

Recent Events

One of the most exciting developments this month was the start of the Villa's partnership with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services. For most of the month, a group of students from Deep Run High School in Henrico County came to the Villa for four hours per day to learn vocational skills in our Donation Center. The students have assumed responsibility for making sure merchandise is displayed correctly and for keeping the Center clean, and in the coming month, they will move on to customer service tasks. Matt Kreydatus, the Villa's Transition Specialist, says the students "... have been learning a lot to prepare themselves for life after high school." According to Kristi Lockhart, DRS Transition Coordinator, the Villa plans to do "in a comprehensive, nine-week package what vocational rehabilitation counselors and their school partners have been attempting for years in a piecemeal fashion"; in the process, the Villa is "clearing a path for other localities to offer similar early work experience projects." We look forward to a long partnership helping DRS and other students in our community.



Many Villa students also participate in internships and career readiness programs which provide valuable job skills. Below, Paul, one of the students at Dooley School, works on repairing a door lock. Other students like Meghan have internships working with the Villa's Culinary Services.



Students from Dooley School are having fun participating in the Richmond Area Alternative Sports League basketball season. To date the team has won two games and lost three. The season will conclude in late March with the league's "Elite 8" annual tournament.

At right, Trevon prepares for a drive to the hoop against an opponent from Charterhouse School. Dooley School won the match.



The University of Richmond men's basketball team visited the Villa to spend time and offer pointers to children in the Villa's Day Treatment program. The players, and Coach Mooney, took the children through drills (offering a LITTLE support, at left) and spoke to the children about good sportsmanship. The kids also will attend a UR game in early March. Thanks team!



A team of students from Brook Road Academy also took part in a basketball game in late February. Although the team lost a hard-fought battle, students, parents and friends were thrilled that the school was able to field a team and to play so respectfully. Special thanks to the Brook Road students who organized the effort, and Ben Walters who coached the team.



Students from Brook Road Academy visited the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts recently to explore the museum's collection. Each student was required to examine works from the museum's collection of 21st Century and 20th Century art and to write about the artist's intent and how that intent was expressed through the piece.

Each year, students take several field trips to Richmond and to the surrounding area to complement their work in the classroom. To find out more about Brook Road Academy, please visit www.BrookRoadAcademy.com

And, speaking of Brook Road Academy, congratulations to Brook Road seniors who have earned acceptance into the following schools: Appalachian State University (Honors Program); Guilford College; James Madison University; Lees-McRae College (Honors Program); Queens University of Charlotte; Randolph-Macon College; Christopher Newport University (Invitation to Apply for Presidential Leadership Program & Honors Program); University of Mary Washington (Honors Program); and University of North Carolina – Asheville. Congratulations!

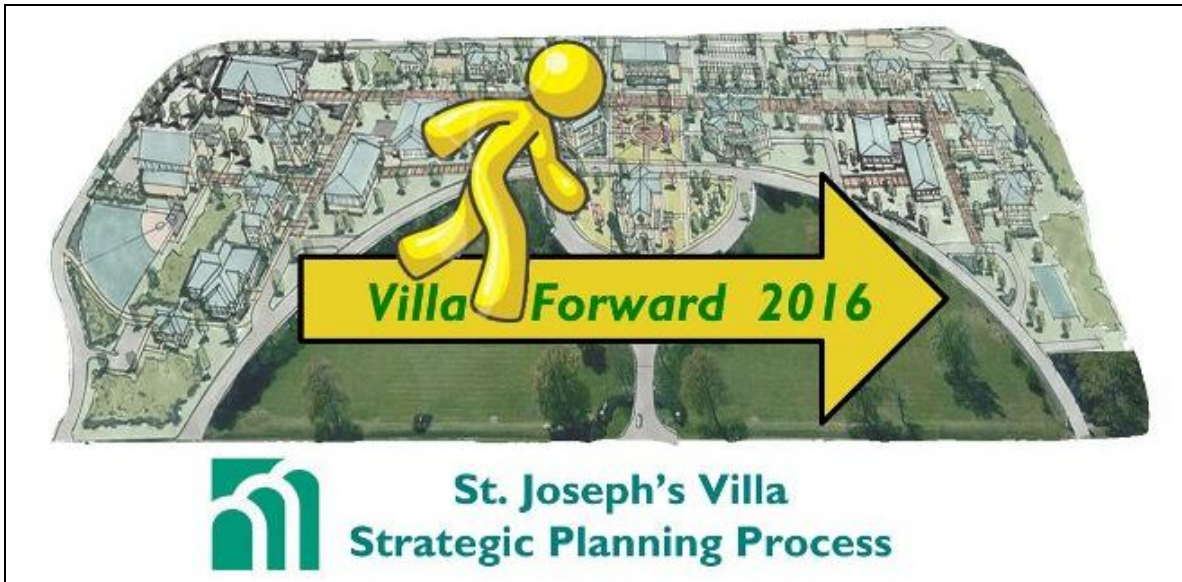
Students at Dooley Elementary School have been taking advantage of an internship by education students from the University of Richmond. Each week, students get an art class which helps them discover new ways to express themselves. At right, Lisa works with Brian to make a paper airplane.



