

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Local Businesses Help Raise Funds

St. John's kicked off the month of May with a fundraiser at Austin Grill on Wisconsin Avenue in Washington, DC. Staff, board members and their families and friends gathered at the Tex-Mex restaurant on the evening of Monday, May 1st, to enjoy delicious southwestern foods and beverages and an opportunity to reflect on St. John's accomplishments this year. Austin Grill humbly donated one-third of their food sales that evening to SJCS.

On May 24, Whole Foods Market at Georgetown in Washington, DC, donated 5% of the day's net sales to St. John's Community Services. Representatives from SJCS took turns at the store to hand out information about SJCS and answer questions. For more information on the Whole Foods event, please turn to the complete article on Page 3.

In the past, SJCS-PA and SJCS-VA have held benefit nights at Applebee's Restaurants, similar to that held at Austin Grill. Many restaurants will hold similar benefit nights for nonprofits if you ask. With very little effort, much needed money can be raised while having fun at the same time.



Tom Wilds, President, and Sandra Bishop, Director of Development, select winners of Whole Foods gift certificates.

“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

St. John's Community Services Events Calendar for 2006

Pennsylvania State Day. Friday, July 28, 2006
ARTview. Wednesday, September 27, 2006
Pennsylvania Awards Ceremony. Friday, November 10, 2006

St. John's Community Services

Thomas F. Wilds
President

Genni Sasnett
Chief Operating Officer

Paul Houston
Chief Financial Officer

George N. Liacopoulos, Ph.D.
Chief Evaluation and Planning Officer

Sandra P. Bishop
Director of Development

Lynn Sweeney
Director of Information Systems

Cheryl Wesley
Director of Human Resources

Martha Delgado
Director Marketing & Communications

Joe Hess
Corporate Compliance Officer

Meredith Ritchie
Marketing Intern

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Albert T. Brown, Ph.D. Pennsylvania

Thalia Simpson-Clement, Virginia

Arthur Ginsberg, Washington, DC

Andrea Bonaparte, New Jersey

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Thomas F. Wilds

Honorary
Reverend Luis León

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(609) 586-8005
(609) 586-8096 Fax

Pennsylvania State Office
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(215) 451-5053
(215) 451-5073 Fax

Tennessee State Office
7891 Stage Hills Road, Suite 116
Bartlett, TN 38133
(901) 384-3645
(901) 385-9450 Fax

Virginia State Office
7611 Little River Turnpike, Suite 404 West
Annandale, VA 22003
(703) 914-2755
(703) 914-5437 Fax

Loudoun County Office
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Leesburg, VA 20175
(703) 779-7684
(703) 779-7476 Fax



*Advancing Community Support and Opportunities for
People Living with Disabilities*
www.sjcs.org

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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of St. John's Community Services

Summer 2006

Honoring Mrs. Perry K. Sellon

The Nineteenth Annual Pillow Lee Award Ceremony was held on April 26, 2006, at St. John's Church-Lafayette Square. This special occasion was hosted by Reverend Luis León and the Founders Board, who honored Mrs. Perry K. (Louise) Sellon as the recipient of this year's award. Mrs. Sellon has been a member of the Founders Board for over thirty years and a vital participant in sustaining our mission. Currently, Mrs. Sellon serves as corresponding secretary and on the executive committee where she is known as a wise and insightful asset to the St. John's community. Mrs. Sellon has been a dedicated volunteer for St. John's fundraisers, contributing numerous hours and experience at The Thrift Shop and the Washington Antiques Show. She has been a warm and familiar face to the individuals we



From left: Mark Gold, Ellen O'Bannon, Louise Sellon, Reverend Luis León, and Tom Wilds

serve and the staff. Her dedication to St. John's mission is exemplary.

Born in Bronxville, New York, she met and married Mr. Perry Sellon upon his graduation from Princeton University. During World War II, the Perrys moved to the District of Columbia with their two children, Charles and Kim. Moved by the agency's mission, the Perrys were attracted to St. John's Community Services; Mrs. Sellon was later

invited to join the Founders Board and has remained an active participant with St. John's.

Mrs. Sellon unselfishly gives her time and donations to the St. John's mission. Through her dedication and diligent service, she has contributed significantly to all endeavors to benefit individuals with disabilities. She has earned recognition for the quality and length of her service and has brought a sense of history and dedicated spirit to the Founders Board and to St. John's.

The event was well attended by family and friends of Mrs. Sellon, and St. John's staff and board members. We thank the Sellon family, the Founders Board and all who attended for making this a memorable event.

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Building Character Through Volunteer Work

Anthony of Mercer County, New Jersey, has a contagious personality. Standing confident, yet compassionate, Anthony is a living "how-to" guide to success and the ultimate measure of happiness which attracts people of all ages and abilities to his side. Anthony is a volunteer and a dedicated member of a variety of organizations that aid the needy and bring joy to those who have suffered. Among many other talents and honorable character traits, Anthony also has a mental disability.



