



## **“SEEING WITH A NEW PERSPECTIVE”**

I teach a Sociology of Disability course and invited a mother of a young man with cerebral palsy to come and share about her son with my class. The students were somewhat surprised when she wanted to give everyone a quiz after her brief introduction. They were to take out a piece of paper and number from 1 – 5. Our guest speaker then proceeded to take out of a bag she had brought, five canned goods wrapped in plain brown paper. On the paper in black marker, the mother had written on each canned good, “Not Carrots, Not Green Beans, Not Corn, etc.” As she placed them on the small table in front of her, she said, “Now I want you all to write what vegetable is each of these canned goods. I have a small prize for the one who gets them all correct.” The students began to look at each other and appeared very uncomfortable with this task. Finally, one student said what the others were thinking, “This is impossible. No one will be able to get all the right answers when all we know is the one vegetable that’s not in the can. There are too many vegetables!” It was then our guest speaker kindly explained, “You’re right. You don’t know anything more about these canned goods than the one vegetable that they’re not. I did this ‘quiz’ to illustrate something about my son, who has cerebral palsy. Most people only see what he isn’t or can’t do. I am here today to share all the wonderful things about my son and the many things he can do.”

Respectfully Submitted

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