



WHERE DIFFERENCE DOES NOT EQUAL DISABILITY

# HAND CAMP

April 12 -14, 2024

## Hand Camp Stats:

We have 80 families and 81 children with Upper Limb Differences from 21 states attending! This includes:

- 12 Happy Campers
- 22 Firefly Explorers
- 60 Fireflies

29 Campfire Crew  
29 Pathfinders - 20 of whom are also attending the Teen Retreat! )



## H2L Grads and AULDs

to share their stories at Camp!



Jerelyne Idica,  
Saturday Night Storyteller



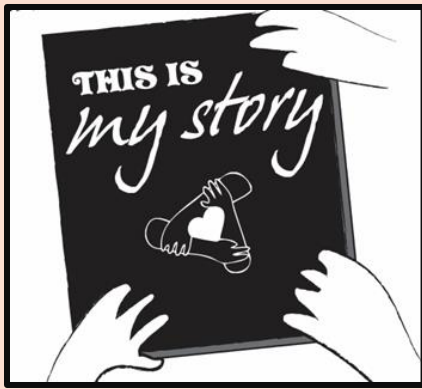
Izzy Hadala  
The First Day Speech



Grace McClelland  
The Gift of Grace



The pool will be OPEN  
Saturday afternoon!



## BY GRACE McCLELLAND, HAND CAMP GRAD & AULD

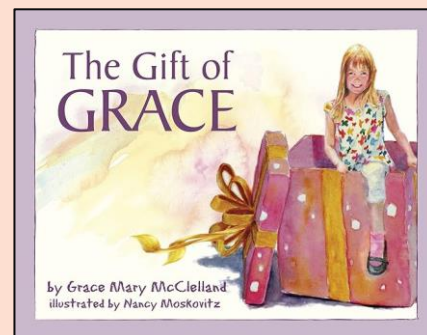
I am 22 years old and just graduated from Xavier University with a BS in Exercise Science. I currently work at ATI Physical Therapy and will start my Occupational Therapy Doctoral program in August at Xavier. I was born and raised in Westfield, IN along with my four brothers, one of whom is my twin!

I was born with symbrachydactyly of my right hand. In preschool, I was teased and excluded for looking different, so one day my mom helped me by writing down my thoughts as I dictated them to her. She typed up my words, we added pictures, and placed my story in a binder. I shared this at the beginning of each school year with my class. My peers included me more, and I became comfortable showing my hand, answering questions, and living my story.

My journey with Hands to Love began at age eight, when I was invited to experience Hand Camp and share my story. The Gift of Grace, was published by Wild Onion Press less than a year later. I had the incredible experience of receiving a Nautilus Book Award for writing a “better book for a better world,” and even had a book signing booth at Book Expo America!  
That’s big stuff for a nine year old!

Since then, I’ve shared my story with schools, youth camps, scout troops, and ministries. My story is meant to encourage acceptance of oneself and of others while recognizing physical differences. It is a reminder that *everyone is wonderfully made*.

One of my favorite experiences was meeting a young boy who lost his fingers on one hand in an accident. On the morning he returned to school, I shared my story with his class and answered questions about my special hand and his. The time together changed us both.



I am beyond grateful for all the connections I’ve made and experiences I’ve encountered since writing this book - my story. I am humbled that my story became a ministry. I came to Hand Camp as a child; I am now an AULD who very much looks forward to sharing my story at Hand Camp this year. I am excited to hear your stories and to see how you will use them to impact our world!



## ON SHARING STORIES...

by Shelley Frasier Mickle



Being a writer for fifty years, I have a passion to share stories that connect us. In 2008, I was struck with how few stories for children we have that feature a hero with a physical difference. It seemed to me to be a missing element in our literature. There were books in which child characters banded together to help another child in a wheelchair or who was dealing with some physical difference, but there was no character with a physical difference that solved a problem for regular, normal children.

**I wanted to remedy that.**

All you have to do is look at the popular play *The Glass Menagerie* to see that the main character with a limp is seen to be the burden for the family.

Even Tiny Tim in Dickens's Christmas story is viewed as an object of pity that changes the other characters rather than a fully drawn character that could have done something else to represent the spirit of Christmas. I set out to remedy that view in our literature. When I read Grace's story that she wrote herself, I was changed from the inside out by being invited to see her world as she saw it. When I heard Isabelle Hadala's story of her first-day speech, I didn't think I'd ever heard a story of bravery to equal hers!

As for my own challenge of being a polio survivor, today few know of the epidemics that affected so many children in past times. My year of being in an epidemic in 1950, when 33,000 other children were affected by the polio virus, focused my life. I had already decided at the age of five to dedicate my life to being a storyteller, but when at the age of six, I was in an Isolation hospital for three months because I was contagious, two children died near me.

In my childhood years of magical thinking, I took that as a sign that I was being saved for something. It clicked: I was being saved to write stories to comfort, to inspire, to make readers laugh. My husband and I shut down Wild Onion Press in 2016 not only because we used up our production funds, but also I felt the culture was catching up with "Fault in Our Stars" and "Wonder" as popular films.

My new book to come out next April, 2025, is a short memoir that covers some of what I've written here. Titled ITCHING TO LOVE, The Story of a Dog, I share views on Dogs, Men, Motherhood, Lasagna, and the Founding Fathers!



# H2L INNOVATION STATION

by Laura Faye Clubok, MS, OTR/L  
*On The Other Hand Therapy*  
 Columbus, Ohio



We are so excited for this year's Innovation Station at Hand Camp! Tammy Harrell, a long time Hand Camp volunteer and Occupational Therapist with special credentialing as a Certified Hand Therapist and I look forward to demonstrating adaptive technology options that can make typing and using a computer easier and more fun for children with upper limb differences. We will work with families to problem solve adaptive strategies to enable healthy use of the limb difference side(s) while also minimizing strain to the dominant side. Many children have never had an opportunity to try different adaptations and haven't learned about ways to prevent [overuse syndrome](#) from technology use. We will have a variety of computer mice, other kinds of input devices, and various keyboards for H2L kids of all ages so that you can "try before you buy."

Over the next few weeks, please share any specific adaptive equipment likes or dislikes to [otontheotherhand@gmail.com](mailto:otontheotherhand@gmail.com). We can't wait to see your family at the Innovation Station in April!

## SIGN UP AS A FUNDRAISER!

<https://www.theamazinggive.org/organizations/hands-to-love>

Click "Fundraise" on this page to sign up.

THE  
**AMAZING  
 GIVE**

April 25, 2024  
 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

[www.TheAmazingGive.org](http://www.TheAmazingGive.org)

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF  
**GAINESVILLE**

Hands to Love is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We strive to provide all Hands to Love events and activities at the lowest possible cost to our special families. These services are available with thanks to the generous support of our donors, like you! Thank you for helping us make a difference in the lives of the families we serve. To give, please click [HERE](#).

*If you have contributions or ideas for future newsletters, please contact Amy McClelland, Newsletter Editor, at [amy@handstolove.org](mailto:amy@handstolove.org)*

