



# VILLA VIEWS

FALL 2016

The Newsletter of St. Joseph's Villa

Teon thrives in school after two years of Therapeutic Day Treatment at the Villa



## TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

Teon and his mother, Richelle, visit St. Joseph's Villa after a triumphant finish to elementary school.

**T**eon is an award-winning student, but he needed help getting there.

The academic and social pressures of third grade were a struggle for Teon. He felt like an outcast and had a hard time communicating his emotions. When his frustration became overwhelming, he turned to disruptive behaviors and outbursts at school and home. Teon's mother Richelle knew he needed help to overcome his challenges and stay in school. That's when she found the Villa's Therapeutic Day Treatment for children with a diagnosed mental illness.

For two years Villa staff worked diligently to help Teon learn to manage stress, build

social skills, practice positive communication, and gain self-confidence.

"It's hard working with troubled youth. It takes the right type of people, and they were definitely at St. Joseph's Villa," said Richelle. "I don't think it was just a job for the staff. They really cared about my son and about the other children. I'll forever be grateful for that."

By the end of fifth grade, Teon was thriving. He was honored with his school's LAMP Award for excellence in participation and conduct in Library, Art, Music and P.E. He also received the Awesome Bobcat Award for greatest progress over the year.

Beginning middle school this year, Teon knows it will be the best year yet!

"You can do good in life and grow up to be somebody, you just have to have the focus to do it," said Teon.



To see Teon and Richelle's story in their own words, visit [youtube.com/stjosephsvillarva](https://www.youtube.com/stjosephsvillarva)

## Villa's Crisis Stabilization Unit receives national Innovative Practices Award

The Council on Accreditation (COA) annually presents the *Innovative Practices Award* to organizations that bring lasting change to the lives of vulnerable individuals through unique, forward-thinking initiatives. This year our Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) for children's mental health was honored at the annual COA Conference in New York City. We were one of only two organizations across the country to be recognized.

The CSU opened in 2012 in partnership with Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) Region IV as the first facility of its kind in Central Virginia, providing treatment for children in mental health crisis across 23 localities. To date, the CSU has served more than 550 children and diverted nearly 90% from unnecessary hospitalization.



The Villa's Director of Clinical Services, Linda Saltonstall (left) and Chief Operations Officer, Cindy Faison (right) accepted the award.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that 1 in 5 children in the United States ages 13-18 have, or will have, a serious mental illness. Yet for many, hospitalization for mental illness can be associated with a sense of shame. The Villa's CSU is designed to end the stigma of mental illness, actively engage children together with their families, and link them to community resources that will prevent future crises.



ST. JOSEPH'S  
VILLA



Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden



## Career and Transition Services, community partners team up to fight food insecurity

The Villa's Learning & Therapy Garden is a dynamic shared space where students of all ages can engage in activities that contribute to their overall physical and mental health—including planting and harvesting fresh produce. While working in the garden, participants in our Career and Transition Services (CATS) learn to prepare food from farm to table using healthy ingredients that they grew themselves. Today our CATS students are using their gardening skills to serve the community thanks to a new partnership with Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and FeedMore.

CATS students have become active contributors to Lewis Ginter's Community Kitchen Garden, a quick bus ride down the road. All of the produce grown there is given to FeedMore to provide healthy meals for children and homebound seniors facing food insecurity. What better way for youth to build job skills?



CATS student Jerimaha picks an eggplant in Lewis Ginter's Community Kitchen Garden.

# Dog Days at the Villa

The therapeutic power of animal companionship shone brightly at the Villa this summer. Sarah Dooley Center for Autism students reveled in weekly visits from Loki, a Golden Retriever pup and certified therapy dog from Warren Retrievers. With the help of his handler, all grade levels were given the chance to pet, feed, walk and play with Loki. While therapy dogs can have a calming effect on children with autism—they are, after all, professional comforters—they also provide an opportunity for engaging in social activities and building communication skills.



Elsewhere on campus, Career and Transition Services partner Richmond Animal Care and Control (RACC) paid a visit to Dooley School with rescue dog Necky. Students instantly fell in love. They heard Necky’s rescue story, and learned how shelters like RACC can help find caring homes for neglected or abused animals. Students took the opportunity to ask questions about career opportunities in animal care.

Human-animal bonds extend back thousands of years, and research has shown that they are mutually beneficial for emotional health and well-being. Interactions with dogs can also teach responsibility, compassion, and respect for other living things. We thank our community partners Warren Retrievers and RACC for introducing Villa students to positive animal relationships, and bringing countless smiles to their faces.

