

JOURNEYS

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

Spring 2019

*A publication of
St. Mary's Home.*

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Ann Sparkman is a
Healthcare Hero

*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.*



Jayson, in his mother's arms, at Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics' inaugural GoBabyGo event. With them are, at left, Betsy Turner of St. Mary's occupational therapy support services department and, center, Kaddie Surratt, an orthotist resident at Coastal. (photo courtesy of Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics)

Go, Jayson, Go!

Modified Cars Help Kids Gain Independence

Jayson just turned four years old, but he's already learning to drive. His vehicle of choice? A battery-powered Power Wheel V6 presented to him and adapted for him by our friends at Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics, LLC.

Jayson tested out his new wheels during Coastal's inaugural GoBabyGo event last fall at the company's Norfolk office, near St. Mary's Home.

GoBabyGo is a national, community-based research, design and outreach program

that takes off-the-shelf, ride-on cars and modifies them to meet the needs of children with disabilities and help them become more mobile and socialize while having fun. The program started at the University of Delaware, which freely shares materials and other information to help as many children as possible benefit.

Coastal adapted the idea at the suggestion of Kaddie Surratt, an orthotist resident at Coastal who previously participated in a GoBabyGo event in Chicago. Coastal teamed

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Go, Jayson, Go!

Continued from front
with volunteer engineering students from Old Dominion University to assemble and modify cars for three children with disabilities, including Jayson, to match their needs. Coastal donated the cars to the children. Coastal hopes to make GoBabyGo a semiannual event.

Thanks to Coastal, Jayson just has to push a large button to operate his car, since he is unable to use the pedals. Additional modifications are planned to the seat to help strengthen Jayson's torso.

Jayson was a bit tentative when first introduced to the car at the event, but he quickly got comfortable. "Jayson was phenomenal," said Debbie Rhoads of St. Mary's occupational therapy support services department. "We were so proud of him."

Down the road, Debbie said she could see

Jayson using his modified car to zip around the halls of St. Mary's. Betsy Turner, another member of the OT staff who attended the event along with Lynn Regna of our physical therapy department, said learning to drive the car may help prepare Jayson to eventually handle a motorized wheelchair.

Coastal staff got to know Jayson during their weekly visits to St. Mary's to conduct an orthotics clinic, said Bobby Siverd, an orthotist and an owner of Coastal. Coastal, which makes splints and other equipment to assist with stability, also has referred a few families to St. Mary's over the years.

Coastal supports St. Mary's in additional ways, such as sponsoring the Home's annual It's Fall, Y'all fundraiser. The company's relationship with St. Mary's goes back about 25 years. Thank you!

In the News Coverage

COVA BIZ magazine

December 2018/January 2019 issue

"On the Move" item about new Director of Human Resources Michelle Depelteau.

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT
Oct. 17

Item about Beach Ambassadors' Battle of the Beers, which benefits St. Mary's Home.

INSIDE BUSINESS

Dec. 3

Feature on Chartway's We Promise Foundation, a long-time supporter of St. Mary's Home.

Nov. 26

Article about Junior League of Norfolk-Virginia Beach, a longtime supporter of St. Mary's Home, being honored on National Philanthropy Day as Outstanding Community Organization.

Albero House Gives Back at Holidays

T.J., one of the adults who lives in The Albero House, collected toys at the holidays on behalf of the Dominion Derby Girls. He took the items to a Toys For Tots drop-off location at O'Connor Brewing Co. in Norfolk. While there, he had fun touring the brewery.



Peers Play *with* Pals During Richmond Visit



Riding the indoor carousel at the Children's Museum was among the fun activities during the Peer Play Pals' visit to Richmond. (photos courtesy of Alan Jones)

EVENTS

March 30, 2019

Spring Fling, 10:30 am. - 12:30 p.m., grounds of St. Mary's Home, 6171 Kempsville Circle, Norfolk. Crafts and more fun activities for people of all ages and abilities. Free and open to the public. Info: Carlton Farmer, (757) 622-2208 ext. 423 or cfarmer@smhdc.org

Some of the littlest kids at St. Mary's got into the holiday spirit and got up to some adventures during a daylong visit to Richmond.

The December journey almost two hours northwest of Norfolk was the longest yet for our Peer Play Pals group and featured stops at a historic hotel and the Children's Museum.