St. Joseph's Villa has produced a new video describing its current construction project and the effort to transform the campus into a safer and more therapeutic environment. You can watch the video on YouTube or the *Believing is Seeing* Campaign page of the Villa's website, <http://www.NeverStopBelieving.org/bis.htm>

If you have passed by the Villa campus recently, you know that several trees have been removed to make way for the new perimeter road which will circle the original 1931 campus. Once completed, the loop road will carry cars and free up the campus interior to allow completion of a new, safe pedestrian mall. Work is expected to be complete by the end of the year.





The Board of Trustees at St. Joseph's Villa has begun a strategic planning process to develop a plan for the Villa's next three to five years. Strategic priorities are to be developed by the summer, with operational strategies following by fall 2011. Stay tuned!

A big "Thanks!" to our friends at CWD Kids, who donated several boxes of winter clothing to help the Villa's children.

Pictured (left to right): Catherine Stanley, the Villa's Manager of Volunteer and Community resources, with CWD Kids Assistant Store Manager Mary Martha Pender, Store Manager Bunny Collier, Assistant Store Manager Diane Maddra, and CWD Kids President Bryan Jones.



Special thanks to Rhonda Neal and her Capital One co-workers, who assembled more than 100 Valentine's Day goody bags for students at St. Joseph's Villa.

Pictured: Catherine Stanley with Carolyn Banks, one of the Villa's volunteers in the Donation Center, and Rhonda Neal.

If your group would like to help children at the Villa, please contact Catherine Stanley at cstanley@sjvmail.net or (804) 521-5577. Thank you!

In other donation news,

- Maude Trevette Elementary School hosted a mitten and scarf drive for the children here at the Villa.
- The VCU Homecoming Committee donated 50 birthday party kit bags which included everything you need to host a children's birthday party (except the cake!).

Thank you!



Looking for a great summer camp experience for your child? Enroll in Lewis Children's Center's "HEROES Training Camp," the program that reinforces positive values such as honesty, enthusiasm, optimism and responsibility (among others). The camp is offered five days a week, from 7 am until 6 pm, June 20 through September 1. Call Carolyn Seay at 553-3244 for more information.

St. Joseph's Villa has begun a new service, In-Home Behavioral Treatment (EPSDT), which provides intensive behavior therapy to help children with developmental disabilities and their families avoid out of home placements and enhance the overall quality of their family life.

The service will be run by Danielle Moore, a Licensed Professional Counselor who joined the Villa in late 2010.



St. Joseph's Villa is sad to announce the passing of Ernie Binns, who was one of the first people to move into the Hollybrook Apartments more than 25 years ago.

In addition to being a longtime resident, Ernie also worked and volunteered for several years at the Villa. A memorial service was held on February 12.

We will miss you, Ernie.

St. Joseph's Villa has received a grant of \$15,000 from the Emily S. and Coleman A. Hunter Trust in support of Brook Road Academy. Funds will be used for teacher salaries, educational materials and enrichment activities, including field trips.

Congratulations to Annie, Another Villa Shining Star!



