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ST. MARY'S HOME FOR DISABLED CHILDREN EXPANDS

TO IMPROVE CARE OPTIONS FOR VIRGINIA ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

NORFOLK, Va. – Feb. 19, 2011 – St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children plans to build a 10,000-square-foot expansion with 12 private rooms to offer adults who have severe disabilities the comprehensive and expert care for which St. Mary's is recognized.

St. Mary's Board of Trustees approved the expansion after two years of study, and a capital campaign already has raised more than half of the project's \$3 million goal. Richard N. Knapp, president of the Board and chair of the Embrace Campaign, was to make the formal announcement of the plans during the St. Mary's Auxiliary Auction & Gala on Feb. 19.

Groundbreaking is planned for early summer of 2011. The adult home is expected to open by mid-2012, creating 25-30 jobs, mostly caregiver positions.

"Children and adults with severe disabilities who need specialized care throughout their lives deserve to have a lot of different options to get that care," said William C. Giermak, CEO of St. Mary's, one of the nation's leading healthcare providers for children with disabilities. "There are few places in Virginia that offer the same level of care for adults as St. Mary's provides for children, so we are expanding to fill this critical need. This is a natural evolution for St. Mary's, which began in 1944 as an infant home and has grown to care for young adults up to age 21."

The adult home at St. Mary's will be open to adults with severe disabilities from across Virginia, including St. Mary's own graduates, who now must find other places, such as nursing homes, to live after they turn 21. The move can be difficult for the young adults -- many have lived at St. Mary's for years -- and their families.

Bruce and Eileen Scherzinger of Vienna, Va., know how difficult it is to find appropriate care for young adults with severe disabilities. Their daughter, Rachel, lives at St. Mary's Home and will turn 20 in May. The Scherzingers have found that group homes in their area have long waiting lists and require residents to have a large degree of self-sufficiency that is beyond Rachel's reach.

"An option to extend Rachel's residency at St. Mary's beyond age 21 would be a godsend," Bruce Scherzinger said. "It would quite literally give her a new lease on life and a level of care that can be offered nowhere else."

In addition to private bedrooms, the adult home at St. Mary's will have dining, leisure and family visiting areas. The one-story expansion with a brick exterior is being designed by PF&A Design, the same architecture firm that designed the children's home. It will match the look of St. Mary's state-of-the-art 88,000-square-foot building, opened in 2005 near Sentara Leigh Hospital. A promenade will connect the two facilities, enabling them to share some functions, such as food service and laundry.

The adult home is to be named in honor of the leading contributors to the capital campaign: St. Mary's Trustee Carl M. Albero, a founder of the defense contracting company AMSEC and vice-chairman of the Board of Directors of Colonna's Shipyard, and his wife, Carole Anne Albero, a retired special education teacher, volunteer at St. Mary's Home and member of St. Mary's Auxiliary Board. Other major supporters include the Auxiliary Board of St. Mary's Home, Sentara Healthcare, AMERIGROUP Charitable Foundation, PACE Collaborative and Bank of America.

About St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children

The private, nonprofit St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children in Norfolk, Va., provides comprehensive long- and short-term residential care for Virginia children and young adults, ages newborn to 21, who have severe intellectual and physical disabilities. Children come to St. Mary's as a result of birth disorders, traumatic accidents, illness and injuries from abuse.

For more information, contact:

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