



# SHIFTING SANDS



## MEETING CALENDAR

### WHERE:

**Our Lady of Good Counsel (OLGC) De Sales room/ downstairs classroom (DS), Vienna, VA**

### WHEN:

**Second Thursday of every other month. Next meetings:**

- ❖ Thursday, April 12 —  
Porto 104 Divan, 7-8 PM;  
PCI, 8-9 PM

## EVENTS

- ❖ Saturday, February 4 —  
Founders' Day/Charity Awards Presentation,  
7 - 10 pm
- ❖ Saturday, May 12 —  
Porto Derby Trivia Contest,  
6 - 10 pm

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## A Spiritual Message

### Learning about love

For just about as long as I have been associated with the International Order of Alhambra and Porto 104 Caravan (almost 37 years), I have been involved with a group called Teams of Our Lady. Both organizations are Catholic to their roots but are entirely different. You know about Alhambra, so let me tell you a little about "Teams."

"Equipe Notre Dame," as it is known in France, where it began in the early 1940s, started with a few married couples, who approached a priest and said they wanted to deepen their understanding of marriage as a sacrament, to intensify the spiritual foundation of their marriage. Meeting together monthly, they developed a format of prayer, discussion, and spiritual practices that was taken up by other couples—first in France, then into other parts of Europe. Twenty years after its beginning, it came to the United States, and today is virtually worldwide. Thousands of couples have committed themselves to meet monthly, share a simple meal, support one another in the ups and downs of marriage, discuss relevant topics, pray together, and adopt a plan of daily prayer and scripture reading.

Not a lot like Alhambra, to be sure, but there is a similarity that strikes to the root of our Faith. Each movement is, in its own way, a school of love.

Teams of Our Lady looks to married love as being a reflection of the love that God has for us. St. Paul compares the love between a man and woman in marriage as an image of the love of Jesus for the Church. In helping

married women and men understand the true depths of the sacrament of marriage, Teams opens their understanding of the love that prompted God to send his Son to share our physicality in all things except sin.

Alhambra, on the other hand, schools its members in fraternity, the love that all Christians are to have for one another in their everyday community and especially in their mutual efforts to proclaim the Kingdom of God in gatherings of celebration and common concern. Alhambra directs its members' attention to God's love for the least among us, those whom the world does not value and who for that very reason are most treasured in the hierarchy of God's concerns. Alhambra—and Porto Charities—calls forth our love for God's Special Children and gives us in their love and simplicity a hint of what unconditional love is all about.

As Christians—as men and women both celibate and married, as couples and as men and women joined in camaraderie and charitable outreach—we are a people whose paradigm of life is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and we look in all our human experiences for deeper experiences of God. We find them best in one another, in whatever circumstances—and groups—to which God leads us.

*Fr. Edwin Dill, ST*

**Grand Commander's Message**

*"In day to day work, we are often faced with challenges. When faced with these challenges, we often become reactive. Rearrange the letters 'reactive' and you get 'creative'. So instead use challenges as a way to be creative and help create solutions that will help everyone and help grow your business."*

You may say Porto 104 and PCI are not businesses, but in reality they are both incorporated. We are not just organizations raising awareness. We are really in the business of finding, providing and funding solutions for the intellectually disabled in our local community.

In 2011, we raised over \$115,000. Of this amount, we are distributing \$90,000 as charity awards to local 501 ( c ) ( 3 ) organizations that support God's Special Angels (see enclosed list). We are setting aside some funds for a future Alhambra House, hopefully in 2012, where some of our young adults may live independently. The Housing Committee has been meeting and is on its way to finding solutions.

We have approached Bishop Loverde for assistance with under-used Diocesan properties, convents or raw land which may be utilized for future housing. The good Bishop has shown great interest and support for this proposal in its early stages. We continue to work with the powers that be at the Diocese to provide employment internships at the Arlington Diocesan offices and departments. This endeavor should come to fruition soon.

The GMU job internship program (job coaching) is going great and they are working with one of our Diocesan schools for a job placement. These creative examples should open doors

at our 43 Diocesan schools and 78 parishes. Hopefully, this will provide a successful model so we can approach the local Catholic Business Network so private companies can provide the same employment opportunities.

