

# JOURNEYS

Because it is in the process, as much as the progress, that we measure each journey.

Autumn 2015

A publication of  
St. Mary's Home.

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*We provide quality, specialized care within a homelike environment for children and adults with severe disabilities, so each person can achieve his or her fullest potential.*

## You Make it Possible for Kids to Have Fun and Defy Gravity



Ready for liftoff: John, 17, flies at iFLY Va Beach.

A half-dozen children and young adults from St. Mary's got out of their wheelchairs to fly at Virginia's only indoor skydiving facility — no parachutes needed.

The "Soar with St. Mary's" event at iFLY Va Beach in May raised nearly \$2,200 thanks to iFLY and to generous supporters like you. The funds will help make more fun activities like this possible for residents of St. Mary's Home.

"Out of all the special events iFLY Va Beach has done since opening in January, this has easily been the most rewarding — not just for myself, but for our staff," said iFLY Va Beach CEO Bob Pizzini.

St. Mary's Home worked with iFLY Va Beach to set aside time during the event for six children and young adults to fly, along with family, friends and staff of the Home.

St. Mary's CEO William C. Giermak said, "It's one of the most rewarding and fun events our children have been involved with. We look forward to a long-term relationship and hope our children can make iFLY a regular stop as they go out and about in the community."

When we opened The Albero House in 2013, we shortened our name from St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children to St. Mary's Home because we now care for adults as well as children with disabilities.

To reflect who we are today and symbolize our dynamic future, we've developed a new logo, which we're proud to share with you. The figures reaching toward one another, guiding and supporting each other, represent the children and young adults who live here, staff, families and you, friends of St. Mary's.

The new logo also comes with a new tagline: "A good life." That is exactly what you help make possible for the young people entrusted to our care. Thank you!

  
**St. Mary's Home**  
A good life.

# Albero House Primary Nurse Demonstrates Extraordinary Skills, Compassion

## Volunteers Help Put on Prom

**A**bbey was among older teens who danced at prom at St. Mary's Home on a Sunday afternoon in late spring. Special thanks to St. Mary's recreational therapy department for organizing this fun annual event and to the great volunteers from Grassfield High School and from Lifepoint Christian Fellowship in Chesapeake.



**I**n the more than two years that Bobbi Jo Sheriff, LPN, has worked at St. Mary's Home, she's been a role model for the direct care staff. She also found herself putting her nursing skills to good use when a terrible traffic accident happened right by our campus.

Bobbi Jo owned and operated a daycare in Auburn, N.Y., for eight years before she decided to go into nursing. She and her family — including her five children, ages 19 and 23, and 12-year-old triplets — moved to Virginia in 2011.

Bobbi Jo completed her orientation and preceptorship at St. Mary's Home, and in July 2013, she accepted a floor nurse position at The Albero House, which St. Mary's had just opened on our campus to care for adults with disabilities. She now is primary nurse at The Albero House, where she is a valued member of the staff, said Grace Jabon, RN, St. Mary's chief nursing officer. "She is responsible, organized and dependable," Grace said.

On July 27, 2014, there was a terrible accident on the interstate next to The Albero House. A truck cut in front of a sedan, and the sedan swerved and hit an SUV. The SUV flipped over, flying over the guardrail and landing upside down in a ditch filled with four feet of rainwater. Inside the SUV were a grandmother, grandfather and a toddler. Two cars stopped, and two men jumped in the water to rescue them.

An Albero House staff member saw the accident as she was reporting to work, and our staff rushed to help. The child was handed up to Bobbi Jo. She rocked him and talked softly to him to keep him awake and breathing. He was coughing and, by the time ambulances arrived, he was losing color. Bobbi Jo described the child's condition to the paramedics and told them he needed oxygen immediately. St. Mary's learned later that the baby had recovered.

Obviously this was not a normal workday for Bobbi Jo. But it was an extraordinary demonstration of her assessment skills, her ability to provide emergency care and her compassion for others, even strangers. We are very proud to have Bobbi Jo on our staff.



**M**ercedez is one of 12 residents under the care of Bobbi Jo Sheriff, LPN, primary nurse at The Albero House.

# Families, Kids, Staff Enjoy Summer Fun at St. Mary's Thanks to Volunteers

**F**amilies came to St. Mary's on a warm June day to join staff at our end-of-the-school-year cookout. The children and young adults at St. Mary's and The Albero House enjoyed the sunshine, spent time with visiting family and ate with the staff members.

