



Family News

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Welcome to Your Newsletter

While our main newsletter, *The Guardian*, is a great source of information, we'd like to introduce you to something new: *St. Mary's Family News*, exclusively for the families and caregivers of the children and young adults who live at St. Mary's Home. We hope you enjoy reading the inside scoop. Please call or email us with questions, comments or story ideas.

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If you'd prefer to receive *St. Mary's Family News* by email, drop a line to Sonja Barisic at sbarisic@smhdc.org.

Holidays Kick Off in High Gear

St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children is full of hustle and bustle for the holidays, with a number of organizations taking part in festivities with the residents.

SECEP will present its annual holiday program on Dec. 16 from 6-8 p.m. Kerneos Inc. will throw a holiday party, complete with wheelchair dancing, on Dec. 18 from 2-5 p.m. Other groups making the holidays bright include the Virginia Beach Garden Club and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Santa Claus is expected to visit St. Mary's twice, at 10 a.m. on Dec. 10 as part of Dominion's continuing support of the Home, and at 10 a.m. on Dec. 19 when a crew from AMSEC will bring gifts.

Facility Maintenance Manager Ron Herrick set the tone for the holidays by bringing to the



From left: Carmen Gerena, Delores Curry and Ron Herrick on a joy ride in the lobby.

Home a 1931 Model A Ford that he and his grandfather restored. Receptionist Delores Curry and Carmen Gerena, executive administrative assistant, helped Ron turn the lobby into a vintage winter wonderland.

Family Spotlight

Mom Shares Her Story to Help Others



Paula Addison

Paula Addison placed her son at St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children three years ago when his needs became so overwhelming that she realized she just "couldn't do it anymore." Her child has a rare genetic disease that contributes to his steady decline and disability.

Paula heard about St. Mary's Home when we had an informational booth at Portsmouth Naval Hospital as part of the Exceptional Family Member program. Impressed with the comprehensive services that we offer, she toured our facility and decided (with her family) that the time was right to place her child here.

Initially, there was guilt. But Paula now feels compelled to let others know that St. Mary's is a great option for anyone who needs our services. Her goal is to encourage other families to consider St. Mary's a

resource for addressing the many needs of a child with disabilities, either short term or long term. That's why she agreed to be on the parent panel, "Home is Where the Heart Is," on Nov. 20 during the Bioethics Day program at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters in Norfolk.

"I know there is a reason in my life why I am involved with St. Mary's, something I need to be doing and giving back," Paula said. "If I can encourage other families that this is a good choice, that they don't have to struggle anymore and juggle the needs of everyone in the family and fall short when times are hard, then I am happy to do it."

To the Pumpkin Patch, and Beyond

Rose enjoys an outing to a pumpkin patch. Her mother is at right. (photo by Nicole Hoskins Jones)



From the pumpkin patch to the cinema and to the mall, St. Mary's residents sure know how to get around.

Staffers regularly take the children and young adults who live at St. Mary's on field trips into the community. Recent trips have included excursions to the movie theater, restaurants, Old Dominion University basketball games, a pumpkin patch for Halloween

and a mall to sit on Santa's lap.

The outings are an opportunity for St. Mary's residents to experience new sensations, work on socialization and, of course, have fun.

"The trips are quality time with the kids," said Director of Recreation Therapy Nicole Hoskins Jones. "Even if it's just going to the mall, every new thing you see and smell and hear is a sensory experience."

Check your mailbox in the coming weeks for information about the next Family Fun Night, in February.

Catch a Ride With Handi-Ride

St. Mary's families looking to take their children and young adults into town now have the option to take public transportation. Hampton Roads Transit offers lift-equipped van service, known as Handi-Ride, in the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach.

Handi-Ride is available to cer-

tified passengers. For information, contact Marianne Mendigorin, St. Mary's medical records manager, at (757) 622-2208 ext. 334 or email her at mmendigorin@smhdc.org.

Once certified, you can schedule a ride by calling (757) 455-8510. Reservations can be made from three days in ad-

vance of the ride until 5 p.m. the day before.

The fare is \$3 one way. A caregiver may ride along for no extra charge.

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

"It will open up the world for the kids."

— Ann Sparkman, St. Mary's director of medical records, talking about Handi-Ride

Wish Lists Make Gift Giving Easier at Holidays — and Any Time

Many people want to give the children and young adults of St. Mary's Home special presents during the holiday season — or any time. To help with gift selection, St. Mary's has created a general wish list and an individualized wish list. Suggestions include hair bows, switches for adapting toys, craft supplies and Disney DVDs.

You can download the lists from www.saintmaryshome.org or request copies by contacting Sonja Barisic at (757) 622-2208 ext. 331 or sbarisic@smhdc.org. Copies also are at St. Mary's front desk.

Wish lists also have been created at Toys R Us, Babies R Us, Target and Walmart, as well as the stores' websites.

Bre'Aunna visits with Santa Claus during an Early Intervention Program field trip to the MacArthur Center mall in downtown Norfolk.