The Divan members of Porto, the Board of PCI, the Housing and Job Committees are being creative. No doubt we will run into challenges. No doubt we will not be able to solve issues for everyone. However, if we continue pushing ahead, there is no doubt that with the continuing involvement and expertise of our new members, solutions and success will follow.

Our most important challenge should be getting new members to join Porto and PCI. Our recent efforts are being led by the newest members of Porto and PCI, clearly demonstrating how important it is to bring in a fresh crop of creative individuals.

I challenge everyone to be creative and bring in a new member by our spring function on May 12th, the famous and entertaining Porto Derby at Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Our businesses are creating solutions. If we provide assistance to everyone we support, then our business will continue to grow!

*GC Leo Alonso*



**Please Pray for...**

- SN Bill Dalgetty
- Sultana Connie Murray
- SN Tom Gavin
- Georgina Dingell (GC Leo Alonso's sister)
- Past Regional Director Fred Sheridan.

*Call PGC Rick Vranesh (703-241-9526) if you know of anyone in need of our prayers, comfort or support.*





## MEMBER PROFILE

### MEAGAN MUNDY

Meagan Mundy, born in Alexandria Hospital on August 23, 1988, is the 23-year-old daughter of Bill and Marla Mundy. Meagan lives in Fairfax with her parents and she has two older brothers (Chris and Scott), a sister-in-law (Lauren), and two cats (Gato and Calvin).

Meagan attended Fairfax Villa Elementary School, Lanier Intermediate School, and she attended Fairfax High School for one year before she transferred to the Options Program at Paul VI Catholic High School (PVI). Meagan always enjoyed school, but she especially enjoyed her time at PVI. In addition to participating in many school activities, she flourished in the inclusive

environment that PVI promotes. Meagan attended Davis Career Center for one year after she graduated from PVI.

Meagan now works at Wildflour Caterers where she sews aprons, decorates gift baskets and note cards though she occasionally works on catering assignments too. Meagan works 20+ hours a week and she takes Metro Access to work each day. Meagan has been at Wildfour Caterers for 1½ years and she loves her work--she especially enjoys working with so many of her school friends.

Meagan participates in a number of activities and she plays a number of sports in Special Olympics. Her favorite

sport is track and field. She represented our area (26) in track and field at the Special Olympics State Games in Richmond on numerous occasions.

Her interests include listening to music, watching DVDs (especially the I love Lucy series), and dancing. She especially enjoys the summer when she frequently vacations in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. She also looks forward each summer to attending St. Elizabeth's camp at Shrine Mont.

Meagan is a special child that brings love and laughter to everyone that she meets!

## Other News

- Since our last Shifting Sands in November, we have been finalizing the Special Kids/Special Needs 2011 collections at the parishes. We collected \$88,232--a new record! We are awarding a total of \$90,000 to 20 worthy organizations.
- Our annual meeting with Bishop Loverde was very productive to plan for the future of our Special

Angels, especially in the areas of employment and housing.

- Our annual Christmas party was a great success with 118 attendees. Our visit by Vanessa, our Brazilian salsa instructor, was a big hit once again, with a majority of our 40 young adults on the stage moving those hips! Santa didn't miss the party; he was there passing out gold coins to those who had been good and charcoal nuggets to a select few. Our great meal was provided by Wildflour Caterers,

who employs 30 of our Special Angels.

- The Housing Committee held multiple meetings in January. Porto and PCI continue to create camaraderie and opportunity for all our member families and those we serve.

**Porto Charities, Inc., President's Message**  
**A banner year**

I hope your 2012 is off to a great start and you all look forward to a Banner Year.

As you will note from Grand Commander Leo's remarks in this edition of our *Shifting Sands*, 2011 clearly was a banner year for the families of Porto Charities and our brethren in Porto Caravan 104 having collected over \$115,000 in charitable donations and from profitable activities such as our annual golf tournaments. We have also increased the membership for both organizations during last year. Our Employment and Housing Committees are off and running from the starting blocks at a fast pace toward accomplishment of our goals. We have received tremendous cooperation and assistance from Bishop Loverde and the Parishes of the Arlington Diocese.

