

## Welcome to Holland

By: Emily Perl Kingsley

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability – to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...

When you're going to have a baby it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make wonderful plans. The Coliseum. Michelangelo's David. The gondolas in Venice. You may even learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland".

"Holland?" you say. What do you mean, Holland? I signed up for Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change of flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay. The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around and you begin to notice that Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they are bragging about what a wonderful time they had there.

And for the rest of your life, you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever go away, because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.

But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

## What can VOICES do for me?

### Do you find yourself asking any of these questions . . .

- How can I help my child do better in school?
- Does my child need a tutor?
- What services are offered in the Mequon-Thiensville School District to students who need help
- How can I find out about these services?
- Should my child be evaluated for special education?
- What is an I.E.P.?

*If these questions sound familiar, let a member of the **VOICES** Advisory Board help you find the **ANSWERS** to those questions.*



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## ***Parent Chat Dates 2010-2011 School Year***

October 5, 2010	February 1, 2011
November 8, 2010	March 18, 2011
December 7, 2010	April 15, 2011
January 7, 2011	May 5, 2011

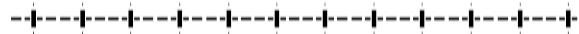
Parent Chats offer a wide range of topics and speakers including anxiety, assistive technology, RTI – Response to Intervention, bullying, PBIS – Positive Behavior Intervention Support.

The days and times of the Parent Chats varies each month. Check the VOICES website for details.

### ***Did you know . . .***

- **Hosts monthly Parent Chat meetings with speakers and gives a chance for you to network, find answers, share ideas.**
- **Is linked to the Mequon-Thiensville School District website [www.mtsd.k12.wi.us/communityconnections/VOICES](http://www.mtsd.k12.wi.us/communityconnections/VOICES) with all the latest events and resources.**
- **Publishes a quarterly newsletter available on our website and in MTSD school newsletters.**

Every student struggles from time to time. Some children face significant ongoing challenges socially, emotionally, and/or academically. **VOICES** is a group of parents and staff working together to educate families in the M-T School District. We can show you how to locate and access necessary help for students who are struggling. Our school district provides many resources to help ensure their academic success.



### ***Vision Statement***

- To raise awareness and acceptance of diverse education needs of students in the Mequon-Thiensville School District.
- To encourage a climate in our schools that will increase each child's opportunities to perform to his or her full potential.
- To empower parents, teachers, and staff to empower our children.



## ***Mequon-Thiensville School District***



# ***V.O.I.C.E.S.***

***Voices Offering  
Inspiration for all Children's  
Educational Support***

***[www.mtsd.k12.wi.us/  
communityconnections/VOICES](http://www.mtsd.k12.wi.us/communityconnections/VOICES)***