

UWO plays host to inclusive education-based conference

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/17455/uwo-plays-host-to-inclusive-education-based-conference/>

Hundreds of parents, educators, school district administrators and service professionals gathered at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh March 3 for the annual inclusive education-focused conference.

The day-long conference, "Planting the Seeds of Inclusion: Supporting the Growth of All Children," featured many breakout sessions. The event is held annually for those who support the growth and learning of all children in inclusive settings.

"We are all born with a mission and my mission was to help children," said this year's keynote speaker Lynn Manfredi/Petitt, a nationally recognized early childhood expert, care-provider and co-author of *Circles of Love and Relationships, The Heart of Quality Care*.

With more than 20 breakout sessions, the conference provided practical information and training on a variety of topics, which included educating children with medical needs, behavioral interventions, accessibility, models of co-teaching, reading and math instruction, assistive technology and more.

Conference attendees were truly there to learn about the hows and whys of inclusive education. Inclusive education aims to allow children with and without disabilities to participate and learn together in the same classes and environments.

"The idea of inclusion means so much more than it used to," said Jennifer Marie Eggert, of Milwaukee, who works for the Center for Independence. "It pushes us educators to figure out ways to include so more are involved."

Being open is at the heart of inclusion, attendees of the conference said.

"Everyone is a learner and everyone is a teacher. The only way to achieve your goals is to be open," said Sue McCallum, a special education teacher from Sheboygan.

Amy Brown, also of Sheboygan, echoed McCallum's thoughts.

"I think ongoing education is important," she said. "Also, knowing what other people are talking about in your community and connecting with people from the community (is important)."

During the conference, two awards were also given.

Phil Marshall, principal at Emmeline Cook Elementary School in Oshkosh, was given the Inclusion Partnership Award and UW Oshkosh's Billie Jo Rylance, professor emeritus, department of special education, was awarded the Special Education Outstanding Service Award.

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