



# The Guardian

## Ferguson, Inc. "Fills the Truck"

The children of St. Mary's received a gracious outpouring of gifts and needed items during the holidays from all their friends at Ferguson. Their "fill the truck with hope" project was organized by the associates at Ferguson headquarters in Newport News, Va. and their Hampton Roads locations. An ambitious project, Ferguson associates managed to fill half of one of their large delivery trucks with gifts for the Home's children.

Sandy Donaldson, Community Relations Coordinator, oversaw the planning and coordination for this event, which began in early fall, and culminated with a kick-off party celebrated in front of the corporate



*'Filling the Truck' at Ferguson*

headquarters the week before Christmas. The goal had been reached — the truck was loaded with gifts for the children. Not only were there clothes, toys, books and a variety of other gifts for each child but also items all 88 children at St. Mary's will enjoy tremendously. Everything from two flat screen TVs, a camcorder and a GPS system to educational toys and gift cards were included. All of the gifts came from individual contributions from Ferguson's associates.

"For more than 50 years, Ferguson's culture has encouraged community involvement," said John Stegeman, president and chief executive officer for Ferguson. "By working with St. Mary's to provide gifts and support to children of our community, we define who we are as individuals and what we believe in as a company." ♥

## Holidays — Busy Days

The children at St. Mary's were very busy throughout the holidays. December's activities included a visit with the therapy dogs and The Southern Riders who brought toys and a generous financial donation. Then there was a trip to see the holiday lights at Norfolk Botanical Gardens, shopping for holiday gifts at Messiah Lutheran Church and enjoying Christmas caroling by the Army Corps of Engineers and Chartway Federal Credit Union.

AMSEC and SAIC staff came with Santa the week before Christmas and presented the Home with a generous donation



▲ Santa visits with the children before Christmas  
◀ SAIC and AMSEC members help deck the halls at the Home.

as well as presents for the children as they visited the classrooms during the school day. The team was led by Harris Leonard, president of AMSEC, LLC, Northrop Grumman Corp. and Hank Giffin, vice president of SAIC.

Kerneos, led by Thomas Green, president and loyal supporter for more than seven years, sponsored wheelchair dancing, which the children loved. They also provided great music, good party food, punch and door prizes for staff. The American Legion Auxiliary filled an Angel Tree, held a pizza party and brought gifts and stocking stuffers. Nordstrom Department Store also filled an Angel Tree and provided many gifts. Virginia Dominion Power's Mo Patrick came again this year as Santa with Mrs. Santa so the children could have their Santa pictures taken. Several church groups visited and sang songs and another church group donated hand-knitted caps to ward of winter's cold. Trips included

*Please see "Holidays — Busy Days" page 2*



## St. Mary's Auxiliary Auction Creates a Lifetime of Change

One night. A lifetime of change. That's exactly what's promised for all who attend the Third Annual Auxiliary Board of St. Mary's Auction Friday, Feb. 22 at the Princess Anne Country Club in Virginia Beach. This elegant evening is a gala event that benefits the children at St. Mary's while offering its celebrants libations, a three-course meal, live music and a vast array of exceptional items from which to choose. Highlights include vacation packages, keepsakes, hand-crafted jewelry, one-of-a-kind items,

photography and much more. The preview and silent auction begin at 6:30 p.m. Dinner begins at 8 p.m. and the live auction follows. Sponsorships for the evening include

Katheryn H. Mote in memory of J. Harry Mote, TowneBank, Armada Hoffer, Covington and Associates, Campostella Builders, Electronic Systems, Inc. and DeFord Companies.

A new, exciting addition to this year's auction is an Internet-based program, AuctionPay. This program allows participants to register quickly and easily and makes checkout a breeze. You can even buy your tickets online. Just go to our website: [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org) and click on the link included on the front page under: News and Events, Auction Tickets on Sale Now.

"The Auxiliary Auction is a real highlight of the year for St. Mary's. The Auction provides an opportunity for folks to become familiar with St. Mary's and with the wonderful work the Auxiliary does to support the Home in its care of the children who live here. Although a relatively new tradition, the Auction has assumed an important role in helping support this unique home," said CEO William C. Giermak. And, as the theme of the auction points out there really is "No Place Like Home." ♥

## The Mission of St. Mary's

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.

