

Recent Events

Paul K., one of the students at Dooley School, recently completed an internship as Computer Lab Assistant. After his successful internship, Paul received a certificate of accomplishment from David Huerbin, Dooley School's Multimedia Specialist. Congratulations, Paul!

Paul's is one of the many internship opportunities for students at St. Joseph's Villa. These opportunities help students prepare for life after graduation.



There is a Villa tradition of ringing a bell to signify the receipt of a major gift. Villa CEO Kathleen Barrett (at right), Grants Specialist Andriea Ukrop (center) and Vice President of Financial Development David Huffine lead the Villa Development staff in celebrating two major gifts.

St. Joseph's Villa is proud to announce that the Community Foundation Serving Richmond & Central Virginia has awarded the Villa \$35,000 in Support of its Day Support and Respite Service.

The grant will support program expenses and also provide scholarship funds to families who cannot afford after-school and weekend respite care.

The Villa also is grateful to announce that the McKesson Foundation (McKesson Medical-Surgical) has awarded the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism a grant for \$16,667 to purchase equipment to develop a new physical education and sensory program which will provide an outlet for children with autism to build leisure skills, release energy, and express everyday frustrations. Due to their inability to communicate effectively, many children with autism express themselves through aggressive behaviors. The program and equipment will further enhance their quality of life by increasing physical fitness level, by fostering socialization with others, and by identifying recreational interests.



Dooley School at Cherokee Road moved onto the Villa campus over the holiday break, and since then, they have been fully exploring all of our resources and activities. At left, some of the Cherokee Road students help the Villa's Culinary staff prepare lunches. The Villa provides more than 500 hot meals a day, so we certainly can use the help! Thanks!

Our students at Dooley School at Cherokee also visited the petting zoo at Maymont to see many of the area's animals up close (but not TOO up close). All of the children enjoyed feeding the animals and taking in a great Spring day.

Below (left to right): Tyler and Gabe with the bear statue, Donnie feeding a goat and Tyler.



It's a sure sign of Spring: putting mulch down on the Villa's playgrounds. Here, one of the workers sprays the mulch down on the playground in front of Lewis Children's Center.



The Flagler Home has received a grant from Firstbooks to help build literacy and empower moms as their children's first teacher. Each week the moms spend time learning about best practice reading techniques, studying children's authors and then reading to their children. And each week, the children get to pick a new book to keep! Here, some of our children look over the week's selections.

And speaking of books, each year, The May L. Keller Alumni Club of the Phi Beta Phi Fraternity helps us celebrate the birthday of Dr. Seuss, the children's book author, at Lewis Children's Center. This year, everyone had a fantastic time.

Thank you!



Children at Lewis Children's Center were visited recently by college students in town for the Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Music Therapy Association's regional conference. Our children had a great time playing lots of instruments, including drums, and singing along with the students.

In Mid-March, the Villa's Children's Education Services system inducted several students into the Circle of Courage. The Circle of Courage builds four character quadrants (Belonging, Generosity, Mastery and Independence), and members of the Circle are expected to help foster these traits in other students at St. Joseph's Villa. It is a big responsibility, and we are sure that the new inductees will help us in our programs.

Congratulations!



After compiling a 5-1 record during the regular season, the Dooley School basketball team lost its semifinal match in the Richmond Alternative School Sports League basketball tournament. The margin was close, only five points.

Congratulations, team, on a great season!





“Red” from Red Robin Restaurants recently stopped by the Lewis Children’s Center to meet the children and speak about good nutrition. (Actually, one of Red’s handlers spoke about nutrition; Red is a bird and doesn’t do a lot of talking.)

The children had a great time and learned something too!

Thanks to a grant from Capital One, Commonwealth Parenting held a workshop for Lewis Children’s Center parents on “How to Be a Good Parent, Even in Tough Economic Times.” Several people attended, and everyone agreed that there were plenty of good tips.

Commonwealth Parenting will do another workshop on Wednesday, May 20. If you would like to attend, please call Carolyn Seay at 553-3244 to make a reservation.



Students at the Dooley Center for Alternative Education continue their “Off the Chain” exploration of the linked effects of poverty, crime and homelessness. As part of the program, students visited several locations where homeless people live.

At left, Charles W., one of the DCAE students, speaks with a man living under a bridge in downtown Richmond.

To see the “Off the Chain” video, please visit www.NeverStopBelieving.org/services_youth.html

St. Joseph's Villa’s Emergency Shelter has been approved to receive Medicaid Level A for funding of children in our care. Since 1993, the Villa has operated an emergency (short-term) shelter for children who have been taken out of their homes as a result of abuse, homelessness or neglect, and the new Medicaid Level A approval will allow us to offer additional services to children in our care.

Upcoming Events at St. Joseph's Villa

April is **Autism Awareness Month**. Please be sure to take advantage of the many learning opportunities throughout the community or visit the Autism Society of America Central Virginia Chapter website, www.asacv.org.

April also is **Volunteer Recognition Month**. We at St. Joseph's Villa thank the hundreds of individuals and groups who provide time and energy to help us achieve our mission of helping children in need and their families.