I extend a heartfelt BIG THANK YOU to all of you for the marvelous 2011 achievement.

Let us not rest on our laurels though. We should indeed strive for a greater Banner 2012. I echo GC Leo's call to augment our membership. A prime goal for us this year is seek and rally others who share our compassion as well as our desire to help the Special Angels among us. As I have said before, if each PCI family brings in one additional family, we double our membership. How about each of us signing up two or even three families then watch us grow and then see our legion accomplishment.

By the way, speaking of banners, we have taken the liberty to advertise who we are and what we proudly do by creating banners for use at such gatherings as the Special Olympics tournaments and other assemblies. Below is a preview of what you will see.

As always, I truly appreciate your support for Porto Charities, Inc. Keep up the great work.

*Carmen DiPlacido*







## ORGANIZATIONS PORTO SUPPORTS

### STILL MEADOWS ENRICHMENT CENTER AND CAMP

Picture in your mind a serene place in the country where adults and children in wheelchairs, braces, and other devices are laughing, singing and clapping. Picture in your mind a place where a child who cannot stand or walk is riding atop a strong and beautiful horse. This picture comes alive at Still Meadows Enrichment Center and Camp in Linville, Virginia. Still Meadows is located between two mountain ranges in the Shenandoah Valley. It is a facility that is run with volunteer help and is funded through grants and the generosity of others. Many call it “God’s Camp” because it resulted from the visions and dreams of the Executive Director, Janet Maasch, to allow people with limitations to fly like eagles, if only in their minds.

Still Meadows served over 2,000 special needs individuals in the past year by offering summer camp sessions, therapeutic riding sessions, worship services, music events, and much more. These are all activities in which these folks would not usually be able to participate because of their limitations. Their smiling faces are

living proof that interacting with nature is healing and liberating.

Still Meadows also has a wheelchair accessible tree house, the only one in the state of Virginia, and is perched among the trees in a beautiful wooded area. It is used for music sessions, storytelling, games, and relaxing chats with friends and caretakers. This tree house was provided for the camp through the hard work of volunteers and the generosity of many supporters.

Another therapeutic aspect of Still Meadows is the “Healing Garden”. This is a garden area with raised beds that are filled with all types of vegetables and flowers.

Individuals can harvest potatoes, carrots, and radishes; gather strawberries, tomatoes, and beans! They come to the garden to make birdhouses, to play on a teeter-totter or in a playhouse, or to simply sit and listen to the many birds living in this mountainside retreat.

Visions and dreams continue for Still Meadows. Future plans include a

climate-controlled building that can be used for year-round activities. This building would house a commercial kitchen designed to not only serve meals to the participants, but also to teach food preparation and restaurant skills for future careers in the food industry.

Still Meadows is indeed “God’s Camp”. His presence can be felt in the peace of the quiet mornings, in the sounds of laughter by people who have no reason to laugh, and in the excitement of friends as they greet others.

Funds from Porto Charities are used to support the scholarship fund for participants who cannot afford “extras” during this time of low economy and high medical costs. Our dream is to NEVER turn away any individuals.

*For more information, please visit [www.campstillmeadows.org](http://www.campstillmeadows.org) or contact Ms. Janet Maasch, Still Meadows Enrichment Center and Camp, 11992 Hollar School Road, Linville, Virginia, 22834, (540) 833-2072 (office).*



## Porto Charities Inc. 2011 Awards

Our Founders' Day/Charity Awards event will take place this Saturday, February 4th from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm at Our Lady of Good Counsel's DeSales Hall (see flyer, p. 7). **Please call or email your reservations to Grand Commander Leo by noon, Thursday, February 2nd.** (Our count so far is 68 Porto/PCI members and 30 award recipients.)

