



# ST. JOSEPH'S VILLA FOR CHILDREN

## Sarah Dooley Center for Autism



### Overview

St. Joseph's Villa opened the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism in November 2006 in partnership with Commonwealth Autism Service, which helped the Center develop its current curriculum. The Center is licensed through the Virginia Department of Education and accredited by the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Educational Facilities and the national Council on Accreditation. Instructional staff meets licensing and endorsement standards of the Virginia Department of Education.

The Sarah Dooley Center for Autism provides educational, vocational and life skills training to students who are faced with significant challenges related to their autism. The program includes several interrelated components, all designed to provide a successful transition into the community following the student's education. The program includes the following components:

- **Assessment** – Board-Certified Behavior Analysts conduct intensive observation to assess a child's behaviors, to determine reasons for those behaviors and to develop strategies for changing negative behaviors.
- **Behavior Management** – Applied Behavior Analysis strategies are implemented to change behaviors that adversely affect the child's learning.
- **Learning Readiness** – Programs are used to better develop skills that are necessary for learning to take place.
- **Functional Academics** – Skills are taught, with an emphasis on generalization to everyday situations.
- **Quality of Life Skills** – Students develop social skills and age-appropriate leisure activities that enhance their ability to interact with others outside the classroom environment.
- **Vocational training** – Focused instruction is provided to increase knowledge and skills that enable students to contribute to society after they exit education.

Real life teaching environments provide skills necessary for transitioning into adulthood with the greatest degree of independence. For example, a bedroom-bathroom combination offers students the opportunity to learn and practice activities of daily living as well as to develop skills for potential job placement.

### Wrap-Around Services

Numerous services are available to Sarah Dooley Center for Autism students and their families to facilitate success at school and in the community. All students receive therapeutic support from staff, and student progress is reviewed in weekly treatment team meetings. Wrap-around services available through St. Joseph's Villa include the following:

- In-home Counseling (Medicaid funded)
- Day Treatment services (Medicaid funded)
- After School Support (Medicaid funded)
- Weekend Respite (Medicaid funded)
- Youth Emergency Shelter
- Homeless Shelter for Women and Children
- Donation Center (clothes, home furnishings, school supplies)

Additionally, Sarah Dooley Center staff work closely with local school divisions and Family Assessment and Planning Teams (FAPT) to ensure that the needs of each child are addressed.

## Admissions/For More Information

For admission and tuition information or to learn more about the Villa and the Dooley School, please call Hattie Porter, Admissions Coordinator, at 804 553-3241. We welcome visits and will provide a campus tour to all interested parties.

## A History of Caring at St. Joseph's Villa

St. Joseph's Villa has served children with autism for more than twenty years. The Sarah Dooley Center for Autism was opened with Commonwealth Autism Service, who had provided consulting services to St. Joseph's Villa prior to 2006. The partnership of the two organizations and the establishment of the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism at St. Joseph's Villa highlight the Villa's commitment to ensure the highest quality of service through the implementation of research-based, best practice strategies. St. Joseph's Villa took over full control of the Sarah Dooley Center in the Spring of 2008.

### **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 600 children and families daily, through the delivery of six major day and residential programs that includes: special and nontraditional education; education/housing services for homeless children and their families; respite, summer and after-school care for children with disabilities; emergency shelter for children in crisis; and, housing for adults with disabilities.

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.