



2021 Holiday Giving

2021 Holiday Giving was through the roof! We had 105 donors and received more than 2,500 toys and other gifts worth \$59,000! In addition, we received 350 gift cards worth \$7,770. These donations made sure the children we serve had a bright holiday season and will supply toys and basic needs for our families all year long!



SAVE THE DATE!

Please mark your calendars on June 23 for our 2022 Children's Friendship Awards Gala!

Fingers crossed, this will be in person.

Please see the enclosed card for more details.



CLIENT STORY

What St. Mary's Children Really Need

In December, Santa and Mrs. Claus visited with the children served by St. Mary's. A little boy sat down next to Santa and when asked what he wanted for Christmas, he didn't request presents for himself. No Legos or remote control cars. Instead, he said he wanted a "happy family" and for "everyone to get along."

In another classroom at our George N. Hunt Campus School, Santa and Mrs. Claus entered to say goodbye to some of our youngest children. The students crowded around Santa and one of them shouted "group hug!" The youngsters threw their arms around Santa's belly and they grasped onto to each other for several minutes.

These scenes from the holiday season show what the children who come to St. Mary's need – they need to feel heard and loved. They need a stable home. And they need hope for a better future no matter what trauma they have already suffered.

The children served by St. Mary's face all sorts of obstacles that can derail their potential. Whether it's a family that is stressed due to trauma or a child with a psychiatric disorder or a child struggling to learn, St. Mary's is there for them. Helping a family that is strained by a trauma such as sexual abuse takes a full team of experts in mental health because we don't just assist the child in need, but their entire family because everyone is affected when something bad happens to a child. About 76% of our clients are children. In addition, our Outpatient Department helps adults to deal with traumas they have suffered.

The children we serve have all the potential in the world. But when they struggle with big problems, their lives can go off track, veering towards issues such as drug abuse, homelessness, or uncontrolled anger – issues that can literally ruin their futures. But St. Mary's knows that with the right services and a lot of love, these children can overcome their circumstance and grow into healthy, productive adults.



Read how children we serve are learning about healthy eating.



Kitchen Group Offers Healthy Meals



Chef Manager Amanda Allard in the St. Mary's kitchen

It can't be easy cooking for dozens of picky eaters every day but Amanda Allard does it with style. Allard is the Chef Manager of St. Mary's new food service, the CulinArt Group, which serves customers in the corporate, higher education, private school, and senior dining areas, and has operations in 50 countries.

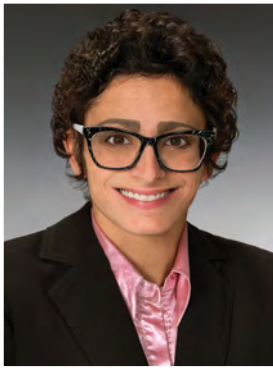
At St. Mary's, Allard oversees

staff cooking more than 140 meals every day of the week to feed hungry Residential Services children and teens as well as day students at the George N. Hunt Campus School, while also providing meals and Grab and Go items to staff. But Allard

doesn't just hide in the kitchen. "I love that the kids are pretty receptive to trying new things. I put out something about once a week for them to try. They get excited about the new fruits and vegetables," Allard said. "Then I talk to the kids to find out what they want."

Of course, while plenty of kids say they want fast food, Allard's job is to help them eat healthier. She said that meals are cooked from scratch and the kitchen takes steps to avoid food waste. In the future, Allard hopes to have a garden on St. Mary's campus where compostable food leftovers can be used as fertilizer.

Prior to working at St. Mary's, Allard cooked for 1,200 students and staff at Bishop Hendricken High School. COVID interrupted that job and has also made it harder to hire staff needed in St. Mary's kitchen – so if you know anyone looking for a cook, food service worker, or dishwasher job, check out the CulinArt website: culinartgroup.com/career-opportunities



Diane Long, School Administrator

School Administrator Focuses On Empowering Students

Every morning at the George N. Hunt Campus School, new School Administrator Diane Long stands at the front door greeting each child as they arrive. It's part of her leadership style – listening first and then helping students and teachers with what they need.

"We are the ones honored to be educating them," Long said of the school students who consist of St. Mary's Residential Services clients and day students from cities and towns around Rhode Island. "First and foremost, you have to spend

time on what is working now and where students and teachers need that support."

Long began her new position in Fall 2021 when the previous Administrator, Marty Morris, retired. She has a background as an English teacher and school administrator. Most recently, Long worked with youth in statewide institutional settings in Massachusetts as Director of Professional Development and Curriculum. She has also taught graduate courses in special education and supervised teacher candidates in their practicum semesters at Fitchburg State University.

Long brings this breadth of experience to the Special Education school located on St. Mary's campus where she is helping to expand the offerings to include areas such as music, kickboxing, and a theater class offered by Trinity Rep. She is also working closely with teachers to ensure they have enough planning time as well as access to professional development and additional curriculums. She is focused on ensuring the school uses technology effectively and motivates its students in positive ways.



We are the place where you have that person, that teacher, that social worker, who gives students that glimmer of academic life again. Many have had trauma around school. We are reengaging youth with academics so they will have the power of education that no one can ever take away from them."