Special thanks to Crystal Anderson, our food production manager, and Lynn Earle, dietitian and director of food services, who were instrumental in preparing food for everyone to enjoy, as well as to volunteers from CarMax in Virginia Beach and PRA Group, who worked hard to help with the grilling and serving.



**A**mong our volunteers was Itina Spellman, right, of PRA Group, with Lynn Earle, St. Mary's director of food services. PRA Group has been a true friend to the Home for the past seven years.



**C**arMax is a new friend of St. Mary's. Here are some of the many volunteers they sent to the Home to help Crystal Anderson, our food production manager.



**A**bby was so excited for the fresh fruit at the end of the table, she could hardly contain her enthusiasm.

## Need a Speaker? We'd Love to Help

**E**very club and organization faces the challenge of providing quality programs. We can help. Our staff members enjoy speaking about St. Mary's and the exceptional care, education, therapies and recreational programs we offer for children and young adults who have severe disabilities. Our presentation is designed to fit easily into your breakfast, lunch or dinner program format, at no cost, and includes a lively, professional, 10-minute video, "The Power Of Touch." Our speakers also are prepared for a short question-and-answer period.

To book a speaker from St. Mary's Home, please contact Sonja Barisic, director of marketing communications, at [sbarisic@smhdc.org](mailto:sbarisic@smhdc.org) or (757) 352-2700.

## In the News Coverage

### "NORFOLK PERSPECTIVES"

#### Week of Aug. 9

Kid2Kid volunteers Anna Brunick and Jenna Crumley appeared on the City of Norfolk's public affairs TV show to discuss the "Dive into Desserts" fundraiser

### INSIDE BUSINESS

#### Week of Aug. 10

Profile of Dr. Joseph Toland, St. Mary's medical director, who was honored as a 2015 "HealthCare Hero"

#### Week of July 27

Announcements of officers of St. Mary's Board of Directors

#### Week of July 20

Kids from St. Mary's soar at iFLY Va Beach fundraiser

#### Week of June 29

St. Mary's Home won two Pinnacle Awards from the Public Relations Society of America, Hampton Roads chapter: first place, newsletters, and second place, annual reports

### THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

#### July 20

Announcements of officers of St. Mary's Board of Directors

#### June 14

"Compass" section feature about Ocean View Women's Golf Association, which holds an annual tournament to raise funds for St. Mary's

### WAVY-TV

#### May 30

Kids from St. Mary's soar at iFLY Va Beach fundraiser; photo slideshow on wavy.com

### WVEC-TV

#### April 6, 4:30 p.m. newscast

"Making Your Mark" story about Brenda Mitchell, a direct support professional who retired from St. Mary's after 44 years of caring for children

For links to these and other media mentions of St. Mary's Home, go to: [saintmaryshome.org>News>News Coverage](http://saintmaryshome.org>News>News Coverage)

# Brenda Mitchell Set Compassionate Example

Our beloved Brenda Mitchell, one of the longest-serving members of St. Mary's staff, retired this spring after nearly 44 years of taking care of children.

Brenda, a direct support professional, or DSP, set the standard for care at St. Mary's. The children and young adults, their families and the staff loved her. She was quiet and resilient. She got things done with no fuss. She was a comfort to all. St. Mary's CEO William C. Giermak called Brenda "one of the greatest examples of love and compassion and expert care that I've ever



**B**renda Mitchell, center, was surrounded by friends and family at her retirement party in April, as well as WVEC-TV personality LaSalle Blanks.

seen in my 35 years of working in health care."

Brenda began working at the old St. Mary's Infant Home in downtown Norfolk in late 1971. She started in the laundry department but wanted to work with the children, so she followed her mother's footsteps and became a nursing assistant.

As a DSP, she was a team leader, assigning staff to work with various kids. And she was still very hands on

herself, helping children eat, handling personal care duties and just spending time with the kids.

LaSalle Blanks from WVEC-TV in Norfolk was on hand to capture Brenda's surprise retirement party. She had no idea as she walked into St. Mary's Atrium that it was filled with current and former colleagues who wanted to wish her farewell. We miss you, Brenda!

