

*It has been eleven years since I have attended the School for Language and Communication Development, better known as SLCD. I enrolled with my twin sister Nicole Draghi. What this school has given me is immeasurable. SLCD taught me to speak, something so basic to most but almost impossible for me. I have learned that with hard work and encouragement anything is possible.*

*The first time I went to SLCD, I was two years old. It was here that I was able to learn how to speak. The school has not only given me the gift of speech, but also taught me how to have the ability to succeed in anything I want to do in my life, not just school. When I think back to SLCD, all I think of is good times with my teachers and classmates. To me, it was a magical place, I felt special, I felt like I belonged. The environment in SLCD enabled me to learn, and work through my speech challenges. SLCD gave me the best gift in the world, a chance to learn and to be like everyone. Most kids do not strive to “be like everyone else,” but to a child that does not speak it is everything. No one I attend high school with knows of my speech problem. The joy that is in me when I know the secret struggle that I over came is mine alone.*

*Scholastically, I graduated in time to start kindergarten at my public school. In 2001, I was accepted to the Brother C. Fox Latin School; it is the middle school for Kellenberg Memorial High School, founded by the Marianist Brothers. I am currently a junior at Kellenberg. Our school motto is “one heart, one mind.” I think that this motto fits SLCD, because as a school you have treated me, and the thousands who have passed through those doors, with the love, encouragement, and given us the tools needed to accomplish any of our aspirations. At times learning can be extremely difficult for anyone. Luckily for me, at a young age, SLCD was there to teach me and help me learn how to accomplish my dreams. This year, I was nominated and inducted into National Honor Society. What I have learned from SLCD has helped me in every facet of my life. It has given me the push to succeed in sports, clubs and other events that occur in my life. To me SLCD is the push telling me that I can do whatever I wish to accomplish. I could continue to list accomplishment after accomplishment, because of the foundation that SLCD has built. More importantly, what would be on that list if SLCD were not there? The truth is when I think of how my life would have been without the help of SLCD it scares me. The only thing that I can think to say is, thank you so much for giving me the gift, to accomplish my dreams through my voice.*



*- Amanda Draghi*