We received FANTASTIC news this month! Annie, one of our students at Dooley School, had passed her Math SOL exam and will receive her Modified Standard Diploma this June! Congratulations, Annie!

Several students graduate from Dooley School each year, but Annie is special to the Villa. She has been a student here for more than four years and has become part of our family. She has had her struggles, and sometimes they have gotten the better of her. But over the years, we have seen her come to love her Villa family.

How does that happen? Susan Pokorski, the Senior Director of the Villa's Educational Services, says that persistence is the key. "You have to be there for Annie. She can tell when you're not being honest with her, and if you say you're going to do something, you had better do it. She'll let you know when you're letting her down."

Annie is incredibly intelligent and has grown to the point where she is sharing that intelligence with others. She was born with a hearing disability, and after surgeries and hearing aids, she still relies on reading lips to understand what people are saying. She is proficient in sign language and has even taught sign language to the faculty at the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism.

We will miss Annie when she graduates this June.

Pictured: Annie (right) with Denae Kennedy, one of her teachers at Dooley School.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday and Wednesday, March 8 and 9 – Commonwealth Autism Annual Conference.
For more information, please visit www.autismva.org.

Friday, March 11 (6:30 pm) – Recreation Resource Fair sponsored by the Autism Society of Central Virginia. At River Road Methodist Church (8800 River Road).

Saturday, April 2, 2011 (9:30 – 12:30) – Connections Resource Fair. Come and meet with vendors of products and services to help children with special needs and their families. For more information, call Emily Starrett at (866) 737-5965 or email her at estarrett@mcvh-vcu.edu



Saturday, April 9 (Kids Race at 8:30, 5k at 9:00) – Superhero Race benefitting Henrico and Chesterfield CASA on the St. Joseph's Villa campus. For more information and to register, please visit <http://www.henricocasa.org/SuperheroRun/tabid/92/Default.aspx>

Saturday, May 7, 2011 (6-10 PM) - 17th Annual Hoedown benefiting the Villa's Flagler Home. On the Villa's grounds. For more information, please visit the Hoedown page of the Villa website (http://neverstopbelieving.org/news_hoedown.htm) or contact Anne Murray at (804) 200-1617 or amurray@sjvmail.net



2011 Innsbrook Classic

Monday, May 23 - 2011 Innsbrook Classic Golf Tournament benefiting St. Joseph's Villa. At The Dominion Club. For more information, please visit the golf page on the Villa's website http://neverstopbelieving.org/news_2011golf.htm or contact Anne Murray at (804) 200-1617 or amurray@sjvmail.net

Volunteer and other needs at St. Joseph's Villa

Volunteer your time, Donate goods, Share our message!



We are looking for volunteers to come out during the week of April 18th to host Egg hunts with the preschool and school age children here at the Villa. Morning and afternoon time frames are available.



Egg Stuffers needed! Help fill plastic eggs for Egg hunts. The Villa has the eggs and the trinkets we just need a few willing helpers to finish the task! This is a great afternoon project for families and children. Flexible afternoon time frames available.



The Villa is in need of Easter basket donors to provide 225 filled baskets for the school age children. Multiple donors are needed to fulfill this need. If you or someone you know is interested in helping with this project please contact Catherine Stanley at 521-5577. All baskets must be delivered by Monday, April 18th. This is a great office or class project!



Summer is just around the corner and the Donation Center is seeking NEW swim suits for boys and girls and spring/summer clothing is now being accepted. Please visit www.NeverStopBelieving.org for a complete list of items accepted.

Our Donation Center is open Monday-Wednesday 11am-4pm to accept your items.



ST. JOSEPH'S VILLA FOR CHILDREN

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 serves more than 800 children and families each year, through the delivery of programs for children with autism and other developmental disabilities, at-risk youth and homeless children and their families, among others. The Villa is accredited by the national Council on Accreditation and is an approved Medicaid provider for many of its services.

The work of St. Joseph's Villa cannot take place without the support of individuals and organizations in the communities we serve. If you would like to contribute to the Villa's success, please visit http://neverstopbelieving.org/help_finance.html Thank you!

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And also on Twitter!

http://twitter.com/sjv_richmond