



# SHIFTING SANDS



## A Spiritual Message

### January (and February too!)

T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land* famously declared that “April is the cruelest month.” Not so for everyone, however. A friend recently told me that January is the worst month of the year for him; the holidays are over and he will have to wait another year to hear from or see friends and family with whom he is in contact only annually. Added to this, his January calendar lists anniversaries of the deaths of several loved ones. And then there are the shorter days (though getting longer in very small increments) and the consequent longer nights. Light and darkness, loneliness and companionship—and so many other variables in the ebb and flow of life—affect our moods, our emotional condition. And even our faith.

When things are going good, then “God’s in his heaven and all’s right with the world.” But when we are down and troubles seem to be ganging up on us, it may be harder to see a Divine Providence watching over us with love. Our feelings of faith, not faith itself, fluctuate according to our mood, much as our feelings of love for spouse and children may wax and wane, but the underlying real love doesn’t change. We learn over the years to separate the ups and downs of mood from the reality that directs our deeper and more permanent selves.

This is one of the reasons why regular prayer is so necessary; it helps us keep a

level faith-attitude. Our weekly attendance at Mass or our church services can keep us centered on the reality of faith and its centrality in our lives. There are Sundays when we may not “feel like going,” (How often have you experienced that or heard it from your children?) but going despite that natural reluctance brushes aside the cares and preoccupations that beset us and turns us, if only for the period of church presence, to the deeper meaning of what seems like the banality of everyday living.

For Alhambrians and Porto Charities folks, our outreach to “God Special Children” can itself be a prayerful expression of faith. When we are responsible for those whose responsibility for themselves is limited, it forces us to go out of ourselves, away from the pettiness that distracts us from real life, and places us squarely into the center of God’s love—not necessarily feeling or superficial emotion but the deep caring that comes from knowing and loving someone whom we know God knows and loves with absolute and unconditional love. It can—and should—raise us out of any despondency of self-centeredness or seasonal gloom. January—or any month of the year—can be a good month if our attention and love is directed to others.

*Fr. Edwin Dill, ST*

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## Grand Commander’s Message

*“Resolve in advance to persist until you succeed no matter what the difficulty.”*

Brian Tracy

I have been a very persistent person throughout my life. If our convictions are right and we are doing the right thing, then we must remain persistent until accomplishing our goal.

Persistence is part of Porto 104/PCI’s agenda as we continue to work with Bishop Loverde to provide job opportunities at Diocesan offices and parochial schools throughout the Diocese.

Persistence is continuing to work with Bishop Loverde on housing solutions, finding land or church property (former convents) that are not in use.

*(continued on p. 2)*

(continued from p. 1)

Persistence is continuing to work with the County on the use of self-directed service funds for job coaches and providing job opportunities so our jobs coordinator, Lauren Lee, can place more individuals in meaningful jobs with support.

Persistence is an effort by all of us to spread the word about Porto 104/PCI to our friends and families who can benefit from joining our efforts as we tackle new frontiers as our young adults go out into society to pursue independent lives.

Persistence is scheduling housing committee meetings on a monthly basis, traveling to other areas and states, researching housing models and bringing like-minded families together so we can have choices about who our young adults live with once they are on their own.

Persistence will be setting up a committee this coming Spring to visit Pastors in the Diocese to explain to all of them why we need their support for our Special Kids/Special Needs second collections and the lives they will touch with their participation.

Persistence is making sure all the groups who receive our annual grants provide us with their support in letting their members know what we are accomplishing.

Persistence is continuing to promote growth in the school programs we support that have changed the lives of those attending, making them more independent and increasing their self esteem as they head into society.

Persistence is getting more families to attend our six annual functions, especially as they become an outlet for socialization for our children and young adults, and also as our families continue to solve the issues at hand.

**PERSISTENCE:** Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. TALENT will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. GENIUS will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. EDUCATION will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. PERSISTENCE AND DETERMINATION ALONE WILL BRING SUCCESS!

Happy New Year!

GC Leo Alonso

## Porto/PCI Cruise Update

We have received reservations from three families: Alonso, McKenney and DiPlacido. We have requests from two families for their two self-sufficient male young adults to join us on the cruise, and from one female young adult. We are open to this kind of request. If necessary, we'll sign up a GMU R.A. as a chaperone with those families picking up the cost of their trip. If we receive more requests of this kind, we will consider the person's ability level/independence.

Some have asked if they can join in later. The answer is YES as long as the ship has cabins available and the price will be determined by the categories open at that time. If Carnival drops their prices or puts on a sale, our prices will be lowered accordingly up until June 4th, when full payment is due.

