

# VILLA VIEWS

The Newsletter of St. Joseph's Villa

FALL 2018

## THE POWER OF PLAY

New Youth Fitness Park to enhance children's physical and mental health



*Phase I of the Youth Fitness Park is complete and open to children in all Villa programs.*

**T**he Villa's 82-acre campus is one of our most effective therapeutic resources. With support from community partners and individual philanthropy, we are able to continually adapt the campus and create new opportunities for kids to benefit from outdoor education and exercise.

The Youth Fitness Park is our latest initiative in promoting children's health. Located on the north end of campus, the space offers more ways for students to get out, be active, and socialize with their peers.

Phase I of the Youth Fitness Park includes new swings and playground equipment, and a shaded activity pavilion. Phase II plans for the installation of a basketball court, walking/jogging path, and accessible exercise stations.

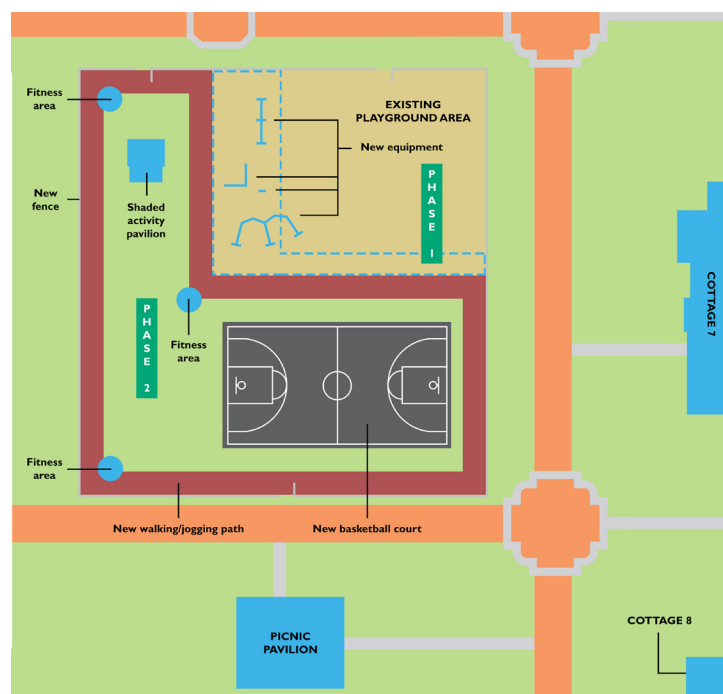
**"Our campus has been a tool for helping vulnerable children learn and grow for nearly 100 years," said CEO Kathleen Burke Barrett. "We're excited the Youth Fitness Park will build on that purpose."**

Outdoor play allows for exploration, imagination, and problem solving, which are all critical to children's development and well-being. A healthy release of energy can also reduce the incidence of harmful or disruptive behaviors. The Youth Fitness Park will add new therapeutic options to benefit more than 200 students each week.

Many thanks to Henrico County for providing funding toward Phase II of the Youth Fitness Park. We look forward to beginning Phase II construction in 2019. Stay tuned!

*Site plan on next page.*

## Youth Fitness Park Site Map



### Phase I (complete)

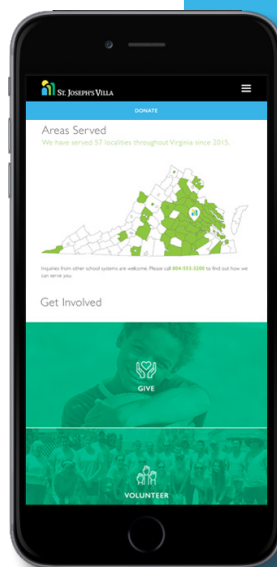
- Install 4 heavy-duty swings for ages 5-12.
- Install vertical and horizontal exercise bars.
- Install accessible exercise equipment.
- Expand current mulched areas 10 ft. north and 35 ft. east from existing borders.
- Install 12 in. high border around expanded area.
- Install 12 in. of "Fibar" playground mulch in expanded area.

