

# the GUARDIAN

winter 2009-2010

## // GOING THE DISTANCE 21st Annual St. Mary's 5K raises nearly \$24K

Jason Branche came in dead last, but he didn't mind. In fact, he was thrilled. He had just finished walking in his very first race: the 21st Annual St. Mary's 5K.

"It was inspiring to look at all the other people in the race," Branche said. "This is something I will definitely do again."

Branche has cerebral palsy. He often has difficulty moving around the office, so walking 3.1 miles was going to be no mean feat. Plus, he didn't have much time to train. He had just decided a few days before the race to join a team with work colleagues from William E. Wood and Associates Realtors in Virginia Beach. Teammate Anna Parker went out with him to buy him a great pair of running shoes.

Branche was among more than 400 runners, walkers, volunteers and supporters who turned out at Fort Story in Virginia Beach on Saturday, Oct. 3, for the 5K, plus One-Mile Fun Run. The event, timed by the Tidewater Striders, raised nearly \$24,000 – about a 50 percent increase over the proceeds of 2008's race. The 5K winners received special awards: artwork created by the children and young adults who live at the Home.

"This fun fundraiser for children and adults of all abilities was St. Mary's most successful 5K in recent memory," CEO William C. Giermak said. "We are very grateful to the many people involved, from sponsors to runners to volunteers. You truly are making a difference for the children of St. Mary's Home."

In addition, Team Hoyt VB presented St. Mary's Home with a donation for \$10,000 after the race. Team Hoyt, which runs with people with disabilities, raised that money during the 2009 Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon in Virginia Beach over Labor Day weekend.

Clark Nexsen was the main sponsor of St. Mary's 5K. Other sponsors were ATC Healthcare Services, Abbott Nutrition,



Bank of America, Capital Concrete, Children's Specialty Group, Coastal Orthotics, Farm Fresh, Hill-Rom, Jo-Kell, KIS, MRI-CT Diagnostics, McKesson, Medical Equipment Distributors, Moore's Electric, NRW Engineering, QED, QVC, Rutherford, Selden Optometry, Stihl, Team Hoyt, The Norfolk Stationery Co., Thompson, Siegel & Walmsley and West Home Health Care.

Dr. Bob and the Burning Desires once again provided musical entertainment. Many more organizations and individuals donated their time and talent, as well as items for a prize drawing.

This year for the first time, the 5K was selected for the Tidewater Striders 2009 Walking Grand Prix series of races that count toward awards from the club. "Many thanks to the entire staff at St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children and all the volunteers who put together a race that, in my judgment, is unequalled on the Tidewater Strider Walker Grand Prix schedule," Jordan "Buddy" Levitin, a member of the Strider Walking Committee, wrote in an email. "You did yourself proud, and the wonderful children you serve so faithfully."

[ above left ] Kim Thumel, a St. Mary's trustee, also is a member of Team Hoyt VB, which runs with people with disabilities.

[ above right ] A happy racer.

Photos courtesy of R.A. Dallman Jr.

READY, SET, MARK YOUR CALENDAR: THE 22ND ANNUAL 5K WILL BE SATURDAY, OCT. 2, 2010, AT FORT STORY. FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT SONJA BARISIC, 757.352.2700 OR SBARISIC@SMHDC.ORG.

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### ABOUT US

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

FROM OUR CEO

// LEADING THE WAY

*St. Mary's staff rise above challenges every day*



While we had few problems on campus during the November nor'easter, many of you had damage at your homes and neighborhoods. So did many of our

employees. Still, folks at St. Mary's were here at work to serve the children. Many came in early or stayed late to ensure that the Home operated as it always does – in an efficient, compassionate and first-class manner to meet the needs of the children.

Similarly, everyone at St. Mary's, as well as our SECEP colleagues who educate the children, has done a great job of responding to the challenges as we continue to take extra precautions during this flu season to protect the children. With the vaccine administration proceeding smoothly, we look forward to re-evaluating our precautions over the next few months while ensuring that we do not let down our guard.

