

# ALANA MALFY

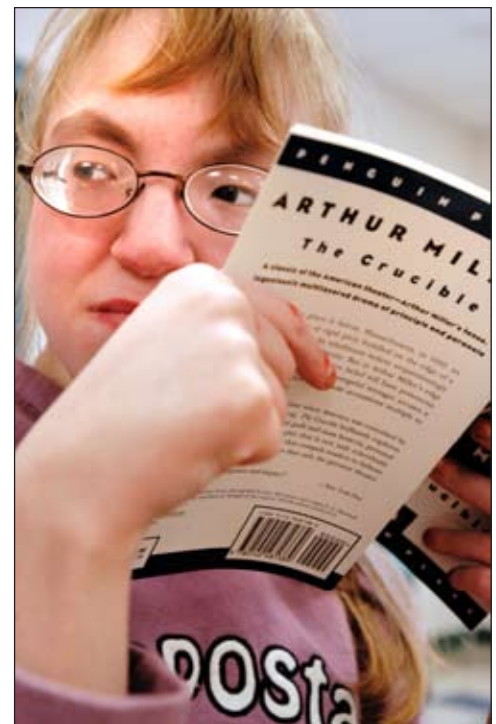


Is inclusion easier for young kids like Samuel? What makes inclusion work well, and what makes it fail? Alana Malfy goes to Pembroke Academy, a public high school in New Hampshire. The school partnered with the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability (IOD) to include students with the most significant disabilities in regular classes, studying the regular curriculum. Alana has developmental disabilities because of a genetic disorder.

Through the IOD's "Beyond Access" project, the school has become a laboratory for full inclusion. But inclusion at Pembroke Academy is still very much a work in progress. Alana and her mother are finding that inclusion brings both educational rewards and social challenges.

“You know what? It’s not easy getting along with other people.”

— ALANA MALFY



“When we think about the true definition of inclusion, it means there are no special rooms, special places, special teachers for special kids. My experience is that as long as there is a special ed room available, students will be placed in it.”

– CHERYL M. JORGENSEN



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ▶ Alana Malfy’s mom, Christina, was told by her doctors that Alana was a “freak of nature” and that Alana would never walk or talk. What impact do you think that type of comment has on a parent?
- ▶ What aspects of the high school environment might make inclusion more challenging than in elementary school?
- ▶ Cheryl M. Jorgensen, the IOD professor who worked with Pembroke Academy, said “all students, with the right support, and the right technology, and the right teaching, can learn the general education curriculum.” What do you think about this statement?
- ▶ Why is it important for all students to have access to the general education curriculum?
- ▶ One of Alana’s teachers, Carol Ward, said, “How am I going to reach the valedictorian and reach Alana at the same time?” Why do you think some teachers struggle with inclusion?
- ▶ Pembroke Academy student Faye Andrews said inclusion “benefited me in a huge way.” How does it benefit her and other students?
- ▶ Why does the word “retard” surface so often among teenagers? How would hearing that word make someone like Alana feel? What could other students or adults do or say when they hear that word used?
- ▶ Do you think Special Olympics reinforces or reduces stereotypes and stigma related to people with disabilities?
- ▶ Why do you think many high schools maintain separate classrooms for some students with disabilities? What impact do you think that practice has on students with and without disabilities?