

September 2014

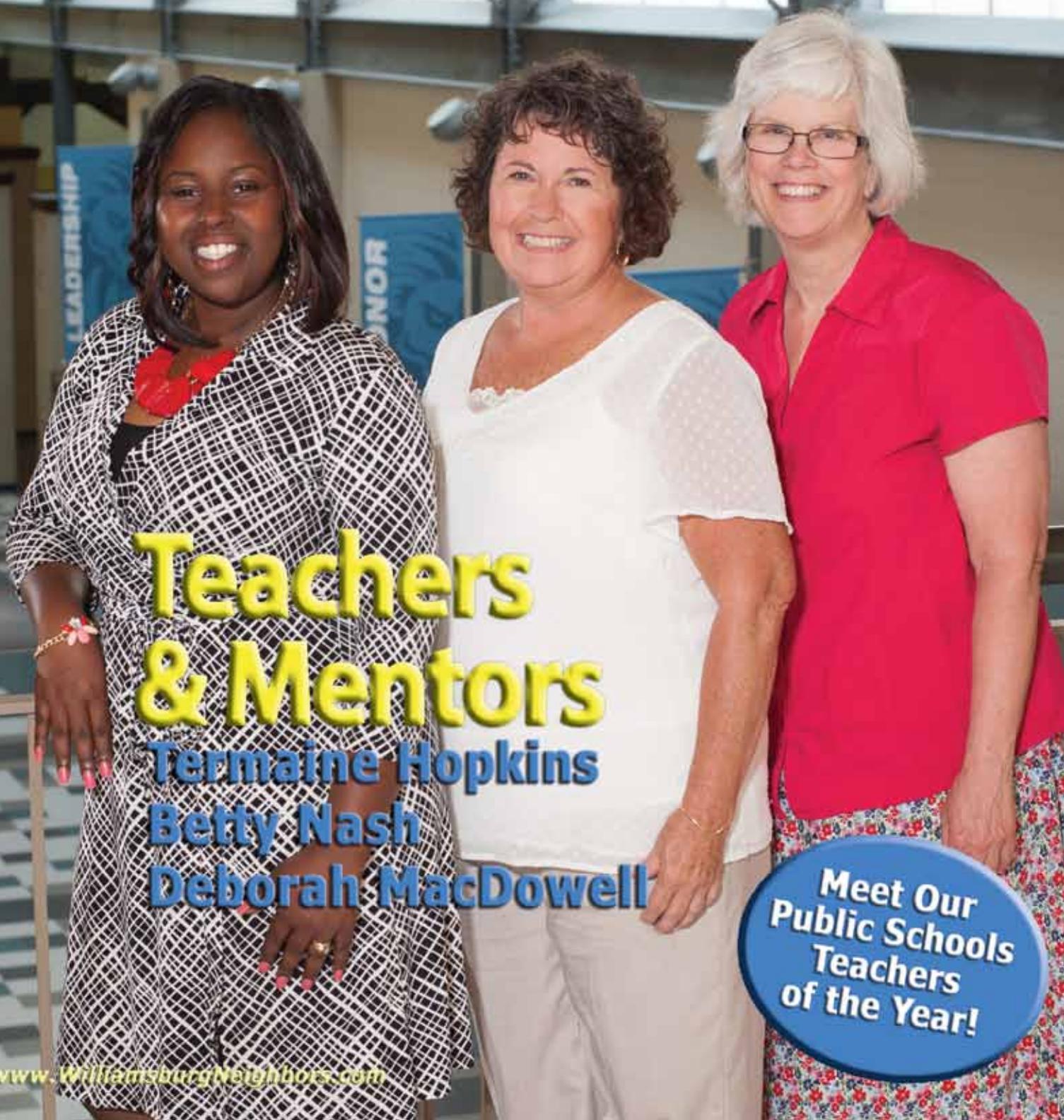
WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors

VOL. 8, ISSUE 9

PRICELESS

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home.



Teachers & Mentors

Termaine Hopkins

Betty Nash

Deborah MacDowell

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of the Year!

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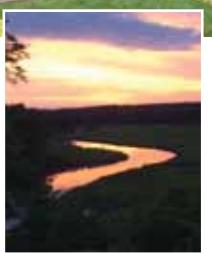


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This year, sixteen teachers with the Williamsburg-James City County schools were honored as teachers of the year. In the past there have only been three recipients of this honor so with this change we now have the opportunity to publish a variety of stories about even more of our local teachers and mentors.

In order to interview all of the these outstanding teachers we have dedicated this entire issue to their stories. Our department stories - Business, Sports, Arts & Entertainment, Health and Home - will be back next month.

While we are delighted to introduce you to the women who were selected for this top honor, we also know that there are many other outstanding teachers who work in our public schools that would also qualify for this special recognition. In fact, many of the recipients graciously brought this up during their interviews. The passion they have for their students and teaching is evident in their stories. It gives us insight into what goes on in classrooms and how much our teachers want the best for their students - our children and grandchildren. I hope you will be inspired as much as I am when you learn about the 2013 - 2014 Teachers of the Year. **[NDN]**



Meredith Collins, Publisher

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CORRECTION: The dates for the Peninsula Glass Guild's gallery show for Arts Month at New Town's Legacy Hall was incorrect in the August issue of Next Door Neighbors.. The correct dates are September 11 - 13. We regret the error and any inconvenience it may have caused.

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CONNECTING with STUDENTS

By Brandy Centolanza

Termaine Hopkins still remains in awe of being named Lafayette High School's Teacher of the Year. "It's been an exciting time, yet so humbling," Termaine says. "It really makes you reflect on the things you do in your job, that they matter and that someone notices. I kind of feel like a famous person after all the photo shoots. It's been awesome, a very fun journey." The honor is a pleasant surprise indeed for Termaine, especially considering she never intended to pursue a career in teaching.

Termaine grew up in North Carolina and started out in the field of social work after receiving a degree from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical (A&T) State University. As a case manager, Termaine worked with a lot of adolescents within the school systems. "I did a lot of mentoring," Termaine recalls. "I taught

them life skills and coached them on making good decisions."

In 2005, Termaine and her husband, Johnathan, whom she met in the eleventh grade, relocated to Newport News after Johnathan, who is in the Army, was assigned to Fort Eustis. Termaine spent several months looking for a job in social work until her best friend, who is a teacher, suggested she apply for a job in the education field.

"She asked if I ever thought about being a teacher," Termaine says. "I already had the background, so I thought, 'Why not?'"

In January 2006, Termaine started as a special education teaching assistant at Lafayette High School in Williamsburg-James City County School Division to get her foot in the door, and a few months later she accepted a

full-time position as a special education teacher at the school, where she has been ever since.

"There was just an instant connection when I first started," Termaine says. "I felt like I could see myself doing this. I saw a drive in me and I couldn't let go. I never went back to social work."

Termaine works with a co-teacher instructing students in full inclusion English classes. "My role is to support everyone, every student," Termaine says. "No one knows which students have special needs. I assist all the students, but I work to ensure that the special education students get what they need to succeed. My job is to make sure everyone has the opportunity to succeed."

In order to accomplish that, Termaine strives to develop a rapport with her students as best

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she can.

"Right now, I have age on my side, so I use that to connect to my students," points out Termaine. "I like to talk to them about the latest in social media, fashion and television shows. If you can't connect with your students, then you can't fully engage them. I'm helping them to become global citizens, great individuals, and I am watching them truly transition into adulthood, into men and women."

In addition to her role as a teacher, Termaine is also Lafayette High School's special education curriculum leader and the multicultural achievement leader, assisting her colleagues in understanding and promoting cultural diversity and awareness. Termaine is also the school's Student Council Association (SCA) sponsor and has served on various committees and held other positions throughout her eight years with the school, most recently serving as a testing coordinator.

"I think there needs to be checks and balances, and some accountability," Termaine says. "With tests like the Standards of Learning (SOLs), it's about asking 'Did I meet my students' needs?' It helps hold us accountable and keeps us accountable."

Termaine may have a full plate, but she certainly doesn't mind.

"I am a very energetic and enthusiastic person," Termaine explains. "I don't like to sit still. I'm a go-getter, and I want to show my students that everyone has the ability to assist in some way."

Beyond Lafayette High School, Termaine is active with the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Termaine assists with the organization's Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO) program and she is the director of NAACP's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast for students.

In addition, Termaine enjoys spending time with Johnathan and the couple's two children, 6-year-old Johnathan, Jr. and 19-month-old Gabrielle.

"We like to travel as a family," Termaine states. "We like to go to the zoo and to parks and playgrounds. We've gone to Disney World, and we visit North Carolina very often to see Grandma."

Just as she enjoys watching her children grow, Termaine feels the same way about her students.

"I am grateful because I get to see where they were in the beginning and how they've grown over the semester," Termaine says. "I like how I get to impact them in a positive way and teach them a lot about life. That's very grand for me. That's very rewarding."

She especially relishes in helping them overcome their disabilities.

"For me, learning doesn't come from any text books," she says. "It comes from my students. Every year, I am growing and gaining more knowledge, and that is what is appealing about my job. It's a lot of time and my day does not end at 2:20 p.m., but I like establishing the relationships with the families. I think it's important for parents to know that their children's needs will be addressed."

Termaine, who earned a master's degree in Special Education from Old Dominion University in 2009, received a second Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from the College of William and Mary just last month. Her goal is to one day move up the ranks into an administrative position, but for now she is content at Lafayette High School and is looking forward to a new school year.

"I think we need to get back to the basics and establishing real relationships with our students," Termaine Hopkins says. "I want my students to see that I am interested in them and care about them and who they are as people. I think that is how best to engage them and motivate them." NDN

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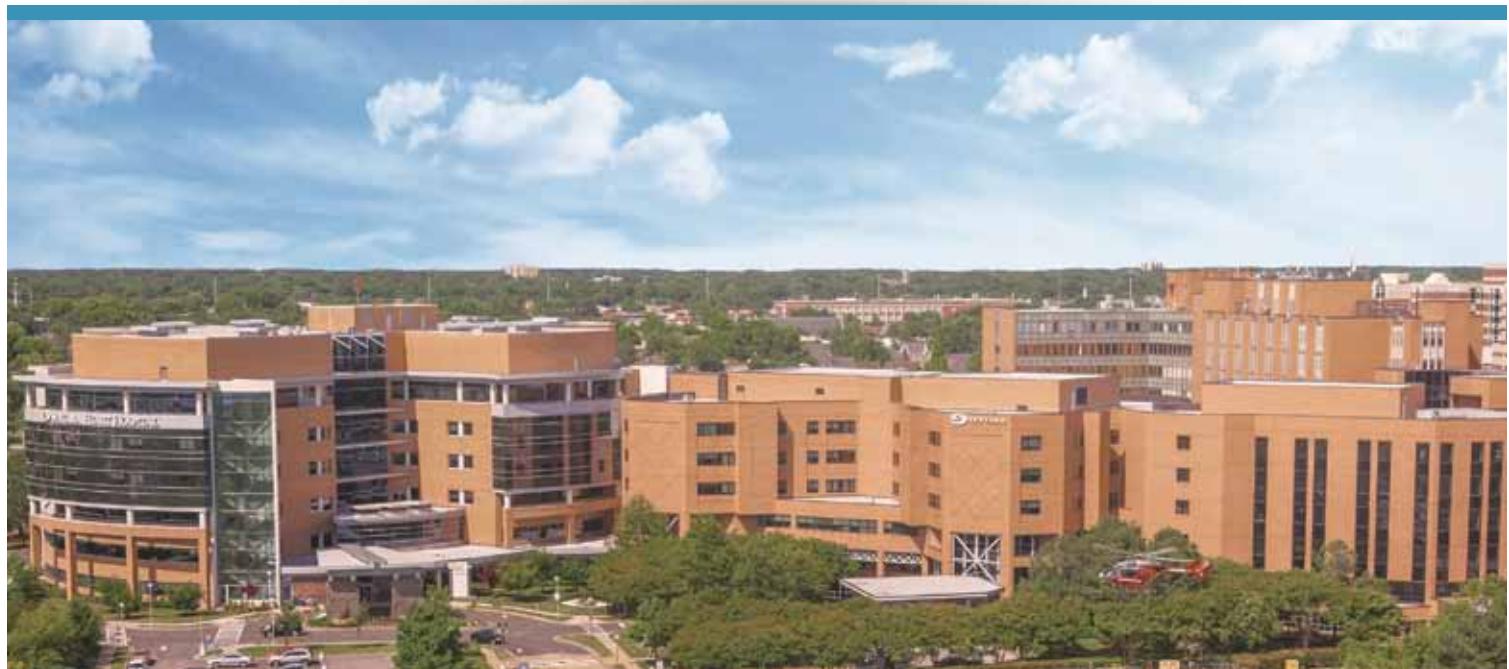
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Teaching Students to Use Their Brainpower

By Alison Johnson



Over her 29 years of teaching, Betty Nash has learned to avoid a word that's just one letter long but can carry a lot of weight: I.

