

# VILLA VIEWS

The Newsletter of St. Joseph's Villa

SPRING 2021



*Pictured left to right: Darius Bradshaw, Shaneka Branch, James Auer, Craig Coles, Sunshine Selby, Kasey O'Neill, Brittany Leggett; Not pictured: Hollie Rhodes*

**S**ince the start of the pandemic, our services staff have pivoted to offer uninterrupted support for families and safely deliver education, therapy and care to our clients. We're proud to introduce you to one group of those heroes: the clinical team of our Sarah Dooley Center for Autism. Through our innovative integrated model, they seamlessly blend highly individualized education planning, comprehensive behavior supports, and speech services to meet our students' unique needs while building on their strengths. All clinical team members employ a coaching model to improve students' social and communication skills by creating a language-rich learning environment, and providing daily real-time training and support to every staff member of our school.

Brittany, Craig, Hollie and Kasey anchor our behavior team. The Sarah Dooley Center for Autism uses Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) as its primary framework for educational and behavioral programming. ABA has been demonstrated over the last 40 years to be highly effective in teaching children with disabilities new skills and helping them integrate more fully into their communities. The behavior team, along with our behavioral interventionists James and Darius, are in our classrooms every day responding to behavioral challenges, training staff, supporting teachers and ensuring continuity in all behavior planning.

Sunshine and Shaneka are our in-house Speech and Language Pathologists.

Their role is to ensure each student is getting the maximum number of opportunities to improve their communication skills. They work closely with our teachers to customize speech programming.

St. Joseph's Villa takes a holistic approach to lift up children and families every day. We are incredibly proud of the dedication, expertise and compassion each member of our education, developmental disabilities, mental health and homeless services teams brings to our community. If you're interested in learning more about how our integrated support system works, we encourage you to contact us at 804-553-3200 or visit [www.NeverStopBelieving.org](http://www.NeverStopBelieving.org).

## Crisis Stabilization Unit takes on critical role for children's mental health during pandemic

Feelings of grief, anxiety, depression and isolation can be especially difficult for children and adolescents to handle in the wake of COVID-19. While the pandemic has drastically cut the availability of inpatient psychiatric beds across the country, the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) at St. Joseph's Villa remains open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to serve youth experiencing mental health crisis, and their families.

While continuing to provide high quality clinical services, staff have successfully implemented wellness protocols to keep everyone in the CSU safe. The CSU team conducts health screenings for all incoming youth, and supports them in wearing masks, physical distancing, and practicing personal hygiene. Over a year into the pandemic, the CSU is still accepting referrals and new admissions, still helping youth build coping skills and supports, and still engaging families to create lasting change and continue success at home.

Last year, the CSU provided telepsychiatry services to

# 195

youth in mental health crisis.

## In recovery, rapid rehousing drives change for Junita

Junita is celebrating two years of sobriety, a memorable milestone on a long journey to stable housing. Coming from a family of twelve, she says she often lacked the foundation of a steady home and struggled to find her place and identity. While living in Portsmouth, Junita embarked on a life that involved heavy drug use, ongoing physical health conditions, and frequent interactions with police.

After a low point in her life, Junita was determined to change course. Her doctor referred her to a rehab program in Phoenix, Arizona, and then to a community provider in Emporia, Virginia where she met Shirley Brown, Director of the Push Faith House – a homeless shelter for women. Shirley inspired Junita to stay on the road to recovery and sobriety, and it was here she learned about St Joseph's Villa.

Junita enrolled in rapid rehousing through the Villa's Flagler Housing &

Homeless Services. Her Housing Stabilization Case Manager, Talibah Majeed, worked with her to find safe, affordable housing – a process that Junita described as “head spinning fast.” In only 14 days, she signed a lease for her very first house. Junita is now employed as a Certified Nursing Assistant and recently purchased her own car, an accomplishment that she is thrilled about, as it enables her to independently maintain her new career, home and life.



