

## November 2006 Events



The Richmond *Times-Dispatch* published a major article on St. Joseph's Villa's new **Sarah Dooley Center for Autism** on November 7.

Here is a link to the story:

[http://www.timesdispatch.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RTD/MGArticle/RTD\\_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1149191550063](http://www.timesdispatch.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RTD/MGArticle/RTD_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1149191550063)

And the Times-Dispatch's reporter, Bill McKelway, and videographer Joe Mahoney also produced a video tour of the new school. You can access the video by going to the multimedia section of the T-D web site [http://www.timesdispatch.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RTD/HTMLPage/RTD\\_HTMLPage&c=HTMLPage&cid=1149188752794](http://www.timesdispatch.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RTD/HTMLPage/RTD_HTMLPage&c=HTMLPage&cid=1149188752794) and scrolling down the MultiMedia Playlist until you find **VIDEO: Autism Program at St. Joseph's Villa.**

The Sarah Dooley Center provides life skills education to children with autism. By learning skills such as how to make a bed, wash clothes, and go to the grocery store, students with autism can lead fuller, more independent lives as adults.



More than 150 members of **Capital One's Upmarket Team** volunteered at the Villa on November 9. In addition to helping students with a celebration of Benjamin Franklin's 300<sup>th</sup> Birthday, one of the tasks they worked on was assembling more than 600 Holiday stockings for Villa clients and preparing 55 welcome kits for the Children's Emergency Shelter and Flagler Family Services. Additional volunteers assisted with the major cleanup of the Dooley Auditorium and built additional shelving in the Villa Donation Center.

This is the fourth volunteer event that Capital One has had at St. Joseph's Villa.

Thank you, Capital One!

The Richmond *Times-Dispatch* published an **Op/Ed Commentary by Villa CEO Kathleen Burke Barrett** on Sunday, November 12. The text of the article is presented at the end of this newsletter.

On Tuesday, November 14, the Villa's **soccer team won its semifinal match** at the Richmond Alternative Soccer League playoffs by defeating the Virginia Home for Boys and Girls, 1-0. In the tournament final, the Villa team lost to Elk-Hill Varina, 2-1, in overtime.

This is the first season in which the Villa's team has qualified for the tournament. This season, team members came from four academies at the Villa.

Way to go, Villa!



On November 14, David O'Berry of **Verizon** dropped off a donation of 100 pairs of pajamas and books for clients.

Thank you, Verizon!



**Volunteer Open Houses** were held on November 16 and 17. Several potential volunteers visited the Villa, took a tour and found out how they can help the Villa and its clients through a donation of only a couple of hours. Other Open House events will be held in upcoming months. Stay tuned!

Each year, more than 250 individuals and groups donate their time and energy to help the Villa fulfill its mission of providing the best services to children in need. Thank you!

Nancy Toscano (LCSW, BCABA and Dooley School Director of Clinical Services) is starting a **support group for families of children with Asperger Syndrome**. The group met on November 16, and their next meeting is December 14 from 4-5 pm. If your family (or anyone you know) is dealing with Asperger's and you would like more information, please call Nancy at 553-3267.

Asperger Syndrome or (Asperger's Disorder) is a neurobiological disorder named for a Viennese physician, Hans Asperger, who in 1944 published a paper which described a pattern of behaviors in several young boys who had normal intelligence and language development, but who also exhibited autistic-like behaviors and marked deficiencies in social and communication skills.



Parents of preschool students at Lewis Children's Center came by for **Thanksgiving Lunch** on Friday, November 17.

Lewis Children's Center provides care to approximately 150 children a day in its preschool and after-school programs.

Ron Shibley, who had served as the Deacon at **St. Chrysostom Church** (which uses the Villa's chapel for its services), was ordained on Saturday, November 18.

Ron, his wife and a parishioner have spent the past four years restoring the chapel.

Congratulations, Ron!

Construction on the **new Villa sign** at the corner of Brook and Parham Roads has been completed. Only minor landscaping work remains to be done.



The Villa's **Emergency Shelter had its Thanksgiving Dinner** on Monday, November 20. Members of the Villa's Children's Day and Residential Services Board attended the dinner, which featured an appearance and performance by "The Villa People."

At any given time, between ten and fifteen children are housed at the Shelter. The children can stay at the Villa for up to 120 days and attend school on campus or in a local public school.

**St. Peter's Baptist Church hosted Thanksgiving** on Thursday, November 23 for residents of the Children's Emergency Shelter, Flagler Services and Hollybrook Apartments. More than seventy people attended the meal.

This is the tenth year that St. Peter's Baptist Church has provided a Thanksgiving meal to Villa residents.

Thank you, St. Peter's!

Susie Cumbia, Senior Director of Children's Educational Services, and John Toscano, President and CEO of Commonwealth Autism Service, appeared on **Virginia This Morning** (WTVR-CBS) on Tuesday,

November 28, to discuss the new Sarah Dooley Center for Autism.

Later the same day, Nancy Toscano, Supervisor of Clinical Services, appeared on NBC-12's **First News at 4:00** to discuss reasons why parents might harm their children and to offer advice to prevent future tragedies such as the recent killings of two children.



