

PRESS RELEASE

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SARAH DOOLEY CENTER TO OFFER FREE WEEKEND RESPITE

Scholarships for new students will provide one free weekend per quarter

Richmond, VA – The Sarah Dooley Center at St. Joseph's Villa has begun a new scholarship program to help new students and their families: a free weekend of respite care for new students, after they have been enrolled in the school for three months. Scholarship weekends will be awarded every 90 days for the first year the new student is enrolled.

The Sarah Dooley Center provides individualized educational programs for students who have been diagnosed with autism and/or another developmental disability. The school operates year-round and provides academic, behavioral and vocational education components. Approximately 20 students currently are enrolled.

St. Joseph's Villa also operates one of the oldest weekend respite program in Central Virginia. Each weekend, approximately a dozen children with autism, an intellectual disability or a developmental disability come to the Villa's Weekend Respite program at 7700 Brook Road (just south of the Villa's main campus at 8000 Brook Road) for fun and recreation. The weekend respite program operates from 6:00 pm Friday evenings until 2:00 pm on Sunday, and during that time, the child's parents can have a weekend free of the constant demands children with developmental disabilities sometimes require.

The new scholarship program will provide a new level of care and support to families with children with developmental disabilities. After they have been at the Sarah Dooley Center for three months, students will qualify for a free weekend at the respite center. Parents will be able to select a specific weekend when their child will stay at the weekend respite center. When that weekend comes, the student will finish school on Friday and immediately begin the weekend respite program. The parent (or caregiver) will pick up the student on Sunday afternoon.

"Both the Sarah Dooley Center and the Villa's Weekend Respite program are part of the Villa's Developmental Disabilities system of services which help children with autism and other developmental disabilities and their families," said Cynthia Faison, Chief Operations Officer at St. Joseph's Villa. "Our Developmental Disabilities services work with each other to understand and implement best practices for our children. It makes sense that they should also work together to develop new programs to help children and families. We are the only service provider in the region with both an ABA educational program and a weekend respite service."

New students enrolling at the Sarah Dooley Center will be able to receive up to four free respite weekend per year. For more information on the programs and this special scholarship program, please contact Ms. Hattie Porter, Admissions Coordinator, at (804) 553-3241.

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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