Award recipients	Award amount
Arc of Northern VA	<b>5,000</b>
ArtStream	<b>5,000</b>
Autism Society of Northern VA	<b>2,000</b>
Best Buddies Virginia	<b>5,000</b>
Central Fairfax Services	<b>1,500</b>
Down Syndrome Association of Northern VA	<b>1,500</b>
Gabriel Homes	<b>3,500</b>
George Mason University Life Program	<b>15,000</b>
Joey Pizzano Memorial Fund	<b>1,500</b>
KeyBoards for Kids	<b>10,000</b>
Paul VI Catholic HS Options Program	<b>10,000</b>
Pope John Paul The Great Catholic HS Options Program	<b>10,000</b>
S. John Davis Career Center	<b>2,000</b>
Special Olympics Northern Virginia (Area 26)	<b>6,000</b>
St. Louis Parish Special Education Program	<b>500</b>
St. Mark Catholic School Evangelist Program	<b>8,000</b>
Still Meadows Enrichment Center and Camp	<b>500</b>
Villa Maria Work / Study Centre	<b>1,000</b>
Wildflour Caterers	<b>2,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>



# **FOUNDERS' DAY**

PORTO 104/PORTO CHARITIES, INC.  
PRESENTATION OF 2011 CHARITY AWARDS

*SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2012*

Our Lady of Good Counsel DeSales Room (next to chapel)  
8601 Wolftrap Road, Vienna, Virginia

## **MEXICAN FIESTA & MARIACHI !!!**

7:00 to 7:30 pm Oasis

7:00 to 8:30 pm Mariachi

7:30 to 8:30 pm Dinner

8:30 to 9:00 pm Awards

9:00 to 10:00 pm D.J. Betty



### **MENU**

by Wildflour Bakery:

Taco Bar

(Carne Asada/Beef or Casserole Chicken)

Spanish Rice / Refried Beans

Chips & Salsa

Cookies

ADULTS - \$20

YOUNG ADULTS - \$15

RSVP to Leo Alonso at [bettyleo@aol.com](mailto:bettyleo@aol.com) or  
(703) 626-2051 **by noon Feb. 2nd.**



**Order of the Alhambra**  
*Founded February 29, 1904*  
**Application for Membership**

**Last Name** ..... **First Name** .....

Home address ..... City ..... State..... Zip .....

Home Telephone ..... Cell Phone ..... Business phone .....

E-mail address .....

Married?  Yes  No If yes, wife's name .....

Birth date ..... What Parish do you attend? .....

To what Catholic organizations do you belong? .....

How did you learn about the Order of Alhambra? .....

*I HEREBY AGREE, if admitted to membership in the ORDER OF ALHAMBRA, to obey the constitution, bylaws, and other rules enacted, or the Supreme Divan, the Council of Viziers, the Executive Committee or the Grand Divan of my Caravan may hereafter enact.*

*I HEREBY CERTIFY that I am in good standing in the Catholic Church and that the above answers are true to the best of my knowledge.*

Applicant's Signature ..... Date .....

Signed in presence of ..... Size of FEZ .....

Proposer

Forward this application with your check for  \$93.00 Individual or  \$143.00 Family membership payable to Porto Caravan No. 104.

**Mail application and payment to:**

Porto Caravan No. 104, Order of the Alhambra, Post Office Box 7266, Arlington, VA 22207  
 Email: bettyleo@aol.com | Telephone: 703.626.2051

**CARAVAN INSTRUCTIONS**

COMPLETE FOR HEADQUARTERS  
OFFICE RECORDS

Caravan Name ..... Number .....

Applicant's name .....

Forward this application with the Caravan's check for \$10 to the Headquarters Office within ten (10) days after the candidate's initiation.

Upon receipt, the Executive Director will assign the member's official number in the Order and forward it to the Scribe of the Exchequer for the Caravan's permanent records.

Novice ceremony  Qualifying

Ceremonial

Date .....

Initiated by .....

At .....

Certified by .....

Scribe of the Exchequer





### Porto Charities, Inc. Application for Membership

Last Name ..... First Name .....

Residence address ..... City ..... State..... Zip .....

E-mail address ..... Home Telephone ..... Cell Phone .....

Employment/profession .....

Business address ..... City ..... State..... Zip .....

Business phone .....

Type of Membership:       Single       Family

*Members of Applicant's Immediate Family*

Full name	Relationship	Age	Address and email (if different)	Special Needs?
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

I/we hereby request admission to membership of Porto Charities Inc. I/We understand that I/We must be sponsored for membership by a current member in good standing of Porto Charities Inc. If admitted to membership in the Porto Charities Inc., I/we hereby agree to obey all of the bylaws of Porto Charities Inc. and any other rules or regulations enacted and implemented by the Board of Directors of Porto Charities Inc.