When Betty tells her students at Warhill High School about assignments for her business or information technology classes, she doesn't say, "I want you to..." or "I expect each of you to..." Instead, she knows to say, "The

expectation for each of you is to..."

"How I speak to them determines their success," Betty says, Warhill's Teacher of the Year for 2013-14. "It's not about me; it's about them. The word 'I' automatically creates an opportunity for defiance."

That's not all. Betty also has learned not to tell her teenage charges exactly what to do –

even if that's what most of them would prefer her to do. The less controlling she is, she has found, the more her students have to use their own brainpower.

"I believe they need to be given open-ended assignments that allow them the opportunity to think, to find answers, to apply what they've learned and to make personal choices on how

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best to present the information," Betty explains. "I'm there as a facilitator, to individually guide them in their quest for and presentation of knowledge."

Like all teachers, Betty has had to adapt to rising administrative demands and emerging technology that have transformed teaching. The courses she leads have changed perhaps even more radically than most: Design, Multimedia & Web Technology; IT Fundamentals; Computer Information Systems; Business Management; Economics & Personal Finance; and Cooperative Business Education.

After growing up using a manual typewriter – the kind where the user had to throw the carriage to get to the next line on the paper – Betty now helps students draw from as many as eight or more computer software programs on a single assignment. Luckily, she's excited by the challenge.

"As we all know, technology is a dynamic influence in the business world," she notes. "My teaching world is changing daily, and I have to keep up. Before I taught individual busi-

ness computer programs – Microsoft Word®, Excel®, PowerPoint® and Adobe InDesign® and Photoshop®, etc. – but now I teach young adults to determine which computer software to use to best accomplish the final presentation of the assignment or project."

Betty, a Rhode Island native, wanted to be a teacher since childhood. Her mother was a first grade teacher, so she grew up surrounded by her mom's teacher friends and sometimes helped to correct papers and decorate classroom bulletin boards. She also enjoyed school herself. "I was a responsible student who took her studies very seriously," she remembers.

One of her teachers, a high school biology instructor, Mr. Bonjiovani, stands out in her mind as a favorite. "Mr. B injected humor into his lectures – the only way to teach back then – and hands-on activities." She also learned what she didn't like: any teacher who outwardly favored certain students or who just stood in front of the classroom talking, without interacting.

At Bryant College (now Bryant University)

in Smithfield, Rhode Island, Betty studied for a degree in Business Education because at the time, teaching jobs were hard to come by. "I figured that if I didn't like teaching, I could always find a job in the business world," she says. She also earned a Masters of Business Education from the University of Rhode Island.

Betty likes working at the high school level because of the deeper conversations she can have with older teens. She started at North Kingstown High School in her home state before moving to Williamsburg in 1983 for her husband's career as a home builder. She spent seven years apiece at Bruton and Jamestown high schools and moved to Warhill when it opened in 2007.

The best part of teaching is easy: her students. "Each is an individual young adult who brings a plethora of experiences into the classroom, both positive and negative," Betty says. "As a teacher, I accept all of them and create learning experiences that help them grow personally and academically. I love watching them grow in self-esteem and to realize that they can

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succeed in anything they try."

The payoff can come immediately, or years later. "Almost daily I'm out in the community and a man or woman, a former student, approaches me and shares how I influenced him or her in achieving personal stations in life as a productive citizen," she says. Recently, a Warhill graduate headed for the National Guard hugged her and apologized for his behavior as a freshman. "I like the kids who have more challenges," she says. "I like to help them feel good about their lives."

Betty doesn't expect her students to always make good choices, and that's not necessarily a negative. "High school students are getting ready to step out into the real world on their own and need opportunities where they can make right or wrong choices in a safe environment," she explains. "Every person has a choice, and every choice has a consequence. This is more than a student knowing right from wrong; it's training the young adult to examine and evaluate each decision and determine which choice would be more beneficial."

While she loves her job, Betty doesn't paint a falsely rosy image. "Teaching is not for the faint-of-heart," she says. "One needs to be full of love, patience and understanding for the 150-plus young adults you meet throughout the school year; to analyze the best way for each of those individuals to learn the subject matter; to create assignments and projects that will make each individual successful in meeting the course expectations; and to deal with all of the administrative requirements as well."

Constant, time-consuming tasks include submitting student grades each week, giving the many required tests and filling out various evaluations and reports.

In fact, she'd rather her students learn from each other than from her. Her classroom rule, "Ask Three and Then Me," means students should only come to her with an unsolved problem if they've already consulted with three classmates. She also turns to her students for help with technology she doesn't always understand, including her own cell phone: "I'll tell them, 'Okay, you're the expert.' That can really

build their self-esteem."

Betty lives in Providence Forge with her husband, C.W. Nash, who works in management for 7-Eleven. They are parents of two grown sons, Adam and Matthew. In her spare time, Betty enjoys cross stitch, gardening, travel and camping. With her husband more of a homebody, she's not afraid to go off on her own adventures. "I like trying new things," she says. "If a friend says, 'Let's go,' and I've got the money, I say, 'Let's go,' right back."

Earning Teacher of the Year, an award voted on by fellow teachers, was a surprise because, she says, people from her department, Career and Technical Education, don't often get the nod over those who teach core academic subjects. "I was so humbled and appreciative that they picked me," she notes.

Betty Nash would like to teach for at least three to five more years – or, more generally, as long as she still feels a good rapport with her students. "It is definitely the most rewarding career," she says. "I wouldn't want to be anywhere else." NDN



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For the Successes

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Lisa W. Cumming Photography



On the last day of school, Deborah MacDowell, Teacher of the Year at Jamestown High School, had a student walk into her classroom to thank her for her guidance and help during the year. "Honestly, I thought I hadn't reached that student," Debbie says. "He hardly talked to me in class. It may seem silly, but that just surprised me and made my day – a student I wasn't sure I had reached, letting me know I had made a difference in his school year."

Those little acknowledgements mean a lot to teachers. "Even years later," she adds, "when you see a student you know that life wasn't perfect for them, and then years later, you see

them again and realize they've done okay for themselves. That's what teaching means in the long-run. I do it for the successes, for the kids I've made a difference in their lives, that I've made feel good about themselves."

Debbie grew up in Connecticut. "I lived in the same town all through elementary school, junior high and high school years. My parents lived there until about eight years ago."

One of her middle school mathematics teachers inspired Debbie to become a teacher. "I had her for two years: seventh and eighth grades. She was one of those people who made everyone feel they could do the math, could

be successful. She inspired a lot of people. We stayed friends for a long time. I used to visit her even after college because she'd so inspired me when I was younger."

Debbie majored in math and minored in education at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. "That's a very small college in upstate New York. I did my student teaching in a small town near there."

She and her husband, Robert, met while in college and married after graduation. They moved to the Albany area of New York, where Robert is from. "I taught middle school while he continued his education at Union College.

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That middle school had great people – a perfect first experience in teaching because of the people I worked with.”

In the years that Debbie first started teaching, there were a lot of teachers in the job market. Securing a job was difficult. She began her career substituting long-term for teachers out on maternity leave. “I did that for several years, and it was a great experience. I learned a lot. I taught all three middle school grades: 6th, 7th and 8th. I had the full realm of middle school experience.” Then maternity leave options disappeared. Debbie worked some regular substitute teaching positions for a while and did some work for her husband’s engineering company.

“Then we had children,” she says, “and I was fortunate enough to stay home. When our children got a little older, I still worked in education as a teaching assistant. I knew, for myself, I spent so much time after school and at night that I wasn’t ready to go back to teaching full-time. I couldn’t devote the long hours to teaching that I wanted to or needed to with the responsibilities of our young family.”

As a teaching assistant, Debbie says she was basically finished at the end of the school day and that worked best for her schedule. Also, working as a teaching assistant for different teachers in the school was a valuable experience for her. “I worked with four teachers at the elementary level, even though that wasn’t where my field was. I learned a lot that transcended through all the age groups on how to work with the students. I learned what works for kids and what doesn’t, how important certain experiences are.”

Collaboration in schools among the teachers is a vital part of becoming a better educator, Debbie explains. “I’m still learning. I’ll be learning until I retire. I spend a lot of time exploring other methods to do things. I find it invaluable to collaborate with other people. We do that in my department all the time. We get together and talk about what works and what doesn’t work. What works for me, won’t necessarily work for somebody else. If you observe it, you think about how you can use it or adapt it for your own style of teaching. Collaboration is very important. Observation of other people helps make yourself better. I can learn from what they do.”

Several years ago, Debbie’s husband, Robert, was hired by Newport News Waterworks. “We lived in Yorktown to begin with and have been in Williamsburg for about five years. When we moved down here, I still had one child in high school. The two girls were in college at that point. I’ve been at Jamestown High School since 2002. I teach Algebra and Algebra II.”

Successful teachers should build a relationship with the students, Debbie says. “So they feel comfortable asking questions. By the time they reach high school, they need to realize that I want them to learn, that I care about them learning and that I want them to be successful. I work hard on doing that for all my students. The other thing you have to do is vary what you do. Have more than one way to explain something or show an idea. All students learn differently. I give a lot of extra time after school. They know I’m there if they need help.”

Several of her classes are collaborative, where two teachers work together. “Sometimes, I get a question and feel like I’ve explained it two

or three different ways and then look at her (the other teacher). She'll get up and try a different approach. That's why we work well as a team. We complement each other."

Since she had taught middle school for several years, teaching high school had an unexpected view of the students. "It's fun," she says. "The kids grow so much during their high school years. Most of them have an idea of where they are headed. They know where they want to go. I get to see them become adults as they graduate and go out into the world," Debbie says.

"The number one lesson I've learned is that the kids are ever changing. I know the kids I work with today are completely different than the kids I worked with 20 years ago, but they are still kids. The basic things are still there: they want you to care about them and they want to learn. I learn from them all the time. It's always a challenge."

The students have taught Debbie to be flexible in her educational approaches and to build relationships with the students. "You can't forget about them or ignore them. You can't departmentalize them to school hours. You think about and worry about them all the time. It's an on-going process."

The aspect of teaching that drives Debbie the most: "I don't think anyone is ever perfect. We're always striving to be better at whatever we do. My goal is to keep doing better. I want all the kids to be successful."

Debbie MacDowell says teaching isn't for everyone, but for those it fits, it's magic. "It's a tough field, but very rewarding. I do love it, and it keeps me learning." NDN



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She Found Her Niche

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Corey Miller Photography

Anna Thomas, Teacher of the Year for Toano Middle School, enjoys her special education classes because of the focus on the individual. "I found that's really my niche because I'm used to having things very personalized, and special education is phenomenal because it's the individual," she explains. "I can craft units and les-

sons that are for individuals, which is really a luxury in education. With the pacing and the rigor and all of these things that go into teaching, it's easy to lose sight of the one. That's what special education is. We put the 'I' in IEP' (Individualized Education Program) because it's the individual who we work with, which is really

exciting."

