

# St. Mary's Home in the News

The *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper of Norfolk published a feature June 15 that highlighted Team Hoyt VB, including eight St. Mary's residents, participating in an 8K fundraiser ... Articles about St. Mary's receiving a Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation grant appeared in *The Daily Press* of Newport News and *The Richmond Times-Dispatch* on Aug. 20 and in *Inside Business* magazine on Sept. 15 ... *The Norfolk Quarterly*, a magazine published by the city of Norfolk, ran a feature about St. Mary's in its summer issue ... *The Virginian-Pilot* published an article Sept. 8 about the dedication of St. Mary's playground and courtyards ... WAVY-TV in Portsmouth ran a feature on its Sept. 17 newscast at 5 p.m. about the Reeve Foundation grant ... WAVY-TV ran a segment on its Sept. 23 noon newscast about St. Mary's 5K ... *The Beacon*, a weekly magazine published by *The Virginian-Pilot* for Virginia Beach residents, featured St. Mary's in a

story Oct. 5 about the Virginia Beach Garden Club's fall fundraiser ... "*Norfolk Perspectives*," a cable program produced by the city of Norfolk, featured St. Mary's on the edition televised twice daily from Sept. 20 through Oct. 3.

To obtain copies of articles, contact Sonja Barisic, (757) 622-2208 ext. 331 or sbarisic@smhdc.org, or check out links on [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org).



Bearing pansies, Virginia Beach Garden Club members Betsy Cromwell, left, Margrit Corcoran and Joan Stumborg visit with 2-year-old Bre'Aunna. (Photo by Laine M. Rutherford)



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## Upcoming Events

### Auxiliary Board Fundraiser

St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children  
10 am.-5 p.m., Wednesday, November 19,  
& Noon-2 p.m., Thursday, November 20  
A portion of sales of Arbonne products  
to be donated to St. Mary's Home.  
Contact Karen Hibbard, (757) 410-5459 or  
[klhibb@cox.net](mailto:klhibb@cox.net), for more information.

### Physicians' Appreciation Reception

Town Point Club, Norfolk  
6:30 p.m., Thursday, January 29, 2009  
Contact Martha Price Stewart, (757) 446-6797 or  
[mstewart@smhdc.org](mailto:mstewart@smhdc.org), for more information.

### 4th Annual Gala and Art Auction

Sponsored by the Auxiliary Board  
of St. Mary's Home  
The Westin Hotel, Town Center, Virginia Beach  
6:30 p.m., Friday, February 20, 2009  
To reserve tickets, donate or volunteer, or for  
sponsorship information, contact Karen Hibbard,  
(757) 410-5459 or [klhibb@cox.net](mailto:klhibb@cox.net).

# The Guardian

A Publication of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children

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## Leading the Way

We are proud of the extraordinary care St. Mary's gives every child and young adult who lives here — and of the dedicated employees who provide it. This level of complex, around-the-clock care requires hard work, passion and commitment every day. The Home recently awarded service pins to 168 employees who have worked at St. Mary's from two years to more than 40. That includes 22 people who have more than 20 years of service, led by Gladys Jones (shown on page 3), a certified nursing assistant who has been at St. Mary's for an amazing 42 years. Thank you to Gladys and all of our staff who continue to make St. Mary's a special place for special children. ♥

*William C. Giermak*

William C. Giermak  
Chief Executive Officer

## Hundreds Turn Out for 5K

Runners, walkers and wheelchair athletes who hit the pavement at Fort Story on Saturday, Oct. 4, were joined by some of the people they were racing for: children and young adults from St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children. More than 300 athletes and volunteers took part in St. Mary's 20th Annual 5K, plus One-Mile Fun Run.

The event raised more than \$15,000 to support the programs and services of St. Mary's Home. St. Mary's children traditionally have taken part in the Fun Run but they participated in the 5K for the first time this year. Team Hoyt VB — a local offshoot of a national

father-and-son team that competes in athletic events — pushed some St. Mary's residents in jogger strollers, plus children and adults with disabilities from the community.