*Above: Loki and a student enjoy a walk on campus; Below left: RACC visits Dooley School; Below right: In the Villa’s days as an orphanage, each cottage had a pet St. Bernard to offer and receive love.*



## Donors fill 280 bookbags with school supplies—and hope—for Villa students

The possibilities that come with a new school year are exciting, but it can be a stressful time for students who don’t have access to essential school supplies.

Because of the generosity of our community partners, Villa students were able start the year with confidence

and the supplies they need for academic success. The Villa and our students thank:

- Allianz
- Center for Healthy Hearts
- Cherry Bekaert
- Park Sterling Bank
- Shady Grove YMCA Leaders in Training
- Tuckahoe YMCA Leaders in Training
- Versus Underwriting Managers
- Wyndham Virginia Crossings
- Wells Fargo



*Park Sterling Bank’s “StuffThe Bus” collection drive benefited students at St. Joseph’s Villa.*

# Flagler Housing & Homeless Services co-hosts youth homelessness training

## *For youth, by youth*

Ending youth homelessness by 2020 has been set as a national priority by HUD. It's also a new focus for Flagler Housing & Homeless Services at St. Joseph's Villa. Flagler has initiated a rapid re-housing pilot program to discover the unique needs of young adults ages 18-25 who meet the HUD definition of homelessness, and develop best practices to address them.



*Youth advocates held an introductory gathering before breaking down into smaller groups. The training was held at Bon Air United Methodist Church.*

In June 2016, St. Joseph's Villa partnered with Advocates for Richmond Youth and Change The World RVA to hold "Growing Together to Serve Youth Successfully," a day-long, youth-led training for ending youth homelessness. Direct service providers, program managers, advocates and agency directors from 65 different organizations came from as far as Philadelphia to participate in the dialogue.

The goal of the training—the first of its kind in Central Virginia—was to expose participants to the realities of youth homelessness, and teach them how to access the resources they need to help those with unstable housing. Youth advocates directed group conversations about sub-populations of youth most likely to experience homelessness, what youth need from service providers to minimize the impact of homelessness, and strategies for creating effective system-level responses.

According to Kimberly Tucker, director of housing and homeless services for the Villa, the training was important because it allowed the voices of homeless youth to be heard, and gave service providers the opportunity to better understand the people they are helping.

"Youth have specific desires and needs, especially if they had a lack of support growing up," said Tucker. "Many want to be independent, but do not have the life experience they need to be completely self-sufficient. Our first goal is to house youth safely, then create a network of support."

The pilot program is funded by Brookfield Foundation, United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, Virginia Housing Trust Fund and Virginia Nonprofit Housing Coalition.

## What's new at Brook Road Academy?



*Brook Road Academy is capped at 50 students to provide a personalized learning environment that builds on the unique strengths of our students.*

## Need space for your next event?

The Villa chapel, gym and outdoor spaces are available to rent year-round with proceeds benefiting our mission. Our 82-acre campus is characterized by artfully handcrafted buildings, serene gardens, and tree-lined pedestrian avenues.



Contact us to find out how St. Joseph's Villa can meet your space needs!

**Weddings:** Contact Beth Harper at 804-553-3215.

**Gym and field rentals:** Contact Craig Hedley at 804-553-3226.

Brook Road Academy underwent some exciting changes over the summer that will make this one of our best years yet! On the first day of school, students were greeted with renovated classrooms and common spaces furnished with new lighting, carpets, decorations, and a fresh coat of paint. It looks like a brand new building thanks to the hard work of the Villa's Facilities team.

We also welcomed three new teachers: Israel Melendez, Spanish; Chris May, Special Education Coordinator; and George Fisher, Art. Starting this year, Brook Road Academy will offer classroom instruction in drawing, painting, sculpture, photography and ceramics, based on student interest. Staff and student led after-school clubs in film, photography and music have also formed to help students pursue hobbies and further their education.

One of Brook Road Academy's most unique aspects is our commitment to helping students reach their individual goals after high school. A greater number of Brook Road students, whether planning to enter college or the workforce, are now participating in the Villa's Career and Transition Services (CATS).

CATS staff conduct an assessment and create a plan with the student's input. Participants gain problem-solving, communication, and networking skills from counseling sessions, interactive presentations by industry professionals, and college tours. We partner with local businesses and colleges to give students experience in real-world work and education environments.

