




Meeting the *complex*
needs of children and
adults *with* disabilities.

St. Mary's Home

A close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair, smiling warmly as she holds a young girl with blonde hair. The girl has her arms crossed and is looking down. They are outdoors, with green foliage in the background.

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

St. Mary's Home is just that. A home – in the very best sense of the word. A home filled with love, friends, activities and extraordinary care. Ours is the only long-term-care residential facility of its kind in Virginia. Since 1944, we've provided a true home, evolving to provide medical, therapeutic, educational and recreational services for children and young adults with severe disabilities from newborn to age 21. ♦ This level of complex, around-the-clock care can be difficult for families to provide at home. We offer it in an atmosphere of warmth, nurturing and personal attention. Our staff combines outstanding medical care with a gentle touch to nurture our children and young adults. ♦ We're proud to also offer, since the opening of our Albero House in 2013, care for adults 22 and over.




Love. Joy. Accomplishment. Community.

At St. Mary's, we care for individuals with severe disabilities that most often are the result of genetic disorders, traumatic accidents, illness or child abuse. Most of our children and young adults use wheelchairs and may rely on methods other than speech to communicate their wants and needs. Many use feeding tubes to provide some or all of their nourishment. A few have tracheotomies, and almost all require regularly administered medications.

For all the unique challenges our residents face, they share the ability and the desire to experience the joys of everyday life. In that spirit, we serve families from throughout Virginia, representing diverse economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We're also pleased to serve military families while they are stationed in Virginia.



“This Home and these people are incredible. They gave us hope and comfort when we needed some, and friendship. They are still members of our family because of what they did for our son.” — John Craig, whose son, Danny, received intense therapy at St. Mary’s



“The staff do their best every single day to make the children at St. Mary’s feel that it is their home. Everything there is done from the heart. That’s why St. Mary’s can’t be replaced. It’s a matter of the heart.” — Myra Perdue, mother of Amelia

Inviting, spacious and filled with natural light, St. Mary’s 88,000-square-foot facility was designed to meet the needs of our children and young adults, staff and visiting families. The carefully considered layout is comfortable and functional and fosters a sense of home and community. Features include:

- Four residential “neighborhoods” that each house a nurses’ station, play areas and bedrooms
- Four interior courtyards that enclose gardens, a fish pond, a hydrotherapy pool with fountain, and a play-ground with adaptive equipment
- Two private family visiting rooms with televisions and a library
- Physicians’ offices, a dentist office, and a barber and beauty shop
- Eight classrooms
- Rooms and hallways with large windows and skylights
- An atrium for sports and activities

The sewing department – “Virginia’s largest closet” – cares for the children’s clothing to keep the children comfortable and fashionable. Our seamstress also can adapt clothing for specific medical needs.

**A place *full* of
friends *and* family.**



Giving their all – body, mind, heart and soul.



At St. Mary's, outstanding care starts and ends with outstanding caregivers. Among our qualified, caring and motivated staff of about 250 full- and part-time employees, tenures of 10, 15 and even 20 years are common. Some employees have devoted more than 20 years and, in some instances, entire careers to caring for our children and young adults.

In addition to this extraordinary level of commitment, our professionals possess the skill, knowledge, patience and sensitivity to care for children with complex health needs day after day. Staff members are thoroughly trained, and they continually update and refine their skills through ongoing education.

The best of friends providing the best of care.

It's easier to maintain a healthy outlook on life when there's a diverse team of top medical professionals dedicated to maintaining your health 24 hours a day.

Daily care is delivered by registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, direct support professionals and occupational and recreational therapists, who work under the medical direction of a board-certified pediatrician, plus physical therapists who work under the direction of a board-certified physiatrist. All children and young adults receive regular examinations from a pediatrician to evaluate their medical needs.

Children and young adults also have in-house consultations and regular reviews with neurologists, orthopedists, physiatrists, gastroenterologists, pharmacists, dentists and other medical specialists. A number of the doctors are on staff at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters and Eastern Virginia Medical School, both in Norfolk.

Working in concert with physicians regarding each child's care plan, our nurses provide around-the-clock care. We emphasize communication among the

medical staff, and physicians are always available to meet with families or provide phone consultations to discuss a child's condition.

Direct support professionals follow a person-centered model of care to help the children and young adults make meaningful choices about their daily needs and activities – in the Home and in the community.

We're proud of the comprehensive medical care and specialized medical treatments we provide – and the compassionate way we provide it. Specialized treatments include gastrostomy-tube care, ketogenic diet, tracheostomy care, Botox clinic, vagus nerve stimulation protocols, wheelchair clinic, baclofen pump maintenance and vest respiratory treatments.

At St. Mary's, we're experts at recognizing abilities and raising expectations. We focus on helping each child and young adult reach his or her full potential and on providing programs and experiences to enhance their lives.

Every child and young adult at St. Mary's has an individual care plan, which includes short- and long-term goals related to physical, educational, psychological and social functioning. A multidisciplinary team continually evaluates the progress of each child and adjusts his or her care plan regularly.

Two social workers, a registered dietitian, a school psychologist and a behavioral specialist, as well as four support coordinators who serve as advocates for the children, round out the professional staff. The coordinators practice person-centered care to ensure appropriate services are provided, based on what's important to parents or guardians and their children. They help the children and young adults monitor their own Individual Support Plans and build a team of family, friends and staff.





Some of our children and young adults attend public schools in Norfolk and Virginia Beach, but most attend school at St. Mary's. Each child's curriculum is based on Virginia's Aligned Standards of Learning and may include physical, occupational and speech therapy along with art, music and adaptive physical education.

