

Fred Saigh Leadership Academy

Special
Education
Foundation



Developing Leaders. Building Futures.

Leadership is more than holding a title—it is the ability to inspire others, build confidence, solve problems, and create positive change. Recognizing the importance of cultivating these skills in students with disabilities, the Special Education Foundation (SEF) established the Fred Saigh Leadership Academy in 2004 through the generous support of the Saigh Foundation.



"The opportunities my son has experienced in the Academy have played a part in his accomplishments this year. We are thankful he has had this experience, and we are grateful to the Fred Saigh Leadership Academy for all that they do for young people with disabilities!" ~Karen B., Lindbergh High School Parent

This unique program provides high school students with disabilities the opportunity to strengthen their leadership abilities, expand their understanding of the community, and gain valuable experiences that prepare them for future success.

How It Works

- Each school year, students complete an online application to be considered for the Academy available on the SEF website
- Applications will include a letter of recommendation from the student's teacher
- Applications are reviewed by an SEF selection committee comprised of Board members and Foundation staff.
- Up to 20 students are selected annually to participate in the program.

Over the course of nine months, students meet one day per month to engage with community leaders, explore key organizations and institutions throughout the St. Louis region, and participate in interactive experiences designed to build leadership and self-advocacy skills.

Upon completion of the Academy, students are better prepared to take on leadership roles in their schools, communities, and future careers. Graduates celebrate their accomplishments during a special graduation ceremony and leave the program with greater confidence, stronger leadership skills, and lasting connections with their peers and mentors.

Through the Fred Saigh Leadership Academy, the Special Education Foundation empowers students with disabilities to discover their potential, find their voice, and become the leaders of tomorrow.

Learn more about the Fred Saigh Leadership Academy, including current schedules and site locations, by visiting the Special Education Foundation website.

