



Embracing Catholic Education
&
Meaningful Employment for All

May 31 | 2026



MAY NEWSLETTER

CELEBRATING MILESTONES



Dear Friends,

I'm absolutely thrilled to kick off this month's newsletter with some incredible news: **Porto Charities was recently featured on EWTN!** This national spotlight highlighted our commitment to inclusive Catholic education and the beautiful impact it has on our community. You can watch the full segment in the video below.

This month, many children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities across our Diocese celebrated graduations and confirmations. These amazing outcomes have been possible in part due to the important work that Porto Charities does by providing grants to Catholic schools, funding special religious education programs, and reimbursing tuition for dedicated educators pursuing their Master's degrees. I hope that you will **enjoy meeting the graduates featured below.** Thank you to our partner schools for their ongoing collaboration that allows these students to experience true belonging.

If you want to continue seeing more students with intellectual and developmental disabilities proudly cross the graduation stage, and more educators receive the tuition reimbursement they need to provide specialized instruction, please consider supporting our mission and **indicate "education" in the memo line** to directly fund these grants and scholarships. Thank you for being part of the Porto Charities family and for celebrating these beautiful milestones with us!



Sincerely,

Guadalupe Williamson
Communications Coordinator
Porto Charities

[Make a Gift](#)

Porto Charities Featured in EWTN



Our recent gala was also featured in the news! You may see the story in the most recent print edition of the Catholic Herald, or read the story by clicking below.

[Gala Article](#)

Congratulations to our Graduates



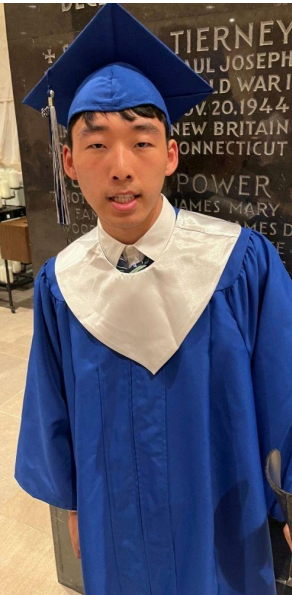
NED

Ned graduated from the George Mason University LIFE program.

At GMU, Ned developed a love of music (Jazz, Rock, and Classical), which helped him focus on his passion for baking and food preparation.



With the support of Porto Charities' employment initiative, PortoWorks, Ned became a volunteer as a barista and baker at the Little Way Cafe at St. Louis Church.



JONATHAN

Jonathan was part of the Special Olympics soccer and basketball teams, and the track and field team during his years at Bishop O'Connell High School.

He enjoyed being a senior class counselor and also earned the accomplishment of completing his Global Studies certificate.

Jonathan was part of many clubs, including the Connect 4 club that he started, and a weaving club. He is well known for his engaging conversations.



ALEC

While at Bishop O'Connell High School, Alec was part of the Special Olympics soccer and basketball teams and the track and field team.

Alec was active in Best Buddies and enjoyed being part of the men's chorus for three years. He is known for his ever-present positivity and big smile.



LUCY

Lucy is graduating from Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School.

She really enjoyed her time learning and making friends at JP. She especially made great connections with her peer mentors and the other students in the Options Program.

Lucy is known for her friendly smile and positivity.



CATHERINE

Catherine was part of Special Olympics soccer and basketball teams during her time at Bishop O'Connell High School. She was also in the swim and dive team and the track and field team.

Catherine had a special interest and strength in STEM classes and enjoyed many science and math classes. She is known for her kindness to everyone.



ISAIAH

Isaiah's experience in the Options Program at Paul VI Catholic High School has been amazing.

Isaiah has felt accepted and included. The Options Program has really helped him grow in confidence, faith, and friendship.

Isaiah will be attending the LCPS CAST program after graduation and will take classes at NOVA for the Computer-Aided Drafting and Design Program.



LILY

Lily was part of the Bishop O'Connell High School Swim and Dive team and the track and field team for all four years.

She was also part of Special Olympics soccer, basketball, and track team.

Lily enjoyed taking four years of French, where her talent and knack for foreign language truly shone.

Congratulations to our Middle School Graduates and Confirmandi

St. Carlo Acutis



"I'm going to miss going to mass with my friends and listening to Fr. O'Donohue"

St. Juan Diego



"I'm going to miss St. Anthony school, but I'm also very happy to go to Saint John Paul the Great High School"

St. Therese of Lisieux



St. Faustina



Congratulations to Catherine Jameson!

Porto Charities Tuition Scholarship Recipient



**Center for Learning
& Leadership**

Building Schools of Belonging



The Porto Center for Learning & Leadership and all of Porto Charities congratulate Cathy Jameson on the completion of a Master's Degree in Special Education with a concentration in Early Childhood Education from the American College of Education.

Cathy is the Preschool Director at St. William of York Catholic School in Stafford, VA and the most recent Tuition Scholarship recipient. Cathy returned to the classroom after an 18-year hiatus and found that many things had changed in the education arena. She saw a need for being available to the most vulnerable students and so began her journey to her new degree.