### Phase II

- Install regulation size asphalt basketball court and permanent goal posts. Grade site as needed.
- Extend chain link fence 15 ft. east and 20 ft. south.
- Install walking/jogging path around entire fenced area (approx. 1/5 mile).
- Add new benches.

## Check out our new look!

Our new website design makes it easier than ever to learn about our programs, see the latest news, and get involved with our life-changing work! Visit us today, and check back often. As we continue evolving to meet emerging community needs, you can get developments as they happen at **NeverStopBelieving.org**.



## Villa staff engage in Trauma Informed Care Training

In preparation for the new school year, Dr. Allison Samson-Jackson led a dynamic training in Trauma Informed Care for our team of nearly 300 employees. Trauma Informed Care is based in the research of how trauma affects the human brain, and how the mind and body are connected.



*Trauma Informed Care training took place at The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen.*

The Villa's Director of Community-Based Services, Jamie Knight, said Dr. Jackson, "reminded us as professionals that we must respond to the need being expressed, rather than the problem behavior. This lens is not only strength-based and person-centered, but highlights our clients' resilience, capacity to solve problems, and ability to engage in post-traumatic growth."

Dr. Jackson has focused her career on understanding trauma and how people bounce back from adversity. Her training reinforces the Villa's commitment to using modern best practices in the fields of mental health, education, developmental disabilities and housing.

**We thank the Jenkins Foundation for funding the training, and for their partnership in building stronger communities.**



## Xander builds first relationships with help of Villa Autism Center

Not having a way to communicate frustrated Xander. Frustration turned into outbursts that usually ended with injury to himself or others. His parents Eric and Frances were constantly covered in cuts and bruises.

“We used to measure how good a day was based on our number of injuries, or whether or not we sprained anything,” said Eric.

School presented its own challenges. Eric and Frances credit Xander’s public school for using every tool at their disposal to create an environment where he could thrive, but the incidents continued to escalate. Xander was sent home early each day and lost the benefit of a full school day where he could develop with his peers. When private placement was recommended, Eric and Frances chose to enroll him in the Villa’s Center for Autism. They have been amazed by the changes in Xander since then.

*Xander’s quality of life has improved in every way. He is extremely fond of the teachers. They let Xander teach them how he wants to learn and interact with the world, and they turned that into a game plan to help him build skills.*

**– Frances, mother**

“Xander is still nonverbal, but now he is able to express himself,” said Eric. “He has started forming relationships with classmates. He shares toys, he laughs... for the first time we see him building bridges with others.”

Xander is continuing to grow in our Center for Autism as he learns to be more independent and develops new ways to communicate. Eric and Frances believe his future is brighter than ever.



### Volunteers refresh Crisis Stabilization Unit for children’s mental health

Our Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) recently relocated to a larger building on the Villa campus to increase service capacity. Taking on a blank canvas, interior designer Carol Pipes volunteered her expertise to create a warm and welcoming space for youth in mental

health crisis and their families. The Villa’s Facilities team and volunteers from Altria brought the vision to life through fresh coats of paint, new furniture, and handmade wall decorations.

The CSU operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in partnership with Richmond Behavioral Health Authority Region IV. 94% of youth served last year were diverted from hospitalization.

# Trustee Jack Catlett has plans for the Villa's future

As a Villa Trustee, Jack Catlett helps our organization strategically plan its course in order to provide the highest quality service to children and families in need. He is also a planner when it comes to his family.

Jack purchased a life insurance policy years ago to take care of his wife and children. Since then his children have grown, graduated from college and begun their careers. Feeling secure with their futures, Jack decided the time was right to make lasting provisions for those less fortunate. He did so by naming St. Joseph's Villa as a beneficiary of his policy.

*The Villa is one of the most remarkable institutions I have ever been affiliated with. It takes care of kids and families who would not be helped otherwise.*

**– Jack Catlett, Villa Trustee**



*John B. "Jack" Catlett is a trust officer and estate attorney, helping other families with their plans too.*

A longtime volunteer leader at the Villa, Jack is deeply knowledgeable of the resources needed to run the campus and its programs. He believes planned gifts are essential for sustaining the Villa's future years of service.