– Diane Long

PARTNERS IN GIVING



We'd like to recognize and thank a new organization that really helped St. Mary's families in 2021. **Plates with Purpose** seeks to partner with local, independent restaurants to reach individuals and families affected by food insecurity in RI. They raise funds that are then converted into restaurant and grocery store gift cards which they donate to nonprofits. **Jennifer Capracotta**, of North Providence, and **Jennifer Fantozzi**, of Smithfield, started the organization in late 2020 and in December 2021 chose to donate to St. Mary's. **They raised more than \$2,800** which will go a long way to providing food security to families and also making it possible for children we serve and their families to go out to eat on occasion – *a real treat!*

New Development Director Seeks To Grow St. Mary's Ability To Help Families



Victoria Picinich

St. Mary's new Development Director, Victoria Picinich chose to work for nonprofit agencies because she has a commitment to being of service to her community.

"I have been a professional fundraiser for over 11 years and have worked for a variety of organizations. One of the best ways for me to serve is to use my expertise in fundraising to assist nonprofit organizations in achieving financial stability so they can continue their important work," said Picinich, who started on December 6, 2021.

A commitment to St. Mary's mission drove Picinich to the agency where she plans to help grow the funds necessary to not only serve today's clients but be ready for the clients of the future. Picinich is thankful for the hundreds of donors that have helped St. Mary's.

"First and foremost, I wish to extend my profound appreciation and gratitude to all of our donors. We could not do the important work we do without your support," she said. "Whether you give us the gift of time, talent, or treasure, your generosity is greatly appreciated."

She also urges people who have never donated before to learn more about St. Mary's by visiting our website, www.smhfc.org, and following us on social media. To contact Victoria, email her at vpicinich@smhfc.org, or call at 401-353-3900, x262.



New Donor Wall

St. Mary's has installed a new Donor Wall which recognizes and celebrates the many donors that came through to help us help families in 2021. More than 1000 names of individuals, businesses, foundations, and other organizations can be found on the plaque which hangs in our main office building. It will be updated each year. "Our Donor Wall is just one of the many ways we seek to recognize the people that help make St. Mary's work possible every day," said Victoria Picinich, St. Mary's Development Director.



Scan with your phone to donate online!

Small Gestures Have A Large Impact



When Pat Moran previously volunteered at St. Mary's, she met a 10-year-old who greatly admired her planting gloves. When

she gave the gloves to the girl, she was so happy she hugged Pat, who never forgot that. So, when the Perennial Planters came to St. Mary's again to make planters with the kids, Pat brought along enough gloves for every child to keep one. For children who sometimes don't have many possessions, this was an act of caring that made the children feel seen and loved. **Thank you, Pat, for your generosity!**

A Letter from the Executive Director



Carlene Casciano-McCann
Executive Director

It feels like all we have talked about for the last two years is COVID-19, and with good reason. Some of us have lost loved ones, others have contracted the virus, and all of us have had to be vigilant about protecting ourselves, our families, our co-workers, and those we serve. We have had to adjust to a different way of living.

The pandemic has been especially tough on the children and teens we serve. Agencies like St. Mary's have had to balance protecting the youth in our care with ensuring they have access to in-person visits with their families and others who are important to them. The sense of isolation is profound for a young person who cannot spend time with family.

The impact of COVID has not only been physical and emotional for our clients and staff, but also financial for our agency as we have had to limit capacity in some of our programs due to the industry-wide workforce crisis. Unfortunately, St. Mary's has not been immune to the staffing shortage. This means your donations have grown even more important to ensuring we can continue to fulfill our mission and help the children of Rhode Island.

Our donors have always been a bright spot in our days. In addition to having amazing staff whose perseverance has gotten us through these trying times, our friends and supporters have not wavered. The generosity of our donors has been important to helping our youth stay positive by providing resources and recreational activities to look forward to and enjoy. Gratitude for the steadfast support of our friends cannot be overstated. Our mission and knowing we continue to have your support during these challenging times are strong catalysts to keep us striving to be the best we can be for those we serve.



St. Mary's
HOME FOR CHILDREN

Healing Lives, Restoring Hope – Since 1877

420 FRUIT HILL AVENUE
NORTH PROVIDENCE, RI 02911-2647

OUR MISSION

Partnering with youth, adults, and families, St. Mary's Home for Children fosters resilience and potential through a continuum of innovative residential, community-based, education, and prevention services.

Produced by the Development Office
Victoria Picinich, Development Director
Susan Gale, Manager of Marketing & Communications

To give feedback, ask questions, or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact Victoria Picinich, Development Director at 401-353-3900 x262 or vpicinich@smhfc.org.

401-353-3900 | smhfc.org

**Names and details in some articles have been changed to protect the privacy of clients.*

2021 Employees of the Year



We are so happy to celebrate our 2021 Employees of the Year: Chelsea Avelino, Adeana Dunston, Sharron Costello, and Stephen Addy! Each of these employees goes above and beyond to care for the children St. Mary's serves every day.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely, *Chair* • Marisa Albanese, *President* • Scott Avedisian, *Vice President*
Dennis Burton, *Treasurer* • Harry Hanoian, *Assistant Treasurer* • Elizabeth Ingraham, *Secretary*
The Rev. Alvin Marcetti, *Assistant Secretary* • Lt. Governor Sabina Matos • Jeffrey Cascione
Doris De Los Santos • Glenn Grilli • Mayor Charles Lombardi • Aaron Nadich • Judge Edward Newman
John J. Schibler • Jeffrey Silcox • Dolores Zompa