

 **ST. JOSEPH'S VILLA**  
FOR CHILDREN  
**August 2007 Newsletter**

**Recent Events**



A group of recent graduates from Union College in New York have formed **Rolling for Autism**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of autism. Four students have embarked on a 2,000-mile (!) rollerblading trip from Florida to Maine and visited St. Joseph's Villa to take a tour of the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism and to give the students a rollerblading demonstration. Thank you!

To follow the students' progress and to learn more about their organization, please visit [www.RollingForAutism.com](http://www.RollingForAutism.com).

Students from **St. Gertrude's High School** have begun practicing field hockey on the Villa's fields. This year, the school will hold all of its practices and home games at St. Joseph's Villa.

Welcome, St. Gertrude's!



Each summer, the University of Richmond hosts the **Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities**. This year, the program invited students from the Dooley School and the Dooley School at Cherokee Road to attend a concert given by students in the orchestral program.

The Villa students attended the concert and then had lunch in the UR dining hall. As Ayanna commented, "It was AWESOME!"

Thank you, UR!

Each summer, the Vila hosts the **St. Joseph's Villa/Powerade 5k**. This year's event, on July 26, featured more than 130 runners. Congratulations to men's winner, Stephan Mutisya, who is from Kenya and runs for VCU; Stephan completed the course in 15:50. Congratulations also to women's winner Jackie Kosakowski, who runs for William & Mary and clocked 18:42.



St. Joseph's Villa operates three summer camps each summer. One of these is the **camp at the Villa's Day Support service**. Each day, forty children with autism, mental retardation, and/or multiple developmental disabilities come to Seton House (7700 Brook Road) for a full day of care and enrichment.

Each day children get at least two outings. One recent day, one group was swimming at the YMCA while another group was at the neighborhood Lowe's learning how to build race cars. (By the way, the Lowe's employee comes in her day off to teach our children. Thank you!)

The camp has a different theme each week. This week (July 30-Aug 3) was International Week and Ann Green came in to read stories from Africa.





Seton House also has undergone some major improvements. First, a **new computer lab** was installed, which will provide a variety of educational and leisure support activities for our children.

And, at the end of July, bedrooms and the dining room for the Weekend Respite program received **new furniture** as a result of a grant from KOVAR (Knights of Virginia Assistance for the Retarded). Thank you!



Ricky Schramm and Ralph Pace from the **Richmond Kickers** visited campers at **Janet's Place** in late July to invite them to a Kickers game and to answer questions about being a professional soccer player.

Everyone got a chance to kick a soccer ball with the players, and some of the campers even performed a Villa cheer for the team.

Good luck with Saturday's game!



Congratulations to longtime Villa employee **Craig Hedley** and his new wife **Debbie** for their July 5 wedding. The wedding took place in Sarasota, FL, where Craig's brother is Executive Director of the Child Protective Team.

Best wishes, Craig and Debbie!



## Upcoming Events

Wednesday, August 8 - **Water Day** at the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism

Thursday, August 9 - **Campus Café**, a monthly luncheon for students in the Dooley School and Villa staff, will be held at noon.

Saturday, August 11 - **Alan Coleman**, the Villa's Networks and Database Administrator and author of the "Quest of the Seal Bearers" series, will appear at the Brandermill Barnes and Noble Bookstore to sign copies of his new book, *The Five Jewels*. One of the characters from the series also will be at the event.

Weeks of August 20 and 27 - **Dooley School Training**. Summer programs will end and staff will undergo training prior to the start of school.

Thursday, August 23 - **Villa Idol**, a talent show presented by campers attending the Villa's Day Support Summer Camp, will take place in the Villa chapel.

Friday, August 31 - **Lewis Children's Center closed**. This is one of the few days each year that the Center is closed to allow for group training programs.

Friday, August 31 - **Staff Awards Breakfast**, an annual event to recognize Villa staff for accomplishments and years of service.

## A Job Well-Done

We received some exciting news this month. Some of you may remember longtime Villa client Henry Bernard. Henry has learning and developmental disabilities (mild mental retardation and autism-like tendencies resulting from a brain injury) and came to the Villa several years ago. Henry had tried several schools before coming to the Villa. None of them worked out. It was not uncommon for Henry to be physically restrained several times a day. Henry's behaviors caused problems for his mother; her employer couldn't afford to give her all of the time off she and Henry needed, and it was almost impossible to find babysitters who could take care of Henry when his mother wasn't there.

And then Henry and his family found St. Joseph's Villa. After years of educational and behavioral support, Henry received his High School diploma last year. (His story was written up last June in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, when he took retiring Villa CEO Ray Pardue to lunch in a white limousine immediately after graduation.)

So what has Henry been up to?

Henry had worked at his local Ukrop's store during middle and high school, and he has continued working there. He also has volunteered at Dooley School at Cherokee Road, helping other people like himself who are working to deal with their challenges. And he also helped out at the Manchester YMCA for a year and then earned a paying job as an assistant to the Summer Program Director.

When he was at the Villa, Henry became interested in how people respond to a crisis. Now he's finding out. He has just passed the CPR class offered through the American Red Cross and earned his Henrico CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) certification. Henry was selected to start the training program for volunteers and assistants to become a CMT (Certified Medical Technician) with the Bensley-Bermuda Rescue Squad.

A pretty impressive year. For any of us.

Debbie Hicks, Henry's sister, works here at the Villa and remembers one of Henry's classmates remarking that Henry's behavior changed so much when he came to St. Joseph's Villa. The student asked Debbie, "What happened to Henry? Will that happen to me, when I grow up?"

That's our hope, too.