### CARNIVAL PRIDE out of Baltimore, 7 nights August 18-25, 2013

- ◆ Depart Sunday, August 18 from Baltimore at 4:30 PM
- ◆ Monday, August 19, at sea
- ◆ Tuesday, August 20, at sea
- ◆ Wednesday, August 21, Port Canaveral (7 AM-6 PM)
- ◆ Thursday, August 22, Nassau (11 AM-8 PM)
- ◆ Friday, August 23, Freeport (7 AM-1:30 PM)
- ◆ Saturday, August 24, at sea
- ◆ Sunday, August 25, 8 AM arrival at Baltimore



At Port Canaveral, our agent will arrange our own personal private bus to take us into Orlando for \$25-\$30 pp., plus the cost of the entrance to a park. Disney or Universal are \$88 pp. so total would be about \$120 pp. We would need a minimum of 30 on the bus. Please let me know if this is of interest.

### Reserved Cabins and Configuration (Insurance is Optional/ price is per cabin not per person)

- ◆ Category 4 D & E Inside Triple: \$2,386.43 (or \$796 pp.) Insurance: \$95 pp. (\$750 deposit required by January 15—fully refundable until June 3; balance of \$1,636.43 due June 4.)
- ◆ Category 4 D & E, Inside Double: \$1,666 (or \$833 pp.) Insurance: \$95 pp. (\$50 deposit required by January 15; \$500 payment required by March 21—fully refundable until June 3; balance of \$1,116 due June 4.)
- ◆ Category 8 B Balcony Triple: \$2,696.43 (or \$912 pp.) Insurance: \$109 pp. (\$750 deposit required by January 15—fully refundable until June 3; balance of \$1,946.43 due June 4.)
- ◆ Category 8 B Balcony Double: \$2,016 (or \$1,008 pp.) Insurance: \$109 pp. (\$50 deposit required by January 15; \$500 payment due by March 21—fully refundable until June 3; balance of \$1,466 due June 4.)

**Cancellation Policy:** Full refund available if cancelled by June 4. If cancelled June 5-24, \$250 pp. penalty applied; June 25-July 20, 50% pp. penalty applied; July 21-August 4, 75% pp. penalty; after August 4, no refunds.

Call GC Leo at (703) 626-2051 or at bettyleo@aol.com. Should you want to make reservations, our cruise director is Robert Ortega at 305-441-1400 or rortega@expresstravelus.com. ■



# Oktoberfest 2012

Porto/PCI members as well as guests enjoyed a fun evening on October 27th, 2012. We enjoyed great German-style food and tried managing pesky bingo cards. Here is a selection of photos taken by our photographer extraordinaire, Maria Eisenberg!



*Sean Cross and Greg Hoppe*

*Danny Hartle and Michael Abraham*



*Sarah, Tommy, and Matt Pizzano*



*Carter McKenney*



*(L-R) Marla Mundy, the Rinkermans, and Marilyn Dalgetty*



*Bingo MCs (l-r): Patrick Cross, Paul Tierney and Vivian Alonso*



*Paul Tierney and Vivian Alonso*

*(L-R) Melia and John Anderson, Michelle Tierney and Bob Britton*



*(L-R) Jeffery Erhardt, Michelle Tierney, and Emma Erhardt*



*(L-R) Elizabeth Eisenberg collecting her bingo prize, Patrick Cross, Paul Tierney, Vivian Alonso, and Michelle Tierney*

# 2013 Calendar

## PORTO 104 / PORTO CHARITIES

Divan and PCI Board Meetings are all held at OLGC DeSales Hall in Church Lower Lobby

Social functions appear in red shadow and will be held in the Counsel Room (school cafeteria)

Thursday, January 10	Divan & PCI Board Meeting
Sunday, February 3	Housing Survey Follow-up Forum, 3 PM (DeSales)
Saturday, February 9	Founder's Day Mass / Charity Awards, 6-10 PM
Thursday, February 7	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Thursday, March 7	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Thursday, March 14	Divan & PCI Board Meeting
Thursday, April 4	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Thursday, May 2	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Saturday, May 4	Porto Derby, 6-10 PM
Thursday, May 9	Divan & PCI Board Meeting
Thursday, June 6	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Thursday, July 11	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby) Divan & PCI Board Meeting
Thursday, August 1	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Thursday, September 5	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Thursday, September 12	Divan & PCI Board Meeting
Sunday, September 15	Bishop Loverde's Annual Disabilities Awareness Mass & Reception St. Thomas More Cathedral
Thursday, October 3	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Friday, October 4	PCI Golf Outing Fundraiser
Saturday, October 26	Oktoberfest / Mass, 6-10 PM
Thursday, November 7	Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Thursday, November 14	Divan & PCI Board Meeting
Thursday, December 5	Tentative Housing Meeting, 7 PM (Lobby)
Saturday, December 14	Holiday Party / Mass, 6-10 PM

# Community Events of Note

## Glen Finland, Author and Parent of a Davis Graduate

*Wednesday, January 9, 2013*  
 7:00 pm  
 Marshall High School  
 Davis Culinary Arts Classroom

This week!!!