Raised by his aunt, Mrs. Betty Jean Johnson, in a housing project in Trenton, New Jersey, Anthony was well-loved and cared for. After spending his childhood in Trenton with his aunt, Anthony moved into the New Lisbon Development Center where he resided for HOW LONG. Finally, in April of 2005, Anthony became a family member of St. John's Community Services in Mercer County, New Jersey, where he has lived in the East Darrah Lane Group Home.

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Thomas F. Wilds
President

Celebrating the St. John's Family Heritage

St. John's is now 138 years old. Our heritage is like that dusty family album rediscovered in the attic. Like many families, our album contains names, pictures and memories of those special moments that bind us together and creates those special relationships that move us forward on a mission. Our family's members are people who grew up with us, who we cared for and whom cared for us. An increasing number of our family members are new - just kids to some of us. Others have grown to become the elders of our family.

They have grown older and wiser right before our eyes. We have staff that chose St. John's over a quarter of a century ago. We have long time volunteers serving as board members and mentors who have been with the family for nearly forty years. Often, their parents and grandparents introduced them to St. John's. We have parents, neighbors, government workers, employers and friends who have shared our vision of a better community for decades. Our family comes from all cultures, religions and races. They are young and old, and most importantly, they represent people of all abilities. Our family is large and continues to grow each year.

And like any family, our album is a lesson in history. This family has lived through the Civil War, the first paved road in Washington, DC, electricity, the telephone, the first car,

World War I, The Depression, World War II and much, much more. It's a family of continuous and growing relationships that span many generations for nearly a century and a half. Our family has stories of adversity, struggle, and ultimate victory. Yet, what I love and cherish about this family most of all is its unwavering passion, even through all of our struggles.

If you are already part of our family, thank you. If you would like to join me in celebrating our 138 year heritage and mission: To Advance Community Support and Opportunities for People Living with Disabilities, please contact our Development Director, Sandra Bishop, at (202) 274-3405.

Building Character *continued...*

Since his time with St. John's, Anthony has become an important part of the Mercer County community. Anthony works with children by reading to them, and he teaches sign language to both adults and children within the community. He participates in the Meals on Wheels Program where he delivers lunches to the elderly and volunteers at the Salvation Army where he helps organize the large amounts of clothing and items that are donated. Anthony is a dedicated volunteer to his community and role model to his peers. His success story shows that all people, regardless of challenges and obstacles, can triumph over disabilities with the support provided by warm and caring staff members.

Anthony has been a great addition to the St. John's Community Services family and a positive role model to the community. Thank you, Anthony!

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved." - *Helen Keller*

ARTview 2006- Save the Date!

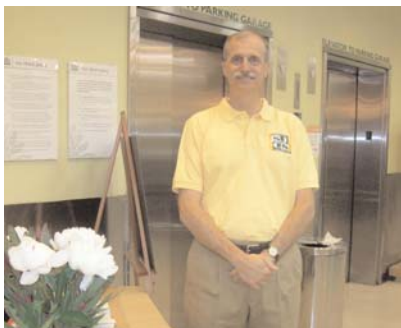
On September 27, 2006, St. John's Community Services will host ARTview 2006 - its largest fundraiser of the year - at the City Museum of Washington, DC. The annual art auction was created five years ago to benefit individuals and families living with disabilities and has been a consistent success for St. John's.

Please join us to view and purchase artwork from renowned artists such as Jessica Park, whose architectural paintings and prints have become nationally known. ARTview 2006 will also feature a selection of artists from BWAC Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition, an organization of artists who have steadily grown to 300 over the last 30 years. Artists from a new program in Rhode Island called Flying Shuttles will participate this year as well as the Grace Program in Vermont featuring Gayleen Aiken whose work has been previously purchased at ARTview by savvy collectors. Another wonderful artist returning to ARTview this year is Rita Langlois of Maine whose work is in high demand among collectors. Rita was first seen in the DC area at ARTview.

For further information regarding ARTview, please contact Sandra Bishop at (202) 274-3405.

Whole Foods Lends a Hand to St. John's

On Wednesday, May 24, Whole Foods Market at Georgetown (2323 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20007) donated 5% of their net sales to St. John's Community Services. Each year, as a part of their CommUnity program, Whole Foods chooses from a number of applications for 5% Day. This past May, St. John's became the recipient of this gracious charity event.



Arthur Ginsberg, State Director, DC

St. John's staff and board members volunteered to pass out fliers and answer questions about our mission and vision. Whole Foods Market at Georgetown kindly met all of our needs and allowed us to display posters highlighting some of the individuals with disabilities we serve. Whole Foods Market at Georgetown also generously donated two \$50 gift certificates for a



Margarita Covarrubias,
Development Coordinator, Home Office

customer raffle.

Five percent of the net sales from May 24, over \$4,000, will be used to advance community support and opportunities for people living with disabilities.

We graciously thank Whole Foods Market at Georgetown and Fadia Jawdat, Marketing Specialist and Community Liaison, for organizing this event and making it such an enormous success!

