

# Morning Star School serves learning-challenged children in spiritual setting

There's no better accolade for a principal to hear than praise from another principal.

For Morning Star School Principal Jean Barnes, it was the words of Dr. John Luciano, principal of Holy Spirit Catholic School that warmed her heart. "There is no better place for your special needs child than Morning Star,"

said Luciano, who is also the parent of a former student.

When Morning Star opened in 1956 it served about 60 children with varying disabilities in kindergarten to eighth grade. Now the private school serves 132 students through Grade 12.

"The majority of our students have learning challenges such as SLD, ADD, processing deficits, mild intellectual disabilities and High Functioning Autism," said Barnes.

Morning Star is fully accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference. Some of its students will leave after eighth grade to attend a typical high school.

When students are ready to transition back to a typical classroom setting, they may take one or more



Morning Star School therapy dog Nova with Matthew, Alex, Chyann, Marnie and Colin



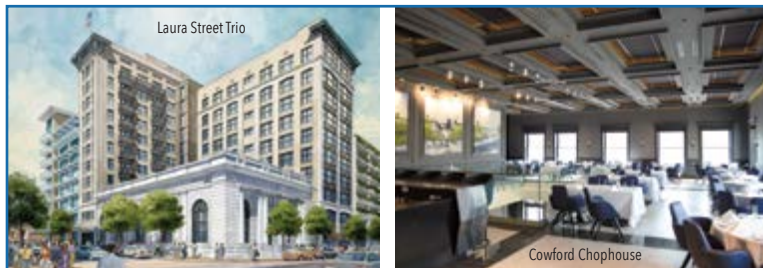
Alex Pineda at a school assembly

*"One of our biggest successes is opening a high school program for students with special needs."*

— Jean Barnes



Dylan Jackson and Lorenzo Hall



Laura Street Trio

Cowford Chophouse



Lofts at LaVilla

**The Downtown Investment Authority** serves as a clearinghouse to establish an identity for the region that capitalizes on partnerships to guide the revitalization of the core of the City of Jacksonville. To attract investment, facilitate job creation and residential density, while assuring a unified effort is strategically focused to implement action through capital investments, planning, advocacy, marketing and the establishment of policy for the general community and downtown stakeholders.



## Results Driven Planning

- ▶ Downtown Investment Authority leveraged approximately \$30 million in public capital to induce over \$240 million in private capital investment within downtown.
- ▶ There are currently 700 new residential units under construction in the downtown core.

classes at nearby Christ the King Catholic School. "This gives them the opportunity to gradually make the transition from the level of accommodations and support they receive here to a regular classroom setting," said Barnes.

Students who attend through high school and who satisfactorily complete a regular course of study will receive a high school diploma. Other graduates will continue their education, others will participate in transition classes and be able to get jobs or go to technical or trade schools.

"The high school is amazing and a huge blessing, to be in a new facility, to feel like we are wanted,"

said Kammy Cenicerros, mother of tenth-grader Raphael Cenicerros.

"One of our biggest successes is opening a high school program for students with special needs," said Barnes. "Our parents have searched for an appropriate high school placement for their students. No other high school program in Northeast Florida meets the unique social and academic needs of our students."

Additionally, Morning Star's partnership with Bishop Snyder High School gives its students the opportunity to participate spiritually and socially with their non-disabled peers, while having their individual learning needs met at Morning Star.