On November 30, a **16' Northern Spruce tree** was planted next to the Villa's chapel. The tree is a gift from the Richmond Grounds Association.

The tree will serve as the Villa's Christmas tree for years to come.

Thank you for this wonderful gift, RGA!

Pictured: Campus Resource Coordinator Kay Miles (in red) with members of the Richmond Grounds Association

## December 2006 Events

Saturday, Dec. 2 - Holiday Party for Flagler Home, hosted by St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Saturday, Dec. 2 - Holiday Party for the Emergency Shelter and Respite Weekend program, hosted by an external Volunteer group.

Tuesday, Dec. 5 – Governor Tim Kaine presents donation of coats and toys to St. Joseph's Villa.

Wednesday, Dec. 6 – Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Wednesday, Dec. 6 – Flagler Services Holiday Celebration

Friday, Dec. 8 – Staff/Board Holiday party

Monday, Dec. 11 – Holiday Party for Flagler Services, hosted by St. Gabriel's Catholic Church

Monday, Dec. 11 – “Meet and Greet” event at Hollybrook Apartments with St. Peter's Baptist Church

Thursday, Dec. 14 – Asperger's Support Group meeting, 4-5 pm.

Monday, Dec. 18 – Monday, Jan. 1 – Dooley School closed for Winter Break. (Note: Bayside Academy closes on Dec. 20 and the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism closes on Dec. 22.)

Friday, Dec. 22 – Sunday, Dec. 24 – Weekend Respite closed

Monday, Dec. 25 – Lewis Children's Center closed

Friday, Dec. 29 – Sunday, Dec. 31 – Weekend Respite closed

## **Solutions to Societal Problems: *In Greater Richmond, Everyone Deserves a Chance to Change***

KATHLEEN BURKE BARRETT  
TIMES-DISPATCH GUEST COLUMNIST

November 12, 2006

What does it take to solve society's problems? A lot more than any individual or institution can handle. But luckily for residents in our region, St. Joseph's Villa is here to address a number of them.

St. Joseph's Villa is no ordinary place. We are relentless in our efforts to give children a reason to believe in themselves. We never give up. We never stop trying. We never stop believing in each and every child's potential.

Each day, more than 300 staff work with more than 600 children and families to address issues of homelessness, abuse, neglect, learning disorders, autism, emotional disturbances, and physical handicaps.

Our campus -- at 82 acres -- is larger than many schools, and our budget of \$14 million makes us one of the largest nonprofit organizations in Virginia.

As large as these numbers are, our commitment to helping children is also evident in the details. If the drapes in a child's room are torn down, we are going to replace them. If they get torn down again -- and they do -- we are going to replace them again. Over and over, until the child realizes he is important to us, and to himself.

But as wonderful as these resources are, are they enough to address the community's future needs?

We think so, even though we cannot predict what those needs might be. After all, the Daughters of Charity who started St. Joseph's Villa almost 175 years ago had no idea that our need for orphanages would dwindle, only to be replaced by a need for a transitional housing program for homeless women and their children, a school for autistic children, and a weekend respite program for children suffering from autism, mental retardation, and cerebral palsy, to name only a few of our services.

The fact is, we cannot predict the future, we can only plan ways to be ready when it arrives.

And at St. Joseph's Villa we are already laying the foundation for the future.

### **Center to Help Autistics**

We have just created the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism in partnership with the Commonwealth Autism Service to provide vocational and life-skills education to children and young adults dealing with severe autism. Autism is one of the fastest-growing developmental disabilities, and we believe our new Sarah Dooley Center will help autistic children lead fuller lives as adults.

We have redefined our other Dooley School academies to more specifically reflect each one's academic mission, and we are providing more vocational testing and training to better prepare our students for life after school.

We are expanding our Stepping Up program to provide more (and better) job opportunities to homeless women in our Flagler Home and Flagler Community Services.

## **Children Are the Future**

We have begun aggressive fundraising and marketing programs to spread the word about our mission, programs, and accomplishments so that more people can learn about the work we are doing and support our growth. When we list the needs of the Greater Richmond community, children must be elevated to the top of the list. Our children are our future.

And we have begun discussions about a new building on campus that would house several existing programs and also be a new home for services not yet contemplated.

This work requires community support. All of us will have the opportunity to make a difference in a young person's life.

To meet the future's needs, corporations and individuals must continue to give their time and treasure. Public institutions must continue to work for fair solutions to complex issues.

And in return, we will continue to develop effective and innovative programs to help people who otherwise have nowhere to turn. We believe that everyone deserves a chance to change.

Our strength is always believing in the positive and knowing that -- no matter what -- we will never stop believing in the children we serve.

And when that day comes for a child to leave the campus and tackle the world on her own, she will leave with the notion, "I believe in myself, and I am going to make it."

That's what we've been doing in Richmond since 1834. And, with your help, it's what we'll be doing for years to come.

Whatever needs children have, St. Joseph's Villa plans to be there to address them. We will never stop believing in the children and families or our ability to help them. I can promise you that.

*Kathleen Burke Barrett is the CEO at St. Joseph's Villa.*