*“Talibah was a joy to work with. She pushed me hard to make sure I stayed on track, and that’s what I needed. I will forever be grateful for St. Joseph’s Villa.”*

## NEW! Villa launches planned giving website



Do you have the Villa in your estate plans, or want to learn more about how you can create your legacy at the Villa through a planned gift? Our new site can help get you started, give you some ideas about what might make sense for your specific situation, and help you get in touch with us about any plans that you've already made. Check it out at **[NeverStopBelieving.org/foundation](https://NeverStopBelieving.org/foundation)**.

For more information, contact P.J. Shaver, Major Gifts Officer at 804-553-3220 or [pshaver@sjvmail.net](mailto:pshaver@sjvmail.net).



## Students discover job and life opportunities with Career and Transition Services

Shifting to virtual classrooms in March 2020 was a monumental change for many of our students who thrive on in-person instruction and support. Working with more than 100 students in our Dooley School and Sarah Dooley Center for Autism, our Career and Transition Services (CATS) team helped ease the adjustment by taking new and creative approaches to keep kids engaged and excited as they learn about real-world work opportunities. While streaming cooking classes, CATS podcasts, and virtual field trips to places like Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, the Smithsonian and LEGOLAND, students are able to explore different career paths and learn directly from community leaders and volunteers.


Now that the majority of students



have returned to the Villa, they are once again participating in our campus work training programs – including the therapeutic Villa Garden. On a daily basis, kids are growing, harvesting and

sampling healthy foods, tending beds, and cutting and arranging flowers to take home, all while enjoying the physical and mental health benefits that come with learning outdoors.


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### Alumni Spotlight Joseph Swedish Retired, CEO of Anthem

*"Anything is possible given your dedication to being the best, using your special talents, and serving others who can benefit from what makes you unique."*

Villa alum Joe Swedish proves that when the Villa doesn't stop believing, anything is possible.

Before being named one of the 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare for 12 consecutive years by Modern Healthcare as CEO of Anthem and Trinity Health, Joe spent many of his formative educational years as a day school student at St. Joseph's Villa in grades 1-8. He fondly looks back on his time on campus from 1957-1963, remembering how strict the nuns were, except for Sister Angela in the first grade, and the huge playground where they would have lunch recess.



Mr. Swedish is now a Co-Founder and Partner at Concord Health Partners, a healthcare focused investment firm, and serves on various boards including Duke University's Fuqua School of Business Board of Visitors, the Board of Benedictine Schools in Richmond, and IBM.

Like many children at age 10, Joe didn't have a vision for his future career, but the Villa – with the influence of the Sisters – instilled in him a strong foundation of service and values. His education at the Villa and then at Benedictine led him to earn his undergraduate degree, and a master's degree in health administration from Duke University in 1979.

His 45-year career as a healthcare executive serving hospitals created opportunities throughout the U.S. and recently concluded with his retirement as CEO of Anthem, one of the nation's largest health insurance companies.

Of course, Joe says that his greatest achievement is 47 years of marriage to his wife Gene, their three wonderful children, and their grandchildren.



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# WE DID IT! \$30.6 MILLION

raised for children and families

<b>\$11 MILLION</b>	<b>\$19.6 MILLION</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>
raised for capital projects	raised for Villa programs	sq. ft. renovated	lives changed

With generous support from our community, the Villa's RiseUP Campaign raised over \$30.6 million, exceeding our \$25 million goal! We thank our donors for helping to create a brighter future for the children and families we serve.



We never stop believing in children and their families.

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## Meet urgent client needs with our Amazon Wishlist



In-kind donations are an important part of the basic needs services we provide at St. Joseph's Villa. We're excited to introduce our Amazon Wishlist as a convenient and safe way to lend a helping hand to Villa children and families! Your gift of urgently needed items can be shipped directly to us, and will provide immediate assistance for our clients experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, and other challenges amplified by the pandemic.

The Wishlist can be found on our website:

[NeverStopBelieving.org/donate-goods](http://NeverStopBelieving.org/donate-goods)

Don't forget, when you shop with AmazonSmile, Amazon will also donate a portion of the purchase price at no cost to you! Just log on to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), and choose St. Joseph's Villa as your charity.

When making a purchase, please include your name and preferred contact method in the gift message, so we can give you our thanks!