Also new to the 5K this year was a wheelchair division, started by Kelsie Kellen, a 13-year-old, internationally ranked wheelchair athlete

Left, Mike Moore of Team Hoyt VB and Carrington;  
above, racers at the start line (photos by Buena Henry)

Continued page 4



*There's no place like St. Mary's*

# Home.

## St. Mary's Children Enjoy Renovated Playground, Gardens

Amelia had never experienced the simple childhood pleasure of swaying back and forth on a swing. Now she and other children at St. Mary's can play on specially designed equipment and have more fun exploring the outdoors because of the efforts of parents, garden clubs and other organizations to transform the Home's grounds — a \$65,000 project paid for by donations.

Families and staff who wanted to make St. Mary's playground more functional for residents sold raffle tickets to raise \$1,600 to begin revamping the playground. That jump-started other renovations, including newly designed areas featuring flowering plants and trees, walkways and sensory and butterfly gardens.

The playground courtyard has been re-installed with shade structures and equipment including a Sway Fun. The Make-A-Wish Foundation of

Eastern Virginia provided the glider, which accommodates two children in wheelchairs and several friends and gently rocks them back and forth.

"My daughter has never been able to sit on a swing set because of her lack of head control," said Amelia's mother, Myra Perdue, who spearheaded the raffle and spoke at a Sept. 7 dedication of the grounds. "This is the first time in her life — and she's 15 — that she can be on any type of swing. ... She can just sit back and enjoy life."

Other donors making the playground renovation possible included Ronald McDonald House Charities, the Chartway Federal Credit Union's We Promise Foundation and the Virginia Beach Foundation, while the Virginia Beach Garden Club, Junior Virginia Beach Garden Club and Harborfront Garden Club have enhanced the landscaping in the gardens and courtyards. ♥



Dayz and Garrett enjoy the Sway Fun, a wheelchair-accessible glider, during a dedication and open house.



Vicki prepares to cut a ribbon at the dedication, with a bit of help from Nicole Hoskins Jones, director of recreation therapy.



From the Cover:  
Gladys Jones, a certified nursing assistant, receives a pin recognizing her more than 40 years of service from CEO William C. Giermak during a luncheon at St. Mary's on Oct. 16.

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

## “Superman” Quality of Life Grant Helps Keep St. Mary's Residents Healthy, Comfortable

The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation is helping St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children use the latest technology to keep the children and young adults who live here healthy, safe and comfortable.

St. Mary's recently received an \$11,360 Quality of Life grant — one of about 100 grants totaling almost \$800,000 the Reeve Foundation awarded to nonprofit organizations nationwide. The grant paid for the computerized FSA 4D Complete Rehab Pressure Mapping Seating System.

Sitting or lying down in one spot for too long can cause skin pressure problems. Because most of St. Mary's residents can't speak for themselves, therapists have to find the pressure points. The

pressure mapping system helps remove the guesswork by providing objective information. A thin blue mat is placed beneath a resident. Sensors in the mat collect data that is transmitted to a computer; trouble spots show up in red and yellow and orange on the computer screen, much like a weather radar screen.

Suzanne Eason, St. Mary's supervisor of occupational therapy support services, plans to use the system on all residents, both in their wheelchairs and in their beds. She's already checked out four residents and said she found potential pressure problem areas she could not have anticipated without the system. “It tells me how to change their wheelchairs so they will be more comfortable and not be at risk for pressure problems,” Eason said. ♥



Suzanne Eason, supervisor of occupational therapy support services, uses the pressure mapping system with Amelia as Amelia's mother, Myra Perdue, watches.

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# T E A M W O R K

## Hundreds Turn Out for 5K, continued from cover page

Team Hoyt (photo by Buena Henry)



from Fredericksburg, Va. Kelsie and her mother, Kelli, recently visited St. Mary's Home and were impressed by the staff's commitment to the children. "If I needed this level of care I would so want to live here," Kelsie said.

