

# Volunteers Invest Time and Energy

WellPoint associates eagerly donated four hours of their time to St. Mary's as part of the company-wide community service day. The group washed vehicles, folded laundry, met with the children during a group activity, pulled weeds, planted flowers and mowed grass. Many thanks to WellPoint for helping us get ready for Prom, which was held the next day.



Weekends at the Home have been bustling with the sound of volunteers. After working on a schedule for two months, 16 crew members from the USS Porter were finally able to fulfill their desire to come to the Home and volunteer. Even after they found out they would be cleaning drains, rearranging the walk-in freezer, folding an endless stream of dryer-hot towels and washing windows they stayed. A brave lot, indeed.

Other groups included 20 Virginia Wesleyan College students as part of the college's campus-wide volunteer service day. Eager to make a full morning of it, the students previewed the St. Mary's DVD before coming, and once at the Home were given a tour before beginning their crafts project. ♥

*Thanks to these WellPoint associates who participated in their Community Service Day at St. Mary's.*



6171 Kempsville Circle  
Norfolk, Virginia 23502  
[www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org)



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*A special place for special children.*

## Upcoming Events

**5th Annual Charity Golf Tournament  
Sponsored by Alhambra Padul  
Caravan #69**

**Ocean View Golf Course  
Thursday, September 18, 2008**

Shotgun Start, 12:30 p.m. Florida Best Ball  
For reservations contact Paul Siebeking,  
757-481-4030, KP59PE@Verizon.net, or  
John Romanus, 757-464-0161

**20th Annual 5K Run and 1 Mile Fun Run  
Sponsored by St. Mary's Home  
for Disabled Children**

**Fort Story, Virginia  
Saturday, October 4, 2008**

To register, volunteer and for sponsorship  
information contact Mary Helen Hilton,  
757-622-2208, or [mhilton@smhdc.org](mailto:mhilton@smhdc.org)

**4th Annual Gala and Art Auction  
Sponsored by the Auxiliary Board  
of St. Mary's Home  
The Westin Hotel, Town Center,  
Virginia Beach**

**Friday, February 20, 2009**

To reserve tickets, donate, volunteer and for  
sponsorship information, contact Karen  
Hibbard, 757-410-5459, or [klhibb@cox.net](mailto:klhibb@cox.net)

# The Guardian

A Publication of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children

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Look Inside

Summer 2008



## Running for Good Reason

May 3rd marked the first time *Team Hoyt VB — The Weekend Wheelers* took area children with disabilities, including four from St. Mary's Home, on a run. Families, friends and staff from St. Mary's, on bikes and on foot, joined the runners and headed to the boardwalk at Virginia Beach for an extraordinary day of fun.

Team Hoyt is a father-and-son team from Massachusetts that competes in athletic events across the country; Dick Hoyt pushes or carries his son Rick in marathons, triathlons and other events because Rick has had a disability from birth that prevents him from competing on his own. The message of Team Hoyt is both simple and profound: everybody should be included in everyday life. Locally, *Team Hoyt VB — The Weekend Wheelers*, embraces that message and has put it into action.

photo by Gary Jones



After having run with Team Hoyt at the Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon in 2007, Virginia Beach resident Trey White was inspired to do more on a local level. When invited to participate in the St. Mary's Home 5K, he organized three teams of runners to take children from the Home on the 5K course. Historically the children from St. Mary's have participated in the 1-mile fun run, but never the 5K.

*Dr. Robert Woodard pushes St. Mary's resident Bre' Aunna whose mother came from Williamsburg to participate in the event.*

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### Leading the Way

We hope that you will find the newly expanded *Guardian* both informative and easy to read. With so many activities underway and accomplishments to report, *Guardian* needed to grow and to take on a bolder look. We are proud of the extraordinary care provided to each child and young adult at St. Mary's from across the Commonwealth. So, enjoy the new *Guardian*; read about all that makes St. Mary's so well respected now for over 60 years; and let us know what you think of the new look. ♥

William C. Giermak  
Chief Executive Officer



*There's no place like St. Mary's*

# Home.

*Special times to remember.*

## *Prom — A Special Night in the Lives of the Home's Teens*

With help from 20 Norfolk Academy high school students, St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children put on a Winter Wonderland Prom, Sunday, April 27th. Twenty-two St. Mary's residents attended the gala event, complete with formal attire. Each girl picked out her own dress, and all the attendees sparkled with elegance as they enjoyed the music with their dates for the evening. The dresses were donated by Fairy Godmothers, students from the ODU School of Dental Hygiene, and The Auxiliary Board of St. Mary's. The tuxes were also sponsored by The Auxiliary Board of St. Mary's.

