



**For Immediate Release--Manassas, VA; May 5, 2018:** Holy Family Academy announced that it is starting the St. Anne Program for Children with Down Syndrome for the 2018-2019 school year. The Program will be a 1 day a week co-op for Down Syndrome students ages 8 to 18. It will feature a home-school classical curriculum designed for special needs children. The multi-age classroom component will take place on Fridays in the main school building.

“There’s a real need for a Catholic education solution for families with a Down Syndrome child,” said Mo Woltering, Headmaster of Holy Family Academy, whose youngest daughter has Down Syndrome. “Most of the larger schools, whether public or private, tend to lump all special needs children together. Children with Down Syndrome have vastly different needs and challenges than say children with Autism.”

The St. Anne Program is intended to support home-schooling parents with a classroom experience and a social opportunity for their Down Syndrome children one day a week. “We are also convinced that children with Down Syndrome can greatly benefit from a classical education,” said Woltering. “These children will readily connect with the good, the true and the beautiful, which is our Catholic heritage, but maybe in a different way than our other students.”

There is already great interest in the Program and Woltering has met with several families to discuss the opportunity. “The Program is a bit of an experiment for us since this our first special needs project,” said Woltering. “However, based on the initial interest, it’s clear that there is a need for a school that serves Catholic families with Down Syndrome children.” Woltering is committed to growing the program according to demand. “If St. Anne and the Holy Family want us to do this, I’m sure the program will blossom into something very beautiful,” said Woltering.

When ask why St. Anne was chosen to be the patroness of the program, Woltering responded, “In raising the Virgin Mary as a child, St. Anne had the duty of caring for a child with a special kind of innocence. Children with Down Syndrome also have a special kind of innocence and we hope St. Anne will care for our students and the program in the same way that she cared for Our Lady.”

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Founded in 1993, Holy Family Academy is a co-ed independent Catholic classical school serving approximately 160 students in grades K to 12 in Manassas, VA.