Glen will read from her book, *Next Stop, A Memoir of Family*, which is a candid portrait of a differently-abled young man poised at the entry to adulthood. Weaving bittersweet and humorous anecdotes from her son's life, *Next Stop* recounts the complex relationship between an autistic adult child and his family as he steps out into the real world alone for the first time. This beautifully written story will strike a chord with many parents and is a Barnes & Noble 2012 Discover Great New Writers Pick. For additional information see [www.glenfinland.com](http://www.glenfinland.com). The book is readily available at local bookstores and online, and will be available for sale and signing the night of Glen's visit.

## Access Community Lecture: "The Nuts & Bolts of Virginia Medicaid Waivers" Savina Avila, Client Advocate, The Arc of No. Virginia

*January 14, 2013, 7:30-9:00 pm*  
 McLean Bible Church, Tysons Campus,  
 Community Room B (lower level), 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA

Did you know there are programs that give assistance for respite, assistive technology, and other services for children and adults with special needs? ID, DD, EDCD—what do they all mean? This lecture will provide an overview of the Medicaid Waiver System in Virginia. You will learn what a waiver is, why you might need one, what it can do for your family and how to apply for it.

## PCI Housing Forum Follow Up

*Sunday, February 3, 2013, 3:00 to 5:00 pm*  
 Our Lady of Good Counsel Church - DeSalles Hall (left side of the Church building)  
 (Take Niblick St off Route 123 in Vienna, across from the West Wood Country Club. Niblick will end in the Church parking lot. The Desalles Hall will be on the left side of the Church.)

Please mark your calendar for the next session on the housing initiative for our special family members. Those who were unable to attend our earlier session should be present. We will be discussing immediate/necessary steps to move forward. If we don't do it, it won't get done!!!!

RSVP: Please reply to Ron Gutkowski ([rgutkowski@twfg.com](mailto:rgutkowski@twfg.com)) no later than January 15th.

## Paul VI HS Special Olympics Dance

*February 1, 2013, 7:00-9:00 pm*  
 PVI High School Cafeteria

Porto/PCI members are invited to this popular event. One chaperone required for every four guests. Admission is free.

## Davis Center Valentine's Dance

*February 22, 2013, 7:00-9:00 pm*  
 Marshall High School Cafeteria

Porto/PCI members age 18 and up are invited to this popular event. One chaperone required for every four guests. Admission \$5.00

## Guardianship and Special Needs Trusts

*March 6, 2013, 7:00 pm*  
 Marshall High School  
 Davis Center Culinary Arts Room

Kelly Thompson, an attorney specializing in guardianship and special needs trusts, will address legal issues involved in planning for the future needs of your adult child with special needs. Kelly has served many Davis and Porto families and has a wealth of information to share.





## MEMBER PROFILE

### Sean Cross and Tasha Adkins-Blanch

Sean and Tasha are the son and daughter of Patrick and Brenda Cross and Chuck and Sara Adkins-Blanch. Both families have been Porto 104 and Porto Charities members respectively for several years, each introduced to Porto through the parents' group at the Options program at Paul VI Catholic High School. Sean and Tasha met in the Options Program during their freshman year and the rest has been history!

Those who know Sean Cross can tell you about his 4 great loves: sports, weather, Shakira, and Tasha! Sean has always loved sports, whether pro football on TV—he can tell you the name of



every quarterback—or participating in some way. Sean has played a variety of sports through Special Olympics and Challenger leagues, and has gone to the S.O.

State games several times. His love of football is unrivaled; he was manager for his high school team at Paul VI and now manages the club team at George Mason University. Sean also wrestled at the JV level for Paul VI for two years and currently serves as manager for GMU's wrestling team.

Sean is currently a sophomore at GMU in the LIFE program and lives in a townhouse with 4 other students. He hopes to channel his love of weather into a career. After his long days at school Sean relaxes by listening to music, usually Shakira. Sean seems to have found the perfect balance and really enjoys college life.

Sean has accomplished much in his young life, but one recent event shows his dedication to the community that surrounds him: he was recently awarded the rank of Eagle Scout!