Anna was born and raised in Hopewell, Virginia where she attended the same schools as all her neighbors and friends. "It's a small community," she adds. "I went to William and Mary for my undergraduate degree. My parents were 45 minutes away, so I feel like I never really left

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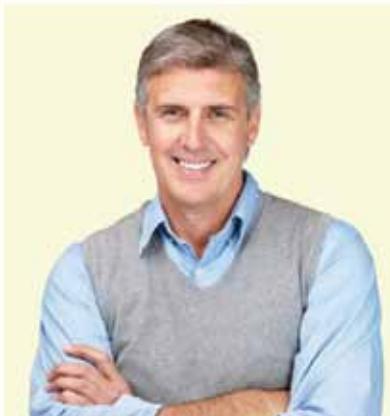
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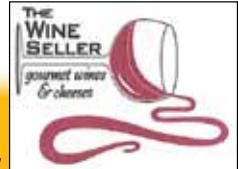
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home."

At William and Mary, she majored in literary and cultural studies. "Comparative Soviet Cultures was my focus of study. I took a lot of art classes. It was a cross-disciplinary study: classes in government, history, art and literature. Different fields, but with the same theme. I learned how to study in a thematic fashion." She found that she was able to build her own degree.

After college, Anna admits she was still finding herself. "I think a lot of people do that in their early years after school. I went through a series of random jobs and wound up as a preschool teacher. Then I became a substitute teacher, and then kind of serendipitously, I became a special education aid."

She then worked as a one-on-one aid in a self-contained classroom for children with autism before arriving at Toano, where she worked as an instructional aid in a self-contained classroom. "I hadn't even thought about special education until I found myself there," she says. "The self-contained term means the classroom is entirely special education. That's the students we serve, and that's what I am now: a self-contained teacher. My students all have exceptional needs."

Service was the key that kept Anna involved and teaching. "A service oriented profession, I always knew that was something I would be in. I wasn't looking for a career that was based on money or on advancement. I really needed a job where I was helping people. When I graduated, I thought I would go to law school or I would become a writer." She laughs at the memories. "It was just my early twenties. That time was equally exciting and scary because I really needed to find a direction. But, I knew I needed to be in a service oriented field."

She says that other members of her family have worked in service to the community. "Absolutely, I come from a long line of it. My dad worked in juvenile justice. My mom and dad have taught. My brother is a special education teacher. There are guidance counselors and State Department workers in our family. Working within the government or working for organizations that benefit people, that's the culture I was raised in and that is what is a natural fit for me."

Not only is education a great fit for Anna because she's helping people, but she also gets the chance to be creative. "That's very important to me. I'm very artistic. Having a chance to create new and novel techniques in teaching curriculum and through student experiences, shows me that I've found my niche. It is service and it's also creativity. It's hard to find that anywhere else."

Her classes can be large or small during the school day, and that keeps her on her toes. "I will have an English class that is sixth, seventh and eighth graders together, which is interesting because I still have to address the SOLs (Standards of Learning) for the specific grade levels at the same time," she describes. She finds materials where she can incorporate the standards and still make the learning interesting to the students. "That creativity piece can get funky," she says with a laugh.

Thematic learning is very helpful to the students. "I will think of things we want to learn like the Bermuda Triangle, and then I will make

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it project-based. Not only are we imbedding specific English goals that they have to do in their IEPs, but I pull in their SOLs. They don't actually realize that we are doing that. Sometimes thematic units will also help us sneak in math with English. We're working on math skills by doing coordinate grids – here's the Bermuda Triangle – and I'm also having them find the X and Y axis, so that we're locating ships. The students get so involved they don't realize they're doing math. English and math, it is interesting that we separate them so much, but you can't do one without the other. They're deeply entwined."

Being chosen as a Teacher of the Year means that Anna is very effective in her teaching skills. She says effective teachers are adaptable, open to feedback and constant learners. "I reflect about effective teaching a lot because I'm in an admin program at William and Mary working on my doctorate. I'm thinking about how I wound up here because if you asked me 10 or 15 years ago, I would have said no way would I be teaching. I didn't see myself in this position, but I think what brought me here was being open minded."

She says that education is in a constant flux. Change and willingness to accept, even embrace change is critical for teachers. "Be adaptable," she advises, "because the students are changing. These are not the learners I had five years ago; these are not the learners we had ten years ago. Understand we have to fit them – they don't fit us because they are the future, and be open to that, be open to feedback which is critical. I'm a good teacher but there are areas that I need to improve on, and I know I need to improve on, and I want to improve on," she says.

"Which leads me to the last point: understand your title is teacher, but your job is student. You are the learner too. You're constantly learning, reflecting, changing and growing with your students."

The students have taught her many aspects about learning and about life. "As an individual, I have learned there is nothing I can't overcome. I can't show up with excuses. I can't show up and have a bad day. Whatever I ask of myself, I ask of my students too. We have this on-going conversation that whatever we're working through, we will work through it together. The quality of our time together is important."

The realization that she needed to have herself in order was one of the first classroom lessons she had from the students. "That's really critical. But that's the jump from my 20s to my 30s, too," she says with a laugh. "It's funny that middle school kids taught me how to be a good adult – ironically."

She also welcomes mistakes. "I have learned it's okay to make mistakes. I encourage my kids that failure is a teachable moment. My dad engrained in me: it's not a problem, it's an opportunity. As an educator, I make mistakes all the time. You just have to learn from them. I model that for my kids. They need to see me make a mistake and to cope with it, to adjust and to move on. So making mistakes, it's safe to make mistakes. That's another really big one for me too."

Anna focuses on the individual in her lessons. Each learner is unique and has contributions to himself, the class and to Anna. She celebrates that she's learned as much from her students as they have from her. 

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Take the Plunge!

By Ryan Jones

"I am not afraid...I was born for this."

Joan of Arc

As the Teacher of the Year for Lois S. Hornsby Middle School, Melissa Natter's trail-blazing personality might best be associated with a tendency to initiate bold and creative action. Less exhilarating, but just as important, is her inclination for conducting careful research be-

fore jumping headfirst into an endeavor.

Less than a decade ago while completing her student teacher requirements at Northern Michigan University, Melissa had the opportunity to observe firsthand the results of both effective and less-effective teaching practices in a special needs classroom. After mulling over the polarities of this experience for the remainder of her internship, she took the insights she

gleaned, packed them up with a few personal items and moved halfway across the country to take a job as a special education teacher for the Williamsburg-James City County school system. While Melissa makes a habit of looking carefully before she leaps, she has proven time and again that she is not afraid to take the plunge when the time is right.

"As an undergrad, I exposed myself to a lot

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of different experiences trying to figure out where I wanted to be in special education," she remembers. "During one phase, I volunteered in a self-contained room where students had severe disabilities. There, I worked with a teacher who kind of got pushed into her role. She didn't want to be there and was obviously not happy with the choice. I saw how this affected the students, and I said to myself, 'I'm going to do such a good job that one day I'll come and take her place, because the kids deserve way better than this."

Soon after this experience, Melissa had a more positive encounter to balance her training.

"I worked in a private school in the Detroit suburbs with severely disabled children," she says. "In that instance, I worked with a really great teacher, and I was able to see how good things could be with the right leadership, so it kind of came full circle. The first year I worked in James City County schools, I ended up putting a sign by my desk that said, 'Don't be like (Teacher A), be like (Teacher B).'"

Melissa says her decision to move more than six hundred miles southeast of her native Michigan home to accept a teaching position in Williamsburg was carefully considered, but

it didn't make the process of transplanting any easier.

"After I finished up all of my student teacher work, I decided I didn't want to stay in Michigan," she says. "I pulled out a map with all 50 states and started crossing out the ones I didn't want to go to. Eventually, I ended up with Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. I applied for every job in that region that fit what I wanted to do, and Williamsburg was the first to call me back and offer me a position. I didn't have an apartment, so I moved with whatever I could fit in my car at the time. After a few weeks of staying in a motel, I found an apartment and slept on an air mattress in a room with a chair, a pot and a pan. It was a rough beginning, but the adventure of it made up for the discomfort."

As a special education teacher, Melissa has learned to cope with the inevitable ups and downs that are part of classroom life.

"Every day is its own day. You have to mentally rip up everything bad that happened, throw it away and come back in the morning to a brand new day. The kids are struggling, so there are going to be bad days. But when you have a good day and can see what the kids are capable of, that's the best. No matter what,

I know that they will eventually have a good day."

Melissa says that teamwork plays an important role in keeping the class functioning at its highest level. From her end, this collaboration involves the help of assistants, student peers and the school principal.

"I work with a really good team" she says, "In a way, we teach on an island, because we are the specialists at what we do. We are our own support group. We keep it going, with the knowledge that it will all come together in the end. Byron Bishop, the (former) principal at Hornsby, has also been a big supporter. I have learned a lot from him, and he has learned a lot from me. A lot of times, the special needs class is the one that winds up in the back corner, and the principal will only come to visit once or twice per year. That's not Byron. He always stopped in once a week and said 'hi' to the kids. He also let me start a peer-helping program where, at the end of their 7th grade tenure, we would invite certain 8th graders to use one of their electives to become a peer-helper. The volunteers were given a framework to guide them in helping the students. They would come every other day and assist in the class and help model how a typically developing peer behaves. We expanded the

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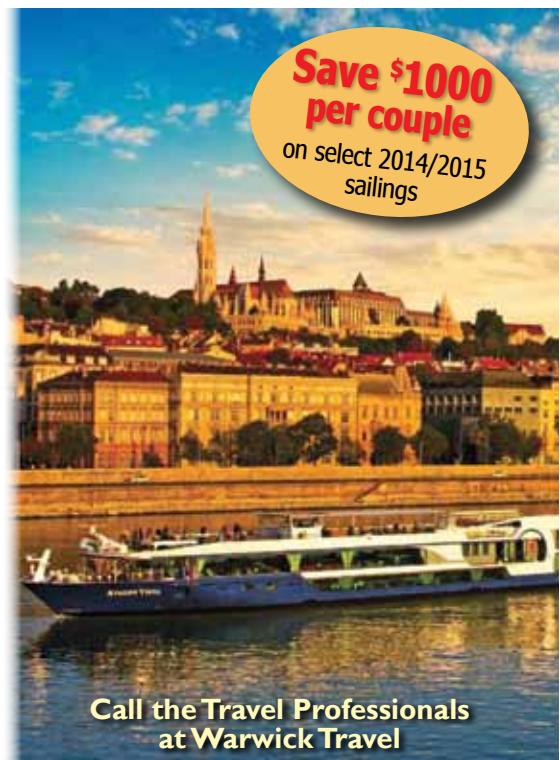
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program to other self-contained classes in the building, and at one point, I think we had like thirty-six peer-helpers. The roles tend to extend outside of the class into places like the cafeteria where social interactions are important. It has been very, very beneficial to everyone involved."

Melissa says she thinks notable progress has been made in many special education programs, even in the few short years since she was in school.

"When I was growing up, I never even saw kids with severe disabilities in my school," she says. "They went to some other, separate school. The integration of children with severe disabilities into general education schools is such a huge and important leap. I don't believe a child with very severe learning disabilities should be put right into an 8th grade math class, but I do believe they should be included in the same school. Things are different for my kids in many ways, but in some ways, they are the same. We go to the same assemblies, we go to the same lunch period, we do the things we can do with our peers. My kids get to see what 'typical' is, and the other students are able to reflect on their own struggles and situations and see them in a better context. I'm really glad that teaching has evolved into that. It's a good thing."

Apparently, Melissa's zest for service doesn't wane with the ringing of Hornsby's dismissal bell. She spends part of her free time volunteering with the Junior Women's Club of Williamsburg, whose work is to raise funds in the community and then place the proceeds with non-profits in the area. She also leads a chapter of a non-profit called United Athletics, whose mission is to assist people with disabilities to participate in foot races, triathlons, bicycling and swimming. The organization was founded in Richmond and now has chapters there, in Lynchburg and Williamsburg.

"We seek out people who are interested in taking part in physical activities and help them to participate," she says. "We have equipment that allows people with special needs to participate safely. I've been in this role since January, and we've done a race about every month. We have an informal partnership with SHIP (School Health Initiative Program) through Williamsburg James City County (WJCC). Two of our biggest races are the Run the DOG 5k and the Sleigh Bell 5K. I've gone to Richmond to help with a triathlon and to Norfolk for the CHKD 8K. I love it. One boy has been a student of mine for the past three years and has had some behavioral difficulties. You put him

in a running stroller, and he just sits there and enjoys the ride. You don't always see a smile, but you know he is happy. When you get to that last two-tenths of a mile and you are exhausted, you hear them laughing and it's just enough to make you cross the line."

