

# A RAY OF HOPE

*A Christian home and a ray of hope for children needing a chance*



Spring/Summer 2008 • Volume 21

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## Appreciation Open House Draws Many Friends to Seamark Ranch

Trolleys full of guests toured Seamark Ranch on Saturday afternoon, February 9 as Seamark said "thank you" to over 800 friends and supporters at its Appreciation Open House. Guests toured Seamark's on-campus school and counseling facilities at the Administration Center, and were treated to a riding tour of the campus and family fun activities around the Agricultural Barn. Over seventy-five volunteers, organizations and churches helped make the day a tremendous success. More photos on page 4.



## Seamark Welcomes...



*Stefan Brokas  
Teacher, Seamark  
Ranch School*

Seamark Ranch welcomes Stefan Brokas to our staff as a teacher at Seamark Ranch School. He joins us after retiring from 35 years at Keystone Heights High School where he served as a teacher, Dean of Students and Athletic Director. Stefan also served as a principal and administrator in Desoto County in Florida for four years. Stefan graduated from the University of West Florida with a degree in education and holds a Master of Science degree from the University of Florida. Stefan enjoys interacting with the Seamark children each day and says it keeps him young. Stefan and his wife Celeste have four children and two grandchildren.



*Art and Debbie L'Huillier  
Houseparents*

The L'Huilliers have served in various Christian ministries for over 20 years, including houseparenting, Christian Camping, and managing a large, historic ranch in Texas for the Salvation Army. Art's background is in facility maintenance and Debbie is in food service, but they have had some interesting experiences that range from working with a 200-head Bison herd to hosting luncheons for a committee from the White House and dignitaries from the Palace Museum in Beijing, China! The L'Huilliers are excited to be back where their hearts feel at home – serving in a ministry where the goal is to point the way to Jesus Christ and striving to be “family” to Seamark kids. The L'Huilliers have one married son in Texas as well as family in the Live Oak, Florida area.

## Seamark Ranch School Nears Completion of First Year

On August 22, 2007 Seamark Ranch School began classes with three children. Now nine children, making up two classes, attend Seamark's on-campus school designed for Seamark children that need an



individualized learning environment. The school was made possible by a two-year grant from The Sontag Foundation. Seamark Ranch School is licensed and registered with the State of Florida and is guided by the Florida Sunshine State Standards set by the state's Department of Education. School curriculum is personalized to meet the learning needs of each child, overcoming gaps in their learning so that they can experience academic success. Robin Garvey, Seamark's Director of Education, develops individualized lesson plans geared to each child's learning strengths and weakness. She and fellow teacher, Stefan Brokas, provide individualized instruction for the children based upon these lesson plans. Tutors and volunteers for reading, language arts, science and math provide additional one-on-one support. The children are currently learning Spanish, as well as studying about the country and its culture. Having recently completed a marine biology unit, the children have added an aquarium to their classroom.

“Initially, we anticipated about 50% of our children would need some individualized instruction though our campus school. That percentage is actually closer to 90%,” explained Robin Garvey. “As the school grows, our needs are growing as well. Next term, we will need more space, tutors, curriculum, computers, volunteers and supplies. But seeing each child succeed academically makes it all worth it!”

## Seamark Offers Summer Enrichment Program

This summer, Seamark children will participate in a 6-week Summer Enrichment Program. From 10:00AM – Noon, Monday through Thursday, children will have hands-on opportunities to learn crafts, music, art, and creative and recreational skills. Seamark's Director of Education, Robin Garvey, is putting Seamark's Summer Enrichment Program in place. Individuals with skills they would like to share, who have one morning available each week in late June and July, are encouraged to contact the Seamark office at (904) 288- 8885.

# Seamark's Vocational, Agricultural and Technical Program begins Spring Planting

In early February, Seamark children began vocational, agricultural and technical classes in addition to their regular academic schedule. Class is held each afternoon at Seamark's Agricultural Center and is taught by Ranch Manager, Glenn Lassiter. The program teaches a strong work ethic, responsibility and life and trade skills that will benefit each child. Afternoon classes include carpentry, fence building, planting and animal husbandry. As appropriate tools are acquired to outfit a workshop, the program will expand to include welding and mechanical skills. The children have worked on several projects for the ranch including building bookcases for the school, installing and organizing pegboard and hand tools in the workshop, building a horse shelter, planting a garden and laying irrigation pipe. The children are now building pump houses for each Seamark home.