All day, every day, staff continue to help the children and their families meet their challenges, and for this we thank them, as we thank you for your support of the children of St. Mary's Home. We hope all of you will have a blessed and happy holiday season.

// William C. Giermak



// A SMILE, AND A HANDSHAKE

*U.S. Rep. Glenn Nye visited St. Mary's Home this summer. One stop on his tour was the classroom of the Early Intervention Program for the Home's youngest residents. He shook hands with 3-year-old Jahmari, who was being held by recreational therapy assistant Shaun Stauffer. The Home is in Nye's district, the 2nd District of Virginia, which stretches along the eastern side of the state.*

UPCOMING EVENTS

02/20/10  
*5th Annual Gala & Auction fundraiser*  
Sponsored by St. Mary's Auxiliary Board.  
6:30 p.m., The Westin Hotel, Town Center, Virginia Beach. To reserve tickets, donate, volunteer or request sponsorship information, contact Karen Hibbard, 757.622.2208 ext. 381 or [klhibb@cox.net](mailto:klhibb@cox.net).

03/24/2010  
*65th Anniversary Dinner*  
Sponsored by Monarch Bank.  
5:30 p.m., Marriott Hotel, downtown Norfolk.  
Contact Mary Helen Hilton, 757.446.6793 or [mhilton@smbdc.org](mailto:mhilton@smbdc.org).

04/18/2010  
*Virginia Arts Festival Concert: Rhythm Project*  
2 p.m., St. Mary's Atrium  
Contact 757.622.2208

05/07/2010  
*Graduation*  
10 a.m., St. Mary's Atrium  
Contact 757.622.2208

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SIGN UP FOR EMAILS *Stay in the loop. To receive updates from St. Mary's Home via email, sign up at our website, [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org).*

St. Mary's medical doctor is Joseph Toland, M.D., North Shore Pediatrics.

# onBOARD

*messages from St. Mary's Home*

## // THANK YOU FOR GIVING COMFORT & JOY

*a message from the board of trustees*

*"Knowing that Matthew was never alone on a holiday, or a birthday, or in the middle of the night, was something we appreciated and never took for granted."*

— A ST. MARY'S PARENT



By now, most of you have received a request for a year-end gift. The card also speaks to 65 years of "comfort and joy." Those words sum up what St. Mary's Home has been since our founding

in December 1944: a place of exemplary professional care, but also a place where children are embraced by safety, happiness and love.

One mother who recently lost her son, a young man who lived most of his life at St. Mary's Home and had left at the age of 21, wrote most eloquently:

"From the day he arrived at St. Mary's Home, he was 'yours.' From then on, we were confident that he was loved, fussed over, worried about, praised for accomplishments, respected, encouraged. ... Thank you for the sacrifices you made—working the late shifts, and the early morning shifts; for giving up holidays with your children and families in order to be there with other people's children. Knowing that Matthew was never alone on a holiday, or a birthday, or in the middle of the night, was something we appreciated and never took for granted."

I have been touched by the St. Mary's spirit of comfort and joy in my role on the Board of Trustees. I ask that you join me in touching the lives of the children and young adults of St. Mary's Home as we close the year, a difficult one for all of us, and look forward to the year ahead. If you have not had a chance to make a year-end donation, please consider a gift today. Thank you.

// *Richard N. Knapp, president*



*Isaiah strums a guitar during a music session this summer at Camp Horizon, a camp for people with disabilities. Earnings from the Auxiliary's auction provide camp scholarships, among other things. // Photo courtesy of Bill Tiernan, The Virginian-Pilot*

## // YOUR SUPPORT HELPS CHILDREN HAVE FUN, RECEIVE GREAT CARE

*a message from the auxiliary board*



The newest fundraiser organized by the Auxiliary of St. Mary's Home – a raffle – raised more than \$5,000 this fall to provide for the needs of the children

of the Home. Thank you to everyone who bought tickets. The winners were:

- Katheryn Mote of Virginia Beach, grand prize, accommodations for seven nights at luxurious Mizner Place in the South Florida Bonaventure Spa, Tennis and Golf Community;
- Adam Stanley of Virginia Beach, four tickets to a regular-season performance of the Virginia Stage Company;
- Todd Murphy of Hampton, \$100 gift certificate to Long's Jewelers.