Watch WVEC-TV's story about Brenda: <http://bit.ly/BrendaMitchell>

## Guests Delight in Delicious Desserts, Help Kids with Disabilities

Families and friends dined on decadent desserts like cakes, donuts, cookies, cake balls, brownies and baklava during "Dive into Desserts" at St. Mary's on Aug. 30. They also helped chalk the sidewalk with art and decorated crafts with children from St. Mary's.

Thank you to St. Mary's Kid2Kid youth volunteer group for organizing the event, which raised \$1,300 to support outings and activities for the children and young adults of St. Mary's Home and The Albergo House. And special thanks to the generous sponsors of the event: Aldo's Ristorante, Amazing Glazed, Bergery's Breadbasket, Brownies by Amy,

Chocollage Bakery, Coastal Grill, Cuisine and Company, Dancing Tomato, Farm Fresh, Handsome Biscuit, My Vegan Sweet Tooth, Philoptochos women's group of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Starbucks, Sugar Plum Bakery, Sweetly Done Cakes and Uncle Harry's.

**H**aley, center, who lives at St. Mary's, with Anna Brunick, left, chair of the "Dive into Desserts" event and Jenna Crumley, founder of the Kid2Kid youth volunteer group at St. Mary's.



From the Board President

# St. Mary's Home Has a Special Place in My Heart

Nancy Wilcox

About 30 years ago, I was invited to join the Auxiliary Board of St. Mary's. I came to the Home for a visit and immediately fell in love with the place. Having grown up with a sister with a disability who lived in a children's home, I was very comfortable at St. Mary's and excited about volunteering and making a difference for these children.

I have served as the Auxiliary president and have worked each year on our annual fundraising Gala. I am still a member of this wonderful group of women who support St. Mary's.

With my Auxiliary experience and many years in sales training and leadership development, I was asked to join St. Mary's Board of Directors in 2011. I have been Board secretary and vice president, and recently elected president. I am honored to be able to serve the children and young adults of St. Mary's Home and The Albero House in this capacity.

My husband Bruce, a General District Court judge in Norfolk, and I are the proud parents of six children and three grandchildren. In 2000, our son Andrew, who was 14 at the time, was in a car accident that left him with a traumatic brain injury. Some of the children at St. Mary's have a TBI as well. As a mom, I know the challenges that parents who have children at St. Mary's face. My family's experience has only made me more passionate about St. Mary's. The Home tugs at a special place in my heart.

Our Board meetings at the Home always include some of the staff who take care of the children and young adults. As Board president, I'm looking forward to including more staff members at our meetings so we can keep a close connection between the Board and the dedicated staff that cares for the children and young adults. Hearing about all the wonderful things that our staff does with the residents strengthens our dedication to provide the best care for those we serve.

I am very excited that St. Mary's is exploring the idea of building small group homes for people with disabilities. My son Andrew has lived in several residential facilities, so it is a passion of mine to provide special homes for people who need them. How exciting that we can bring St. Mary's to so many more people who will benefit from what we can offer.

Thank you for all your support to help the children and young adults of St. Mary's and The Albero House be happy and healthy. I look forward to my term as president, where I hope to make a difference for all of the residents of St. Mary's Home and The Albero House.



## St. Mary's Board of Directors

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- Dr. Allen "Trey" Hardin  
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## HONORARY DIRECTORS

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*St. Mary's Medical Director*
- Nabil T. Tadros, M.D.  
Long Term Care of Virginia  
*The Albero House Medical Director*

## St. Mary's Welcomes Board Officers

Nancy Wilcox, senior leader and national sales trainer for NYR Organic, was elected this spring to a two-year term as president of St. Mary's Board of Directors. Nancy, who previously was vice president of St. Mary's Board, also is a longtime member of the Auxiliary Board of St. Mary's Home, a group of dedicated women who strive to fill needs the Home otherwise cannot meet.

In addition, the Board elected the following officers:

• **Sharon S. Goodwyn**, labor and employment counsel with Hunton & Williams, moved from secretary to vice president of St. Mary's Board.



• **George L. Consolvo** of Kaufman & Canoles, P.C., who is nationally recognized for his tax-exempt finance law practice, continues his long service as treasurer.



• **H. Gregory Kilduff**, who is retired, is the new secretary.



