



Embracing Catholic Education<sup>®</sup>  
&  
Meaningful Employment for All

June 30 | 2026



Dear Friends:

We are at the midpoint of 2026, and Porto Charities wants to take this opportunity to thank you for your generosity and share some of the wonderful opportunities you have made possible for the people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that Porto Charities serves in the Diocese of Arlington.

With your support in 2026, Porto Charities:

- Provided a record \$366,000 in grants to Catholic schools and special religious education programs (SPRED) in the Diocese of Arlington to support special education services to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Established the Porto Center for Learning and Leadership in March, led by former Holy Spirit Catholic School principal, Maureen Ashby, which will work to provide our Catholic schools and educators with the tools they need to teach students with disabilities. As part of the Center's kickoff work, Porto Charities has partnered with the Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE) and is investing \$25,000 to provide science-based reading instruction training to educators in our Diocese that will benefit not only students with disabilities, but all students in the classroom.
- Will sponsor in Fall 2026, for the third time, a cohort of 25 educators in our Catholic schools to take an online graduate-level introduction to special

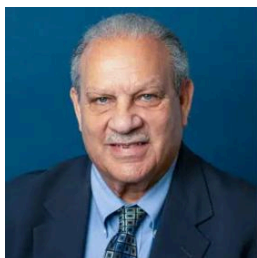
education class free of charge at George Mason University.

- Is committed to more than \$60,000 in scholarships for Catholic school educators in the Diocese of Arlington pursuing master's degrees in special education.
- Will host a 2-part webinar series on dyslexia and a 2-part webinar series on language learning for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as continue to sponsor monthly coffee meet-ups and social activities to provide opportunities for fellowship and engagement for the families we serve.
- Continues to create employment positions in schools, parishes, chancery, and private businesses as part of our PortoWorks program. PortoWorks has created 29 employment and volunteer opportunities that allow individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling lives in society. In 2026, Porto Charities developed a business plan to respond to the high demand for employment support and expand PortoWorks.
- Is grateful to the 50+ parishes that have committed to participating in our Special Kids/Special Needs annual campaign in 2026 and to all parishioners for opening your hearts and sharing your time and treasure with Porto Charities to make all of this possible.

With a record-breaking Embrace Gala behind us in April, where we raised \$460,000 (save the date for our 5th gala on April 23, 2027), and looking forward to our annual golf tournament on October 2 (register early because this event always sells out quickly!), I am confident that Porto Charities will have another banner year!

We are proud to report that we have, once again in 2026, attained a four-star rating by Charity Navigator — its highest designation for a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit! We are so proud that Porto Charities is recognized as a great steward of your generous gifts. With the support of our wonderful Bishop and leader, Michael F. Burbidge, and each one of you, Porto Charities will continue to dedicate ourselves to supporting Catholic education and employment and building a culture of true belonging for children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Diocese of Arlington.

Thank you for being part of the Porto family!



Sincerely,

*Leo Alonso*

**President & CEO, Porto Charities**

*Papal Benemerenti Medal Recipient*

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[Make a Gift to Porto Charities](#)

**Congratulations to Rachel Livingstone!**

*Tuition Scholarship Recipient*



The Porto Center for Learning & Leadership and all of Porto Charities congratulate Rachel Livingstone on the completion of a Master's Degree in Special Education accompanied with a Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis from George Mason University.

Rachel is a kindergarten teacher at the Basilica School of St. Mary in Alexandria, VA and the most recent Porto Charities Tuition Scholarship recipient.

Throughout her teaching career, Rachel has been interested in student behavior which led her to initially want to pursue the ABA certificate. Being the life-long learner that she is though, once in the program she saw the benefit and value of pursuing a full master's degree.

Rachel believes that by understanding why a student is exhibiting particular disruptive or inappropriate behaviors, she can better address the issues with solid and research-based techniques from which to draw. Understanding the behavior allows her to introduce strategies in the classroom that may change/address it. She believes that having sound data to bring to school administration and parents when discussing student success or lack thereof in the classroom allows for better more focused communication on behalf of the student.

*To learn more about the Porto Charities Special Education Scholarship Program, please visit [portocharities.org/spedscholarship](https://portocharities.org/spedscholarship)*

## **Board Member Spotlight**

Meet Fr. Rich Miserendino

During the month of June, new priests are ordained (seven in 2026!), and others are reassigned to new parishes throughout our Diocese. We always love seeing how our priests—both newly ordained and seasoned—find meaningful ways to welcome and integrate parishioners with disabilities into their parish families.

At Porto Charities, we are blessed to have Fr. Rich Miserendino as our chaplain and a member of our board. Fr. Rich is deeply committed to welcoming individuals with disabilities wherever he serves. A talented preacher and writer, he writes a monthly column in the *Catholic Herald* and lovingly shares special Advent reflections with the Porto Charities community.



Father Rich Miserendino is on the Board of Porto Charities. He is also chaplain and director of the St. John Bosco Center at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA. A native of Burke, VA, Father Rich has always had a special place in his heart and closeness with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. He has also worked with individuals in the Special Religious Education and Development programs (SPRED) and for sacramental preparation. He has served at both Saint Agnes and Saint Bernadette Catholic Churches.

## Support Our 2nd Collection at Your Parish!



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### SPECIAL KIDS / SPECIAL NEEDS CAMPAIGN

100% of all proceeds support programs for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities at Catholic schools in the Diocese of Arlington



Prefer to Make Your  
Gift Online?



[portocharities.org/sksn](https://portocharities.org/sksn)

Write your parish in the memo line!

#### Upcoming Dates

July 10-11  
*Our Lady of Hope*

July 18-19  
*Christ the Redeemer  
St. John the Beloved  
St. Philip*

July 25-26  
*Holy Spirit  
St. William of York*

July 31- Aug 1  
*St. Matthew*

**Make a Gift to SK/SN Campaign**

## Upcoming Educational Events

**Teaching Foreign Language in the Inclusive Classroom**  
July 8 & July 13, 6:30–8:00 pm (virtual)

**Understanding Dyslexia: the Science, Support, and Lived Experience**  
July 16 & July 21, 7:00–8:30 pm (virtual)

**Cooperation and Collaboration**  
August 11, 9:00 - 1:00 pm (in person)

**Introduction to Special Education at George Mason University**

## Join Us for Coffee!



*Parent Coffee*

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



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## Save the Date!



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# EMBRACING BELONGING ALL YEAR LONG



**2020**  
**OCT 2**  
GOLF  
TOURNAMENT



**OCT 11**  
RESPECT LIFE &  
DISABILITY MASS



**DEC 5**  
CHRISTMAS  
PARTY



**MAR 6**  
DISABILITY  
CONFERENCE



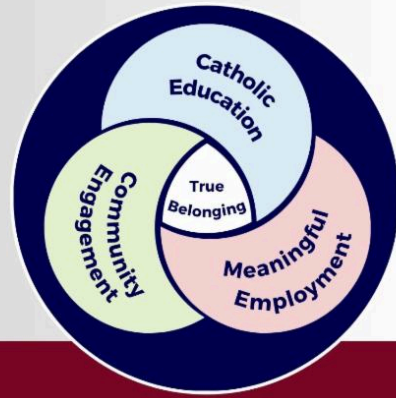
**2021**  
**APR 23**  
AWARDS  
GALA

[www.portocharities.org](http://www.portocharities.org)



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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.



Follow us on social media!



Website

Make a Gift

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