

## Recent Events

If you've been to the **Administration Building** at St. Joseph's Villa, don't be surprised the next time you come to see us. We are beginning a project to give the Rotunda a facelift, and we have removed the furniture in advance of the painting and other work which should begin soon.

Note: The furniture that was in the Rotunda has been "repurposed" and is now being used by clients in the Flagler program.



The Villa's **Therapeutic Day Treatment program** held a **graduation ceremony** in September to honor Kaitlin Brooks for successful completion of the program.

Kaitlin has been with us for almost two years, and she made tremendous progress during that time. Steve Beasley, Senior Director of the Therapeutic Day Treatment service, felt it was only appropriate to recognize Kaitlin's progress with a formal graduation ceremony.

Congratulations, Kaitlin!

It's Back-to-School time, of course, and the Villa campus is alive with all of the energy of the students. And with the change in weather, it's easy to see students at play at most times of day.

The Dooley Center for Alternative Education holds a **Parent's Night** at the beginning of each school year. Frances Kenyear, the school's director, and her staff prepared a delicious spaghetti dinner for parents in early September.

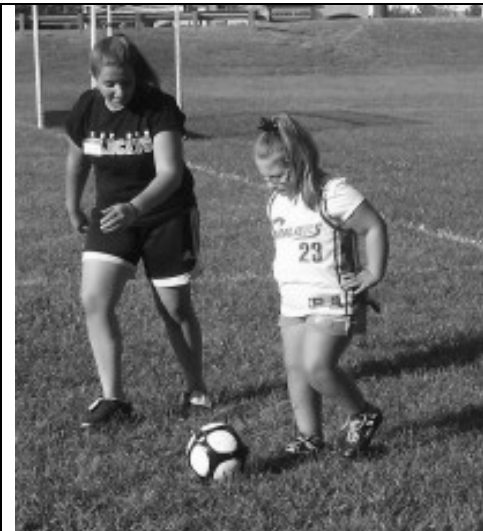


Above: Frances Kenyear (right) addresses the parents.



The Lewis Children's Center had a **Back to School night** as well. Thanks to a grant from the Macerich Company (owners of Chesterfield Towne Center), the Center was able to provide games to keep the children occupied so their parents could spend quality time with their child's teacher. It was a great evening!

Below: Frances Jackson and some of the Center's children.



The **TOPSoccer** program has begun its Fall season at St. Joseph's Villa. You may remember that this program pairs special needs children with a soccer "buddy" from an area soccer team. Games are held on the Villa's campus through the end of October.

Paul Mack, the director of the program, recently passed on the picture of Anna and some comments from Anna's mother, who wrote, "What a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon! Thank you all so much for putting this together! It may have seemed small to the outsider but you made some dreams come true to today! Now Anna really wants to play a game! She cannot wait until next Sunday!" Thanks, Paul!

Students at Brook Road Academy have begun their **year-long practical physics project**, a model car race track that will consist of hundreds of feet of track, assorted obstacles and a cumulative drop of more than thirty feet. Each year, the project shows the students (and the entire community) that there are many ways to get a great education in physics and engineering.



In mid-September, the Villa provided its employees with a **Wellness Fair**. This year, 12 exhibitors volunteered their time to educate the Villa staff regarding various health and wellness related issues.

Right: Matt Kreydatus (seated) gets his cholesterol checked, while Bridget Baldwin and Adam Coleman wait their turn.



Congratulations to Eric Townsend, Director of the Villa's Emergency Shelter, who was recently named by *Style Weekly* as one of Richmond's "**Top 40 Under 40.**" You can read *Style's* write-up at their web site, <http://www.styleweekly.com/article.asp?idarticle=15274> and you can also read the (longer) description of Eric and his accomplishments at the end of this newsletter. Congratulations, Eric!

And speaking of congratulations, you probably saw an article in the newspaper or on television about Hollybrook resident **Brian Montgomery** and his seven-year quest to get funding for sidewalks and streetlights in front of St. Joseph's Villa. In September, Brian received official notice from the Henrico County Board of Supervisors and the Virginia Department of Transportation that funding for the sidewalks has been approved. (Funding for the streetlights is supposed to come from a Henrico County Community Development Block Grant in the near future.)

Brian's efforts will help Hollybrook residents make safer trips up and down Brook Road, especially to the shopping center across the street. Thanks, Brian!





If you travel up and down Brook Road, you probably have noticed the **new signs** for the Villa's Day Support Services building and for the Hollybrook Apartment complex. The Day Support building (formerly known as Seton House) provides after-school and weekend respite care for children with severe developmental disabilities. St. Joseph's Villa was one of the first organizations in Central Virginia to offer weekend respite care, starting the service in 1978.

## Upcoming Events

**Wednesday, October 3 (5:30 pm) – National Night Out cookout at Hollybrook Apartments.**

**Thursday, October 4 (3 pm to 7pm) – Open House at Brook Road Academy.** Come join us and take a look at the nontraditional program that helps children finish high school and head on to college.

**Saturday, October 6 (6 pm) – First Annual Celebrate Children Silent Auction and Dinner.** Sponsored by the West Richmond Kiwanis Foundation, and supporting St. Joseph's Villa and three other nonprofit organizations. Sheraton Richmond West Hotel.