Peer Play Pals began in 2014 as a way for kids at St. Mary's to play with other kids their own age who don't have disabilities. The kids take local field trips about once a week, to the library, museums, beaches, restaurants and more, such as the Busch Gardens amusement park about an hour away in Williamsburg.

The Richmond trip arose from a desire to try something different.

"We do so many things in the building for the holidays, but it's also nice to get out of the building," said Nicole Hoskins Jones, our director of recreational therapy. "Seeing the kids experience something for the first time was a highlight of the day."

The kids visited The Jefferson Hotel to check out the grand holiday display. At the Children's Museum, kids including Mackenzie, Jayson and Autumn rode the indoor carousel, took part in activities at various stations, got dressed up in costumes in a theater room and explored a play bank and a play school as well as other exhibits.

"Thank you for coming by," the museum commented on a Facebook post about the visit. "We hope you had a fun field trip!"

The trip was so fun that Peer Play Pals would like to return to Richmond before the holidays this year. "We hope we can make it a bigger event," Nicole said.



Peer Play Pals also checked out the holiday decorations at the historic Jefferson Hotel during their Richmond trip.

Holiday Happenings at the Home

Thank you to the many friends who dropped by in December to fulfill the holiday wishes of almost 100 children and young adults who live at St. Mary's Home and The Albero House. You brought toys, school supplies, other gifts and many smiles! Here's just a sampling of holiday cheer:

Do You Need a Speaker? We Can Help

Our staff members enjoy speaking about St. Mary's Home and the exceptional care, education, therapies and recreational programs we offer for individuals with disabilities.

Our presentation can include a lively, professional, 10-minute video. Our speakers also are prepared for a short question-and-answer period.

To book a speaker from St. Mary's Home at no cost, please contact Sonja Barisic, APR, director of marketing communications, at sbarisic@smhdc.org or (757) 352-2700.

See our video, "The Power of Touch," at: saintmaryshome.org/about-us



A bigale glided around our Atrium with help from Wanda Cook, a direct support professional, during the annual dance party our fun friends from Kerneos Inc. threw for kids and staff. They brought food and presents and made a gift to the Home. Thank you, Kerneos, for your generous holiday spirit!

Santa had a whole lot of helpers among the employees at Trader Interactive, who bought many, many gifts on our kids' wish list. Thank you for your incredible generosity at the holidays and all year long! Special thanks to Carmen Gerena at St. Mary's for coordinating holiday donations.



Kassidi and other kids let Jolly Old St. Nick know what they wanted for Christmas when our longtime friend Mo Patrick of Dominion Energy Virginia visited. Mo also was a special guest at our Peer Play Pals' holiday party.



Ocean Lakes High School is the first school to start a St. Mary's Kid2Kid club. Students met for the first time in January. (photos this page courtesy of Kid2Kid)

Kid2Kid: Spreading the Love

by Jaedyn Williams and Julia Roche, Kid2Kid communications chairs

The official board of officers of St. Mary's Kid2Kid youth volunteer group met for the first time on Jan. 13. The officers reviewed past and upcoming events. Special Events Chair Olivia McGuire updated the members about the success from past fundraising events. Recently, Olivia and other board members sold crafts at venues such as Princess Anne High School, Thoroughgood Elementary School and farmers' markets. The board appreciates all the time that Olivia has dedicated toward organizing and participating in these successful events.

The members also brainstormed ideas for upcoming events. They are planning on making monthly visits to St. Mary's Home and organizing activities for the residents. All of the members are excited to work with the individuals and form closer relationships with them.

Kid2Kid also is striving to expand the group and its vision through clubs at high schools in Hampton Roads. At the beginning of January, the first high school Kid2Kid club was approved at Ocean Lakes High School. Jaedyn Williams and Ryan Sherman organized the first meeting, which took place at the end of January. In addition, Max Frederic, Sienna Frederic and Julia Roche are working on starting clubs at Princess Anne High School and Plaza Middle School. We are excited to see how Kid2Kid is growing and what the future will bring.



Meet Max

My name is Max Frederic and I am the president of St. Mary's Kid2Kid. I am Franco-American and recently moved from Paris, France, to Virginia Beach, my mom's hometown. I am a sophomore in Princess Anne's International Baccalaureate program. I play on the school's soccer team and am a member of the Model United Nations team and Spanish and French Honor Societies. I am excited about my role with Kid2Kid and am trying to raise awareness about Kid2Kid and start some clubs in the high schools and middle schools in Virginia Beach.