At the completion of her program, Cathy wrote a reflection piece and agreed to let us share a part of it. Her words highlight her passion for teaching and for assisting the youngest students at St. William of York.

"Working towards my master's has been an incredible learning journey and one that guided me in ways I could not have imagined. While juggling work, my family, and my studies, I was able to complete assignments, read hundreds of research articles, and maintain a 4.0. I want to still read and research relevant and insightful topics to help me lead better, that will help my staff learn more, and that will help our school community thrive. It is for our school community that I work so hard.

The desire to help preschoolers who require more academic support is still strong. I had not anticipated working with the school's Academic Resource Team this year, but my schedule allowed me to bridge a gap...My hope is to create opportunities on that team for our preschool students...especially those who would benefit from differentiation, small group instruction, and one-on-one assistance like the elementary and middle school students receive.

Wrapping up my studies...had me reflecting on everything I got to do for my master's program. I got into a habit of staying more informed of current standards, trends, and attitudes in education over the last year and a half. I dove deeper into important classroom and school topics, which solidified my desire to provide a well-rounded early childhood program. It reminded me how important it is to find resources for families whose children have learning differences. Parents who have seen their child go from general education to later receiving special education services share that the support they received from me has been helpful. Knowing that motivates me to learn more so that I can do more. My quizzes, papers, and lectures just ended, but the fulfilling and important work I get to do alongside my students and their families will continue."

Board Member Spotlight

Meet Dave Hoppe

In the spirit of celebrating history-making milestones, Dave Hoppe is credited with salvaging the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997. His legacy of advocacy has helped pave the way for the inclusive educational opportunities all students with intellectual and developmental disabilities enjoy today.



Dave Hoppe holds a BA in Government from the University of Notre Dame and an MA in International Relations from John Hopkins. He worked on Capitol Hill for 30 years in various positions, including AAs to Sen. Dan Coats (R-IN), and COS to Senate Whip Jon Kyl (R-AZ) and to Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI). Dave serves on the Board for Easter Seals of DC, MD, and VA. He serves on the finance council for St. Luke's Ordinariate Parish in Fort Washington, MD. He is married with three children, the youngest of whom graduated from the Options Program at Paul VI High School in 2009.

Do You Have a Child Celebrating a Milestone?

Request Mail from Porto Charities!



Receive Mail from Porto Charities!

From words of encouragement to celebrations, your friends at Porto want to tell you how much you and your milestones mean to us!

portocharities.org/portomail

Request Mail

Upcoming Events



Cooperation and Collaboration

Working for the Success of All Students in the Catholic School Classroom

Presenter: Ann-Bailey Lipsett

Ann-Bailey Lipsett is a special education consultant with over 20 years of experience partnering with schools, preschools, and families to create positive social-emotional learning experiences for all children. She is also the co-author of Building Blocks for Social-Emotional Learning: Creating Safe, Secure, and Successful Schools and PREVENT Problem Behaviors: Seven Contemplative Discipline Steps.



Tuesday, August 11, 2026

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Holy Spirit, Annandale, VA

Topics

- Why inclusive education is at the core of our mission as Catholic educators
- The role and responsibilities of a paraeducator/aide in an inclusive classroom
- Knowing and supporting students with ASD/DS
- Implementing general methods of behavior management plans

Sign Up

Join us for a day of learning, collaboration, and shared commitment to inclusive Catholic education.



<https://forms.gle/XVhrmsJBPB77yDa8>

[Register Here](#)

Monthly Parent Coffee



Wednesday
JUNE 10
Godfreys
Falls Church, VA

Friday
JULY 17
Trinity House
Leesburg, VA

Tuesday
AUGUST 25
Caboose Commons
Vienna, VA

9:30 - 11:30 am

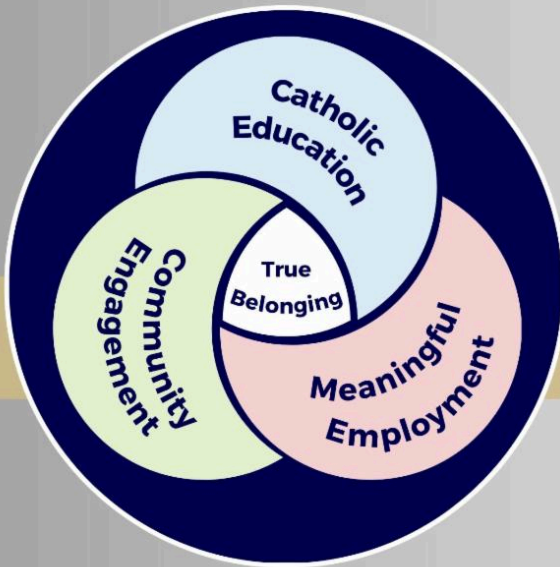
Join us for fellowship and belonging!
Open to all parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities



Embracing Catholic Education
Meaningful Employment for All

[Questions?](#)

Building a Culture of Belonging



Porto Charities is a 501(c)3 organization that builds a culture of belonging for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities by increasing their access to Catholic education, meaningful employment, and community engagement in the Diocese of Arlington.



True Belonging means being seen, known and valued.



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