The Auxiliary now is busy preparing for its fifth annual gala and auction, to be held Saturday, February 20, 2010, at The Westin Town Center in Virginia Beach. Proceeds will be used for summer camp scholarships, among other things. The 2009

auction raised about \$50,000, and with your support, we can match or beat that amount in 2010. For more information, including sponsorship opportunities, or to donate items for the auction, call 757.622.2208 ext. 381 or visit St. Mary's website, [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org).

For 60 years, the Auxiliary Board has been made up of dedicated women who raise money specifically to help the children and young adults who live at St. Mary's. This year, in addition to camp scholarships, the Auxiliary funded two adaptive tricycles for physical therapy, five new and improved play areas, two specially equipped beds, caps and gowns for graduation, a laptop for recreational therapy and eight combination DVD/VCR players.

Thank you to Auxiliary members and supporters, and welcome to the Auxiliary's new members: Clare Davison, Sheila Napolitano and Julie Martinette. Together, we are all working to better the lives of the children who call St. Mary's "home."

// *Karen L. Hibbard, president*

# atHOME

news from St. Mary's Home

## // ST. MARY'S EMPLOYEES MAKE A SPLASH

*Pond adds beauty to Home; recognition brings prestige to staff*

Something new blossomed in St. Mary's butterfly garden over the summer: a 500-gallon pond complete with waterfalls and fish. **Ron Herrick**, facility maintenance manager, designed the pond and installed it with help from his crew. Norfolk's Harborfront Garden Club provided the funds to build the pond, while the parents of some of the children of St. Mary's donated koi.

Children can go outside to enjoy the pond but also can observe the scene through the window as they pass through a main hallway. And they can listen to a recording of the rushing water by pressing a large button beneath the window, thanks to the efforts of **Mamie McCloud**, an occupational therapy technician.

**Carla Aquino**, chief nursing officer, was accepted into a master's degree program in nursing management, policy and leadership at Yale University.



*Ron Herrick, facility maintenance manager, and members of Norfolk's Harborfront Garden Club plant more plants around the new koi pond at St. Mary's Home.*

**Lynn Earle**, director of nutrition services, and **Suzanne Eason**, supervisor of occupational therapy support services, were selected to present at the Navigating the Care of the Medically Fragile Child conference in Portland, Ore., Oct. 28-31. Earle discussed the ketogenic diet and Eason spoke about pressure mapping.

**Nicole Hoskins Jones**, director of recreational therapy, has been named president of the Board of Directors of the Mid-Eastern Symposium on Therapeutic Recreation.



## // MAKING HOLIDAY WISHES COME TRUE

St. Mary's Home is always full of hustle and bustle for the holidays, with a number of groups and individuals dropping off gifts and taking part in concerts and other festivities with the children and young adults who live here. Even Jolly Old Saint Nick drops by.

"I just love seeing each and every one of the kids, and the women and men who work there just take such good care of them and even buy presents for the kids themselves," said Marlin "Mo" Patrick, a Dominion employee who has been coming to the Home every December dressed as Santa for more than a decade. "This makes my Christmas, right here. People can't buy me anything to replace what I do."

**SPREAD THE CHEER** *If you'd like to donate items to the children for the holidays – and year-round – you can pick up a wish list with gift suggestions at St. Mary's front desk, or download it from our website, [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org). Thank you.*

[ at left ] *Angel was 8 last year when she struck a pose on Santa Marlin "Mo" Patrick's lap.*

# 65 years of Comfort & Caring



*Sisters of the Daughters of Wisdom feed children during the evening meal at what was then called "St. Mary's Infant Home." // 1946 File Photo*

The world was at war when a downtown Norfolk building that already had served children for more than a century as a school for girls was re-dedicated on Dec. 8, 1944, for a new purpose. "St. Mary's Infant Home will provide shelter for the little boys and girls who cannot find it elsewhere," Bishop Peter I. Ireton, co-adjutor bishop of Richmond, said during the ceremony, according to news accounts.