**Week of October 8 – Book Fair at Lewis Children's Center.**

**Wednesday, October 10 (8 – 10:30 am) – Fast Track Board Orientation.**

**Saturday, October 13 – Commonwealth Autism Service Annual Awards Dinner.** The Villa's partner in the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism holds its annual awards dinner, featuring a speech by James Reinhard, Commissioner, DMHMRSAS.

**Thursday, October 18 (6 – 8:30 pm) – Walk a Mile in Someone Else's Shoes event sponsored by the Women's Networking Forum** and benefiting St. Joseph's Villa. Saxon Shoes at Short Pump.

**Friday, October 19 (9:00 am) - The Valentine Richmond History Center** is bringing an outreach program on the Powhatan Indians to Dooley School at Cherokee. This is a hands-on program using Indian artifacts to learn about the lives of the Eastern Woodlands Indians of Virginia.

**Wednesday, October 24 – Training at Children's Educational Services with Mary Harrington, with the Richmond Regional Homeless Program.**

**Friday, October 26 (10 am) – Lewis Children's Center Harvest Festival.** Includes Trick or Treating in the Administration Building.

**Tuesday, October 30 – Board meeting for the Dooley Center for Alternative Education.**

## **Villa Profile**

### **Eric Townsend, Director of the Children's Emergency Shelter**

**Submitted to Style Weekly's "Top 40 Under 40" Contest**



#### **Professional Accomplishments**

Eric began his professional career at Capital One, where he spent five years working in Information Technology. Eric was working in his field of study and was very successful at this company, but he wanted more. Simply stated, Eric wanted to work in a field where he would be happy and better yet, make a difference.

Eric made the decision to work with children, he wasn't sure on any specific populations or "types" of children, he just felt that this was a way to truly make a difference. In 2000, Eric began working for Youth and Family Advocates. He worked a dual role of admitting children and marketing the program. Through his marketing efforts, he made many community connections and began learning about the needs of at-risk children.

Eric then decided that he wanted to take a more hands-on role with children and in 2001 began teaching in Richmond City Public Schools. Eric worked in the EAGLE Academy program, which is a self contained classroom with children who were at risk of being expelled from school.

In the summer of 2002, Eric ran into the Directors of St. Joseph's Villa Child and Family Emergency Shelter. He had become familiar with the Villa when working at Youth and Family Advocates. He expressed interest in working in the Emergency Shelter and was hired to serve as the Summer Enrichment Teacher.

Eric continued his employment with Richmond Public Schools (full-time) and SJV (part-time) until June 2003, when he left RPS and accepted a full-time position as a Youth Counselor at the Emergency Shelter.

Eric was an exemplary employee and was promoted to Program Manager in November 2003. Eric truly stood out as the Program Manager at the Emergency Shelter. He ensured that he had strong positive working relationships with all of the Villa's offices and services, he worked extremely well with managing staff, he managed all of the daily operations, he always took on extra duties that were not his role, and most importantly he had a "kids first" attitude. The kids always come first, and it was evident in the interactions that Eric had with the children. They trusted, respected, and truly enjoyed working with him.

In November 2005, the position of Director became available and there was only one person proving to be a perfect fit...Eric.

During his tenure, Eric has made strides in bettering the lives of children in the foster care system that live in a residential environment. Eric has led his staff to develop new processes to comprehensively assess children's emotional states. In addition, he made programmatic changes which proved to better stabilize the children during an emotional time in their lives. These processes have better prepared the children to successfully transition back to the least restrictive environment, hopefully home, which is the ultimate goal.

#### **Community Involvement**

In addition to his duties at St. Joseph's Villa, Eric is actively involved in the children and men's ministry at St. Paul's Baptist Church. He has also mentored teenage males (Lions of Judah) at St. Paul's Baptist Church.

Eric also served as a mentor for at risk children at another non-profit organization, United Methodist Family Services (UMFS), for more than 1 year.

Eric is a former assistant basketball coach for one of the local metro YMCA's.

## **The Bottom Line**

Eric has done a fantastic job building the Emergency Shelter into a vibrant, safe and welcoming community for children in crisis. Many of Eric's clients have serious emotional and behavioral issues. When children come to St. Joseph's Villa, Eric and his staff do a fantastic job getting them "settled down" and getting them the right care to prepare them for the next step in their lives.

Children can stay at the Emergency Shelter for up to 120 days. Serving multiple children in a residential environment, with varied issues, all ages, on an emergency basis for up to four months can be quite a challenge. Eric and his staff have done an outstanding job creating a positive family environment. They expose the children to new activities (i.e. golf, Go-karts, water parks, etc), and they have created a beautiful and welcoming environment for children.

The shelter also operates around the clock, seven days a week. For any of the staff at the Emergency Shelter, it can be a demanding job. It is incredibly demanding to provide around the clock supervision for up to 19 children, many of whom may have behavioral issues.

As the leader of the Emergency Shelter, Eric has to put numerous hours into the Shelter and has to be prepared at any moment to deal with any situation. He does so with a positive attitude and supportive spirit. Being on-call 24 hours a day is a challenge – however it can prove to be more of a challenge when you have a family. Eric is the married father of four children. He does an excellent job balancing the demands of work and taking care of his family....everyone feels fully supported.

**Congratulations, Eric!**