"We want the Villa to always be here," said Jack. "Continued commitment from our community will make sure underserved families can find help here for many years to come."

Jack is inspired knowing that his planned gift will change innumerable lives in the future. In naming the Villa as a policy beneficiary, Jack has built a permanent legacy at the Villa.



When most people think of planned giving, they think about bequests. But an insurance policy or retirement account beneficiary designation—or contingent beneficiary designation—can be just as effective, and sometimes an easier way to make sure one's philanthropic values live on.

By making a gift in your estate plan for 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 how easy it is to give a gift and make an impact that can last forever.

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



## How Intensive In-Home Services transformed Mitchell's future

Mitchell\* had already lost hope his life would get better when he first came to the Villa.

He was referred to our Intensive In-Home Services (IIHS) while on probation for several charges, including drug use, stealing medications and circulating counterfeit money. He made it known that he abhorred getting services, and initially refused to interact with our clinicians. Mitchell's grandmother, also his legal guardian, feared losing him to a gang

*\*Name changed for privacy*

and made it her mission to work with him and our clinicians every step of the way.

His grandmother says the patience and compassion of the Villa's clinical team encouraged Mitchell to open up and problem solve. He felt validated about the aspects of his life he couldn't control, and started focusing on what he could change. In time, Mitchell stopped self-medicating, got a job, and committed to finishing high school. He is no longer on supervised probation.

Mitchell is happy to be making progress. With support from IIHS, he is now shaping his life to be successful—something he once believed couldn't happen.

IIHS works with families to develop an effective, positive behavioral management system that stops destructive behaviors and keeps families intact. Our clinicians are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The program served 115 individuals last year.



## Shynia found more than stability at the Villa. She found family.



*Shynia receives her high school diploma from Dooley School principal Suzan Denby.*

Shynia entered the foster care system at age 10 because of substance and child abuse in her home. She lived in different foster families, separated from her siblings. When foster families didn't work out, she entered a group home.

That's where Shynia lived when she came to St. Joseph's Villa two years ago for fighting and violent behavior. She thrived at the Villa and did not have one physical incident since arriving. Shynia was on track to graduate, until she turned 18.

Upon turning 18, Shynia could no longer legally reside in the group home, so she was evicted and became homeless. But the Villa was there for her.

Our Flagler Housing & Homeless Services banded together with Dooley School staff and helped Shynia access extended services over the Christmas holiday, including a social worker and an efficiency apartment. She also had uninterrupted access to the Villa's food pantry, our partnership with FeedMore. And when Shynia burned her hand, staff brought food to her apartment.

Shynia never gave up, and neither did the Villa. She walked across our chapel stage and graduated from high school in June 2018, surrounded by friends and her Villa family who supported her on her journey. Shynia is currently continuing her education and pursuing a career in cosmetology.

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## It took a Villa to keep Harrison and his family together

When Harrison, a teenager with autism, started having violent outbursts and hallucinations, his parents knew something was wrong.

"We were terrified because that was not our child," said his mother, Allison. "We had dealt with autism for fifteen years. This was not autism."

Numerous hospitals and mental health resources turned Harrison and his family away in their search for treatment, attributing his new behaviors to his autism. They came to the Villa hoping for answers.

Staff in our Crisis Stabilization Unit, working in tandem with the Villa's own Autism Center experts, recognized that Harrison's new behaviors were due to a medication change. Together, our team was able to correctly diagnose Harrison and deliver help.



*Harrison and Counselor Douglas Green prepare for a community outing.*

Today, Harrison is a student at the Villa's Center for Autism, working with the same staff that helped him get back on the right track. He enjoys taking trips out in the community and participating in activities that build life skills. Allison says he comes home happy every day since coming to the Villa, and engages people more than ever.

"I feel very comfortable with my son going to St. Joseph's Villa. They treat him like he's family," said Allison.