Spring planting bears fruit in Seamark's first garden – greens, carrots, potatoes, onions and blueberries! The children donated the "first fruits" of their harvest to "The Olde Farm", an organization that assists needy families and individuals in Clay County and neighboring communities by distributing food.

*Do you have farm implements or shop tools in good condition you would like to donate? Seamark is in need of:*

- Air compressor
- Torch
- Farm implements
- Welder
- Power and machine tools

*For more information or to make a donation, please contact Glenn Lassiter at (904) 673-1820.*

*"And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD, and great shall be the peace of thy children."*

Isaiah 54:13

## Thunderbolt Elementary Lays the Groundwork for Seamark Ranch Library

Parents and faculty of Thunderbolt Elementary School in Green Cove Springs have prepared the groundwork for Seamark's on-campus library. Through a book drive at Thunderbolt Elementary, and a partnership with Barnes and Noble Bookstores in early February, Seamark was provided with every book on its initial library book list. This donation included eleven boxes of books collected at Thunderbolt's book drive, and over \$400 raised with Barnes and Noble to purchase the remaining books. Representatives from Thunderbolt Elementary will return this summer to sort and shelve the books for Seamark. As additional funding is secured, computer software will be purchased to keep track of our treasured books and automate the Seamark library. A huge thank you goes to Debbie Sanders and other faculty members and parents of Thunderbolt Elementary, as well as Barnes and Noble, for their generosity.

# More Appreciation Open House Highlights...



## Seamark Offers On-Line Donation Option and Email Updates

**F**riends of Seamark Ranch will soon have an additional way to contribute. Seamark's website will offer an on-line donation option for donors wishing to make a gift using a credit card. Donors will soon be able to contribute by mailing a check, calling the Seamark office to donate by credit card, or by entering a donation on-line through our secure website at [www.seamarkranch.com](http://www.seamarkranch.com).

In addition, Seamark will soon be able to share more current updates and information via email. If you would like to receive monthly email updates and priority prayer needs please contact us at (904) 288-8885 or [mail@seamarkranch.com](mailto:mail@seamarkranch.com).

Please look for these enhancements coming this summer.

### Please Make a Note...

The post office address for Seamark Ranch has changed. Our new post office address is:

*Seamark Ranch  
P.O. Box 24032  
Jacksonville, FL 32241-4032*

## Children are a Blessing



**A**s we celebrate the precious gifts of love and family on Mother's Day and Father's Day we ask that you consider blessing the children of Seamark Ranch in two special ways.

### Seamark **Season of Prayer 2008** Commitment

- I commit to pray daily for Seamark Ranch during the Season of Prayer, May 11 - June 15.
- I have enclosed a special love offering for the children of Seamark Ranch. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

My gift is:  in Honor - or -  in Memory of  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Please send memorial/honor card to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Seamark Ranch, P.O. Box 24032, Jacksonville, FL 32241 or call (904) 288-8885 for credit card donations.

## NASCAR Shows Support for Seamark Ranch

**R**enowned race car driver Hurley Haywood shows his support for Seamark Ranch by sporting a ranch logo on his #59 Porsche Riley Daytona Prototype car at the recent Daytona Rolex 24-Hour Race. Hurley is a five time Daytona 24-Hour winner and three-time LeMans winner.