Monday, April 6 – **Villa Coed Softball Season** begins. Villa staff from across campus will play at parks throughout Henrico County each Monday evening.

Wednesday, April 8 (5:00 pm) – **VDOT Public Information Meeting** on Brook Road construction project. In the Villa gymnasium.

Wednesday, April 22 (6:30 pm) – **Parent Networking Meeting** for parents of children with autism, Asperger's and related developmental disabilities. The group will go for dinner at CiCi's Pizza. Contact Bertie Strickler at rstrickler@sjvmail.net for more information.

Saturday, April 25 (9:30 am – 1:30 pm) – **Connections Resource Fair** for parents and others working with children with special needs. At the Children's Museum of Richmond (2626 W. Broad Street). Free admission to the Children's Museum.

Monday, May 4 – **25th Annual St. Joseph's Villa Golf Tournament** at Willow Oaks Country Club. More information online, or contact Katie Merritt at (804) 200-1617 or kmerritt@sjvmail.net

Friday, May 8 (7 pm) – **15th Annual Hoedown** to benefit Flagler Home. Featuring the Lonesome River Band. Tickets \$75. Call or email Katie Merritt at (804) 200-1617 or kmerritt@sjvmail.net for more information.

Wednesday, May 20 (6:30 pm) – **Effective Parenting classes** from Commonwealth Parenting at Lewis Children's Center. Call 553-3244 for information and to RSVP.

Wednesday, May 20 (6:30 pm) – **Parent Networking Meeting** for parents of children with autism, Asperger's and related developmental disabilities. The group will discuss Transition Issues. Contact Bertie Strickler at rstrickler@sjvmail.net for more information.

Saturday, May 23 – **5k Run/Walk for Autism** at Innsbrook Office Park. Sponsored by the Autism Society of America Central Virginia Chapter.

Friday, June 5 (6 pm) – **Lewis Children's Center graduation** ceremony.

Thursday, June 11 (5 pm) – **Brook Road Academy graduation ceremony**.

Friday, June 12 (10 am) – **Dooley School graduation ceremony**.

Thursday, August 20 (1 – 3 pm) – **"Villa Idol"** performance to conclude summer programs.

Friday and Saturday, November 20 and 21 – St. Joseph's Villa celebrates its **175th Anniversary**. Call Brenda Savage at (804) 200-1616 or email her at bsavage@sjvmail.net to get on our mailing list.

Volunteer needs at St. Joseph's Villa

Donation Center Volunteers are needed to assist with receiving, sorting and displaying donations in the St. Joseph's Villa Donation Center Monday-Friday 9am-4pm. The center accepts New and "Like New" donations of household items, clothing, school supplies and furniture for the benefit of the clients of St. Joseph's Villa. Volunteers are asked to commit to a minimum of 2 hours once a week. Volunteers should be comfortable lifting up to 30lbs and be at least 18 years old. This volunteer experience is an excellent opportunity for groups.

Greeter/Receptionist needed to assist the Day Support Program Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:30am-5:00pm, flexible shifts are available. Responsibilities include greeting clients and guests when they arrive, escorting them to classrooms or transportation provider, managing sign in/out logs. Volunteers should be comfortable working with the public and children. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age to apply.

Garden Attendant is needed to assist the Culinary Services Program with maintaining and harvesting the Villa vegetable garden and providing educational instruction to school age children. Responsibilities include propagation of plants, general garden maintenance and weekly instruction for school age children in a 1 hour setting. Volunteers should possess a good working knowledge of vegetable gardening and be comfortable working and teaching children. Flexible time frames are available Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:00am-5:30pm. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old to apply and willing to make a minimum of 3 month commitment. Group volunteers welcome.

Office Assistant is needed to assist the Human Resources office with a variety of clerical tasks such as filing, copying, data entry, assembling orientation materials, answering the telephone, and other related tasks. Volunteers should be comfortable working independently and possess strong organizational and clerical skills. Volunteers are needed for 4 hours a week between the hours of 8:30am-4:30pm Monday-Friday. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age to apply and willing to make a minimum of 3 month commitment.

Please be sure to check our website, www.NeverStopBelieving.org/help_donate.html for other volunteer opportunities. Thank you!

A Final Note

As you can see from this newsletter, there is constant activity at St. Joseph's Villa. We are a place of hope and healing for more than 600 children and their families every day. Challenges that have begun to take a toll on more and more Americans have always been a way of life for many of our children's families. These families have to make daily decisions between eating, heating their homes, buying gas, or going to the doctor.

As discouraging as headlines can be, the Villa remains a solid source of hope for those we help. Later this year, the Villa will celebrate 175 years of faithful, determined service to the most underserved children in the community we share. We haven't persisted successfully for generations on determination alone. We have done so thanks to faithful friends like you who believe in the Villa's mission and act on their belief by supporting our work.

Will you help the children of the Villa by making a gift to our Annual Fund now? Please visit <http://neverstopbelieving.org/donate.html> Thank you.