Race winners received special prizes: artwork created by St. Mary's residents. "My first place (in my age group) picture is hanging proudly on the wall," runner Hallie Trout wrote in an email. "Thanks again for a great day and we'll see you next year!" ♥



Wheelchair athlete Kelsie Kellen beat her personal best time.

## From the Old St. Mary's to the New: Moving "Seat of Wisdom"

Fine arts conservator Andrew Baxter was a little nervous when he was asked to move the sculpture *Sedes Sapientia* (Latin for "Seat of Wisdom") from the old St. Mary's Home in downtown Norfolk to the current building. "With stone, you never know," Baxter recalled during a recent presentation at St. Mary's. "It could crumble and break into several pieces."

Baxter and his crew drilled and chiseled to remove the statue from its base, transported it by flatbed truck and used a forklift to place it at the new Home — a process that took about five days. The statue, sculpted by Jozsef Orolya, remained in one piece. Today, the statue stands watch in the newly landscaped Statuary Garden, facing the full-length glass doors to the Early Intervention Program classroom.

Two years later, Baxter was pleased to find the statue still in great shape. "It was very meaningful for me to work on this," said Baxter, founder of Richmond-based Bronze et al, Ltd., which has conserved and restored works at The White House, The Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk and Montpelier, the home of President James Madison.

"It's been a blessing to have the sculpture here," William C. Giermak, St. Mary's CEO, told Baxter. "I'm so glad we did it. It adds so much to our campus." ♥





## St. Mary's Home Serves, Served By, The Military

Navy sailor Sarah Valanidas was driving home one day when she spied St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children from the highway. She knew immediately that she had to volunteer here because the Home made her think of Jocelyn, the daughter of her best friend's brother. Valanidas used to babysit for Jocelyn, who has severe disabilities.

Valanidas began coming to St. Mary's Home this summer after her job fixing aircraft components aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Enterprise*. "I always have a lot of fun when I come here," Valanidas said. "The Home is a happy place."

Valanidas also is taking college courses and working on her helicopter pilot's license, and she's thinking about pursuing a career in special education when her four-year enlistment ends in about two years.

Also along the volunteer front, about 25 sailors from the aircraft carrier *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* came out to the Home for a day of volunteering this August, doing everything from cleaning windows to



Top: Volunteer Sarah Valanidas tackles some paperwork at St. Mary's. A sailor from the *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* makes the windows of St. Mary's sparkle.

mulching the grounds. A handful of sailors from another Norfolk-based carrier, *USS Harry S. Truman*, volunteered as course marshals and water-station attendants during St. Mary's 5K fundraiser on Oct. 4.

While military members like Valanidas serve St. Mary's, the Home has proudly served military families for years through the U.S. Armed Forces Exceptional Family Member Program. Since the 1980s, 43 military families have relied on St. Mary's for the care of their children with disabilities. ♥



## Coming Up for the Holidays

Facility Maintenance Manager Ron Herrick and artist Germaine Clair study the architectural plans for St. Mary's Home. To find out what they're up to, check your mailbox or our website, [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org), in the coming weeks. ♥



# All ONBOARD



Karen Hibbard,  
President, Auxiliary Board

## Message from the Auxiliary Board: Ambulette Makes Doctors' Visits Easier

*St. Mary's Auxiliary Board recently donated \$32,890 to St. Mary's Home for the purchase of a second ambulette used to drive children and young adults to their doctors' visits and other appointments and activities in the community. The residents regularly see doctors at the Home; however, procedures or examinations often require transporting the children to the physicians' offices. The ambulette accommodates the older, larger children and young adults.*

*The Auxiliary Board also donated \$700 for a special stroller, \$5,200 for an electric Hoyer lift to help transfer residents between their beds and wheelchairs and agreed to provide up to \$3,000 to purchase a laptop computer for the Recreation Therapy department. Residents will be able to use the computer for independent leisure, such as playing games.*