Whether she is looking or leaping, Melissa Natter says any success she enjoys can be traced back to Detroit, Michigan, where her parents live.

"They have been my biggest supporters," she says. "For example, I use DonorsChoose.org a lot for some of our classroom needs. People can go online and donate however much they want to towards a project. Every time I put a project up, my parents are the first to donate. They also offer great emotional support over the phone. Next year, I will be taking over a class of autistic kindergartners at Norge Elementary, and, to make a long story short, I wanted to put a certain number of beach chairs in the classroom. All summer long, my mom has been in Target to see if the chairs have gone on clearance. Here she is hundreds of miles away, and yet she's still calling me with the latest price adjustment. I wouldn't be where I am without their support. They are the reason I am able to do good things." **NDN**



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Push for Them

By Greg Lilly, Editor

"The kids have personalities," Berkeley Teacher of the Year Selena Chamblee says. "I like big personalities. Sometimes big personalities are big because they're always in trouble – that's what makes the big personality. They will say to me, 'You get it. No one else around here likes me.'"

When she hears a student say something like no one else likes me, Selena will ask the students to consider why some people might have difficulty with their actions. She doesn't try to coddle them, but talks with them on a peer level.

"Middle school age gets a bad rap. If kids know you care about them, they'll swim the deepest ocean and climb the highest mountain for you," she explains about her approach to reaching her students. "The most important teaching strategy is relationships. It sounds so cliché. But it is the most important. If you build a relationship, the kids need to know about the teacher. My room is done up in Virginia Tech stuff. They know I'm a Hokie fan. I'm a huge sports fan. I win the boys over with football and basketball. The kids know I know sports. They

know me as a person."

Selena says that working in a team with Special Ed Aid, Lisa Kelly, makes her classroom run smoothly. "I have been so incredibly blessed working with Lisa. I can't imagine doing what I do without her. Some kids are naturally drawn to her, while some are drawn to me.

Somewhere between that, we cover all the bases. That collaboration and comfort makes the job easy."

Building a relationship of respect and learning, Selena gets to know the students in the school, not just in her current classes. "I go down the hall and check in on the other classes, get to know some of the students coming into my classes the next year. The big thing is letting them know I care about their success. Do they need help at lunch? I'll be there to help."

After growing up in Newport News, Selena went to Virginia Tech. "When I first started applying to college, I applied as a business major," she says. "Then, my dad reminded me that I had always wanted to teach. My reply was that there just wasn't any money in it. He said, 'Doing something that you don't love will make you crazy.' From that point, I switched and applied to colleges for an education major. Virginia Tech had a great program. Our entire senior year was student teaching. I went into the program thinking I would teach elementary school. I love the little ones."

She did her student teaching with a third



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grade class and then taught eighth grade and found that the middle school personalities clicked with her.

During her college years at Tech, she met her future husband, Al Chamblee, who played football for the Hokies and later for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Selena secured a job with Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools by attending a job fair at Tech. She was happy to have a job lined up before graduation and to be coming back to her home area.

"I taught summer school at James Blair before I started my first school year as a teacher. That was fun; summer school with 12 kids in the classroom. That's my niche: kids who struggle. Those are the kids I enjoy and I can get through to. It seems the more difficult they are, the more of a challenge it is. I've been at Berkeley since 1991." She earned her master's degree from the College of William and Mary in 2008.

Her parents instilled an expectation of hard work and education. "Neither of my parents went to college," she says, "but my brother, sister and I all went all the way through school. I remember finding out in 10th grade that a C wasn't failing. My parents didn't allow anything but A's and B's in the home. Just having that push, I never thought about not going to college. My brother runs his own consulting firm in Northern Virginia. My sister is the City of Newport News School Division's Teacher of the Year. We always had the support and expectation to excel in school."

She acknowledges that school can be difficult when that support is not in the home. "A lot of the students don't have encouragement. So, having to generate their own inside push must be exhausting. I tell them I'll be that push for them to help get through the classes. That's one of those life lessons I picked up later – realizing that being in middle school and high school, when parents aren't pushing the kids to be better, someone has to show the drive and support. Now, I realize what a gift my parents gave us from their encouragement and pushing us to do the best we could. My dad had a saying: 'C is average. So, we're average people? You're happy being average?' Average was never acceptable."

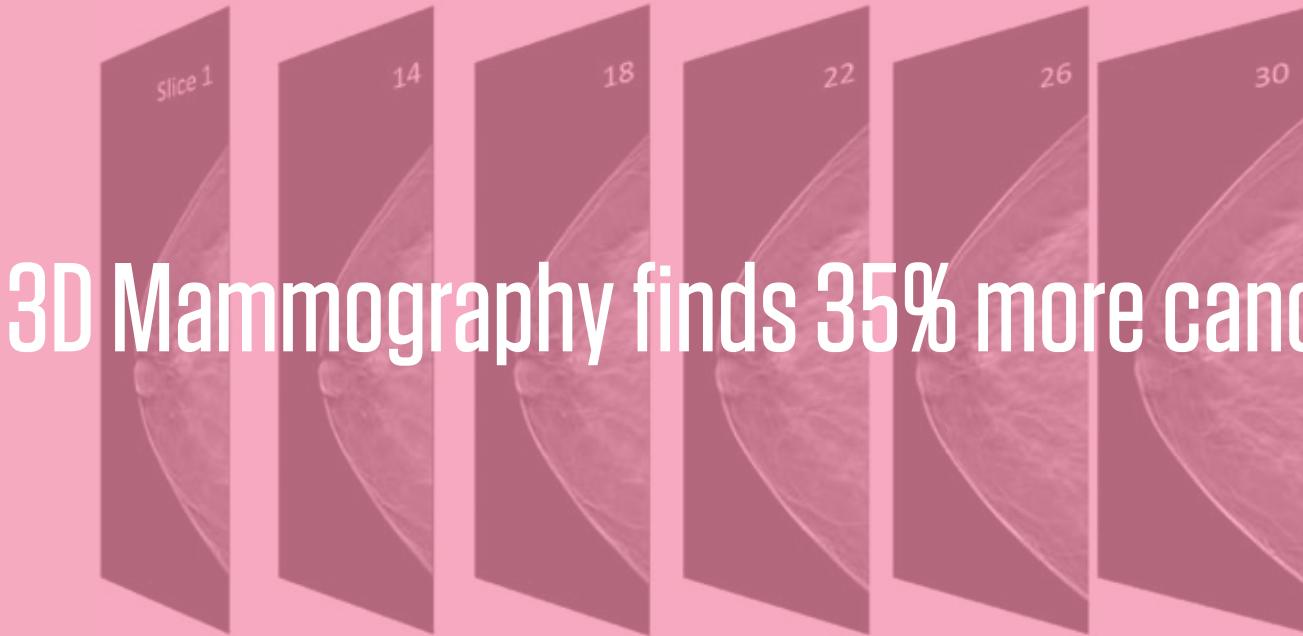
Her students often see Selena and Berkeley P.E. teacher, Tamara Gilham, going on their daily run after school. She and Al are busy on weekends and after school with their sons. "My oldest son is at Woodside High School (Newport News), and he loves music. In Newport News, they have boys volleyball. He plays volleyball. He's my big boy, just turned 15, 6'2", 230, plays at the net – that's his thing. He's still growing. My youngest is all sports, all the time. We're doing sports a lot during the fall season. Football season...My husband has coached a group of kids since they were five years old. This is their last year of Rec League."

This stage of her life, she explains, her relaxation and out of school time is with her boys. "Volleyball season is the same as football, so we're going all the time."

Starting her teaching career at the age of 21 has Selena thinking about spending 40 plus years in the school system. "That's the beauty of starting so young. I believe there was a call in my life to do what I do because I love it so much. No two days are the same. As long as I love it, I'm going to keep doing it."

Selena enjoys building relationships with the young people at Berkeley Middle School. "I'm honored that my peers chose me, but I want to be Teacher of the Year to my students. That's the relationship I want with the kids."

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AMY HICKS STONEHOUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Corey Miller Photography

Excited About READING

By Susan Guthrie

"I just love working with the kids every day," Amy Hicks says about her 18-year career in education. The National Board Certified Teacher will be starting her third year as the Reading Specialist at Stonehouse Elementary School. She provides reading intervention to students in grades two through five and supports teachers with weekly planning. Her dedication to the students and teachers was paramount to receiving the honor of Teacher of the Year for her school.

Dual certified in elementary and special education, she taught special education in New York for two years and in Newport News for three years. After receiving her Master's Degree in Reading from the College of William and Mary, she applied the practices she learned as a third grade teacher for eight years, including a year at James River Elementary. "I knew eventually I wanted to be a reading specialist but I wanted to be in the classroom for a while to have that experience. When the reading specialist opportunity came up at Stonehouse Elementary, I thought it was time."

Amy grew up in Bath, New York. "I always found myself working with kids all of the time, so teaching was a natural fit." She excelled in

math and science, but admits that spelling was and continues to be a challenge. "It was funny that my life took me to teaching in the areas that I struggled with the most. I think that when there is something that you always have to work on it's easier to teach someone else how to do it, versus a skill that just comes naturally."

As a reading specialist, she helps the teachers identify which students are on similar reading levels. "At Stonehouse we do a very good job of seeing everybody that needs help and reading intervention. If anything, we probably take on more kids because we want to make sure that we help everybody."

They collectively develop plans for the kids based on how much extra reading support is needed. At the beginning of a new school year interest inventories help her get to know her students. "We let the kids tell us about their strengths and about things they like to do and things they do not like to do. If you listen to kids and find out what they are good at, you can use that to help them in areas that they struggle."

To get a complete picture of a child's life, she does her best to get to know their parents. "Parents are very involved and super supportive. We have tons of volunteers and a fantastic PTA." Volunteers organize the reading room, which contains over 10,000 books for guided reading instruction, so that Amy can keep doing her job. "The volunteers and support is amazing, I couldn't function without them. That room would either be a disaster or I wouldn't be able to help as many kids and that would be a shame."

Fall's back to school time means Amy gets to see all of the kids excited about learning again. "That's a huge motivation for me." With a new principle and all of the activities she has planned, this is an exciting year at Stonehouse Elementary. The new principle can make a big difference in the new school year. "That's a big job, and



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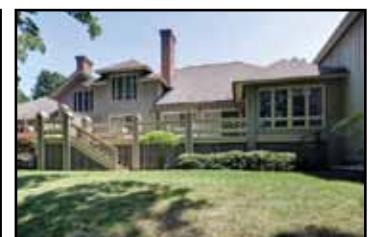
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there are so many things that they have to take on. Their leadership and the climate they create at the school is really important."

There will also be some changes in her approach to reading intervention with the students this year. "We're looking to do more of a coaching model. We are trying to do more in the classroom instead of pulling students out." The challenge there will be balancing the pros and cons of the classroom atmosphere. "In the classroom I feel like I have a better handle on what they're doing on a day to day basis. Being able to provide structured support is really helpful." Nevertheless, the classroom can have distractions. "There is a lot going on in the classroom, so the kids aren't as focused as when you're in an office with a small group."

With two small children of her own, this will be a big year for Amy personally. Her daughter will be starting first grade at Stonehouse Elementary this fall. "I am a little bit nervous, but Stonehouse has great teachers. Being a parent has given me a new perspective, because then you see your child going through some of the things that you've been working on for so long with other kids. It becomes much more personal." In addition, she must renew her National Board Certification this year, so she will be very busy working on her portfolio.

Even with everything she already has going on in her life, she also coordinates extracurricular literary programs, including a Journalism Club, "Rock the Test," Literacy Night, "Read Across America" and "Battle of the Books." She started the Journalism Club, which publishes a biannual school newspaper. "The newspaper is fun, and the kids enjoyed it. We were trying to find different ways to encourage writing and bring a love of writing to the students." They successfully recruited 24 students for the fall 2013 issue and 18 students for the spring 2014 issue. This turnout was very exciting for Amy and the co-sponsoring teacher and volunteer parent. The students did most of the work for the newspaper, which covered a teacher feature, the new principle, school events, a spotlight for each grade and even a comic strip.

