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FEATURED

Kids with special needs get opportunity to share

Robert Inglis May 11, 2017



Vanessa Moyer, 12, left, Mifflinburg, holds up a hoop for Zoey Hollenbach, 6, Lewisburg, to throw a ball through at the CSIU's Celebrate Communication Day on Wednesday.

Robert Inglis



The brightly colored activities set up Wednesday at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit in Montandon for their Celebrate Communication Day seemed dull in comparison to the smiles on the faces of the more than 100 students participating in the activities.

“The number of students has grown, this year is actually our largest number of participants,” said Jennifer Williams, Director of Special Education for CSIU.

A diverse group of students from 17 different schools, with a range of communication challenges came together to socialize, play games and have lunch.

Tara Parrish came to the event with her daughter, Vanessa Moyer, 12, Mifflinburg. “Last night she didn’t want to go to bed, she was so excited. She loves it, we’ve been doing it since she was three.”

As Vanessa played with a large green bouncy ball in the grass, her mother watched with a smile. “When she comes here she has to use her device to tell them what her name is because she can’t speak, so it encourages her to use her speaking device to communicate.”

Wendy Griggs, who is a speech therapist at the CSIU, was on hand helping out with some of the many stations. “This is a way to bring everyone together and they can see other children using picture cards or an iPad to communicate and there like its not just me, I have a group of people that are just like me.”

Students everywhere could be seen pointing to pictures of something they wanted, using sign language, iPads or other electronic devices to communicate with everyone around them. “Many times in their classroom they might be the only student using that particular type of device so this day allows them to come to one location where they might meet someone that is communicating the same way,” said Williams.

In the events twenty-first year, it serves schools from Columbia, Montour, Snyder, Union, and Northumberland Counties.

Voices of laughter and joy could be heard hundreds of feet away under a bright blue sky during the activities ranging from foam rockets, oversized bouncy balls, bubbles and chalk drawing. "Its awesome to see them together. I'm seeing kids I haven't seen for three years, and you see how much they've grown and how they're using pictures to communicate, or they are pointing at things and being able to communicate, it's just awesome," said Griggs.

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