



The PCI Portal

A Monthly Newsletter from Porto Charities, Inc.

At Porto Charities, Inc. our mission is to support children with special needs with the opportunity for an inclusive Catholic education, and young adults with special needs, assistance with meaningful employment in the Diocese of Arlington.

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From the Director's Desk...



Dear Friends,

Happy Spring to all of you! During this season of rebirth and renewal, we would like to extend the following invitation to you from our friends at SPRED at the Diocese of Arlington.

SPRED and Friends of Those with Disabilities End of Year Mass and Celebration

Date: Saturday, April 30th, 2022 - 10:00 am

Location: Holy Spirit Church

Address: 8800 Braddock Road, Annandale, VA 22003

Phone: 703-978-8074 parish@holyspiritchurch.us

All School Students, Families, Friends, Volunteers,
& Porto Charities Members are invited to join this Mass and
Celebration

Mass Celebrant: Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington

Please join with other SPRED Volunteers, Families, and Friends for
Fellowship and Joy as we celebrate the end of another SPRED Year!!

Brunch will be provided in the Holy Spirit School following Mass

SPRED (Special Religious Development) is a program in which persons who are developmentally disabled come together with a spiritual friend/catechist to share a one-on-one relationship and form with others a small faith community. SPRED fosters and nourishes spiritual and personal growth by helping those with developmental disabilities discover God's action and presence in their lives. SPRED gives developmentally disabled parishioners an opportunity for celebration and worship and prepares them for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist) and Penance (Confession). SPRED serves age groups from children to adults (6-10 years old, 11-16 years old, 17-21 years old, and 22 years and older).

Inclusion Catalysts

Recognizing our Friends who have made a Significant Difference toward an Inclusive Community



St. Veronica Catholic School
Chantilly, VA

The Saint Veronica Catholic School Community celebrates the spirit of Christ, who is the perfect teacher, and each child is recognized as an intellectual, spiritual and social being with an inherent desire to learn. The mission of the school is to ensure vibrant religious education and exemplary academics by empowering our students and faculty through faith and knowledge.

St. Veronica believes in providing an inclusive environment for all our students, including those with intellectual disabilities. Our students spent most of their day alongside their peers in the classroom.

Modifications and accommodations are provided to help the students succeed.

These modifications included reducing the number of problems or vocabulary words required, revising tests to give the student a field of three options instead of four, and making corrections to tests or quizzes that the student did not pass. The modifications are very individualized and vary from student to student and even from year to year.

Dave Hoppe
PCI Board of Directors

Dave Hoppe holds degrees from the University of Notre Dame (BA Government) and Johns Hopkins University SAIS (MA International Relations).

He began working on Capitol Hill while completing his MA and went on to serve 30 years in various leadership positions, including COS to Whip Trent Lott (R-MS) in the House, AAs to Hon. Jack Kemp (R-NY) and Sen. Dan Coats (R-IN), and COS to Senate Majority Leader Lott. After 6 years in the private sector, he returned to the Hill as COS to Senate Whip Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and later COS to Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI).

Dave serves on the Board of Directors for Easter Seals of DC MD VA and is credited with salvaging legislation to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997. He also serves on the finance council for St. Luke's Ordinariate Parish in Fort Washington, MD.

He is married and has three adult children, the youngest of which, Greg (31) graduated from the Options Program at PVI in 2009.

Parents' Advisory Council



Dear Parents,

We would like to invite you to join us for our upcoming PAC meeting on **Monday, May 2nd at 7:30pm via Zoom**. We have a very exciting update we want to share with you. The Parents' Advisory Council has been invited to assist the Diocesan Working Group for the Bishop's Strategic Pillar regarding inclusive education.

What does that mean? It means that we have an opportunity to create and submit proposals to be considered by the Working Group and Diocesan leadership.

This is exactly what we've been waiting for: action, next steps, planning, and collaboration with parents. If the idea of drafting and creating proposals for the Diocese to consider is energizing to you, great!

The direction and purpose of the PAC will primarily shift focus to supporting this effort to shape, influence, recommend, and advocate as much as possible, with regards to drafting and submitting proposals in the coming weeks and months.

Please join us!

Blessings,

Steven, Sharon, Lupita and Carmen

The PCI Parents' Advisory Council (PAC) is made up of parents/legal guardians of children with special needs and representatives of the Office of Catholic Schools. The PAC assists Porto Charities in its mission of expanding inclusive Catholic education and employment options throughout the Diocese of Arlington. If you would like to participate, send an email to Larry Rzepka, PCI Executive Director, at lrzepka@portocharities.org and we'll forward a link to the meeting.

Inclusion In Action

On the Road...

This is one of our favorite times of year as we take the opportunity to visit our 2022 Grant Award Recipients and present them with their checks!

It is always an exciting and heart-warming experience as we meet the administrators, teachers, and students who are working so hard on making inclusion more than just another program in the Diocese.

We are inspired by the commitment made by Bishop Burbidge, the Diocese and Office of Catholic Schools as we look to expand inclusive education in ALL Diocesan schools.



**St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School
Woodbridge, VA**

"Inclusion is a mindset. It is a way of thinking. It is not a program that we run or a classroom in our school or a favor we do for someone. Inclusion is who we are. It is who we must strive to be."

Lisa Friedman



**Holy Family School
Dale City, VA**

Porto Charities was pleased to be able to provide grants to fifteen of our Catholic schools and the Diocese of Arlington this year to support inclusive education. Schools submitted applications in November of 2021 and were chosen for their commitment to inclusive Catholic education for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The two shown here, St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School and Holy Family School, were both first-time recipients and we welcome them to the Porto Family!

Porto Charities, Inc. looks forward to a continuing partnership with these schools and expanding its outreach to even more schools in the Catholic Diocese of Arlington in the years to come.

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