 children with disabilities and their families. We also support an additional 150 families through advocacy services and referrals.

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