Special preparations for the girls were provided by Nancy Wilcox, Auxiliary member and national vice president of Arbonne International. Wilcox said that she very much wanted to help the girls with their make-up as a way to get involved with the prom and spend some time with the teenagers. "Make-up is a natural. What girl doesn't like make-up and dressing up? And Arbonne, which creates all natural skin care products, was a perfect way for me to really help them get ready and use products that I knew would not harm them," said Wilcox.

"Prom is a wonderful event," said CEO William C. Giermak. "Some parents thought they would never see their children enjoy this special event that happens for many teenagers — yet there they were. The kids enjoyed the celebration, the music and all of the help that the Norfolk Academy students gave them this year." ♥

photo by Gary Jones



Norfolk Academy seniors (left to right) Lisa Littman, Emilyn Blakey and Olivia Desmarais share a happy moment with St. Mary's resident T.J.

*The St. Mary's Club at Norfolk Academy was offered the opportunity to host prom this year and jumped at the chance. This was our first shot at prom and we wanted to do it very well. It was an absolute joy to see the kids and staff have such big smiles on their faces. We hope the strong relationship our school now has with St. Mary's will continue for years to come and include many more proms.*

Emily Bernstein and Adam Rose  
Co-presidents and founders  
St. Mary's Club at Norfolk Academy

## Graduation Day — A Rite of Passage at St. Mary's Home

The Color Guard made a spectacular entrance as they marched in the Atrium with the flags, marking time with their steps during the graduation ceremony Friday, May 16th at the Home. Six students graduated signaling the completion of their formal education. Norfolk City Council Member, Daun Hester was the keynote speaker and addressed family and friends. There was excitement in the air and each graduate wore a cap and gown and a big smile. One by one the graduates entered and proudly waited as everyone said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Each graduate's picture was displayed as a slide presentation showing residents through the years as Josh Groban's *You Lift Me Up* played in the background. Hester offered a tribute to the families, staff and community for supporting St. Mary's, the work of the staff, and the

Matthew's father, Mark, delivered the Parent Tribute and spoke of  
“...not only the medical care and security that St. Mary's provides, but the opportunities for our son to experience happiness, something all families want for their children.”

Matthew and his family celebrate graduation, a milestone in the lives of St. Mary's residents.



## Now She's a West Coast Girl — We Say Goodbye to Raiyelle

Mom, Dad and four medical personnel helped ready Raiyelle for her big move with her family to California. Dad, who is in the Marines and was re-stationed in San Diego, made arrangements to have Raiyelle transferred by air ambulance. She reached her new home safely and is now enjoying the west coast. We miss her and wish her and her family much happiness. ♥

“You gave me a home, you kept me safe,  
you gave me love, and you gave me peace.  
When I was sick you made me well,  
when I cried you held me close.  
You gave me sight, you gave me taste,  
you were my ears, and you were my voice.  
You taught me things I never knew,  
you treated me as if I was your own...  
Most of all you gave me a big wonderful family  
to love me and care for me.  
For these things I will always be grateful  
and shall forever love you all —  
For to me, my St. Mary's family, you gave me hope  
and for this you are my heart!”

Raiyelle, family and friends have a bon voyage celebration before they leave for their new west coast home.

Presented to St. Mary's staff  
by Raiyelle's parents



# H I G H L I G H T S

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## T E A M W O R K

### *\$45,000 Grant from The Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Foundation; Sensory Table for Early Intervention Program*

The three-year, \$45,000 grant from The Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Foundation (BFSF) will continue to support the Home's Early Intervention (EI) program, which is approaching the end of its inaugural year. The program is currently funded in part by Portsmouth General Hospital Foundation and The VuBay Foundation, Hampton, Virginia.

This grant ensures the continuation of a program that has become vital to the youngest residents at the Home. This additional funding will directly support the purchase of equipment, materials and other educational resources to be used by the students, staff and families who participate in the EI program.

Also, the program is starting to gain the attention of the community. Linkhorn Park Elementary School students recently raised \$650 and donated it to St. Mary's Auxiliary, and, in turn, the Auxiliary funded a sensory table, so now the Home's youngest residents can experience such fundamental enchantments as dirt, rocks, water and the feel of fresh, cool grass.