At first, St. Mary's was a home for young children with no homes of their own or who needed a temporary place to stay while their mothers were at work at war plants. Over the years, the Home evolved into a home for children and

young adults with severe disabilities, changing its name and moving into a new facility in the 1960s and then into its current, state-of-the-art building in 2005.

Starting in December 2009 and continuing throughout 2010, St. Mary's Home will be celebrating its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary in a number of ways, including vintage-themed holiday decorations, displays of historical items, billboard advertisements in the Norfolk area and an anniversary dinner on March 24, 2010. Be sure to check out our website, [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org), and the spring 2010 issue of *Guardian* for more details.

## Save the Date

Wednesday, March 24, 2010  
Reception 5:30 p.m. • Dinner 6:30 p.m.  
Norfolk Waterside Marriott, 235 E. Main St.

*Keynote speaker Fern Kupfer will present "A Place for Zachariah," based on her poignant memoir about life with a child with disabilities.*

DETAILS TO FOLLOW.  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Mary Helen Hilton  
at 757.446.6793 or  
[mhilton@smhdc.org](mailto:mhilton@smhdc.org).

## St. Mary's Home

FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

PRESENTING SPONSOR

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR THIS SPECIAL EVENT

## // ST. MARY'S EMBRACES A MERMAID

She's holding a child in her embrace as she welcomes people at the entrance of St. Mary's Home, where children are embraced every day by comfort and caring.

Meet "Embrace," St. Mary's new mermaid statue, which arrived at the Home on Oct. 26. The name was chosen from among many ideas submitted by staff, family members and supporters. Patsy House, a friend of the Home, suggested "Embrace."

What does a mermaid have to do with St. Mary's Home? Norfolk is dotted with mermaid statues shaped like the city's mermaid symbol, which is 10 years old. The city's Year of the Mermaid kicked off with a party at St. Mary's this summer. Bob Batcher, the city's public relations manager, read a proclamation issued by Norfolk Mayor Paul D. Fraim in honor of St. Mary's 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary. St. Mary's Home exemplifies the city's slogan of "Life. Celebrated Daily," Batcher said. "Every day there is something here to celebrate."

Special guest former Miss Norfolk Amanda Batcher, Batcher's daughter, sang "God Bless America" to open the program and closed out the event with a touching rendition of "Over the Rainbow."

The event also celebrated the release of a new, updated edition of Lisa Suhay's children's book about Norfolk's mermaids, "There Goes a Mermaid! A



*Amelia and her mother paint the new mermaid statue at the entrance of St. Mary's Home.*

NorFolk tale." The author, who read the book to the children of St. Mary's during the party, is donating part of the proceeds to the Home and to *The Virginian-Pilot's* Joy Fund, which helps needy families at the holidays.

But even though the Home is involved in the book, the children of St. Mary's didn't have a mermaid to call their own. Carl Albero, a member of St. Mary's Board, bid \$5,000 at the Auxiliary's fundraiser auction in February to change that. Artist Georgia Mason used just

part of the money to pay for materials to make the mermaid, with the rest going to support the nonprofit Home.

To see a video of the mermaid being unveiled during the fall donor reception, go to the Home's blog, [www.saintmaryshome.blogspot.com](http://www.saintmaryshome.blogspot.com). Type "mermaid" in the search box to pull up all posts related to the mermaid, including another video of two of the children of St. Mary's Home, Amelia and Jahmari, helping the artist paint the mermaid this summer.



[ at left ] Many people greeted the mermaid when she arrived at the Home, including, from left, volunteer Carole Anne Albero, artist Georgia Mason, Amelia, Jahmari and Trustee Carl M. Albero.

[ above ] The cover of Lisa Suhay's book shares the same pose as the new mermaid statue.

To order your copy of the book for \$10, contact author Lisa Suhay at [LSubays2@cox.net](mailto:LSubays2@cox.net) or 757.575.4424.