*The Guardian is published by St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children, a non-profit organization. If you have questions or comments, please contact Paige Evans Fleming, marketing communications manager, 6171 Kempsville Circle, Norfolk, Virginia 23502, (757) 622-2208, ext 331 or [pfleming@smhdc.org](mailto:pfleming@smhdc.org)*

## Holidays — Busy Days, continued

Nauticus, an afternoon at the Sandler Performing Arts Center to see the Virginia Beach Chorale and a New Year's Eve movie with donated tickets. There were also parties given by the staff for the children and

unwrapping Christmas presents. Whew . . . we still haven't caught up. To all those who helped make this holiday so special, "Thank you — all of us at St. Mary's appreciate what you do on behalf of the children." ♥

## Volunteers Happy to Give Their Time

An effort to formalize the volunteer program over the last six months has met with success both in the number of people coming to the Home and in the scope of those applying to the program. Briefly, the process is as follows: potential participants go through a formal application process. And, because the Home serves children who are medically fragile, there is a specific screening process that includes testing for TB, finger printing and providing references. Once these criteria are met and the volunteer is matched with a department, he or she participates in an orientation that covers confidentiality, infection control and fire safety, among other issues. The whole process takes about two weeks.

Last fall we had two interns working under the supervision of the Development Department. Lindsay Deaver, who was completing her master's

in community and environmental health at Old Dominion University (ODU) and Jen Towers, a graduating senior in biology at ODU. Both students helped in many aspects of marketing the Home. Interns currently at the Home include Zach Frank, a student from Ashland University in Ohio. Zach is studying recreational therapy and this internship is required both for graduation and his certification. ODU student Kelli Sullivan is studying social work and will be with us through April. New volunteers include Carole Anne Albergo, a retired special education teacher, who is assisting classroom teachers; Erica Keiser, who completed community service hours for high school graduation; and Diego Cortes, a jet mechanic for the Navy, who will be working in the occupational therapy department assisting with wheelchair maintenance, among others duties. ♥

## Beach Elementary School Give "Pennies" to Auxiliary

When Rita Redon and Bunky Manley, teachers at Linkhorn Park Elementary School in Virginia

Beach, helped the Student Council Association hold a fund-raiser they knew exactly what they would like to do with the money. "As soon as I told the kids about St. Mary's they were really excited about raising money for them," said Rendon. She learned about

St. Mary's through Barbara Stufflebeem, a St. Mary's Auxiliary board member and friend of her mother's. "As soon as I heard about St. Mary's it brought back all my wonderful memories working as a counselor at a camp for children and adults with disabilities. I knew this was the thing to do."

The week-long drive pitted the boys against the girls in a "Penny War." This means that

only pennies are "legal" tender. If other coins or dollars are used then that amount acts as a

negative to the total and must be made up by the team. "The kids had a great time raising the money," said Rendon. In total the school raised \$650 and presented Auxiliary President Kim Thumel with a check. This has meant so much to the kids that they want

to make this an annual event, said Rendon. While accepting the check, Thumel thanked the students for all of their hard work and said she hoped they would continue to make volunteerism an important part of their lives. The money raised will fund a wheelchair accessible sensory table so children at the Home can experience the feel of sand, water and other objects. ♥



Linkhorn Park Elementary presents a check from their fundraiser for the Home.

# Gospel Singer Donnie McClurkin Visits, Fulfilling Resident's Make-A-Wish



Donnie McClurkin sings to Jojo during a private concert at St. Mary's.

After two years of talking, planning and arranging, Jojo received a very special gift from the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Encouraged and up-lifted by the rich baritone, lyrics and music of Donnie McClurkin, Jojo's mother requested a private concert with his favorite singer. Saturday, Dec. 1, Jojo got it. McClurkin, who worked with the Eastern Virginia Make-A-Wish Foundation, was able to commit to a date because he was slated to be in Hampton Roads for another event. Once the date was confirmed things happened quickly. By Friday afternoon last minute details were addressed and McClurkin arrived Saturday morning. He and his sister were met by Jojo, his mother, Linda, and his brother, James, plus several staff members. In the atrium with sun pouring in through the windows, the family received a private concert. Afterwards, other children were invited in along with their caregivers. "I'm so happy he came and so is Jojo. I never thought this would really happen, but it did," said Linda. For his part, McClurkin promised to come back next year when he will again be in the area. "This is an exceptional place and the work you do here is very special; each of you here who cares for these children is meant to be here," said McClurkin. ♥

## Message from the President of the Board

As we begin a new year at St. Mary's, I'd like to first thank each of you for the outpouring of support that you provided in 2007. Because of you, St. Mary's exceeded its goal with over \$1 million in contributions, pledges, and planned gifts. Those funds make possible the staffing, programs, and equipment needed for the on-going complex care of the children and young adults. This level of support also helps ensure that the future is sound and secure for the children who will need the services of St. Mary's Home. You'll be pleased to know that St. Mary's not only continues to receive support from the community, but that staff are efficiently and professionally managing the care as good stewards of your contributions.