*Recreational Therapy Assistant Stephanie Bailey and Early Intervention Specialist Sherry Wilson introduce Jahmari to the new sensory table.*

“This is a wonderful way to introduce texture, weight, temperature, smell, color, feel and other sensations to our children,” said Sherry Wilson, early intervention specialist for St. Mary's. ♥

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### *Running for Good Cause, continued from cover page*

Unfortunately the 5K was canceled due to flooding for the first time ever in 2007, and the children didn't get to go on the run. However, once set in motion, the enthusiasm of the runners did not end. The group committed to taking the children on outings throughout the year. And, in addition to children from St. Mary's, the invitation extends to other children and young adults throughout the Hampton Roads community with varying disabilities.

After a trial run inside the Home on a cold, rainy Sunday in April, the first outing came to fruition on a beautiful, sunny Saturday in May on the boardwalk in Virginia Beach. “It touches me to see the kids light up, get excited and feel the thrill of the wind through their hair. God gave me the ability to run and the compassion to give back to the community — what better pairing than this project of giving time with appreciative kids whose smiles just melt you?” describes White after the run in May. Next, The Weekend Wheelers will team up to do the 8K RunWalk for the Kids at Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in June. Seeing a group of athletes passionate about running dedicate their time to enhance the lives of those who can't run remains heartwarming for all to see. Go Team Hoyt VB! ♥



Left to right: R. J. Cooper and children from St. Mary's; Norfolk Mayor Paul Fraim welcomes conferees who came from across the nation and Canada; staff from St. Mary's participated in the conference.

*The mission of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children is to provide quality, specialized care within a home-like environment for special children with severe disabilities, so each child can achieve his or her fullest potential.*

## Assistive Technology Featured at Building Bridges Network Conference

More than 150 long-term residential pediatric care professionals attended the April conference designed to create a space to exchange ideas and information for professionals from across the country who work with children with severe and profound disabilities. The three-day April conference, sponsored by Eastern Virginia Medical School, Building Bridges Network, and hosted by St. Mary's, featured an introduction by Norfolk Mayor Paul Fraim. Breakout sessions included a wide-range of the technical aspects of care.

The Friday morning plenary session featured R. J. Cooper and a segment on hands-on technology implementation. This technology, the creation of Cooper, teaches and encourages children to use the equipment to experiment with their surroundings. Three of the Home's residents helped Cooper with his demonstrations. ♥

*“Specially-adaptive computer technology can open up the world of a child with special needs.”*

R. J. Cooper

## Community Outreach Begins at “Home”

During the last several months Community Outreach Manager Donna Cannon has been very busy generating leads and opportunities for St. Mary's staff to speak to community service boards, hospital discharge planners, social workers and other related professionals.

St. Mary's staff have spoken to the Virginia Beach Community Services Board (CSB), case managers from Sentara Leigh Hospital, The University of Virginia McLenore Birdsong Pediatric Conference in Charlottesville, followed that same day with a Norfolk Community Services Board evening meeting. Future events include visiting James City County, Hopewell, Isle of Wight Social Services, Cumberland Hospital and Division of Social Services...and the list goes on. The purpose is to make sure St. Mary's is reaching out to the children, families and guardians who it strives to serve. “The program has been accepted into the community with more enthusiasm than we anticipated. There is obviously a great need for these services and we are working to most efficiently fulfill them and help families throughout the Commonwealth,” said Donna. Call Donna Cannon at 757-622-2208 for more information. ♥

# Volunteers Onboard

## Announcement of New Positions for Auxiliary Board Members

Congratulations to Karen Hibbard. Recently elected president of the Auxiliary, Karen transitioned from serving as treasurer from 2000 through March 2008. Previously, she worked for



Karen Hibbard,  
President of the Auxiliary  
Board of St. Mary's

Wachovia Bank for 11 years, serving as a bank manager for nine years and two years as a licensed financial specialist. In 2004, she left Wachovia to become a full-time mother to Gretchen, 8, and Nicholas, 3.

As president of the Auxiliary, Hibbard hopes to build on current successes. "The purpose of the Auxiliary Board has always been to serve the needs of the children of St. Mary's Home. Over the past several years, our annual fundraising events have allowed us to support the Home in truly significant ways. As president, my goal is to continue to improve the lives of these very

special children by increasing our fundraising efforts and providing critical support to St. Mary's," said Hibbard.