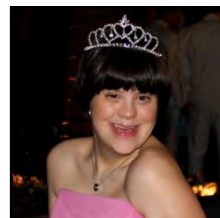
Tasha Adkins-Blanch graduated from the Options Program at PVI in 2011. Tasha loved her years at PVI and while she took many different classes, her favorites were math, P.E., and anything having to do with food. She was also involved in S.O. sports and loved playing soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, and track & field in the spring, attending the S.O. State games several times. During her junior and senior years, Tasha was an assistant manager for the PVI Varsity Volleyball team—she absolutely loved all the girls and her favorite thing was to use the score machine during practice and games. This is a result of her great interest in electronics: she can't live without her laptop and iTouch! She uses them to surf the web looking for restaurant menus and to watch numerous YouTube videos—cartoons or movie clips. She also loves to watch full-length movies—she has recently discovered Netflix!—or listen to music of all kinds: she loves Disney songs as much as she loves Green Day.

Tasha is currently at the Arlington Career Center where she is learning different job skills so that she can find gainful employment. So far her favorite job is food preparation.

Sean and Tasha met freshmen year at PVI, where they shared most of the same classes, including group prayer time. Tasha would always include Sean in her prayer requests, while sports-minded Sean would only pray for the

latest injured athlete. One day Mrs. Gregory, one of their teachers then, mentioned to Sean that it was so sweet that Tasha prayed for him every day, and the wheels began to turn. According to their records, they started dating October 25th—from then on, they were an official couple!

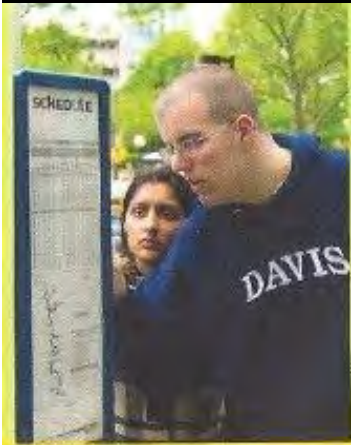
During their time at PVI, Sean and Tasha attended school events, including homecoming events, Marathon Madness, school plays, and Special Olympics dances. Senior year was a flurry of activity, including prom, where Tasha was crowned queen, and graduation in June 2011.



During their PVI years and after, Sean and Tasha have gone on movie, dinner dates, and getting together at Porto functions, but one of their favorites is watching F.C. Barcelona soccer games.

Their loyalty and dedication to each other is stronger than ever. They celebrated their 5th anniversary this past October and couldn't be happier. When asked about Sean's long term plans, he is very specific—graduate from GMU, get a job, and MARRY TASHA! Will Tasha say "yes"? ■

*(This article originally appeared in the Fall 2012 Everyone Has Options at PVI newsletter. It has been reprinted here with some updates.)*



## ORGANIZATIONS PORTO SUPPORTS

### S. JOHN DAVIS CAREER CENTER

The S. John Davis Career Center is a unique school focused on vocational and independent living skills for students with disabilities. Over 100 students ages 18-22 attend the Davis Center, located at Marshall High in Falls Church. The Davis Center is a Fairfax County Public Schools program that follows the standard FCPS calendar with hours similar to local high schools. There is no cost to attend and school bus transportation is provided.

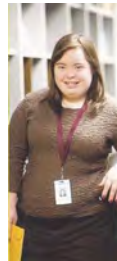


Students at the Davis Center are taught Community Inclusion skills which they can apply in any job environment to help facilitate their future independence. Skills are taught at 13 job training sites in local community businesses including Dewberry, Tysons and Fairview Park Marriotts, Commonwealth Care and Rehabilitation, CiCi's Pizza, Northern Virginia Community College and more. In addition, there is an in-house Culinary Arts program, which has supplied deli-



icious desserts for several Porto events. Although instruction takes place at different businesses and environments, the focus of the instruction is the same: to create competent workers who are able to obtain and maintain employment.

Instruction in Independent Living Skills promotes individual growth and development. General areas addressed include knowledge of personal information, money handling, banking skills, budgeting, calendar skills, time and time management, reading, writing and social skills in the community. Travel Training is offered to every student with the goal of increasing their ability to navigate the community through the use of public transportation. The goal is to integrate the student into the community by introducing him/her to "real world" settings.



The Davis Family Group consists of parent volunteers who organize and provide a variety of social events for Davis students and alumni, including Halloween and Valentines Dances, Bingo Night, Game Night, and more. Students early look forward to these events which are always well-attended. In ad-

dition the Davis Family Group sponsors speakers on topics of interest, such as, legal issues, special needs trusts, group homes, iPad apps for special education students, and others. Porto members are always welcome to attend.