Brook Road Academy offers a flexible curriculum and a conversational approach to learning. Our focus is not solely on academic achievement; we strive to foster the growth of the whole child. Visit our website at **BrookRoadAcademy.com** to learn more about what makes us unique.



## Celebrating Virginia's Greatest Philanthropists

St. Joseph's Villa gives heartfelt congratulations to Page Auto Group and The Bob and Anna Lou Schaberg Fund of the Virginia Nonprofit Housing Coalition (VNHC), honorees at National Philanthropy Day on November 17, 2016. Larry Page, owner of Page Auto Group, has served on the Villa Board of Trustees and is a longtime supporter of the Villa. Since 2004, Page Auto Group has sponsored the Villa's two fundraising events that benefit our homeless and developmental disabilities programs.

They have been the signature sponsor for both events for the past three years. It was our delight to collaborate with FeedMore on Page Auto's nomination for Corporate Philanthropist of the Year.

VNHC is dedicated to serving the needs of homeless and low-income residents of the Greater Richmond area. VNHC helped create the Employment Specialist position within the Villa's Flagler Housing & Homeless Services in 2012. Funding from VNHC also launched Flagler's youth rapid re-housing pilot program. VNHC has been named Foundation Philanthropist of the Year.

The National Philanthropy Day celebration is held by the Central Virginia Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. We thank Page Auto Group, VNHC, and all honorees for making our community stronger.



Top: Larry Page (center) receives thank-you creations by Villa kids; Bottom: VNHC has helped Flagler house hundreds of homeless families.



## Partner Spotlight: St. Joseph's Outreach Clinic



The St. Joseph's Outreach Clinic is located at the south end of the Villa campus.

Bon Secours opened the St. Joseph's Outreach Clinic on the Villa campus in 2007 to provide medical care to patients with little or no health insurance. Although the clinic serves the entire community, 75% of its patients reside in the surrounding 23227 and 23228 zip codes, which Bon Secours has identified as a high-need area.

St. Joseph's Outreach Clinic currently serves 1,400 individual patients.

"This collaboration brings holistic, primary care to those living near

St. Joseph's Villa and the surrounding communities, and to many patients who otherwise would be unable to access care," said Tyler Agee, Practice Supervisor for Mission Services at Bon Secours. "Our goal to commit ourselves to bringing people and communities to health and wholeness is achieved each and every day on the Villa campus."

The clinic also refers patients to the Villa's behavioral health services, to help them improve daily functioning and overcome emotional difficulties such as stress, depression, anxiety or anger issues.

"We are grateful to have shared a longstanding partnership with Bon Secours in providing health and therapeutic services to our community's most vulnerable children and families," said Kathleen Burke Barrett, CEO of St. Joseph's Villa.

Learn more about the St. Joseph's Outreach Clinic on our website at [www.neverstopbelieving.org](http://www.neverstopbelieving.org).



## It's easier than you think.

Since 1834, St. Joseph's Villa has helped children overcome seemingly impossible challenges and grow into healthy, productive adults. Each year more than 3,000 children and families benefit from your generosity, but what about countless others who will rely on Villa programs in years to come?

By making a gift in your will to St. Joseph's Villa today, you are ensuring that children and families of future generations will have access to groundbreaking services that help them reach their full potential. All it takes to get started is a conversation. You may be surprised at the difference your bequest can make.

**Contact us to learn more about establishing your legacy at St. Joseph's Villa:  
[www.NeverStopBelieving.org/Foundation](http://www.NeverStopBelieving.org/Foundation) | 804-553-3220**



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**Students use gardening skills to serve their community in new partnership**

We never stop believing in children and their families.

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**Villa, VCU Peer Mentoring Program  
celebrated with *Currents of Change Award***

The Council of Community Engagement at Virginia Commonwealth University has honored the Villa's Career and Transition Services and VCU's Department of Focused Inquiry with the *Currents of Change Award for Exemplary Partnership in Teaching*. In the first two years of the collaborative peer mentoring program, 43 VCU students provided more than 1,600 hours of service to the Villa. Villa students benefited from sustained relationships with mentors and an introduction to college life, while VCU students benefited from working with young people with a range of abilities and experiences.

We are pleased to continue the program in the 2016-17 school year. Mentoring benefits students in so many ways, including development of important life skills, improved attitudes toward school, and greater self-esteem.



*Currents of Change Award presentation, held at The Depot at VCU.*

