



**workshops for siblings of children with special needs**



## About Sibshops

Through over fifty years of experience, Via knows that individuals with a disability are part of a family and families share in both the joys and sorrows of their loved one. A sibling relationship is often the longest relationship that many individuals have in their lives, often outlasting parent-child relationships and marital relationships.



Sibshops are lively, pedal-to-the-metal celebrations of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. Sibshops acknowledge that being the brother or sister of a person with



special needs is for some a good thing, others a not-so-good thing, and for many somewhere in between. They reflect a belief

that brothers and sisters have much to offer one another - if they are given a chance.

Sibshops seek to provide siblings with opportunities for peer support. Because Sibshops are designed for school-age children, peer support is provided within a lively, recreational context that emphasizes a kids'-eye-view.

Sibshops are not therapy, group or otherwise, although their effect may be therapeutic for some children. Sibshops acknowledge that most brothers and sisters of people with special needs, like their parents, are doing well, despite the challenges of an illness or disability.

## Who Should Attend Sibshops?



This series is for children, age 8 to 12 years old (13 to 18 for junior facilitators), who want to celebrate

the many contributions they make to their brothers and sisters with special needs and find support among peers experiencing the same types of things. Sorry parents, kids only!!

## What Do Parents & Kids Have to Say About Via Sibshops?

**Anne Moran, Jr.**  
**Facilitator, age 15**

"Sibshops is an amazing environment and a great way to interact with other peers who have siblings with special needs. The Via Staff are extremely compassionate people who work with participants to inspire bonds between the kids, allowing them to open up, express their feelings, and know that they have friends who can empathize with them."



"Sibshops allow these children to recognize they are not alone. It gives them time and friends with which to share and explore their thoughts. This program is exceptionally well put together and has an amazing purpose which I love and support wholeheartedly."

**Alane Lynch, Parent**

"I learned about Sibshops almost five years ago when a fellow parent lent me the book *Views From Our Shoes* (edited by Sibshops founder Don Meyer). I quickly purchased the book for my daughter and set about finding a Sibshop near us. The closest I could find was in Philadelphia."

"The Sibshop she attended was very beneficial but it was difficult to foster friendships because of geography. I approached many organizations and all agreed Sibshops would fill a great void in the Valley."

"In October 2008, Via launched the first Sibshop in our area. Because of Via, siblings of special needs children in the Valley will be having many needs addressed that have long been overlooked. I couldn't be more grateful."