Industry Insight

Cure Autism Now Board Members Take to Capitol Hill

On March 1, 2006, a large and diverse coalition set to Washington, DC, for a very intense and productive day of lobbying for the Combating Autism Act on Capitol Hill. The coalition was comprised of Cure Autism Now board members, Elizabeth Emken and Craig Snyder, Autism Speaks cofounders, Bob and Suzanne Wright, their daughter Katie Wright Hildebrand and Deirdre Imus, founder of the Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology. The coalition met several key lawmakers from the Senate to discuss the need for significantly more funding of autism research.

Importantly, Sen. Michael Enzi, chair of the Senate HELP Committee, has committed to take action on the reauthorization of the autism provisions of the Children's Health Act. The HELP Committee is treating the "consensus version" as the working draft, and it is currently under review. To view the suggested revisions to the Combating Autism Act, visit www.combat-autism.org.

Representatives from Cure Autism Now also met with Combating Autism Act sponsors Sens. Rick Santorum and Christopher Dodd as well as Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. All reiterated their continued support for the Combating Autism Act. Sen. Frist ended the day by graciously speaking from the Senate floor regarding autism and the reauthorization of the Children's Health Act provisions.

Although we have made much progress in the fight for Autism research, we still need your help! Cure Autism Now supporters are encouraged to call, e-mail and fax their senators and representatives to secure their cosponsorship of Senate bill S.843 and House bill HR.2421. Go to www.combatautism.org for complete instructions on how to contact your representatives, and for up-to-date information on the Combating Autism Act. We need to continue this effort as we work to accomplish the steps that will help this bill become a law.

-Source: www.cureautismnow.org

Brazil Interests Sparked by St. John's

St. John's Community Services was honored to receive a visit from Ms. Leda de Azevedo, President of FUNLAR RIO - a public foundation established to monitor policies and procedures regarding the care of people with disabilities in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The trip was arranged by Ms. Ilene Zeitzer, President of Disability Policy Solutions. Ms. de Azevedo was interested in learning about the innovative ways that St. John's assists people with disabilities to gain employment in the United States. St. John's community employment partners, Miller's Office Products and Wal-Mart, participated in the visit and kindly shared their perspectives with Ms. de Azevedo.



From left: Leda de Azevedo, Genni Sasnett, Pablo Saloras, and Sheila Small

Mr. Pablo Saloras, Human Resources Manager of Miller's Office Products, and Ms. Sheila Small, Human Resources Manager of Wal-Mart, both spoke enthusiastically in support of the employment of people with disabilities and of the assistance they receive from St. John's staff to make the employment of individuals with disabilities a successful process for the employer and the individual. Genni Sasnett, SJCS Chief Operating Officer, who hosted the meeting said, "I could not have scripted a better endorsement from Mr. Saloras and Ms. Small. They said just what Ms. de Azevedo needed to hear, that people with disabilities are valuable, dependable and desirable workers. She left the meeting very enthusiastic about the possibilities in Brazil."

SJCS was pleased to have the opportunity to share the message regarding the capabilities of people with disabilities with our visitors from Brazil. A very special thanks goes out to Mr. Saloras and Ms. Small for their participation and to Jarrett Alston and Carolyn Price of the Support Employment of Northern Virginia (SENVVA) for making all of the arrangements.

In My Own Words...

Honoring Hassan Kamara, Retiring Program Monitor, Virginia

I was born in Sierra Leone, and I traveled to the United States to earn my Master's Degree from A&T State University in North Carolina. After graduating, I returned home to be with my family. When the war started, my family and I made our transition to the United States.

In June of 1996, I began working with St. John's Community Services as an Employment Training Specialist. In my current position as Program Monitor, I am responsible for ensuring that the day-to-day routines are completed and that the individuals we serve and staff are prepared to participate at their Community Training Sites. Then, I start the second portion of the day where I support Shawn Erik Hayre at his job delivering food to First Steps Child Care Center.

I am certain that this organization is more than simply words and figures-we are a family. We are a team focused on



Hassan Kamara (far right) with Shawn Erik Hayre and Maggie Ramirez-Sunrise Dining Service Coordinator

the same goal, whether it's food delivery or national understanding. We practice and pride ourselves on good team work and ensuring the safety of one another-both the individuals we serve and the staff. St. John's has a very unique way of caring for the individuals it serves and the staff that makes us a strong and powerful community.

"Upon the submission of Hassan's res-

ignation as he prepares for retirement, I literally wept because Hassan is irreplaceable not for just the work he does but how professionally and compassionately he does it. Hassan will always be remembered as a great pioneer, teacher and leader among his peers and management here in Virginia." -Thalia Simpson-Clement, State Director-Virginia

"Hassan undeniably has, and continues to be, a tremendous asset to St. John's Community Services and the Human Service field. Because of his consistency and dedication, he has time after time stood out among his peers. Hassan is a problem solver; he is always looking toward the future for solutions while remembering that our focus is always on the individuals we serve. As he prepares to leave, I can only think about what I will miss-his leadership, candidness, and friendship." - Melinda Szlapak, Director of Employment and Day Services-VA