

## PRESS RELEASE

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### ST. JOSEPH'S VILLA BEGINS PROGRAM TARGETING AT-RISK YOUTH

Project Turnaround will help youth transition back to classroom

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Richmond, VA – St. Joseph's Villa announced today that it had successfully launched a new program designed to help at-risk youth better manage problem behaviors and transition back into their local schools. The program, named "Project Turnaround," began in early March 2010 and now has six students enrolled.

Project Turnaround began as an effort to help reduce the number of students who drop out of the educational system because they have been expelled or have not responded to other behavioral treatment programs. Each year, dozens of children are expelled from school or given long-term suspensions as a result of continuing behavioral incidents which result from a mental illness. And, most often, these students do not return to school, because they have lost so much ground academically.

The Villa's new program will provide therapeutic interventions and supports necessary to assist students in making better decisions about their actions. After a thorough assessment of a student's behavioral needs, Villa staff will develop an individualized program to teach the student appropriate social behaviors to facilitate a return to school.

Project Turnaround is an all-day program that takes place on the Villa's campus at Brook and Parham Roads, just north of the City of Richmond. Most of the students' day will be spent working on behaviors. However, each day the student also will receive instruction in both math and English.

The Villa's new Project Turnaround program is one of several programs targeting children with academic and behavioral problems. St. Joseph's Villa provides a variety of specialized schools which educate children from local school systems who are at risk of failure due to learning and/or behavior problems. The Villa also offers in-school, after-school and in-home therapeutic treatment programs to help children and families better manage problem behaviors.

"Our number one goal of our programs is to provide the supports necessary for a student to succeed in school, in the community and in the home," said Steve Beasley, Senior Director of Therapeutic Day Treatment Services. "Unfortunately, many students have not been able to control their behaviors. Project Turnaround gives them the tools they need to transition back. And because we also provide some academic support, when they do transition back, they are not as far behind their peers as they might have been."

Project Turnaround is funded through Medicaid, so there is no cost to families of qualified students. Academic instruction is provided through a scholarship program at St. Joseph's Villa. For more information about

Project Turnaround, and to discuss qualification criteria, please contact Craig Hedley, Director of Community Partnerships at St. Joseph's Villa, at (804) 553-3226.

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### St. Joseph's Villa

Established in Richmond in 1834, St. Joseph's Villa is metro-Richmond, Virginia's oldest and largest continuously-operating children's nonprofit organization. The Villa is located on a spacious 82-acre campus in Richmond/Henrico County and builds stronger children, families and communities. The Villa serves more than 500 children and families daily, through the delivery of day, after-school and residential programs that include: special and nontraditional education programs for at-risk youth; education and housing services for homeless children and their families; education and respite, summer and after-school care for children with autism and developmental disabilities; behavioral treatment programs for children and families; housing for adults with disabilities; and a child development center. The Villa is accredited by the national Council on Accreditation and is an approved Medicaid provider for many of its services.

St. Joseph's Villa admits clients of any race, color, gender, age, religion, disability or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accepted or made available to clients at St. Joseph's Villa. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, St. Joseph's Villa is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability and retaliation in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs and athletic and other agency-administered programs. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any U.S.D.A. related activity should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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