With more than 20 programs, the Villa is uniquely positioned to take a collaborative approach to serving the whole child. See more of Harrison's story at [youtube.com/stjosephsvillarva](https://youtube.com/stjosephsvillarva)



*Top: Shady Grove YMCA Leaders' Club assembles book bags for Villa students.*

*Bottom: Colortree delivers book bags to our Donation Center.*

## School supplies donors equip students for success

More than 350 Villa students started the school year with a brand new book bag full of supplies thanks to our generous donors and volunteers. Without their support, many of our students would not have access to the essential supplies they need for academic success. We are grateful to the individuals and community partners who helped our students start the year with confidence:

- Allianz
- AmerisourceBergen
- Anonymous
- Apple
- Candace Rummel
- Colortree
- Commonwealth Eye Care Associates
- Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Design Ready Controls

- HandsOn Greater Richmond
- Lee Ann Gudorp
- Independent Container Line
- Mason & Hanger
- Odell
- John Ringer & family
- South State Bank
- UnitedHealthcare
- Shady Grove YMCA Leaders' Club
- Virginia Board of Accountancy

DID YOU KNOW?

# 100%

of Brook Road Academy's 2018 graduates were accepted into college or post-secondary education.





Villa Director of Community Engagement Kathy Perun (left) with EMBA students

## Partner Spotlight

# VCU

**Virginia Commonwealth  
University Executive  
MBA program**

Working professionals in VCU's EMBA program chose the Villa as their nonprofit for a semester-long Community Engagement project. Serving as consultants, they applied what they had learned in finance, project management, effective presentation, accounting and IT, and worked with staff to increase the Villa's capacity and efficiency in recording volunteer data. The project was a success—and out of the partnership, a new initiative benefiting young students was born.

Two parents in the EMBA program have daughters interested in IT. The parents wanted to continue their relationship with the Villa and help with more technology-based projects, while opening volunteer opportunities to middle and high school girls considering the career field.

The initiative took on the name Tech Teens. Over the summer, six students in Tech Teens met with our staff and collaborated to design the content and look of each page of the new volunteer database. The screenshots they created can be used to build the system. Villa IT Director Paul Baker saw the value of the project and complimented the Tech Teens on their work.

"I have three daughters. Creating this opportunity for them and a few of their peers was so worthwhile," said Le-Ha Anderson, EMBA student and Manager of Dominion Energy Media Relations. "Girls tend to be less drawn to careers in IT so I saw this project as one that could nurture an interest in technology and create a pipeline of talent for businesses."

## Foundation Board Chair Dave Redmond honored with Volunteer Impact Award

Foundation Board Chair Dave Redmond, who has volunteered with the Villa for more than 30 years, has been selected by the Association of Fundraising Professionals for the 2018 Volunteer Impact Award. The award is presented each year to one volunteer in Central Virginia on National Philanthropy Day.



Over the years, Dave has helped raise more than \$3 million for the Villa's developmental disabilities services through our annual golf tournament, chaired the Villa's first-ever capital campaign that raised \$10.7 million for campus infrastructure improvements, introduced countless friends to our programs, and forged new partnerships. We're grateful to have Dave as part of our Villa family, and for his relentless contributions to our community.

Congratulations, Dave!

**LEWIS INSURANCE  
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Thanks to Lewis Insurance Associates for sponsoring this newsletter.

## Inside:

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### FIRST CONNECTIONS

**How our Autism Center helped Xander build bridges with friends and family**

### TURNING LIVES AROUND

**Mitchell makes big changes with Intensive In-Home Services**

We never stop believing in children and their families.

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## Center for Autism students reach goals with music therapy

Author Hans Christian Andersen once said, "Where words fail, music speaks." Villa volunteer Lydia Heitman gives new meaning to that phrase through her work with our Autism Center students.

Lydia is a senior at Shenandoah University studying music therapy. For the past three summers, she has come to St. Joseph's Villa multiple times a week to engage students in music-based activities that teach movement, counting, rhyming, matching, and socializing.

"They get a lot of choice. They can lead their peers, which is big for them," said Lydia.

Lydia sings and plays guitar for students, who get hands-on with their own instruments.



She also assists our teachers around the classroom and in off-campus, community-based instruction. After graduating, she hopes to work in a school setting helping children with autism.

"I love working with these kids," said Lydia. "It's been fun to keep coming back and see how much they have grown."