"I love working and collaborating with other teachers, and it's just so important to work together as a team in our ultimate goal of helping the kids." She supports the teachers with the SOL tests by holding after school intervention programs called "Rock the Test." The math specialist, a teacher and Amy organize the program and are responsible for keeping track of all of the students' reading and math progress.

"The foundation of becoming a good reader and enjoying reading is important so that stu-

dents continue to read and enjoy it." Literacy Night brings students, parents and teachers together to discuss reading and literacy. "We do fun things to get everyone excited about literacy. We've had guest speakers tell folk tales and stories, a book swap, and last year we used an instructional focus with activities that parents could do at home with their kids."

She is also one of the Stonehouse advisors for the Battle of the Books, which is a competition run by the Williamsburg Regional Library for fourth and fifth grade students. The Stonehouse competition usually starts with approximately 30 students who read a book every two weeks. "We have a Stonehouse competition which narrows it down to five kids and they go to the library to compete to see who remembers the books the best," she says with a laugh before clarifying. "Mostly it encourages the kids to read some of the new books coming out."

Even with all of her efforts, Amy Hicks is not always the educator. "I learn a lot from my students. They always cause me to reflect on what I'm saying and doing." She believes teachers need reflection time to keep up with the support and changes students require. "They challenge you in different ways because every kid is so different. So I have to find new ways to teach each student that will work for them." **[NDN]**



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Wings to Fly



By Narielle Living

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

For many, thoughts of kindergarten are laced with memories of using little scissors, singing new songs, learning to hold a pencil and listening to story time. This is our kindergarten experience. Kindergarten teacher Griselda Carlsen, at Norge Elementary, un-

derstands the importance of a child's first year of school, which may be why her co-workers voted her for Teacher of the Year.

Griselda's family moved to Chesapeake, Virginia when she was five years old. Her father had been in the Navy, and when he retired, the

family decided to stay in Chesapeake which is where her mother was from. She attended Radford University and taught upon graduation.

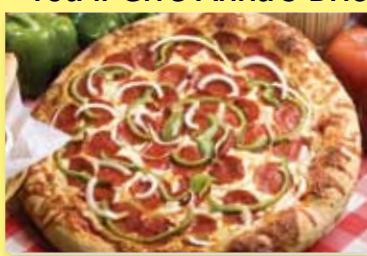
"When I was out of Radford I just wanted to go to work. I had a wonderful student teaching experience and I was ready," Griselda says. She

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laughs as she recounts her efforts to go back and get a master's degree. "I got pregnant both times. Sometimes life just happens."

With a solid love for what she does, Griselda does not see herself in any other career at this point in her life. "I have friends who are close to retirement, and they keep telling me I need to go to school and have a backup plan for when I'm ready to be out of the classroom, but the thing is... I'm not ready. This fall will be my seventeenth year, and I still love what I do. I love watching the kid's faces when they have successes. I love being part of someone's family. The relationships we form are important to me. If I have one kid that comes back to me every single year to say hello then it's worth it to me."

Griselda has always wanted to be a teacher, and says that her decision is almost a cliché. "When I was little I had a wonderful kindergarten experience and I loved school. My dad had taught me how to read before I went to kindergarten, so I got to leave my classroom and go to a different school for reading." This experience showed her at an early age that learning was fun.

"I used to bring home all of the ditto papers with the purple print," she says. "My brother is three years younger than I am, and I made him play school with me. He didn't like it at all, but I made him do it. I think I decided I wanted to be a teacher in high school, when we were told to start thinking about career paths."

Because her parents had been foster parents, Griselda was exposed to a range of children at various stages and educational levels which helped form her decision to become an educator. She often helped her mom and dad with the kids in her home and worked with them, further solidifying her passion for the learning process.

Clearly her respect for her students and for education comes from the solid foundation her parents gave her. Griselda recounts that one of the greatest lessons her mother taught her was to simply be herself. "She told me people are just people, like we are, you can't always worry about what someone else is doing. You have to be you," she says. Griselda carries that lesson to her students and children, instilling in them a sense of confidence and self-worth to carry through life.

Each school year Griselda's students teach her things. She learns about trust, about taking risks and about coming out of her comfort zone. "They come to you so innocent, hanging onto your every word. I am constantly remembering to be careful, since they're so impressionable. A teacher can make or break a year for a student simply by not knowing them. We have kids who are very shy, and if we put them on the spot they may never want to come back. You have children who are social butterflies and if you're trying to teach and they want to keep talking, the moment you have to redirect them could crush them."

Griselda goes on to say that her students teach her that everybody's human, and it's important to get to know each other and talk to each other. "While they're testing my boundaries, I'm getting to know theirs as well. You always get those children who want the last word."

In her classroom, Griselda has an assistant to help with daily activities. She says that they work very well together, and her assistant is an invaluable asset to the classroom. "She's my right hand person, she's my

comic relief, she's my work partner. We both very much believe that a child needs to say what they have on their minds. They need to be taught the respectful way, but they need to know that you're going to listen to them or they won't tell you anything. I think that philosophy holds true with my own children as well. My students are treated the same as my own children."

Griselda is grateful that all the kindergarten classes in her school have full time assistants. Her previous school did not have assistants for the three years she taught there, but the class sizes were significantly smaller. Last year, her kindergarten class at Norge had 28 students.

The job of a kindergarten teacher can be varied, and one of her tasks is determining what each child needs for their educational level. Children come to the first year of school at varying stages of knowledge, and Griselda and her assistant work to meet all their needs.

She admits that it can be difficult being pulled in different directions with so many students, but she somehow manages to address every student's needs. "Every child is someone's child, and I remember that every day. I make sure to make eye contact with every single child, because if I didn't, I wouldn't know them. I feel that when a student knows that I am watching out for them, that I know that they are there, they're going to perform better. That's why I love kindergarten so much, the kids still love their teachers and want to be at school. They don't have all these other things that are going on, and since this is their first experience we can make it or break it for them. For parents, too. Parents give us their children for six hours a day, and I feel like we have a really big job."

Griselda said that all the employees at Norge Elementary are like a family. Her current principal, who will be leaving next year, has been at the school for the entire thirteen years Griselda has worked there. "She's done some wonderful things for the school, but she's moving on now. So this will be an exciting year with a new principal."

When the candidates for Teacher of the Year were announced, Griselda was surprised to learn she was on the list. "I was very reluctant about this because my two colleagues that were nominated clearly do so much for the school. I know that I'm not the teacher I am because of me, it's because of things like the students I work with, the families, my colleagues supporting me and my administration. This nomination is because of my mom and dad. I started with them, and I am who I am because of them."

When her colleagues voted for her, Griselda was overwhelmed and touched. "We're all such a family it was hard for me to accept this when I know that my colleagues work just as hard as I do. I feel like I got this for all of Norge," she says.

Griselda Carlsen stresses that one of the things she has learned as an educator is the importance of allowing kids to be kids, and to understand that the time will come soon enough when they have to face adult situations such as test-taking. "I think as parents we want nothing but the best for our children, but sometimes we hear what other kids are doing and we try to compare kids. A child will do what they'll do when they are ready. We can't push them; life is too short for that. We can just give them those wings to fly and hope they soar." **[NDN]**

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All We Really Need to Know

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

"Kindergarten is the foundation for the rest of their education," Matthew Whaley Elementary School's Teach of the Year Kerry Armbruster says. "It's not just about the academics. We're teaching them to be safe. We teach them to be kind. We teach them to do their best and make good choices. We're not just teaching readers in kindergarten. We teach them to be responsible and good peo-

ple. If we don't teach it now, they are playing catch-up the rest of their lives."

Just as Robert Fulghum's poem says "All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten." That's been the basis for a strong foundation for many of us without our knowing it. No longer is kindergarten a buffer from parents to school, the kindergartners of today learn the basics of reading, writing and math

before the first grade. As Kerry stresses, the foundation is laid for a love of learning and for feeling safe in school.

"Matthew Whaley's dynamics are different than a lot of schools," Kerry explains. "We have a high free or reduced lunch rate; we have a high ESL rate, which is our English as a Second Language kids. So we have more than most. The dynamics of the day are

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complicated by the fact that we have a lot of homeless children. If you don't have one in the classroom, it's shocking. Mostly likely, there will be two or three. Last school year, I had four homeless kindergartners. I had several kids being raised by a grandparent. The dynamics of the family have changed."

Not only are some of these young children dealing with the newness of coming to school and transitioning into an academic day, but they also deal with separation anxiety compounded by other issues like poverty, language barriers or rocky family situations.

"My classroom becomes a very safe, normal day for them after the first few days," she says. "I offer the most normal, loving, caring environment and the rest falls into place. Developmentally, children want to learn. It's the kindergarten teachers' job, initially, to have the most loving, fun place to learn."

Kerry adds, "If you can lay down that foundation in their very first year of school – make them want to learn, to thirst for knowledge, wonder what we're going to do that day – then our job is done. They will learn at their own pace."

Growing up in Virginia, Kerry was one of

seven siblings. "I learned a lot of life lessons from being one of many. The only thing my parents expected was for us to contribute. I never wanted for anything. People would say 'There are so many kids. Didn't they forget you sometimes?' Never." She's the oldest girl, with two older brothers. "Becoming a teacher made perfect sense for being the oldest girl in a large family. I'm very bossy and I lead teams." She knew she wanted to be a teacher from an early age. "My grandmother was a teacher and taught one of the first pre-schools in Westfield, New Jersey." Kerry's mother noticed Kerry's instruction to her siblings when they had trouble understanding concepts from school. "She said I was very tactile – always showing them how to do something with things in the house, like using decks of cards or rocks from the yard to illustrate a concept."

She attended Walsingham Academy and played on the lacrosse and field hockey teams. Sports, partially, played into which college she would attend. She had the opportunity to play lacrosse and field hockey at James Madison University (JMU) or at Lynchburg College.

"One of the reasons I chose Lynchburg

College was because I would have more of an opportunity to play than at more competitive JMU. Plus, Lynchburg College had a great teachers' program."

Well trained during her student teaching time, the biggest surprise Kerry had on her first job was how much she loved it. "The feeling was wonderful to have my own classroom. I don't remember it being a stressful time, just a warm and peaceful time. Although I ran through my wardrobe. When I first started teaching, I ruined all my clothes on the mimeograph machines – those things you had to crank to make copies. I'd come home and have fingerprints and thumbprints all over. That first year in Chesterfield County, I took over a kindergarten. I had to throw away all my clothes because of the stains from the mimeograph fluid. My parents thought that was funny."

Her first full-time teaching job was with a first grade class. Then her husband Jeff was transferred and she found a job teaching second grade. With the next transfer back to Williamsburg in 1998, Kerry taught third grade.

"I came back to kindergarten about a dozen years ago. This is where I'm retiring."



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A kindergarten teacher has to be able to multitask, Kerry explains. "One child will be throwing up, one will have a bathroom accident, another one will be crying, one will not have his snack and another one wants their mommy."

Enjoying the time at school is essential for the kindergartner. "I have to be very flexible, patient, creative and make learning fun for the kids. If they don't want to come to school, then it's an uphill battle. I have to be organized and ready for the day when they walk into the room. I want to have fun, creative, engaging lesson plans where the kids want to come in and learn."

With the children's home life uncertain, Kerry wants to make sure the kids know they are in a safe environment while at school. "You'll listen to them and talk to them about what to not worry about. We can work through any problem. We have three basic questions: Are you being safe? Are you being kind? Are you doing your best?"

She explains that she doesn't have to say to them, "No, don't do that." But she repeats those three questions: Are you being kind? Are you being safe? Are you doing your best?

"They get it. It's simple. You give them reasonable expectations and they go! We are amazed every year by the progress they make."

In kindergarten, the teachers try very hard to speak to the kids on their level. "We spend the first month talking about rules at home, at school, on the bus and walking down the street, so we can assure them that they are safe. We spend time laying down those principles of life. These basics help them through their entire life."

