

**Marcia Wiedefeld, M.A.**  
*Director of Disability Support Services*



The pursuit of justice is an integral component of a Jesuit education. This is evident at Loyola University Maryland, where I have worked in Disability Support Services for the past 21 years.

In its mission statement, Loyola recognizes justice as a core value: "Loyola's commitment to justice begins at home with creation of an environment where each individual is valued and attended to, can live safely, and can express him or herself honestly. The University seeks to be sensitive to and supportive of individuals in their particular needs situations." Since starting work at Loyola, I have participated in opportunities at the University to learn about injustices in our community, in Baltimore, in Maryland, in the United States, and in the world. I learned from workshops, lectures, movies, plays, and webinars. I have also participated in service opportunities arranged to address needs of poor and marginalized people. I cleaned a park in Baltimore with a class; served hungry citizens of Baltimore with my daughters; and gutted a house in New Orleans with a delegation from Loyola. These well organized activities provided great experiences, and I benefited though my participation. However, I feel my greatest opportunity to live justice is by going to work every day.

I do my small part to promote justice and create the environment mentioned in the core values, “. . . where each individual is valued and attended to, can live safely, and can express him or herself honestly.” I assist students with disabilities by coordinating access, so they can live and learn at Loyola. This access could take the shape of an ASL interpreter; an automatic door opener; computer hardware and software; or extra time on an exam. Sometimes access is provided through a discussion with a faculty member or an administrator about a student’s particular disability, which might lead to developing an alternative solution to a barrier. Access is key to help students with disabilities obtain their Loyola degrees, which prepares them to learn, lead, and serve in a diverse and changing world.

I try to identify barriers before they become an obstacle to a student with a disability. This behind-the-scenes-work ensures students with disabilities have equitable experiences – comparable to the experience of their peers without disabilities – from the start of their Loyola education. If I do my job well, I live justice by ensuring students have seamless access to the University’s academics and other programs.