# *Fall donor* RECEPTION

*Music, a mermaid, and many thanks*



Medicaid covers less than what it costs to care for the children, so St. Mary's Home counts on donors like you. The Home held a reception Oct. 24 to say thank-you to donors and community and state leaders who are making a difference in the lives of the children and families of St. Mary's Home. In a break with tradition, the reception was an outdoor buffet at the home of CEO William C. Giermak and his wife, Betty, rather than an indoor affair at the Home. The event included the unveiling of a mermaid created for, and with, the children of St. Mary's Home.

[ at left ] *Rob Cross, executive and artistic director of The Virginia Arts Festival, spoke at the reception. On April 18, 2010, the Rhythm Project will return to St. Mary's, a year after the ensemble's first concert at the Home.*

[ center ] *Donald F. Price, a member of St. Mary's Board of Trustees and Norfolk president of Monarch Bank, and Delegate Paula J. Miller of the 87<sup>th</sup> District in Norfolk, wait for St. Mary's new mermaid to be unveiled.*

[ at right ] *Members of the festival's Rhythm Project provided entertainment.*

not what we give,  
but what we share  
for the gift  
without the giver  
is bare.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL



**YOUR HELP IS NEEDED** *If you'd like to help children with severe disabilities receive the very best care and live in a cheerful, homelike environment, you can make your life-altering gift online at [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org), call 757.622.2208 or 800.237.6555, or send it, with our deep thanks, in the envelope provided with this newsletter. You also may use this envelope for your year-end gift.*



**CHECK OUT OUR BLOG**  
*So much is happening around here that we can't fit it all into our newsletter. For up-to-the-minute news and photos from St. Mary's Home, head to [www.saintmaryshome.blogspot.com](http://www.saintmaryshome.blogspot.com). And please leave your comments. We love hearing from you.*



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in the news

**WAVY-TV NEWS, July 28**

Jahmari and Amelia took a field trip to help paint the mermaid statue being created for the children of St. Mary's Home.

**"HEARSAY WITH CATHY LEWIS,"**

**WHRV 89.5 FM, August 5**

A conversation with Sister Mary June Morin, the last nun on the job at St. Mary's Home.

**THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT, September 20**

Ron Herrick, facility maintenance manager, discussed the koi pond he designed for the Home and built with his crew.

**THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT,**

**CLIPPER MAGAZINE, September 27**

Shirley Parham, program facilitator, quoted in cover story about Karen Marshall, who regularly performs a puppet show for the children of St. Mary's.

**"NORFOLK PERSPECTIVES," October 25**

Nancy Wilcox, of the Auxiliary Board, appeared on the city of Norfolk's public affairs program to discuss the Auxiliary's auction and St. Mary's 65th anniversary.

**WVEC-TV 5 p.m and 6 p.m.**

**NEWSCASTS, October 30**

Children and staff enjoyed spooky festivities at the Home, and Gwendolyn Brown, clinical care specialist, gave tips on how not to get sick while trick-or-treating.

**THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT, November 2**

Principal Terry Lyle and CEO William C. Giermak discussed teaching all the school-age children of St. Mary's at the Home. The story focused on teacher Melissa Knightes' classroom and students Isaiah and Carrington.



**SAY BOO** Folks at St. Mary's Home take holidays very seriously, and Halloween is no exception. This year's "Spooky Friday" celebration was filled with fun and educational activities. Staff competed in a decorating contest, turning the children's living areas into a 50s diner, a haunted house, Alice's Wonderland and Oz. Children, staff and teachers dressed up in costumes and paraded about the Home. Children also took part in sensory activities, such as touching "guts" that just may have been spaghetti, and they used adaptive switches to independently activate games, lights and a slideshow with spooky pictures and sounds. WVEC-TV, Norfolk's ABC affiliate, covered some of the festivities, and reporter Joe Flanagan was happy to fulfill Victoria's request to pose with her for a photo. // Photo at top courtesy of Shirley Justice

// For more mentions of St. Mary's Home in the news, see [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org). To obtain copies of articles, contact Sonja Barisic, 757.352.2700 or [sbarisic@smbdc.org](mailto:sbarisic@smbdc.org).