She lets them know it is okay to make mistakes. "You don't want kids falling apart because they made a mistake. It's okay, we look at ways to fix it. We say God's greatest gift is an eraser on a pencil. They laugh at that. By the end of the year, they don't worry over mistakes because they know they have an eraser. You fall down in life, but you have to pick yourself up. They mess up and look at me to fix it. I say 'I am not going to college with you.' They laugh because they know they need to fix the problem themselves. We teach them to be good problem solvers. We raise responsible learners."

When not in school, Kerry is active with her church, Saint Martin's Episcopal. She

coaches a Buddy Ball team with the Williamsburg Youth League. "It's a special needs baseball team that plays every Sunday at Warhill. I adore that. My granddog, Leroy, is the love of my life."

She and her husband, Jeff, have raised three boys. "We've had kids in college since 2006. My spare time these past few years was spent visiting colleges. Our youngest is at University of Kentucky, and we love going there. UK basketball rocks!"

She says she's looking forward to the next phase in her life: "When the boys find someone to spend the rest of their lives with, and they can be as happy as Jeff and I have been. And I'm looking forward to being a grandmother."

Her goal is to continue teaching kindergarten until she retires. "I feel like I'm changing lives, one at a time. I have a lot of steam left, but when it's gone, I'm retiring."

Kerry Armbruster looks around her classroom at Matthew Whaley and says:

"Like Robert Fulghum's poem 'All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten,' I agree with him 100 percent. Everything we needed was here." NDN

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BORN TO TEACH

By Susan Guthrie



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

What makes a great teacher? Just ask the students who had Jessica Capano as their fifth grade teacher at D.J. Montague Elementary School. To them it was no surprise when she was honored as Teacher of the Year for the school. To Jessica it is just what she was born to do. "I wanted to be a teacher all of my life. I never considered anything else."

"Teaching is a calling, it has to be. It's such a crazy job that you have to be born for it and I think I absolutely was." As a child growing up in Chesterfield County, Virginia, she always

wanted to play school, but she took playing school to the next level. "My mom could buy my entire Christmas wish list at the teacher's store. I didn't want the play set; I wanted the real grade book."

She earned her Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Elementary Education from James Madison University. "I knew I wanted to do

elementary education, it's the foundation for learning. They are so impressionable. They are just sponges. This is when you get to teach them how exciting and fun learning can be."

However, Jessica has found the reality of teaching to be even more rewarding. "Out of college you're not prepared to be so invested in their lives. For a year you get to be part of their childhood, and that's huge."

Just like her students, she gets so excited that she actually lights up with excitement when she talks about the upcoming school

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year. "Those first few weeks are a blast, because you are just getting to know each other and trying to build your culture together."

"I'm very big on classroom community. This is a space we have to share, and I'm going to contribute to that space and the students get to learn what they are going to contribute." Her goal is to make time to get to know each of the students on an individual basis. "That first month of school is crucial because you have to know your kids or you're never going to reach them."

"It's important the students know that they have a role and a voice and that they need to contribute just as much as I do." She faces the challenge of uniting all of these unique little personalities together for a common goal. "Everyone has different perspectives and strengths and we're all going to approach things in a different way. It is important to me that our classroom is a place where they feel accepted, safe and cared about, so they can grow, be good at things and have a group of people around that will encourage them."

She understands that students have different

learning styles so what works for one student may not reach them all. "Trying to mix 27 different personalities into a space for a year, you have to learn how to accommodate differences. If I have to, I will teach the same content ten different ways to reach all of my students." Her own education gave her the tools to teach to a diverse group of students. "We are all so different and luckily I learned to become a teacher during a time when the focus was on learning styles and knowing who you teach, not just what you teach. That is a huge priority of mine, and I think it's one of my assets as a young teacher."

Collaboration is a challenging but essential skill that takes patience and understanding to teach. "The ability to listen to other people's ideas and come up with a solution together is a hard lesson for a lot of students, but it is an extremely important one." It requires a team of children to accept and tolerate each other's differences. "Acceptance, tolerance and social justice as a whole is a really big reason why I got into education. It's teaching students that they are going to encounter people in their

lives that they don't get along with and how to face it with acceptance, tolerance and an open mind."

Jessica is the first one to say yes to any opportunity for professional development. "I just love learning, hearing what other people are doing in the field and seeing what's out there, just soaking it all in. I think what makes a great teacher is someone who loves to learn – that is why I am a teacher."

One such professional development opportunity led her to a program called Actively Caring for People (AC4P). "It isn't an anti-bullying program; we have a lot of great programs already in place for that. It's about building a culture of empathy and compassion between students, the teachers have very little involvement in the program. AC4P is about students recognizing acts of kindness between one another."

A student's act of kindness is acknowledged as the AC4P Hero of the Day, and the student gets to wear a green bracelet. "I think it's been really empowering for them, there's just something about the students wanting to wear that

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green bracelet." Once every student in the class has worn the bracelet, they all get one of their own to keep, so the teamwork mentality gets everyone in the class working together. "The important piece is that it's actively caring, not just thinking kind things. If a student notices another student looking sad in the playground, it's not just thinking 'that stinks'; they are encouraged to actively do something about it." Implementing programs like AC4P is why Jessica loves teaching. "The getting to know each other, learning from each other and collaboration is what inspires me. As a teacher, I feel like I play a small part in making a more tolerant future. It's pretty cool."

There are numerous demands on teachers right now and it can feel more about testing, scores, accountability and committees than the needs of the children. "The focus is not on crafting unique and engaging ways for children to learn. You have to prove and quantify the learning and that does not lend itself well to elementary education. You have to make it fit and find what still makes you passionate about teaching and I do. I have a blast with my

kids. We have so much fun. I would be mortified if there were adults in the room because I am so goofy and obnoxious. We love it. You can't let the SOLs (Standards of Learning) and all of the pressures get to you. You have to find a way to make learning fun and engaging and enjoy the kids."

She gratefully admits that she has a great deal of help and support, which allows her to accomplish her goals as a teacher. "When I interviewed with the WJCC school division I just knew it was a perfect fit. I'm lucky to be in an environment where we take care of each other. We really look out for each other and that's awesome. I have the best team in the world. I've learned so much from them. I couldn't do it without them; I'm here because of them."

To Jessica, family is another important part of the equation. "I hope that families get that sense about me early on, that we're in this together. I want them to let me know what I can do to make it a smooth year." She finds coordinating with her students' families is easy. "We are fortunate to have a wonderful PTA. There

are always families around volunteering, doing different events or just visiting." Daily emails with the family keep the whole team focused on the students learning plan. "It's a partnership."

She sees her students as her second family and finds she is not always the teacher. "From my students I learn how wonderful all of our differences are and that's what makes our classroom community so strong, because they are not like me. I learn so much from my students, they teach me to be a more open minded, empathetic and tolerant person."

At this point in her life, teaching is everything. "For me teaching is one of those things that is hard to turn off, there are so many ideas, so many things that I could do. I'm so committed. I can't stop, but it's my choice because it's really what I think I was meant to be doing."

To Jessica Capano teaching is rewarding in so many ways, and she has an eagerness to continue to evolve as a teacher and continue to make things better. "I'm constantly trying to make this experience better for the children and to be the best teacher that I can be." **NDN**

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By Narielle Living



Lisa W. Cumming
Photography

Matoaka Elementary School is the largest elementary school in the Williamsburg-James City School District, and the staff at the school has chosen Mary Whitley as their Teacher of the Year. Mary, in her thirty-sixth year of teaching, has devoted her life to education and lifelong learning.

Originally from the small farming commu-

nity of Trenton, Missouri, in the northwest corner of the state, Mary attended Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Her first teaching position was at a residential school for the handicapped in Columbia, Missouri. "At that time, in the late '70s, we didn't really have that many handicapped children in public school. People would often institutionalize them. I was

working there with the younger children, and the man who would later become my husband was working with the older kids," she says. Her future husband then got a teaching job in the Williamsburg area, and Mary soon followed.

"And we really are living happily ever after," she adds with a smile.

According to Mary, although she has taught

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at different grade levels she has always enjoyed working with a younger age group. "Fifth grade has to be my all-time favorite grade to teach. I think if you ask most people about their memories of school they often remember being in fifth grade. It's sort of an in-between time, separating childhood and middle school age." Mary adds that she believes this is a time when kids still enjoy learning, and they are not as preoccupied with socializing and other distractions.

She has also taught other grade levels, including middle school. Her decision to teach at middle school was made mostly because of scheduling. At that time her child was an infant, and she was teaching at Bruton Heights Elementary, which was being closed and taken over by Colonial Williamsburg.

"Berkeley and James Blair were just converting to a middle school at that time. It sounded like an exciting plan to me, plus they got out at 2:15 p.m., so that was awesome for a new mom. I stayed at Berkeley for three years and James Blair for seven years."

Mary's job is a little bit different than other

teachers. "I'm not a classroom teacher," she says. "When I went to Matoaka, I became the student support specialist, and that's a very different kind of job. I think every elementary school probably treats that position a little differently, but in my school I work with below grade level readers. They are usually not special education students, but they need a little help. These are the students who, with that extra intervention, will hopefully be pulled up to grade level."

Mary works with third, fourth and fifth graders. The students who are below grade level are identified and then they are assigned to her class in small groups, usually from one to five students. Mary loves her role with the students and loves being able to help the staff in so many different ways. In her position she is not required to teach the same material that classroom teachers are expected to adhere to.

"I can do more creative things, and I have the ability to try those things that the classroom teachers might not have the flexibility to always do," she says.

Mary has clearly dedicated her life to teach-

ing and making a difference in the lives of her students. Even after decades of teaching, she remains motivated. "Curiosity and lifelong learning are my things. I wake up every day wanting to learn something new. I'm going to retire in a year, and I think my husband's scared we're going to have multiple projects because I have to always do something new."

That desire to learn something new is what propels her to stay fresh and innovative in the classroom. Mary believes that once a lesson is taught, there is always a chance to do it better the next time. "That's what appeals to me, and that's why summer is so important to all teachers because you have time to really digest what you did and how you're going to change it or how you're going to take that thing that worked and improve it more. It's a cycle of making it better, and that fits my personality."

Mary acknowledges that working in the classroom is not for everybody, but for those who do this kind of work there are a wide range of styles. When she was a classroom teacher, Mary was very energetic. She did not sit down while she taught and was in constant

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motion. Surprisingly, she found her job was a lonely one.

"Through the years that I've been a teacher I have had friends who are teachers, and I think they're just great teachers, but none of us ever really see what we do with the kids. We see each other at recess or some interactions, but we don't ever really see the teaching. It's kind of a lonely profession when you close that door."

Being the only student support specialist for third through fifth grade is one of the more difficult aspects of her job. She credits her principal with being very supportive of Mary's ideas and strategies, but she is also humbled by what she sees in the classrooms around her.

"One of the really great things about this job and I think one of the reasons that they elected me teacher of the year—which was a very humbling experience—is that I get to see everyone's teaching style. It took a while to really appreciate and understand other people's teaching style, not that I thought my way was the only way but others were different. One teacher I work with is very quiet, she never gets excited, and her kids do great, and they love

her. There's all kinds of different people that are incredibly effective. It took me a couple of years to be able to walk into people's rooms and appreciate different styles." Mary adds that when she saw that some teachers did not stand and walk around while teaching she came to the realization that teaching is different now because technology is different.

Mary has been teaching in the Williamsburg school system for 31 years, and she says that she has seen some incredible changes.

"When I first came here there was a huge gap. The community was much more divided between wealthy and poor, and there was hardly a middle class. But we've grown. At that time there were only three primary schools, Norge, Matthew Whaley and Rawls Byrd. We've gone from that to the size we are now. A lot of people complain about SOLs and all the tests we take, but some of the good parts are that we're much more accountable to all those other groups, including the minority groups. If you have a minority child that fails a test it can count against you multiple times. Because of that we've been forced to pay a lot

more attention to the kids we need to pay attention to and create jobs with people like me. Student support specialists didn't exist when I came here, but we're trying harder to meet everyone's needs. There's still a disparity that we don't like, but I've seen a lot of progress in 31 years. Classes used to be much more tracked. You had the high level learners in one room and the low level learners in another room, and now we're not tracked like that, we're mixed up."

