

Nicole Danielle Draghi
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My name is Nicole Danielle Draghi; eleven years ago, I graduated from The School for Language and Communication Development (SLCD). Presently I am a junior in high school, at Kellenberg Memorial High School. I also have an identical twin sister, Amanda who also attended and graduated from SLCD. With the help I received from SLCD, all of my dreams have been able to come true.

When people ask me about my earliest childhood memories, most of them include going to SLCD. I was two years old when I first walked through those huge doors at SLCD in Bellmore. I literally could not tell anyone how I felt at that moment. I still drank from a bottle and took a nap, yet there I was going to school. Some of my favorite memories include the big dinosaur in the inclusion room, my teachers and friends.

Throughout my life, I have been a part of many activities. I've participated in; cheerleading, dance, lacrosse (played and coached), chorus, orchestra, student council, GSO, Leader's Club, and Sodality. The best and most rewarding program that I am involved in is S.M.A.R.T. This is an after school program where students go to a nearby elementary school. We assist the students in their homework, play with them, and help them learn by preparing lesson plans. Two of my greatest personal accomplishments are giving the graduation speech at my elementary school in front of all my friends, family and teachers, and making honor roll and maintaining it for most of my high school career.

SLCD gave me the building blocks needed to grow. It is easy to list all of my accomplishments because I attended SLCD. Without SLCD, I may not have achieved them. How can I accomplish something when I am unable to express my thoughts and ideas verbally? It is extremely difficult at any age to accomplish whatever goals we have. Without the power of speech, these goals seem unreachable. I may have started out as having a hard time grasping language, but SLCD taught me how to work through the problem and to be able to be an accomplished student. When called in class to read something or answer a question, I know what I want to say and am able to say it. To most that is common, to me it is miraculous! I no longer have to sit there and think about each step to pronounce a word, because of SLCD. None of my classmates or teachers knew that I was once classified as speech delayed. SLCD was able to correct the problem and make it so people are actually surprised when I tell them. For some this is normal, but to me, it is amazing. Simply put, without SLCD I would not have been able to achieve any of the success I have had. This is because, without a voice, my dreams cannot be heard.