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We are excited to let you know that Gateways received a grant from the Ruderman Family Foundation to bring the Understanding our Differences© curriculum to the Jewish day schools. It has successfully educated thousands of children through hands-on, experiential activities to help dispel myths about disabilities and has helped children to be inclusive and accepting of differences without fear or anxiety. Understanding Our Differences' goal is to teach children to "see the person and not the disability." Elsewhere, it has been successful in helping children to be inclusive and accepting of those with disabilities without fear or anxiety and is currently used in many local public school districts. Bullying, teasing, and isolation of children with disabilities have also decreased in schools offering the curriculum.

We will be teaching lessons on Blindness and Low Vision, Deafness and Hard of Hearing, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Physical Disabilities, Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, and Chronic Medical Conditions (such as allergic conditions, asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy). We are adding a component of teaching through a Jewish lens to each unit, which will encourage respect, compassion and tolerance, and provide another opportunity for the day school community to practice derech eretz.

JCDS is fortunate to be one of the first recipients of this exciting program. We will be kicking off the program in February, during Jewish Disability Awareness Month. We will be running the program for grade 3 on Wednesday February 5, 2014 from 12:45pm-2:45pm.

Sharon Shapiro, Trustee of the Ruderman Family Foundation, is happy to support this new initiative. "Last spring, I volunteered during the unit on physical disabilities in the Brookline public schools," says Shapiro. "I was blown away by the impact of the two-hour session on students, teachers and volunteers. I was impressed with the professional quality of the material. I also believe the hands-on activity made a lasting impression on the children."

If you or anyone that you know (friends, grandparents, etc.) are interested in volunteering for this project or have any questions, please contact [ileneg@jgateways.org](mailto:ileneg@jgateways.org).