



SHIFTING SANDS



PCI's President Message

Happiness that abounds

"Happiness comes when you believe in what you are doing, know what you are doing, and love what you are doing."

—Brian Tracy

Think about this quote and about Porto/Porto Charities member families and those we support. Overall we are a very happy bunch of acquaintances with the same focus and mission. Whenever we have our functions, there is a glow in the room. Our young adults are so happy to see each other and to spend the evening at their tables with friends. All you see are hugs, smiles, camaraderie, joking –true and honest friendships.

This happiness has been attained by knowing what we have to do to provide better independent lives and employment, proper spiritual upbringing and endeavors in sports and the stage. These activities allow friendships to develop with community members with whom they come into contact.

Happiness comes when receiving news of the administrative changes in the PVI Options program. Megan Battle, who started as a peer mentor while at PVI in 1998, has been appointed Director of the program. Congratulations, Megan! She changed her major to special education while at George Mason University working in the LIFE program. Shortly after graduation, she set up and ran the successful Options program at John Paul the Great. Two other PVI graduates currently form the team of teachers which will be assisting Megan: Sarah Browne (Class of 2007), Jenny Hodge and Ellen Bower (both Class of 2006).

Happiness comes when we see the new Expanded Services Program at O'Connell led by its Director, Susan Rinaldi, who was a teacher in the Options program, and another PVI graduate, Mary Desmarais, serving as a teacher. This program should grow to enroll 6-8 students next year.

Happiness comes in the form of the housing accomplishments we have made by creating a community in Fairfax City totaling eleven homes purchased or rented by families. Thirty two of our special young adults reside on their own with nightly supervision. All of this did not happen just by accident. It has taken place because the founding families and those that followed believed very strongly about what we were doing to create better lives for those we support.

This year, Porto and PCI are embarking on a renewed effort to increase the number of special education programs in Diocesan schools. We will make available more homes in the community and, most importantly, increase employment opportunities. To proceed with this new phase, we need to up our membership rolls by getting more people involved. We just can't sit still and reap the benefits of the happiness created by those that preceded us.

We need more people who also know what they are doing. Sheila Erhardt (sheila.erhardt@gmail.com) is leading the effort to secure sponsorships, prizes and raffle items for our annual golf tournament on October 7th of this year. Stacy DeNoyor (sz.deno@verizon.net) is guiding our endeavors to promote PCI and secure sponsorships, grants and donations from the corporate world in northern Virginia. Mary Donovan (jcdonovan@aol.com) has agreed to take on the helm of our first annual "Grants from the Heart" Valentine's Ball/charity awards function on February 11, 2017. Please contact them to sign up for their committees. You don't have to be a member to help chart our future. But I believe that once you get involved and witness firsthand the benefits of being part of our PCI/Porto family, you will not hesitate to join!

We are proud of what is being accomplished and the results we have worked hard to produce. The love we all have for our families and for our young adults shows in their faces. We have created happiness that abounds!

PCI President Leo Alonso