*The Auxiliary Board is now preparing for its 4th annual gala and auction, to be held February 20 at The Westin Town Center in Virginia Beach. The last event drew nearly 300 people in February 2008 and raised more than \$80,000 for the Home. The Board wants to thank those individuals and businesses who have already offered their support of the 2009 event. We are looking forward to sharing this enjoyable evening with you and we hope you plan to join us.*

*For more information, including sponsorship opportunities, or to donate items for the auction, please visit St. Mary's website, [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org). ♥*



Jenny in her new stroller

Karen Hibbard  
President, Auxiliary Board

## Past Auxiliary President Moves to Board of Trustees

Kim Thumel has joined the Board of Trustees after serving as president of St. Mary's Auxiliary until stepping down in February 2008. Kim holds a city of Virginia Beach-appointed position on the Council to the Community Organizations Grants Committee and is a member of the Hampton Roads Community Care Advisory Board. ♥



Kim Thumel, new member of the Board of Trustees of St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children

## St. Mary's Home Hires New Communications Manager

Sonja Barisic has joined St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children as the marketing communications manager. Barisic reported for The Associated Press, the world's largest news-gathering organization, for 18 years. She worked in Cleveland, Ohio; Bismarck, N.D.; and Cincinnati, Ohio; then in 1996 became the AP's correspondent in Norfolk, where she was solely responsible for covering major events throughout southeast Virginia. ♥



Sonja Barisic,  
Communications Manager

# FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## Message from the President: Your Support is Vital

*We approach the year's end with gratitude to the staff and families at St. Mary's who provide the care and attention each child and young person needs and deserves every day. They could not accomplish all that they have, though, without the support of so many individuals, corporations, foundations and municipalities who have stepped up to the plate, even in these difficult economic times. The children of St.*

*Mary's will continue to need even more advanced and complex care as they grow and develop. The Trustees are committed to the care of these children and young people who live at the Home until 21, and we thank you for joining with us in a commitment to their future. We also want to thank Fred Napolitano, who has retired from the Board of Trustees after more than 40 years of service but continues to serve on the Honorary Board of Trustees along with Tom McPhaul, who retired from the Board several years ago and now joins the Honorary Board of Trustees. ♥*

Michael P. Cotter, President

*“Although I have retired from active participation, St. Mary's will always be a part of me.”*

Frederick J. Napolitano Sr.

## In the Spotlight: Kilduff Strengthens St. Mary's Mission



Greg Kilduff joined the Board of Trustees in the early 80s and since then has shared his knowledge and experiences from the financial world to strengthen St. Mary's mission to care for children and young adults with disabilities using best practices and procedures. After retiring from a career in banking, Kilduff began working in the human services field, first as president of then Family Services of Tidewater, and then for about four months in 2004 as interim CEO for St. Mary's, where he became a mentor to staff as the organization continued to develop physically and professionally.

“On behalf of families and children with very serious health problems, St. Mary's offers hope and care which is otherwise unavailable,” Kilduff said. “The Home's professional staff is remarkable for their individual concern — everyone knows each child by name — and for their professional competence. Personally, my association with St. Mary's, its staff and distinguished board members has been a wonderful 25-year adventure.”

While Kilduff's tenure as interim CEO was brief, his impact has been lasting, said Susan Kok, St. Mary's director of staff development. “His gentlemanly, compassionate manner and approachability were instrumental in maintaining a productive and happy St. Mary's working environment,” she said. “We are most grateful for the opportunity we had to serve under Mr. Kilduff, and for his continued support of our facility, our children and young adults and staff.” ♥

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The Guardian is published by St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children, a nonprofit organization. If you have questions or comments, please contact Sonja Barisic, the marketing communications manager, at (757) 622-2208 ext. 331 or sbarisic@smhdc.org.