Join Our FAMILY

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Check out our blog at:



saintmaryshome.org/news/blog-2

Plus, find our Auxiliary Board as StMarysAuxBoard on:



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Members of the Broad Bay Point Greens Garden Club and retired St. Mary's Home CEO William C. Giermak (back row, right) gathered for the opening of our newly refurbished employee break room, which they helped make possible.

Donors Care for Our Caregivers

Our employees work hard to help give the individuals in our care a good life. Now, we've transformed our break room so our staff members have a more comfortable, stylish and welcoming space to rest and recharge.

The refurbished break room, rechristened The Good Life Lounge, opened in December with new furniture and flooring, fresh paint and more.

Thank you to the following donors for helping to make this project possible: Broad Bay Point Greens Garden Club; club member Mary Guimond and her husband, Norm, who matched the club's gift; and former St. Mary's CEO William C. Giermak and his wife, Betty.

"A lot of love and a lot of compassion and care goes toward each of the residents here," Giermak said shortly before cutting a ribbon to officially open the lounge in December. "It's very, very hard work. So I think that to have a nice area like this for folks to have a chance to take a break occasionally is really a big improvement for the Home."

Thanks also to Carmen Gerena, executive assistant to CEO H. Wayne Jones, for taking feedback from the staff and keeping the flame going for this project; Ron Herrick and his maintenance team for taking on much of the makeover labor themselves; and Kristen Nelson, St. Mary's giving manager, for being the point person between all parties involved.

Check out our Facebook page (find us as @StMarysHome) to watch a short video of the opening of The Good Life Lounge.



Staff enjoyed our refurbished break room during the grand opening of The Good Life Lounge.

Ann Sparkman is a Healthcare Hero

Ann Sparkman, LPN isn't just one of the longest-serving employees of St. Mary's Home, where she has worked for 44 years.

"Ann Sparkman IS St. Mary's," said Roxane Ward, whose 25-year-old son Colton came to live at the Home as a teen. "I love Ann for who she is, what she's done at St. Mary's, what she's done for me, and for her heart."

person who really knows all of the children and young adults and puts their needs above all else.

Ann has been heavily involved with advancing St. Mary's to meet the needs of our community. She helped with the change in structure at St. Mary's from a medical model of care to a person-centered community. Even though the children and young adults have

multiple, complex medical issues, we take them on trips to so many places, from the Virginia Beach Oceanfront to a Miley Cyrus concert in Washington, D.C.

Ann also has been integral to many aspects of St. Mary's beyond nursing. She has encouraged people to volunteer here. For many years, she organized yard sales at her parents' home to help raise funds for St. Mary's. She also has participated in other fund-raising ventures, such as spaghetti dinners, 5k runs and bake sales.

Ann's colleagues love and respect her for being a problem solver who isn't afraid to take on new challenges to make things better or to speak her mind when something could be done differently.

"You don't meet many people like Ann in a lifetime," said Janie Mines, LPN, who has worked with

Ann at St. Mary's for more than 30 years. "She is not only serious about her work but she makes it fun and playful since we work with children."

Roxane marvels at how Ann finds time in her extremely busy day to call her to make sure she's happy with Colton's care. "She has become family," Roxane said. "I can talk to her just the same way I would talk to anyone in my family about Colton. She gets it. She feels it."

As Roxane put it so well, "There will never be another Ann Sparkman at St. Mary's."



Ann Sparkman, seen here with CEO H. Wayne Jones at an employee recognition event in November, received a "Healthcare Hero" award from *Inside Business* magazine.

Ann was honored in early March by *Inside Business* magazine for being a local "Healthcare Hero" in the nursing category. Congratulations, Ann!

Ann started as a floor nurse at St. Mary's in 1975. In 1984, she became director of medical records, later also taking on the duties of chief compliance officer. She recently spent 16 months as our interim director of nursing.

Ann also has assisted some of the physicians who come to St. Mary's to treat the individuals who live here. She is a very caring

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A good life.

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Thank You *for* Giving *the* Gift of a Good Life

Laura, who recently came to live at St. Mary's, had a great time on a field trip to the Children's Museum of Virginia in Portsmouth. Your support helps children like Laura grow, thrive through well-rounded care — and have lots of fun!

To donate:

- Go to saintmaryshome.org
- Call (757) 622-2208 or (800) 237-6555
- Send your gift in the envelope provided with this newsletter

*You make a difference.
Thank you!*