# Volunteers Brighten Seamark's Spring

*Students and families took a "break" this spring to make a difference at Seamark Ranch. Our thanks to each and every volunteer!*



*The Shapiro family donated materials and landscaped a flower bed to celebrate their son Josh's 13th birthday.*



*First Baptist Church Jacksonville Middle School Youth lay sod on a HOT spring day.*



*Suneil Kutbiala, joined others from CSX to help caulk and paint the Seamark commissary.*



*Learning about Seamark from our website, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church from Norcross, Georgia donated playground equipment for our school and made the Ranch a stop on their Spring Break Mission Trip. They even spent a day clearing, laying sprinkler system pipes in our garden, and conducting a recreation time for our school children.*



*Mandarin Christian High School students celebrate a successful day of clearing.*



# W E Honorariums & Memorials

What an honor it is for Seamark Ranch to receive your contributions. Because the ranch accepts no state or federal money, we rely solely on private giving from individuals, businesses, churches and other organizations. Donation forms may be printed from the Seamark website at [www.seamarkranch.com](http://www.seamarkranch.com) to accompany your donation. To donate by credit card, please call our office at (904) 288-8885.

Some donors prefer to make contributions to Seamark Ranch in honor of a friend or loved one, or in lieu of flowers at a funeral or memorial. Tribute forms may be printed from the Seamark website or we will gladly take your information over the phone and make sure an acknowledgement card is mailed to your designated recipient that same day. Please call the Seamark office at (904) 288-8885 if we can assist you in this way.

The following supporters have made contributions to Seamark Ranch in honor or memory of their family members, friends and loved ones. Names are listed alphabetically by the person being honored or memorialized. Supporters are listed following the person they are honoring or memorializing. The contributions were received between December 19, 2007 and April 30, 2008. If your name does not appear, please look for it in our special tribute issue coming this summer. We regret the unintentional omission or misspelling of names.

## **In Honor of:**

Ralph Atkinson  
*Allied Systems #11*

David M. Bland  
*Eleanor Bland*

Ruth Brown  
*Tiffany Schribler*

J.F. & Margaret Paul "Peggy" Bryan  
*Jack & Joy Myers*  
*June Reinhold Myers*  
*Rolf & Neely Towe*  
*Rod & Peggy Vetterlein*

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*Gary M. Cassels*

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Seleta Owens

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*E. Chester Stokes, Jr.*

## **In Memory of:**

Susan Gatch Ashby  
*M.J. Griffin*

Emerson Benton  
*Anne M. Poidevant*

Willard Bland  
*Bob & Betty Weese*

Representative Don Davis  
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*Herman Heikkinen*

Hugh M. Griffith  
*Bob, Maria, David and the Shue family*  
*Olive Rebecca Smith*  
*Don & Priscilla Tucker*

Billy Howell  
*Anne M. Poidevant*

Nancy Jeffrey  
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*Janet Welch*

*All gifts are tax deductible and are used towards general Ranch operations. Thank you for your support of Seamark Ranch.*



A Christian home and a ray of hope for children needing a chance

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Jacksonville, FL 32257  
T 904.288.8885  
F 904.288.8875  
E [mail@seamarkranch.com](mailto:mail@seamarkranch.com)

## Priority Prayer Needs

Children truly are a blessing! We have welcomed thirteen children into our Seamark family, with three more children joining us in the next few weeks. We are so thankful for your participation in the Season of Prayer emphasis and the way you continuously lift us up in your thoughts and prayers. Below are the needs we are praying for during our Season of Prayer emphasis (May 11- June 15). If you are interested in receiving the monthly prayer list via email, please contact us at (904) 288-8885 or [mail@seamarkranch.com](mailto:mail@seamarkranch.com). Please pray for:

- ✦ Each home to grow together as a “family” in love, respect and trust.
- ✦ An extra measure of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control for our children, houseparents and staff as they live and work together.
- ✦ Each child to grow healthy and strong physically, spiritually and emotionally.
- ✦ Each child to succeed academically.
- ✦ God’s protection on all who live at the Ranch.
- ✦ God’s life transforming power in the lives of the children. That each will come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- ✦ God’s provision for the day-to-day needs of each child living at Seamark Ranch.

*“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”*

Matthew 25:40

**Special thanks to Quality Images for generously donating their design skills, layout expertise and printing services.**

[www.seamarkranch.com](http://www.seamarkranch.com)

The Seamark Ranch mailing list is completely confidential and will never be shared, sold or given to any individual or organization. Suggestions, comments or corrections should be directed to 904.288.8885.