## EVENTS

OCT. 10, 2015

**Beach Ambassadors' Battle of the Beers.** 75% of proceeds will benefit St. Mary's Home. Tapped Gas-tropub, 1550 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, 1-6 p.m. Info: beachambassadors.com

OCT. 10, 2015

**Roll With It.** Support activities for the children and young adults of St. Mary's while you enjoy an evening of casual elegance amidst collectible automobiles, with music, heavy hors d'oeuvres, champagne and chocolates. \$75 per person. 6:30-9 p.m., Abacus of Hampton Roads, 410 18th St., Virginia Beach. Info: Mary Helen Hilton, (757) 446-6793 or mhilton@smhdc.org

OCT. 16, 2015

**Friday Forums lecture: "Psst! Don't Tell Your Kids They're Learning"** Ynez Peterson, OTR/L, will review how to select toys to create independence and maximize function while stirring your child's imagination. 1 p.m., Atrium at St. Mary's Home. Free. Sponsored by Children's Specialty Group and The Camp Family Foundations. Info: (757) 622-2208 ext. 321 or saintmaryshome.org

OCT. 17, 2015

**St. Mary's Home Fall Festival, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.** Enjoy arts and crafts, face painting, a haunted hayride and more. Info: Shirley Justice, (757) 622-2208 ext. 423 or sjjustice@smhdc.org

### Save the Date:

The Auxiliary Board of St. Mary's Home will hold its **11th Annual Gala and Auction** on April 16, 2016, at a new venue: The Half Moone Cruise and Celebration Center on the downtown Norfolk waterfront.

# Thank You to Valkyrie for Supporting Adults with Disabilities

**D**efense contractor Valkyrie Enterprises, LLC of Virginia Beach supports warriors, much like the battle maidens of Norse mythology for which it is named. Valkyrie also supports the Hampton Roads community through philanthropy.

Valkyrie recently completed a \$10,000 gift to The Albero House, opened on St. Mary's campus to provide long-term residential care for adults 22 and over who have disabilities.

St. Mary's CEO William C. Giermak and Director of Development Martha Price Stewart presented Valkyrie President and CEO Gary Lisota (center, photo) with a special token of grati-

tude: a colorful piece of "smash art" made by a family friend, 14-year-old Aidan. The teen, who lives at St. Mary's, created the piece by dripping several colors of paint onto a piece of paper, covering that with a second piece of paper and then smashing the pieces together with his fist.

"St. Mary's ability to bring love and dignity to its residents has personally touched our Valkyrie family," Lisota said. "I am proud and pleased to have Valkyrie give such support back to this noteworthy community organization."

Giermak thanked Lisota for his personal interest in St. Mary's, as well as the generosity of Valkyrie Enterprises. "Valkyrie's support is helping adults who have severe disabilities receive the professional, compassionate around-the-clock care that St. Mary's is known for providing children with disabilities," Giermak said.

Watch a video of Aidan creating smash art: <http://bit.ly/smashartsmh>



# Donor-Advised Funds Give You Convenience, Benefits

**A** donor-advised fund can be an easy, flexible and efficient way for you to give to charities of your choice. It is invested to grow over time, letting you recommend charitable grants now and in the future. Another advantage is that you receive a tax-deduction benefit immediately upon making your deposit with the managers of your fund.

St. Mary's Home is pleased to be the recipient of a number of donor-advised funds that supporters have set up to make their annual gifts to various charities. If you decide to create a designated fund, you can set that up to support a particular charity, like St. Mary's Home. Either case can be a rewarding way to support a charity with the comfort of knowing your gifts are timely and making a difference in the community.

The Hampton Roads Community Foundation ([hamptonroadscf.org](http://hamptonroadscf.org)) is a leader in Hampton Roads, administering more than 100 donor-advised funds that let people be active philanthropists. Some of those funds have provided critical operating annual support for St. Mary's Home and generously supported projects, including The Albero House for adults. "Donor-advised funds are one of the fastest-growing types of philanthropy in the United States," said Kay Stine, the Foundation's vice president for development.

Other fund managers you may want to consider are the Schwab Charitable Fund and Fidelity Charitable. Closer to home, the United Way Foundation of South Hampton Roads ([unitedwayshr.org](http://unitedwayshr.org))

*Continued on next page*

## Donor-Advised Funds Give You Convenience

*Continued from page 6*

and the Southeast Virginia Community Foundation (sevacf.org, contact Ward Robinett) also offer similar funds. According to Carol McCormack, president and CEO of United Way of South Hampton Roads, “Donors can invest in the future for their families and causes they care deeply about with a donor-advised fund through the United Way Foundation.”

