



Family News

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Please Let Us Know How We're Doing

Last December we debuted St. Mary's Family News, for the families and caregivers of the children and young adults who live at St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children. We received some positive responses but would love to hear more from you. Please tell us what you think of the newsletter and what kinds of articles and information you'd like to see in future issues.

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To receive St. Mary's Family News by email, contact Sonja Barisic at sbarisic@smhdc.org.

Update on Handi-Ride

Brandon Goes to the Movies



Brandon was all smiles at the movie theater.
(photo by Kathy Brobst)

Watching movies at home on a DVD player is fun, but sometimes you just want to go to the theater and catch a flick on the big screen. Brandon, a 13-year-old resident of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children, recently got to do just that by being among the first to take advantage of a public transportation program now available to SMHDC families.

Hampton Roads Transit offers lift-equipped van service, known as Handi-Ride, for certified passengers in the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach.

Once certified, you can schedule a ride by calling (757) 455-8510. Reservations can be made from three days in advance of the ride until 5 p.m. the day before. The fare is \$3 one way. A caregiver, such as a relative or a staff member at the Home, may ride along for no extra charge.

"That's a bargain any way you look at it, and I am happy to report that it all went off without a hitch," said Kathy Brobst, a physical therapist assistant at SMHDC who accompanied Brandon on his trip. "The drivers were on time, friendly and very helpful."

For information about St. Mary's participation in the Handi-Ride program, call Marianne Mendigorin, medical records manager, at (757) 622-2208 ext. 334 or email her at mmendigorin@smhdc.org.

More information about Handi-Ride is available at www.gohrt.com or by calling (757) 222-6000 ext. 6237.

What movie did Brandon end up seeing on his excursion? "Bedtime Stories." Judging by his big smile, he had a great time.

Family Night Returns February 28

Step right up, folks, and enjoy the show: The next Family Night at St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children promises to be magical fun. The Recreational Therapy department has put together a great carnival-themed program beginning at 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 28.

The event will feature a performance by a magician, carnival games and a showing of the movie "Mary Poppins." RSVP to Nicole Hoskins Jones, director of recreational therapy, at (757) 622-2208.

**Upcoming
Events:
Family Night,
April 26
Graduation,
May 8**

Meet the New Recreational Therapy Interns

Top, Shannon Lea with Jahmari; far right, Kathryn Simmons with two of the children in the Early Intervention Program.



versity in Norfolk and will graduate with a bachelor's degree in May. Shannon has always wanted to work with children, so when a friend who had worked at SMHDC encouraged her to pursue the internship, it seemed like a perfect fit.

tional therapy student at Virginia Wesleyan College and also will earn her bachelor's degree in May. She previously worked with children in recreational therapy with the city of Virginia Beach.

Among her duties at SMHDC is working, along with Shannon, in the Early Intervention Program for children up to age 2. "The earlier we work with the kids, the better their opportunity for leading as functional a life as possible," Kathryn said.

Two new interns in the Recreational Therapy department are working with the children and young adults of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children.

Shannon Lea, 24, who is originally from Jacksonville, N.C., is studying recreational therapy at Old Dominion Uni-

"I expected it to be more of a hospital, but it's not. It has the professionalism of a hospital, but it's a home," Shannon said, adding, "The kids are awesome."

Kathryn Simmons, 22, of Baltimore, is a recrea-



Team Hoyt VB Ready to Run Again

They had so much fun last year, they're going to do it again. Team Hoyt VB will resume going on runs with some residents of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children as well as other people with disabilities in the community. Team Hoyt VB is a local offshoot of a national father-and-son team that competes in athletic events. Team members push the children in jogger strollers.

The 2009 season will begin with a run at SMHDC and end with Team Hoyt VB participating in SMHDC's Annual 5K. The full running schedule is below.

2009 Running Calendar

- **May 16 Run @ St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children**
- **June 13 CHKD 8K @ CHKD**
- **July 18 Allen Stone Memorial @ Va. Beach Oceanfront**
- **August 22 Surfer's Healing 5K @ Oceanfront**
- **September 6 Rock N Roll 1/2 Marathon @ Oceanfront**
- **October 3 SMHDC Annual 5K @ Fort Story**

SMHDC Hoop Dreams



Gekita Washington (photo by Leslie Wood)

Sometimes, silliness reigns supreme. Residents of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children recently had fun watching staff shimmy and shake as they vied to see who could keep their Hula Hoops aloft the longest. The winner was

Gekita Washington, an activities assistant, with an amazing time of 7:17.