Mary has faith that the kids today are good people. She notes that they are volunteering more than other groups have, and she sees them as great human beings. "People like to learn, and I really have faith that we will continue to find ways to be accountable and have high level teaching standards but also make it all interesting and palatable."

As Mary says, all kids come to school wanting to learn, and they want the same things kids have always wanted, which is to be successful. And with that faith in today's kids, Mary has a true hope for the future of all the lifelong learners. NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Pat Chappell is the Visions teacher at James River Elementary and the school's Teacher of the Year. "We call the program Visions. Somewhere else it might be 'Talented and Gifted' or a different name," Pat explains. "The ability to meet the needs of a subgroup exists in education. This just happens to be a subgroup that's here. Still there's a lot of diversity within that

group. The vast majority of the time the classrooms have a range of learners, and that's not a bad thing, because I think when you have a range within your classroom, you have a classroom community that models the world."

She says that a range of learners in a classroom helps the students learn from each other. The Visions program provides high-end mate-

rials for academically accomplished children." The majority of my career has been in Visions," Pat says. "In the Visions program, I work primarily with the upper academic groups. That's not where my entire career has been. I care equally for all of the children. With regard to meeting the need of the high academic, if you can tap into their interest and make an assign-

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ment open ended, the child can make it their own. Because that's where you want to be, you want that child tapping into their own interest, their own desire to research, their own willingness to give their time and their effort to learn."

Pat likes to be a sounding board for the children to help inspire them to find the activities and the path to reach the goal. "They need some guidance, like checking in with an advisor. They need someone who is going to say to them: You were looking at this particular aspect of a topic, what did you find out? What are you thinking about that and where do you want to go with that?"

The Visions curriculum focuses on such topics as vocabulary and grammar development. "In order to use words effectively you have to know what words to use and how to do it." Pat uses Junior Great Books that emphasize reading, comprehension and communication. "In many instances, Junior Great Books are diverse. Their origins are different countries, and that's a good place for the kids to become more experienced with the character's motivation and different aspects of literature."

This is Pat's fifth year teaching Visions at James River Elementary. She has taught from the kindergarten level on up. "I enjoyed every single one of those age groups. Kids appreciate humor. They appreciate an interesting environment where ideas are willingly accepted. We have discussions that are thought-provoking. It's in that thought process where you might plant a seed that will develop a passion for and interest in a subject." Pat likes to model an inquisitive nature for her students.

"If you have a choice between learning from memorization or research, which would you pick?" she asks. "Sometimes, you have to memorize. There's basic knowledge, factual information that you have to memorize. But, memorizing is not the end game. Memorizing is a means to an end. Once you memorize that information, what are you going to do with it? That's the key. Don't accept things at face value: This is the way it is. Why?"

Even in a subject like math, Pat says there is frequently more than one way to show how to arrive at the correct answer. "For some children a particular method works for them and makes sense for them. It may not be the best

method for the next person. Individuality is important in learning." She will approach a math problem in different ways, showing the students how another approach can lead to the same correct answer. "You have to keep approaching the question and solution until you have understanding," she says. "Once you have understanding, you get it. A solid foundation where a child has the techniques and the background knowledge on which to continue with their investigation, that's a big step to help them reach their academic potential."

From Clover, Virginia, Pat lived a rural childhood that encouraged her to seek out her own fun and independent learning. "My father was a gentleman farmer," she describes. "He had Angus cattle and a saw mill and raised tobacco. We would live in the town of Clover during the winter and head to the farm in the summer. We didn't have a television. We had an Esther Williams pool, and we had horses. But my biggest childhood memory was sitting and watching to see the dust trail where my mother would be returning with boxes of books. She would go to the library in Halifax, and she would bring us cardboard boxes with

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books. It was wonderful."

The library in Halifax County was a refurbished house where the children's section was upstairs. Pat describes the times her mother took her, the excitement of running up the stairs to see if a Walter Farley Black Stallion book was on the shelves that she hadn't read.

"There was a whole slew of them. I would go in there and would it be there? Would it not be there? That was my love of reading. When people ask me about my hobbies, I would probably say reading is huge for me."

She met her future husband, Jack, when they were in the fifth grade. "We were married right out of college. I had majored in education and got a job with Newport News Schools." She taught for five years, then Jack went to pharmacy school in Richmond. In Richmond, she worked as an administrative assistant for a transplant program while Jack was in pharmacy school.

"That, believe it or not, helped me in my teaching career because it was frequently high stress. Even though I was on the administrative end, I filtered into some of the time critical parts. There, I learned to say what I'm going

to do and do it to the letter. That has helped because this is a profession (teaching) that can be all consuming, by the time you plan, grade, communicate with parents...all of it is interwoven. If you don't do any of those things well, then you're not going to bring about what's best for the kids and for the parents."

After the transplant program, Pat spent several years raising their three sons. "There is no graduate course in existence that helps you be a better teacher than being a parent," she states. "I discovered that with the same mom and same dad our three boys are as different as night and day. And that's my main focus for what I do. Every single child in that room is an individual. They all have their distinct strengths. They all have their Achilles' Heel, somewhere, somehow. It's a matter of tapping into their strengths and helping them reach their full potential."

The children keep Pat excited about teaching. "When it comes down to it, when you tap into something the students are interested, then the sky's the limit. They are going for it and they're going to go big. That's makes each day exciting for me as a teacher." NDN

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Taking One for the Team

By Lillian Stevens



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Mickie Meyer, School Counselor at Rawls Byrd Elementary, is Rawls Byrd Elementary School's Teacher of the Year. "I'm very honored to win this award," Mickie says. "But I hope the article can be more about the school than about me because Rawls Byrd is such a special place. I think of it as a treasure."

One of nine elementary schools in WJCC, Rawls Byrd serves approximately 460 students. There, Mickie teaches not just one grade but all of the students from kindergarten through fifth grade. She provides classroom group guidance lessons, individual counseling and small group counseling.

"At Rawls Byrd we are family and a team," she says. "I am so fortunate to work with such

a dedicated and talented staff and administration. Working with them makes me strive to improve and contribute my very best, always, to the well-being of our students."

With 36 years of teaching and counseling experience, Mickie works diligently to foster, promote and improve student success in school. She cares deeply for each and every student and by the end of October of each new academic year, she knows them all by their first names. In classroom guidance and in individual or small group counseling, she reminds students about the importance of being part of a caring community because she believes that these are the kinds of principles that make Rawls Byrd a better school.

"My goal is for students to show in their actions that they are of good character. I teach guidance lessons each day to support the academic, career and social development of students. As a counselor of elementary

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students, my job is to teach developmentally appropriate skills. Young children do not have the knowledge or experience to solve some of their problems or cope with some of the changes in their lives."

When working with students in conflict, Mickie tries to teach peaceful ways to resolve issues.

"When I work with students experiencing loss, my goal is to help them cope, remember and move forward. My role is about helping students navigate through the challenges of life so that these challenges do not negatively impact their education."

On a weekly basis, for instance, she meets with nine fifth graders who are adjusting to divorces in their families.

"My goal is to educate them about divorce," Mickie says. "I hope to teach them skills needed to cope with the changes they are experiencing in their lives. For instance, what do you do when your mom or dad says he/she is coming for a visit but does not show up? Or, what do you do when one parent won't let you see the other one?"

Mickie believes that parents do their best to educate their children but young children often need reinforcements.

"Sometimes children just need to hear from someone else that it's not their fault. They can't change it. They can't control the things that are going on," she says. "All they can do is learn to cope and manage and just be the best that they can be. That's the message that I try to give children."

A typical day for the beloved school counselor starts well before the first bell, although there is really no "typical" day.

"Sometimes it's a meeting with a teacher before school to discuss a challenging student so that together we can develop a behavior plan," Mickie says. "Then, I contact the child's parent and offer services and materials to assist the family at home."

From there, she might be collaborating with middle school counselors to plan their visit with fifth graders who will graduate to one of WJCC's three middle schools in the fall. Or, she might return a phone call from a parent who is upset with an outside agency.

"Then it's off to my 'peace table' where students are attempting to settle a conflict," she explains. "I also meet with a group of five kindergarten students who have formed a Kindness Club."

The afternoon might bring a conversation with the director of Big Brothers/Big Sisters to discuss a need Mickie has anticipated, followed by a phone call to a New Horizons family counselor to discuss the positive impact the agency counselor is having on one of Rawls Byrd's families. After school, a conference with a concerned grandparent is not unusual.

So, on any given day, she is collaborating with staff members, administrators, parents, grandparents, community volunteers, outside agencies and of course, students. Mickie believes passionately that each plays a pivotal role and each brings something unique to the table.

She is especially proud of the educational partnerships within the community. For over thirty years Rawls Byrd students have benefited from an educational partnership with Williamsburg Landing. Mickie is currently the



UPCOMING EVENTS

August 29 – 31

- Virginia Symphony at Lake Matoaka
- Virginia Symphony at Yorktown
- Opening Night Event at the Freight Shed
- Colonial Williamsburg Taste Tradition
- CW Military Bands Concert

September 5-7

- Arts District Hog Wild for the Arts
- Williamsburg Symphonnia Lecture & Concert
- Concerts and Art in Historic Churches throughout the region

September 12-14

- New Town Arts Festival
- Glass Art Show at Legacy Hall
- Chalk Art Festival

September 19-21

- Tucker Arnold Storytelling Festival at Kimball
- Williamsburg Book Festival
- Contemporary Artisans Festival
- Plein Air Festival
- Under the Big Top PechaKucha Festival
- Art Inspires Stories Weekend
- ArtSpeaks: Old and New - TCAG

September 26- 28

- Taste of the James – James River Assoc. craft beer, wine, food, art
- Yorktown Art Stroll (Expanding up the Hill for 2014)
- P.I.P.E. concert at Lake Matoaka

October 2-5

- Williamsburg Gallery Crawl

- Merchant's Square "Right On" Concert
- Yorktown Wine Festival
- An Occasion for the Arts

October 10-12

- All Jazzed Up - Williamsburg Jazz & Wine Festival
- Jazz Brunch at Merchants Square
- Virginia Fashion Week at Sadler Center



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school's volunteer coordinator and matches some twenty five or more Landing residents with students. More recently a partnership has been formed with volunteers from Ford's Colony. Rawls Byrd is fortunate to have such faithful and talented volunteers.

At Rawls Byrd, her colleagues believe that she brings something unique and very special to the table.

Born and raised in Monroe, North Carolina, Mickie is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In 1969, armed with a degree in Elementary Education, she embarked on a teaching career and taught second and third grade for eight years in Prince George County, Virginia. She taught for a few years before applying to graduate school at the University of Virginia.

Once she started her graduate work, her career trajectory emerged.

"I took a graduate class in elementary school counseling, and I knew that was what I wanted to do!" she exclaims.

The professor who taught the counseling course became Mickie's advisor – and her in-

spiration. At the end of the classwork, the emerging school counselor was assigned a practicum – which is customary in the education realm – where a teacher applies his or her studies and coursework in the field.

"My advisor sent me to a school in Albemarle County that had never had a school counselor. Back then we were called guidance counselors."

Starting from scratch, Mickie created a parent group and established individual and group counseling. She also had to plan and execute classroom lessons.

"I had to meet with parents; I had to do everything," she says. "I had to set up a school counseling program in a school that was unfamiliar with one. At the time, I thought it was awful but it was good for me. It prepared me for my counseling career and made me a better educator."

After receiving her master's degree, Mickie's advisor asked, "How would you like to live in Williamsburg?" The year was 1978, the year she began her tenure as a School Counselor at Rawls Byrd.

"It was a good decision."

Mickie is also the mother of one son who attended Rawls Byrd.

"David is 26 now and lives in Raleigh, North Carolina," she says. "But when he was a student at Rawls Byrd, he never acknowledged that he was my son. There were 5th graders who didn't know David Meyer was my son," she says with a laugh.

Mickie hopes that the most important quality that students take with them from their elementary school years is a feeling of self confidence and self-worth, coupled with a quest for success so that they're ready for the next chapter in their lives. She hopes that she has taught them well. She marvels at the lessons the children teach her, day in and day out.