Additional newly elected board members include: Andi Lawson, recording secretary; Gini Deets, corresponding secretary; Rachel Jiral, historian; Marie Siebeking, treasurer; and Jean Hillegass as parliamentarian. Camille Vaughan will serve another term as vice president. ♥

## Auxiliary Awarded Volunteer Organization of the Year

St. Mary's Auxiliary Board received the 2008 Hampton Roads Achievement Award in the Non-Profit Volunteer category from Volunteer Hampton Roads. The awards ceremony was held Wednesday, April 30th at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott.

Under the guidance of immediate past President Kim Thumel, the Home's Auxiliary fulfilled a \$100,000 pledge for the new facility. In 2007 alone, the Auxiliary funded more than \$80,000 in gifts and pledges including partial funding for a wheelchair-accessible shuttle bus. Other gifts included a sun canopy for the pool, 30 rocking chairs, six Hill-Rom positioning tables, respiratory therapy equipment, sensory toys, three evaluative walkers and a specially adapted tricycle as well as many other needs to enhance the lives of St. Mary's residents. ♥

## Auxiliary Raised \$80,000 During February Auction

St. Mary's Auxiliary raised \$80,000 in proceeds during its third annual "There's No Place Like Home" Gala and Auction held on February 22nd at the Princess Anne Country Club in Virginia Beach, Va.

Under the guidance of immediate past President Kim Thumel and current President, Karen Hibbard, the Auxiliary worked to create both a silent and live auction that offered something for everyone, drawing a record crowd of devoted supporters.

Gentle sounds of the Strolling Strings from Norfolk Public Schools entertained all until a pre-dinner video of St. Mary's and a brisk live auction raised more than \$14,000 in Camp Horizon scholarships for the Home's residents who will be attending the camp over the summer. After dinner, the evening bidding began in earnest. Specialty vacations, including NASCAR driving school for two and a premium golf package, hand-crafted jewelry and purses by Toni Henkel were just a few of the highlights that drew a record crowd. ♥

*The support this event has received over the past three years has been remarkable and we are so grateful for the generosity of our donors. Because of the success of this particular event, the Auxiliary has been able to fund special projects which have truly made a difference at St. Mary's. We are looking forward to our 2009 event, hoping it will be the most memorable event yet.*

Karen Hibbard



Kim Thumel, immediate past president of the Auxiliary of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children and co-owner of In Your Own Skin, talks with Jim Gallagher as they review last minute details before the start of the live auction.

# A N N O U N C I N G T H E NEW HONORARY TRUSTEE BOARD

## Message from the President

The Board of Trustees is honored to announce that the following have accepted positions as members of the newly formed Board of Honorary Trustees: Ted Broecker, George Compo, Joan Damsey, Sandra Gordon, Dan Hurley, Pat Perry, and Cynthia Rector-Jones. Each has served on



the Board of Trustees or Auxiliary Board and therefore understands the complex needs of the children of St. Mary's Home and the care they require. Their insight and experience will serve the Home well, now and in the future.

As we look to the future of St. Mary's Home, we ask that you join us in learning more about The Guardian Society. Members of this donor group have designated St. Mary's in their wills or have made life income arrangements that provide donors income now, and the Home in the future. Bob Guess and Patti Petty have become Guardian Society members and they invite you to their home in Norfolk on Knitting Mill Creek for a special afternoon reception this summer. Please call Martha Price Stewart at 446-6797 or email [mstewart@smhdc.org](mailto:mstewart@smhdc.org) for more information. ♥



Michael P. Cotter, President

We feel very fortunate to have had successful careers, successful self-supporting children and to be enjoying our golden years of retirement together and in good health. With all of those blessings we felt we must give back to those less fortunate and children were our first choice. We both admire and support the good work done by St. Mary's for the children.

Bob Guess and Patti Petty

## Everything's Coming Up Roses...and Daisies...Jasmine

Thanks to the Virginia Beach Garden Club and the Junior Virginia Beach Garden Club for donating funds to expand the landscaping in the gardens and courtyards of the Home. The Virginia Beach Garden Club recently donated the funds which allowed the Home to complete the landscaping along the front entrance, now in full bloom with Flowering Apricot, River Birch, and Flowering Okame trees; day lilies, and various ground plants.

The Junior Virginia Beach Garden Club initiated the garden enhancements this past fall with a beautifully landscaped Sensory Garden. Other courtyards have also been refurbished including the Butterfly Garden recently enhanced by members of the Harborfront Garden Club and the Statuary Garden which will shortly be expanded thanks to the Junior Virginia Beach Garden Club. A fall dedication is planned for all of the newly landscaped areas. ♥



This inner courtyard is now filled with sensory plantings for the enjoyment of the children, their families and staff.

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