



SHIFTING SANDS



PCI's President Message Confidence

"Your self confidence is directly connected to how much you feel you are making a difference in the world."

—Brian Tracy

As members of Porto 104 and Porto Charities, we have self confidence galore and it is no coincidence. This is due to our continued success in supporting programs and schools to better the lives of those with different intellectual abilities.

In 1961, Porto members founded and provided financial assistance to St. Coletta's school. At the time, it was the only school educating those with intellectual disabilities. In 1985, Porto and the International Order of Alhambra provided funds for the first Alhambra house to Gabriel Homes in Herndon, Virginia, in order to provide six individuals with the opportunity to live a life on their own.

In 1998, Porto members began the Paul VI Options Program which has become a model for over 300 schools providing inclusive education throughout our nation's Catholic schools. In 2007, Porto members started the Evangelist Program at St. Mark's in Oakton, Virginia. In 2008, Porto/PCI initiated an Options program at St. John Paul the Great High School. In 2015, we moved forward with the special education program at Holy Spirit; in 2017, the expanded program at Bishop O'Connell High School. In the fall of 2018, we will be providing funds for the start of programs at St. Veronica's in Chantilly; St. Theresa's in Loudoun; Precious Blood in Culpepper; Sacred Heart in Winchester and St. John's in McLean. We have received notice of new programs in the fall of 2019 at Bishop Ireton High School, St. Bernadette's in

Springfield and St. Mary's in Alexandria. Porto/PCI members were at the forefront of the first university program for those with disabilities in the U.S. which has now been replicated in over 350 colleges and universities nationwide.

Individuals who are also Porto/PCI members have also left their mark as coaches for many Special Olympics teams and we have financially supported Special Olympics. We were also there when ArtStream was established as an inclusive theatre program in northern Virginia and several of our young adults participate in the program. We saw the need for outside community activities and worked with Out 'N About to support them. It was apparent we needed a housing program for individuals ready to move on their own and through our research came up with an approach funded by families. With these families' commitment, there are 36 residents living independently in 10 homes in the area surrounding George Mason University.

In March 2018, we produced a video to showcase the results of many of our efforts in the education field that have created SELF CONFIDENCE in the special student; in peer mentors; in teachers and administrators; and in families as they realize what their children and young adults can accomplish in an environment of acceptance.

Porto/PCI's mission is deeply connected to these efforts and our self confidence is directly connected to the difference we know we are making in the world! Let's continue our legacy. Please join us in our efforts and vision for many years to come.

—PCI President Leo Alonso