Applicant's Signature ..... Date .....

Applicant's Signature ..... Date .....

Name of Sponsoring Porto Charities Inc. member .....

Signature of Sponsor..... Date .....

Forward this application with your check for  \$93.00 Individual or  \$143.00 Family membership payable to Porto Charities Inc.

The Board of Directors of Porto Charities Inc. reserves the right to:

- ❖ Disapprove an application for membership
- ❖ Assess annual dues for membership.
- ❖ Cancel a membership.
- ❖ Conduct a criminal history background check for any applicant for membership.

**Mail application and payment to:**

Carmen DiPlacido, President, Porto Charities, Inc., Post Office Box 7266, Arlington,VA 22207

**Treasurer's Administrative Action**

COMPLETE FOR PORTO CHARITIES, INC. RECORDS

Date Approved..... Membership number.....

Certified by:..... Treasurer of the Board of Directors.....

## GRAND DIVAN 2011-2012

### Porto Caravan no. 104

**REV. EDWIN DILL, S.T.**  
Chaplain

**LEO ALONSO**  
Grand Commander

**BILL MUNDY**  
Vice Grand Commander

**CHRIS WNUK**  
Grand Scribe

**PAT CROSS**  
Scribe of the Exchequer

**RICK VRANESH**  
Grand Chamberlain and  
Past Grand Commander

**BILL HINGSTON**  
Master of the Oasis

**TOM BRITTON**  
Master of the Wardrobe

**TOM RYAN**  
Captain of the Bodyguard

**WILLIAM HINGSTON III**  
Sentinel of the Tower

**PAUL TIERNEY**  
Sentinel of the Desert

**RONALD GUTKOWSKI**  
Grand Advocate

### Porto Charities, Inc.

**CARMEN DIPLACIDO**  
President

**BILL MUNDY**  
Vice President

**CHARLIE SULLIVAN**  
Treasurer

**PAT HAMMEKE**  
Secretary

**LEO ALONSO** (Grand  
Commander)  
**PAT CROSS**  
**MICHAEL EISENBERG**  
Directors

**SARA ADKINS-BLANCH**  
*Shifting Sands* editor

## The International Order of Alhambra and Porto Caravan 104

The International Order of Alhambra is a fraternal organization of Catholic men dedicated to assisting persons with intellectual disabilities. The Order's mission is to:

- ❖ Provide assistance, education and residences for persons developmentally disabled;
- ❖ Identify, mark, preserve, and commemorate Catholic historical places, events and persons of international or regional importance;
- ❖ Promote fraternalism and sociability among its members and their families.

Porto Caravan No. 104 was chartered in 1956 and is an active Caravan in the International Order of Alhambra with a membership of about 100. Porto Caravan No. 104 is located in the Commonwealth of Virginia environs of the Nation's Capital. Any male practicing Catholic who is 18 years of age or older is eligible to apply for membership.

### Contact Information:

Porto Caravan #104 | Order of Alhambra  
Post Office Box 7266 | Arlington, VA 22207  
Telephone: 703.626.2051 | Email: bettyleo@aol.com

### Porto Charities Inc.

Porto Charities, Inc. is an I.R.C. 501(c) (3) charitable organization dedicated to actively assisting people with developmental or intellectual disabilities; their community and their environment. Our mission is to:

- ❖ Raise and provide funds, resources, assistance, education, residences and overall improved quality of life for people with developmental or intellectual disabilities; and
- ❖ Promote education, awareness, friendship and social forums among members, their families and the community.

Our vision is to:

- ❖ Focus our efforts on providing assistance and resources to people with developmental or intellectual disabilities and their environment through our charitable programs and projects while also emphasizing friendship, mutual support and social events for its members.

### Contact Information:

Carmen A. DiPlacido, President | Porto Charities, Inc.  
Post Office Box 7266 | Arlington, VA 22207  
Telephone: 703.746.0101 | Email: cd.cadco@att.net

**If you would like to submit a story, article, or  
news piece to *Shifting Sands*, please email  
adkins\_blanch@verizon.net.**