

February 2011 Newsletter

Recent Events



Students at Dooley Elementary School took a field trip to the Aviation Museum in early January. Students enjoyed playing with the flight simulator and exploring the many types of aircraft on display at the museum. (If you haven't been, it really IS amazing how many different planes they have!)

At left, Caeleb soars by and lets us know how much fun he's having.

On another trip, students visited the Science Museum and walked away with a prize – two Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches! Each cockroach is about two inches long, and students love feeding them each afternoon. At right, teacher Deanna Griffin and some of the students prepare to feed their newest classroom additions!



Congratulations to Villa CEO Kathleen Burke Barrett, who was named as the 2011 recipient of the YWCA's Outstanding Woman award for nonprofit management. Kathleen will receive her award at a luncheon ceremony in early May.

Shown: Villa CEO Kathleen Burke Barrett (at right) with Sharon McGinty, President of the YWCA Board of Directors.



"Good luck" to Catherine McCarthy, shown at left with English teacher Ben Walters. Catherine will represent Brook Road Academy on February 15 at the Poetry Out Loud competition at Barksdale Theater. For each of the past four years, Brook Road Academy students have participated in the contest and have done very well.

Good luck, Catherine!

More than half of the parents of students at Brook Road Academy attended an informal breakfast meeting in late January to get together and to learn more about each other. Two things were immediately clear: many of the parents already knew each other and all of the parents were amazed (and thankful) at how much their children seemed to be enjoying their experience at Brook Road Academy.



Students at Dooley School have been taking advantage of several vocational training activities at the Villa. One of the most popular job sites is the Villa's Culinary Services. Below, Megan helps prepare snacks for other Villa children, and at left, Kiera assembles box lunches.

Keep up the good work!





Students at the Sarah Dooley Center for Autism have been taking cooking classes twice each week as part of developing important life skills. As Michael works on preparing nachos (at left), Dante cleans tables for the upcoming meal.

With the recent bad weather, students have been taking full advantage of the Villa's newly refurbished gymnasium. Below, some students relax with teacher Lindsey Brown (center) after the game.



St. Joseph's Villa has a long history of working with refugees from other countries. Recently, five children from Southeast Asia joined the Villa family at Lewis Children's Center. The children and their families got in touch with LCC thanks to our friends at Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Shown: LCC Director Lisa Williams and our newest friends!





After-school students in Miss Faustine's class at LCC recently completed a project to build a Popsicle-stick bridge over a river. The children enjoyed the project so much that they also used modeling clay to build cars, trees, and rocks. And of course, everything was beautifully painted.

Everyone is quite proud of their work! (And well they should be – it's beautiful!)

Miss Anna, one of the teachers at Lewis Children's Center, recently unveiled a special bulletin board in the child development center. The board showcases positive actions the children can take to prevent bullying and promote learning.

Thanks for the additional reminders, Anna!



Young ladies who are part of a mentoring group called Princess Power collected new socks and undergarments for girls and boys here at the Villa for one of their winter service projects. The ladies delivered their donation to the Villa in late January. Princess Power is sponsored and mentored by members of the Delmarva Women's Group. Thank you!

Members of the St. Joseph's Villa Alumni Society celebrated "Little Christmas" with residents of Flagler Home in early January. When the Daughters of Charity were at St. Joseph's Villa, the Sisters and children would celebrate the visitation by the three wise men and exchange small gifts. Alumni Peggy Jamison, Elizabeth Corey Evans, Barbara Wilhelm Farley and David Lydiard are shown with Flagler Home's Child Services Coordinator Katherine Peiper (second from left).



Simon is Shining – Thanks to St. Joseph's Villa!
By Felice McDermott, Head of Dooley Elementary School



Simon W. recently transitioned from Dooley Elementary back to public school. Simon had been in the Dooley School for almost 5 years. He went from being an aggressive, angry student to a leader in the classroom.

Simon did not know how to apply himself when he arrived at Dooley Elementary. He thought all work was too hard and thought that refusing work and becoming aggressive would get him out of having to complete any assignments. Staff worked hard over the years to teach Simon what was appropriate for the classroom and, more important, what he was capable of accomplishing.