Please contact Martha Price Stewart, St. Mary’s director of development, at [mstewart@smhdc.org](mailto:mstewart@smhdc.org) or (757) 446-6797 for more information. Or, contact directly any of the funds listed or others you know about that oversee the charitable giving of generous donors. In all cases, consult with your financial advisor first to make sure this is the right decision for you and your family.



Molly is one of 12 adults who live at The Albero House, which was made possible in part through donor-advised funds. (photo by Tony Cece)



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(go to News>Blog)

# Meet the New Members of the Embrace Cabinet

St. Mary’s Home has added seven members to the Embrace Cabinet, a volunteer leadership group that guides the nonprofit in fundraising, marketing and other areas of interest. They are:

- **Michele Anderson**, *vice president for major and principle gifts at United Way of South Hampton Roads*
- **Lily Hsu**, *president-elect of The Junior League of Norfolk-Virginia Beach, Inc.*
- **Jeff Hubbard**, *president of Beach Ambassadors, which supports Hampton Roads-based charitable organizations*
- **Hanan Mitry**, *president of The Junior League of Norfolk-Virginia Beach, Inc.*
- **John Porter**, *an entrepreneur and co-owner of Norfolk restaurants Handsome Biscuit, Field Guide and Toast, as well as co-owner of Dear Dandelions, a café now open at the Norfolk Botanical Garden*
- **Lindsay Pryor**, *an independent sales director with Mary Kay, Inc., and board member at The Miller Oil Foundation*
- **Kay Stine**, *vice president for development at Hampton Roads Community Foundation*

Thank you to the new members and to those who continue to serve on the Embrace Cabinet: Janette Crumley of Cordell & Crumley; Richard J. Davison, retired from Norfolk Southern Corp; Michael E. Duffy of Merrill Lynch; Karen L. Hibbard, past president of St. Mary’s Auxiliary Board; Elise Hicks, St. Mary’s Northern Virginia liaison; Mark T. Jones, QED Systems, Inc.; Suzy Kelly of Jo-Kell, Inc.; Richard N. Knapp, St. Mary’s Home Board of Directors and Quick180; Kim Thumel; Dr. Allen “Trey” Hardin White, III, D. D. S., Oceanfront Dentistry; Fred Widman; and Nancy Wilcox, NYR Organic and president of St. Mary’s Home Board of Directors.



Michele Anderson



Lily Hsu



Jeff Hubbard



Hanan Mitry



John Porter



Lindsay Pryor



Kay Stine

## Brandon: In a Class by Himself

**S**uzanne Eason, supervisor of occupational therapy support services at St. Mary's, walked up to the microphone carrying a six-inch-thick file. That file, she said, told the physical story of Brandon, who, like his fellow residents at St. Mary's, has multiple, severe disabilities.

But Suzanne, other friends and family members were at his graduation ceremony in June to share what makes him Brandon on the inside. They described him as persistent, smart, lovable and a prankster. "We are all fortunate to have you in our lives and show us how to live life to the fullest," Suzanne told him.

Jorge, who lives at St. Mary's, spoke from the heart about his buddy. "When I first met Brandon, we clicked. We are brothers from another mother," Jorge said. At the end of his speech, he told Brandon, "I'm proud of you, too."

Brandon's father thanked the staff for being so supportive of his son and told Brandon, "I'm amazed by you."



**B**randon loves all things Virginia Tech. So when Todd Collins, the general manager of longtime St. Mary's supporter Checkered Flag Volkswagen and Hyundai, attended Brandon's graduation, he brought his pal Tech T-shirts to add to his collection.

**Yes, I WANT  
TO HELP**

**P**lease donate today to help children and young adults with severe disabilities have good lives and receive the best care, in a warm, homelike environment. You can make your gift online at [saintmaryshome.org](http://saintmaryshome.org), or call (757) 622-2208 or (800) 237-6555, or send it, with our deep thanks, in the envelope provided with this newsletter. Your tax-deductible contribution not only helps with essential medical care but also brightens the children's lives with adventures they treasure year-round.

You also are invited to create your legacy by making a planned gift, such as leaving St. Mary's in your will, and becoming a member of The Guardian Society. For more information, contact Martha Price Stewart, director of development, at (757) 446-6797 or [mstewart@smhdc.org](mailto:mstewart@smhdc.org).

Thank you so much for gifts you have made to St. Mary's Home. Please consider a monthly recurring gift of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more to increase the power of your donation.