St. Mary's partners with Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs to educate each resident using the REACH (Raising Expectations and Abilities for Children with Complex Health Needs) program. Team members provide a safe and enjoyable learning environment emphasizing communication and active learning while striving to develop meaningful connections with families and communities.

A school principal has an office at St. Mary's, and each classroom at St. Mary's has a master's-level teacher and two teaching assistants who provide instruction and develop an Individualized Educational Program for each student. An assistive technology specialist ensures that classroom environments are as accessible as possible. Also, three education specialists mentor teachers based on best practices for students with significant cognitive impairments.

The process of striving to move beyond expectations is highly rewarding – both for our residents and our staff and educational team.

For our youngest residents, up to age two, St. Mary's Infant and Toddler Program offers therapy, infant massage and playtime in a cheerful environment to stimulate early development.

*Always reaching,
always learning.*



A daily testament to the power of touch.

Here at St. Mary's, we touch lives. Frequent hands-on therapy helps our children and young adults develop essential skills so they can function at their best. Therapists also train other staff members on how to follow through with range of motion exercises, correct positioning and other aspects of each child's therapy program.

Our programs address both fine and gross motor skills, which are then applied to daily bathing, dressing and feeding. For example, at mealtimes, children and young adults sit together in small groups, where special tables, chairs and utensils help them maximize their independence. Even though some of the children have feeding tubes, everyone participates in mealtime activities to develop social and self-help skills.

Complementing and augmenting the therapies provided, our occupational therapy support services department provides and maintains custom-fitted wheelchairs and individualized musculoskeletal supports. Staff members also adapt toys to make them easier to use, and they evaluate each child's ability to eat.

Our assistive technology capabilities are always evolving. From driving power wheelchairs to accessing computers and playing with adaptive toys, our residents are empowered and encouraged to gain independence to the best of their abilities.



Things to do, people to see.

Our children enjoy seeing and doing new things as well as meeting and interacting with new people and old friends. We make sure to provide daily opportunities for recreational and leisure pursuits. The things we do are fun and help our children and young adults make progress on physical goals, cognitive skills, social skills, overcoming emotional barriers and becoming active members of our community.

With the help of a community liaison, we take our children and young adults out and about, and we also invite groups and individuals to St. Mary's to interact with the children here. Activities include:

- Taking field trips to the zoo, museums and beaches
- Celebrating birthdays
- Going to the movies and concerts
- Enjoying visits from holiday carolers
- Shopping with staff and family
- Attending summer camp
- Dancing at prom
- Playing with therapy dogs
- Spending afternoons with young volunteers
- Exploring the community, gardening and selling cookies as part of St. Mary's own Girl Scout troop





“Placing Colton at St. Mary’s was the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my entire life, but it was the best thing I could have ever done for him. He is now doing things that we never dreamed he would do.” — Roxane Ward, mother of Colton

The families of our residents live all across Virginia. We recognize the importance of family, near or far, and we encourage family involvement through visits, regular meetings with staff, frequent calls, newsletters, social media and a webcam.

Extensive visiting hours, open classroom visitation and a generous overnight leave policy also help keep residents in close contact with their families.

In addition, seasonal events and special family programs let family members stay active in their children’s and sibling’s lives. One of our most poignant annual events is graduation, complete with caps, gowns and music, for residents preparing to move to adult-care facilities. Happily, with the addition of our Albero House for adults, that move is sometimes a very easy one.

We’re dedicated to keeping family relationships strong. We understand that these connections are vital not just to our children’s well-being, but also to the well-being of our children’s parents, siblings and extended family members.

**We never forget
the *importance*
of family.**



Now *adults*
with disabilities
can call St. Mary's
home, *too*.

Moving away from the comfortable environment and caring, expert staff they have known can be difficult for the young adults when they turn 21, and for their families.

In 2013, St. Mary's expanded to provide our graduates with another option. The Albero House, a 10,000-square-foot wing, features 12 private bedrooms and a spacious common living area, a kitchen, an enclosed porch and a courtyard. Large windows flood the rooms and hallways with natural light.

Previously, it was difficult to find a comparable place for adults to receive the specialized care that St. Mary's provides.



photo courtesy of Ashley Abraham



Dave Chance Photography.



St. Mary's has proven to be a wonderful and rewarding choice for many Virginia families trying to provide the very best care for their child.

Families can refer themselves to St. Mary's, although children and young adults also are referred by sources such as hospital discharge planners, physicians, community services boards and current residents' families. Parents or guardians must live in Virginia while their child resides at St. Mary's. Our admissions process requires a completed admission application and transmittal of the child's medical and educational records.

A short stay can go a long way.

We also offer a respite program for children and young adults with disabilities who need short-term residential care in the event of a family emergency, vacation, post-surgical rehabilitation and care, or other event or circumstance.

How to learn more.

St. Mary's is a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization. Costs are covered by Medicaid, United Way and charitable contributions. We strongly encourage families to contact our social workers to visit and tour St. Mary's and meet our staff.

If you have questions – or if you'd like to receive an admission application or schedule a tour – please call us at (757) 622-2208 or (800) 237-6555, or email us at information@smhdc.org. You also can find more information and admissions materials, and subscribe to our periodic email newsletter, at saintmaryshome.org.

***Is St. Mary's right
for *your* loved one?***



St. Mary's Home

Meeting the complex needs of children and adults with disabilities.

6171 Kempsville Circle, Norfolk, VA 23502

(800) 237-6555 (757) 622-2208

Fax: (757) 627-7339

saintmaryshome.org

information@smhdc.org

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