Simon learned. Eventually, he discovered that he loved art, and he shared his passion of art with the school. He was quickly labeled a "true artist". Simon also finally learned the social skills to make friends and how to BE a friend.

When it was time for transition, Simon was extremely nervous. He had heard about public school from the other students and from what he had heard, it was no place for him! There were months of preparation, including home visits and numerous meetings to discuss his transition. Simon was able to attend those meetings in order to advocate for himself. Simon was able to tell the school's staff his concerns and what he thought would help make his transition a smooth one.

Finally the day came where Simon made the huge jump to Powhatan Junior High School. His parents and Dooley staff were extremely nervous for the future. There was no doubt about what he could do academically, but socially would he fit?

HE DOES!!! Recently, we made a trip out to see him in his new environment. Simon was proud. His teachers in his new program remarked about how well he was doing. Simon came to the office and proudly shook our hands. He seemed taller, more mature. He had risen to the challenge. He showed us his schedule which he had already memorized. He told us that lunchtime was a little tough for him, but he was confident that he would get used to it. He loved the options he had in his new environment. He explained his classes and how he played exponent bingo in Math class. When asked his favorite subject, he quickly said Science and described the experiment he witnessed his teacher conducting where they were testing the flammability of substances. He was really enjoying himself.

As we were leaving he said, " You know, they said public school is hard and has a lot of work, but I like it here." That sentence was enough for us.

As our visit ended, you could see that Simon had truly made the transition back to public school, and that the public school had accepted him. Simon is truly a shining star and great example for other students on the same journey. Working hard and staying focused pays off in the end. Congratulations, Simon!



If you drove by the Villa campus near the end of January, you know that big changes are underway. Heavy equipment has arrived and work on the new Perimeter Roadway has begun. One of the first projects will be to widen the Villa's South Gate (shown) to allow two-way traffic. Construction on the roadway and on the new Pedestrian Mall will take approximately a year, and during this time, please watch out for (and follow) posted construction signs. Thank you!

Construction updates: <http://neverstopbelieving.org/construction.htm>

Volunteer and other needs at St. Joseph's Villa

St. Joseph's Villa is in need of the following items:

- Summer clothing for women & children—all sizes
- Swim suits for children—sizes toddler to young adult
- Office desks
- Wooden bookshelves
- Dining room tables and chairs—able to seat 6-8
- Conference table and chairs—able to seat 8-10
- Window treatments—valances and drapery styles
- Twin bed frames
- Electric stove w/oven
- Bulletin boards
- Dish sets for 10-12
- Large serving bowls, platters and utensils

If you have any of these items and would like to see them go to a good home (or good homes), please drop them off at our Donation Center. We will make sure that your items will go to people who need them. The Center is open from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Wednesday.

We are currently accepting volunteer applications **ONLY** for the positions listed below. Applicants must be at least 18 years old to apply. Please visit our website to download an application.

The Villa's Donation Center is currently seeking volunteers on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11:00am-4:00 pm. Responsibilities include receiving, sorting and displaying donations in the St. Joseph's Villa Donation Center where the center accepts New and "Like New" donations of household items, clothing, school supplies and furniture for the benefit of St. Joseph's Villa clients. Volunteers are asked to commit to a minimum of 2 hours a week and must be at least 18 years old to participate. Group volunteers are welcome!!

Villa Docents are needed to serve in the Administration Building. Responsibilities include greeting guests, answering general questions about our programs and services, and performing various clerical tasks. Volunteers should be comfortable working independently and available to commit to a weekly schedule. Flexible volunteer shifts are available between the hours of 8:30am-4:30pm Monday-Friday.

Please be sure to check our website, www.NeverStopBelieving.org/help_donate.html for other volunteer opportunities. Thank you!

Upcoming Events

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, 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

Monday, May 23 - 2011 Innsbrook Classic Golf Tournament benefiting St. Joseph's Villa. At The Dominion Club. For more information, please contact Anne Murray at (804) 200-1617 or amurray@sjvmail.net



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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<http://www.facebook.com/St.Josephs.Villa>

And also on Twitter!

http://twitter.com/sjv_richmond

(and be sure to invite your friends to follow us, too! Thank you.)