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## Community Stories

### What a Difference People Make

by Thomas Neuville, Ph.D.

I have a long and winding story that lives mostly in my heart and a vast collection of mental images. I could never do justice to those heart-stories or the mental photographic album with inadequate words. And yet I shall try.

**The Closed Door**—This is the inside of a rich dark wood door. There is a natural character in the grain of this wood door that one can almost smell. This image holds the rhetoric of something important and powerful that happens within this closed room. This door, captured in the early 2000's was owned by an administrator. The picture is of the inside because the administrator was creating a closed meeting with the two of us. I was there to propose that students with intellectual disability be admitted to the university and the administrator was there to tell me, behind that beautiful door, that the university "would not become the disabled university". On the day of this picture something powerful and important did happen within this closed room. As a non-tenured professor, I understood that the difference to be made was no difference at all.

**The Infirmary**—This is a picture of a fancy executive meeting room in about 2006. It has a dozen leather chairs and three people sitting around the oval shaped table. The chair at the table's head is large and also vacant. There are a few scraps of paper and a dozen spent coffee cups waiting to be cleaned up. The three people at the table look as though they are still waiting for the meeting to begin. The sort of look that tells of disbelief, rejection, or incredulity. This picture holds the odor of an institutional infirmary because of my emotional memory. We had just been told that students with intellectual disability may be able to attend the university but first we would need permission from the nurses at the infirmary.....[Read more](#)

## WHAT IS HAPPENING/RESOURCES

- [Federal Student Aid provides guidance for interruptions of study related to Coronavirus](#)
- Share your story at [openingdoorstocollege.com/community-stories](http://openingdoorstocollege.com/community-stories)
- [Summer 2020 edition, Lumina Foundation's Focus magazine features Integrated Studies at Millersville University](#)
- Think College launched a new affinity group on Employment Supports. Sign up <https://bit.ly/2ErP2kF>
- A great COVID#19 resource from Education Week: [COVID-19 & Remote Learning: How to Make It Work](#)
- Watch at your leisure the Opening Doors to College Film or the Premiere Webinar at <http://openingdoorstocollege.com/>

A big heartfelt THANK YOU! to Dr. Ann Marie Licata for her leadership and relentless pursuit of authentic inclusive postsecondary education.



Dr Licata joined the PA Inclusive Higher Education Consortium in 2016 and her vision and passion helped growing the Consortium from 3

members strong today. Under Dr. Licata's tenure four new inclusive postsecondary programs opened their doors to people with intellectual disability and many existing programs throughout the Commonwealth enhanced their inclusivity.

In her new role as a faculty in Millersville University Educational Leadership Program Dr. Licata will continue to be a strong voice for authentic inclusive opportunities for young adults with intellectual disability.

## DID YOU KNOW?

On July 23, 2020 House Democratic Policy Committee held a public hearing on [Building Inclusive Disability Curriculum](#).

The hearing was requested by State Rep. Joe Hohenstein, to explore how educational curriculums can be more inclusive of the disability community.

Read more at [https://www.pahouse.com/files/Documents/Testimony/2020-07-23\\_042810\\_hdpc072320.pdf](https://www.pahouse.com/files/Documents/Testimony/2020-07-23_042810_hdpc072320.pdf)