In addition, parent volunteers from the Davis Center sponsor a large and very active Special Olympics program, with four soccer teams in the fall, four basketball teams in the winter, and softball and track programs in the spring. Athletes of all skill levels are welcome to participate and many Davis alumni remain with Davis teams for many years after graduating.

The Davis Center and the Davis Family Group are grateful for the support of Porto Charities. In appreciation for this support, Porto young adult members are invited and encouraged to attend Davis dances, and Porto members are always welcome to attend informational programs sponsored by the Davis Family Group. ■



### Founders' Day / Awards Ceremony

Our function on February 9th (see flyer on p. 9) is the annual mandatory meeting for Porto 104. It is the day we honor and pray for Alhambra Porto 104 members who have passed away. Three years ago, we added the awards ceremony to this event. We issue our yearly grants to approximately 20 worthy organizations that turned in funding requests. This year, we will be

presenting \$87,500 raised from donations to the Special Kids/ Special Needs second collections at local Catholic parishes. In 2012, we had participation or tithing donations from 39 out of 72 parishes. For 2013, we must strive to get 100% participation. Please read the flyer for the event and call or send in your reservation to GC Leo at bettyleo@aol.com or (703) 626-2051. We look forward to seeing you there! ■



# Holiday Party 2012



*Maria Eisenberg and Suzanne McIntosh*



*Elizabeth Eisenberg and Olivia Baker*



*Jenny McIntosh and Betty Franchi*



*Christie and  
Carmen DiPlacido*



*Emily Dalgetty  
and  
Will Hingston*



*Elizabeth and Michael Eisenberg*



*Michelle and Paul Tierney*



*Emma, Jeffrey, Sheila, and Grace Erhardt*

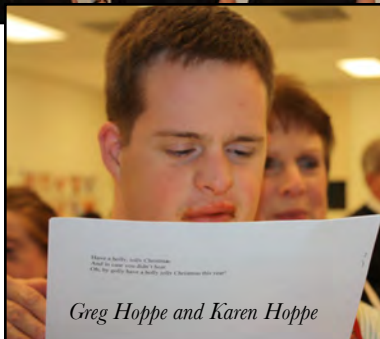
*Sweet Adelines Quartet*



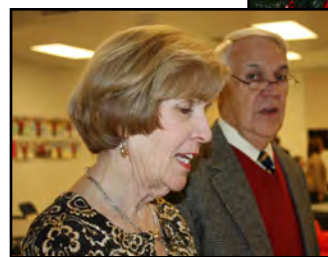
**Santa!!!**



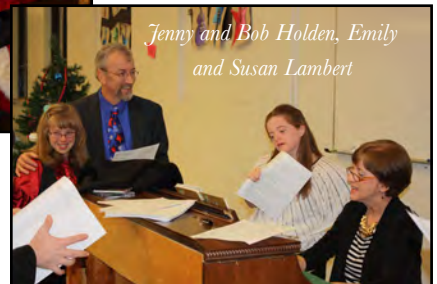
*Meagan Mundy*



*Greg Hoppe and Karen Hoppe*



*Marilyn and Bill Dalgetty*



*Jenny and Bob Holden, Emily  
and Susan Lambert*





## FOUNDERS' DAY

PORTO 104/PORTO CHARITIES, INC.  
PRESENTATION OF 2012 CHARITY AWARDS

*SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2013*

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

## MEXICAN FIESTA & MARIACHI !!!

6:00 pm Mass with Father Dill (OLGC chapel)

7:00 to 7:30 pm Oasis

7:00 to 8:30 pm Mariachi

7:30 to 8:00 pm Dinner

8:00 to 9:00 pm Awards

9:00 to 9:30 pm D.J. Betty



### MENU

by Wildflour Bakery:

Taco Bar

Carne Asada / Beef / 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 January 31st or earlier.**

## 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.

Organizations awarded charitable donations for this year include: ARC of Northern Virginia, ArtStream, Inc., Arlington Diocese "Keyboard for Kids" program, Autism Society of No. VA, Best Buddies Virginia, Central Fairfax Services, Inc., Down Syndrome Association of No. VA, Gabriel Homes, Inc., GMU Life Program, Joey Pizzano Memorial Fund, Paul VI HS Options Program, Pope John Paul the Great HS Options Program, S. John Davis Career Center, Special Olympics of No. VA Area 26, St. Louis Parish Special Education Program, St. Mark Catholic School Evangelist Program, Still Meadows Enrichment Center and Camp, Villa Maria Work Study Center, and Wild-flour Catering.

### 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  
[sadkinsblanch@portocharities.org](mailto:sadkinsblanch@portocharities.org).**