I'd like to share one recent success story. The children look forward to their monthly visit with the therapy dogs through the Home's Recreational Therapy and Activities Programs. This is particularly true with one little boy who is often unresponsive and uncommunicative. He was not interested in learning how to use a special switch-activated button, nor was he willing to reach out to his teachers or therapists. However, he became much more expressive and made eye contact when the therapy dogs visited. The boy's therapist recorded a message on his switch that whistles and calls for the dog to come to him. Now, he not only visits with the dog, but because he uses the switch he is also stretching out his hands to reach for the switch, something he wasn't doing before. He has made a friend, gained valuable flexibility in his hands and arms and the dog always gets a treat. So, as you can see your support and encouragement do make a difference and are truly appreciated. You'll receive a "spring request" shortly and I encourage you to remember this young man and give as generously as you can. ♥



St. Mary's Trustee and Sertoma member, Bill Ripley, and Sertoma of Norfolk President Dave Randolph are among donors who help the Home meet its goal.

  
Michael P. Cotter, President

## Spotlight



Kim Thumel is clear about why she is so committed to St. Mary's. "Our very good friends Laura and Fred Widman had a son, Christopher, who was a resident at the Home. Laura asked me to attend an Auxiliary meeting as the Board was discussing new fund-raising opportunities and wanted some input. I agreed to attend. That day changed my life." From that moment Kim knew St. Mary's was the place for her — she wanted to help make a difference in the lives of the children who live here and in the Home's ability to help each child reach his or her fullest potential.

Kim Thumel, President of St. Mary's Auxiliary

As president of St. Mary's Auxiliary, Kim is described by those who know her as vital, energetic and a natural-born public relations master. "She can reach and appeal to the volunteer in each of us, child and adult alike," said Barbara Stufflebeem, fellow Auxiliary member.

According to Kim, the children are, by far, the most impressive part of St. Mary's. "The children bring out the best in all of us. It's amazing how powerful yet selfless they are. Christopher is the reason I am at St. Mary's. What a hero. Even though Chris passed away a few years ago he is still making a difference in the lives of the children at St. Mary's." said Kim. With the funds raised through the events, the Auxiliary provides special equipment like Hill-Rom positioning tables and respiratory therapy equipment, sensory toys and whatever is needed to allow the children to meet their full potential.

Kim is co-founder of In Your Own Skin, a skin therapy center in Virginia Beach that is internationally recognized for corrective and pre/post-op skin care. She is also Executive Director of the Society of Virginia Skincare Specialists, holds a City of Virginia Beach appointed position on the Council to the Community Organization Grants Committee and is a member of the Hampton Roads Community Care Advisory Board. ♥



## Board of Trustees 2007

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*A special place for special children*

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## Pavers Create Lasting Remembrances

Engraved with the name of a loved one, a sentiment or an expression of gratitude, pavers are a perfect way to create a lasting memory. As part of the effort to complete the landscaping of the Home both at the front entrance and along the side, these bricks are offered to anyone who is interested in supporting the Home while recognizing someone special. There is still time to order — Be one of the first to place a brick as a lasting investment in the Home.

For more information or to reserve a brick, please call Martha Price Stewart, 757- 446-6797 or email: [mstewart@smhdc.org](mailto:mstewart@smhdc.org).



*This is an example of what your personalized brick would look like once placed at St. Mary's.*



## Resident Graduates From St. Mary's



*St. Mary's staff gives Ian a rousing send off.*

Staff and residents wish Ian well as he transitions to a new placement. Both excited and sad to be moving on, Ian is adjusting very well to his new home. Some of those who grew closest to Ian plan a visit in the near future — We all wish you the very best, Ian.

## Upcoming Events

### Family Night

Sat., Feb. 23, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
The Recreational Therapy Department will be celebrating all things Flintstones. There will be games, refreshments and fun. Please R.S.V.P. by Feb. 16 to Nicole Hoskins Jones, 757-622-2208, ext. 351.

### Navigating the Care of the Medically Fragile Child

a conference sponsored by Eastern Virginia Medical School Office of Continuing Medical Education and Building Bridges Network, hosted by St. Mary's Home, Wed., April 9 – Sun., April 12. Open to pediatricians, physiatrists, gastroenterologists, RNs, LPNs, OTs and PTs. This conference will assist professionals in gathering cutting edge information to better support the care of the medically fragile child. Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel, Norfolk, Va. For more information contact the Office of Continuing Medical Education, 757-446-6140, email [cme@evms.edu](mailto:cme@evms.edu) or contact Paige Fleming, SMHDC, 757-622-2208, ext. 331.

### Sertoma

Spring Fever, April 19 from 12 noon until 6 p.m. at the Holiday Travel Park in Virginia Beach. For more information contact: Dave Randolph, 757-715-9299 or go to their website: <http://norfolksertomaclub.org>.

## Save The Date —

*St. Mary's 20th Annual 5K and One-Mile Fun Run is slated for Sat., Oct. 4. Visit our web site: [www.saintmaryshome.org](http://www.saintmaryshome.org) or call Paige Fleming, 757-622-2208 for more information.*