

Creating a welcoming world

In her role as president of the Pathways Awareness Foundation, Maggie Daley is persuading places of worship to create a more welcoming atmosphere for people with disabilities. While churches and temples should be leaders in serving people with disabilities, they often do not provide opportunities for "inclusive" liturgical experiences. "This is not done out of malice but from a lack of awareness," says Daley.

PAF produces and distributes videos and brochures on how to recognize early warning signs of infant movement difficulties so that early intervention is possible. Under Daley's leadership, PAF created a video, *Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*, to help churches include people with disabilities in their activities — especially liturgy. Daley credits her "wonderful" experience of liturgy at UD as one of the factors that influenced the creation of the video. She graduated in 1965 with a bachelor's degree in history.

"The truth of the matter is that older churches are difficult for people with wheelchairs to get into — but that isn't the main issue," says Daley. "Changing hearts and attitudes is more important than changing doors." Daley's core belief is that if you change attitudes, the rest will follow.

"In so many ways, language is negative," she adds. Daley suggests talking about the person first and his or her abilities second. For instance, saying "the man who is blind," rather than "the blind man."

Through her work, Daley became friends with the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, who is a speaker in PAF's video program. "He was a wonderful man — a beautiful person," she says. "Kindness imbued everything he did."

Daley says that as the cardinal was weakened by cancer, he began to experience physical challenges himself. Those challenges made him more aware of the complications that are involved when abilities are diminished.

"UD can be proud of its leadership including people with disabilities," Daley says, referring to the University's plan to build a \$2.9 million Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center, which will include adaptive equipment to help the approximately 400 students on campus who have physical or learning disabilities. UD is also the home of NICE — the Network of Inclusive Catholic Educators. Through conferences, workshops and videos, NICE promotes value-centered parochial school and religious education programs that acknowledge the gifts and talents of all students.

"Our nemesis today is to be too busy to get involved," says Daley, who balances her job at PAF with roles as mother, volunteer and wife of the mayor of Chicago. Her bottom line: "It's important for all of us to create a welcoming world."