"Children are so resilient," she says. "It sounds incredible but sometimes children facing difficulties do better than their parents."

Maybe that is a result of the team work that Mickie Meyer speaks of at Rawls Byrd. Maybe it's a result of the way she helps the children navigate through the challenges of young life. Or maybe it's a combination of the two. NDN

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CONSTANT LEARNER

By Brandy Centolanza

Along her path toward a career in education, Abby Reynolds found several things that have made her into the teacher she is today.

Abby is a special education teacher at J. Blaine Blayton Elementary School. She knew she wanted to be an educator ever since she was a little girl, thanks to one of her own teachers, Mrs. Riera, who taught Abby in kindergarten and again in the fifth grade.

"She really made learning fun," recalls Abby, who attended a private elementary school while growing up in Northern Virginia. "She made it feel like students guided their own choices in learning, and that was a real sense of empowerment for me. That stuck with me, and I knew I wanted to teach that way someday. I was always very excited to go to school because every day there was a new adventure in learning."

Abby's interest in special education began while she was attending Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. A writing seminar teacher, Mrs. Stegall, required that students volunteer within the community as part of her course. Abby chose to devote time at an alternative school for students with special



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

needs.

"She wanted us to experience more than just academics as part of her class," Abby says. "That was very wise of her."

The students Abby encountered through volunteering had an impact on her.

"The range of disabilities at the school was huge," she says. "I was just really inspired by them, by the way they participated and made learning really exciting."

After high school, Abby pursued a double major in elementary education and psychology at the College of William and Mary. During college, Abby volunteered weekly at Matthew Whaley Elementary School down the street under Lisa Pennycuff, who worked with the special needs students there.

"I really experienced what it was like to be a special education inclusion teacher, and I was blessed by her advice," Abby explains.

Abby decided to stay in Williamsburg upon college graduation and started work as a third grade teacher at DJ Montague Elementary School in 2005. There, she was taken under the wings of many teachers, all led by the third grade team leader, Lynda Heath.

"She served as a mentor for me as a student teacher, and she was a great source of wisdom and advice when I was at DJ Montague," Abby says. "I had a wonderful experience at DJ Montague. I loved it. I had a wonderful team. I owe who I am as a teacher to all these wonderful mentors and friends."

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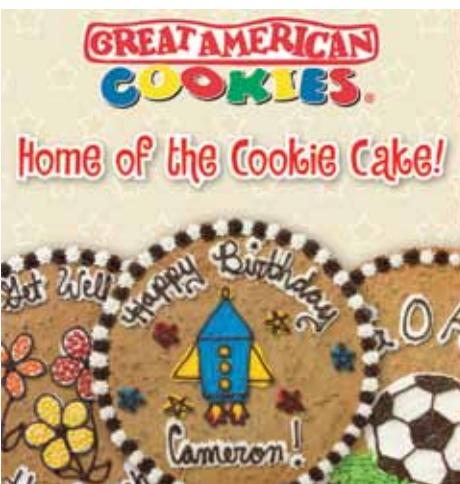
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Abby remained at DJ Montague Elementary School for four years before moving on as a special education teacher at J. Blaine Blayton Elementary School.

Abby was named this year's Teacher of the Year at J. Blaine Blayton, yet she credits her colleagues for the recognition.

"I was really shocked and humbled by it," she says. "I just feel so fortunate to work with so many talented, experienced, knowledgeable teachers. Ashley Hastings, the special education teaching assistant that I work with, is so wonderful and so good at what she does. It is our goal for our students to be successful and have a positive experience at school and grow not just as students but as people."

Abby also calls her students inspirations. "What I really love about teaching is that you get to be a constant learner. I am constantly learning from my students and seeing the world from all their different perspectives. They help me grow as a teacher, as a learner and as a person. No two days are the same for me. Each student is unique, so it makes coming in each day exciting."

Since each student has a different set of needs, each day can also present challenges, but that is welcome to Abby.

"I am constantly trying to find ways to meet their needs," she says. "If something isn't working or something doesn't make sense to a student, then I will work to figure out a way so that it will make sense for them." Last year, for example, she had a kindergarten student who was struggling with reading, so she enlisted the school's physical education teacher to help her.

"He was more of a kinesthetic learner, so we added some movement to his literacy lesson," Abby says. "All of a sudden, he was smiling and it was just so exciting to watch. That was an irreplaceable feeling to watch him get so excited and want him to read me a story."

Moments like these make Abby tear up.

"It is my students who keep me so dedicated," she says with emotion. "These students have struggles, and I am there to help them bridge the gap and be successful. When a student with autism gives another student a spontaneous hug and tells them they will miss them, or another student does something all on their own with excitement or pride, that is irreplaceable. I am there to help them feel empowered to be successful in things that may be hard for them."

Abby's devotion to J. Blaine Blayton Elementary School doesn't end at the classroom door. She is also the school's Relay for Life team captain, having helped start a team at the school, and she assists with the after-school tutoring program.

"I've really enjoyed that experience because I've been able to work with a lot of different students in that capacity," she says.

Abby and her husband, Craig, who teaches fifth grade at J. Blaine Blayton Elementary, don't have children of their own, but they both enjoy watching their students at various events throughout the community.

The pair live near Warhill Sports Complex, so they like to walk over and watch students play baseball, soccer and football.

"We really enjoy working together, and we enjoy seeing our students and their families out in the community," Abby says.

Abby Reynolds looks forward to reuniting with her students in the classroom in September. "I enjoy meeting the new kindergartners because they are so brand new, and I'm looking forward to getting to know their little personalities," she says enthusiastically. "I'm looking forward to seeing the returning students and finding out their goals and what they hope to tackle this year. I hope to continue to be a learner and to continue to find new ways to meet the needs of all of my students. I really love what I do." NDN



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE

By Cathy Welch

Merriam-Webster defines confidence as a feeling or belief that you can do something well or succeed at something. Diane Teh, 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year for Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School, has been instilling this belief in her students for 30 years.

Diane was born in Warren, Ohio, to Butch and Nancy Taylor. The middle of three children, she has a compassion for others that began with her earliest school teachers. Their influence led

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to her life's work in teaching and loving special needs students.

Diane's first grade teacher lost her arm in a car accident. "Nobody liked to touch her arm but me so I always got to hold her hand," Diane explains. "I think that's why I went in the direction I did." By the time she was in middle school, she wanted to be a special education teacher. She visited nearby special needs facilities and volunteered as a summer arts and crafts teacher.

At the University of Akron (UA), Diane met her future husband, Jin Teh, in math class. "I call it fate," she says about meeting Jin, a native of Malaysia who attended British boarding schools before coming to UA. He tutored her in their math class. "He was an economics major and I was an education major," Diane says. "Otherwise, our paths would probably have never crossed."

Diane earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and Special Education and began teaching in Portage County, Ohio in 1982. She led a multi-handicapped classroom for kindergarten-through-eighth grade students and went on to earn her Master of Science in Education (Reading and Literacy) from Walden University.

Jin and Diane married in 1985. After spending their honeymoon in Washington, D.C., they visited Williamsburg. The area always held a special place in their hearts. In 1997, the couple got tired of the harsh winters in Ohio and moved to York County.

Diane applied and was offered a number of teaching positions in the local schools, but she was holding out for her first choice: Williamsburg. Her invitation to interview at Clara Byrd Baker happened at an interesting time. "We were on vacation in Myrtle Beach, when I got a phone call," she says. Diane and Jin left their children with friends at the beach and raced back for the interview. The school system hired her on the spot.

Today, Jin is retired from SunTrust Bank and is buying and selling houses. The couple has a married daughter, Sara, 27, who is a first grade teacher in Chesapeake, and a son, Mitchell, 25, who works for Casey Auto Group.

Diane is an Ohio State Buckeye fan, Cleveland Indian fan and Cleveland Browns fan. She and Jin travel to Malaysia periodically to visit with and help his mom and dad.

Diane teaches a self-contained kindergarten-to-second grade special education classroom. She has a caseload of approximately 10 children each year and every child is different. "I have a little bit of everything that makes the room whole," she says.

Prior to entering Diane's classroom, every child attends preschool. "I think that their start in education has been great," she says acknowledging the work others have already done to instill self-confidence in the students.

Diane continues this work using a variety of positive techniques to teach the children to believe in themselves and in their own abilities. "I always tell the kids you have strengths and weaknesses," she explains. "Prop up the strengths and we'll work on those weaknesses."

A special plaque in Diane's classroom serves as a visual reminder of her students' intellectual abilities. It reads: Smarty Pants. "I'll point to it and say, 'And you are...?' and they answer, 'A smarty-pants,'" she says. "Some of the kids haven't heard that before."

She also teaches her students not to take things too seriously. "I always tell my kids you have to laugh," she adds about her way of keeping things positive and fair. "I say, 'Ms. Teh doesn't know everything. If you're right, you're right. If you're wrong, then you learn from it.'"

As their teacher, Diane says she wants the students to be proud of who they are. "What I'm most proud of is they can read, they can write, they can ask you questions. They also have self-confidence."

Diane's students stay with her for three years then either move to the more general part of the education field or to another self-contained class for grades 3 through 5. She believes it is key for every child to have the experience of inclusion in the general education classroom.

"It's important for both sides of the kids," she explains. "My kids need it and the general ed kids need it. I try to get them out into the public and to see that you can live and survive there."

Patience and caring are two attributes that Diane believes allows her to work well with her students. "Some people may say, 'Oh I don't like that child because of this or that,' I think we all need to start caring heart-to-heart. Some of our kids get a raw deal, but it might be just one little bad day they have." This where her patience shines.

Diane expresses her love for the students daily. "Some of our kids never have people touch them. I'm a hugger and a kisser to every kid in my classroom. They know that I love them."

She encourages her students to make the most of their abilities. Building on her experience as an arts and crafts teacher in her younger years, her students are encouraged to submit their artwork to the PTA Reflections Contest. This is also another way she gets them involved with the public. One student went to state competition last year and one to district this year.

Diane is as loving to her students' parents as she is to the children. She wants the adults to have confidence in her. "When a parent comes into the room, I hug them and tell them, 'Welcome to our family'. I want them to know that, you can trust me, I'm here for your child and it's a good place."

Joining Diane in the classroom are her two assistants, Chris Daly and Audrey Kell. "We work very well together and they accept my out-of-the box thinking."

Diane was shocked when she was named 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year for her school. "I was really honored when they selected me," she says. "I'm not one for attention, but it just put a smile on my face. I'm starting my 31st year of teaching and special education has been my passion. They're your children," she says of her students.

Parents of rising middle school students came back to thank Diane this spring. "They said I opened doors up to their children, but I have to give everybody the credit. It takes more than one person to take care of these kids. It's the self-confidence we all give them to say you can believe in yourself, you can read, you can do it."

"From the time I started until I graduated, I have loved, loved school," she says. "I will do anything possible for these kids and my families." She is, arguably, as proud of her graduating students as anyone else. "It's hard to let them go," Diane Teh says. "I'm very grateful that they're a part of society, and they have the self-confidence to move forward." NDN

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what's up in real estate



By
Andrew Nelson
President
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Q: Credit scores have always figured highly when buying a home. Is there any way these can be more advantageous to the consumer?

A: As a Realtor® helping clients find their next home, we know how important a FICO score can be. Most home loans are predicated on the FICO score of the buyer and the difference between a good score and one that's not so good can result in a higher interest rate or no loan at all.

That's why the news from Fair Isaac Corporation (FICO) on August 7, 2014 was good for both homebuyers and Realtors®.

Removing medical debt points

The new FICO Score 9 will no longer count medical debts as it did in previous iterations. Some experts feel that this move of treating medical debt differently than regular consumer debt may make the new FICO scores more precise.

Ready for rollout this fall, the newer FICO scores also remove any overdue payment notices if the debt has been settled. According to dailyfinance.com, the current model means a collection generally stays on a credit report for seven years even if it is paid off. This is the same amount of time bankruptcies and foreclosures stay on a report. Now, consumers will see their paid collections being removed from their credit reports.

Q: What about the local market, is there any sign that things are getting better?

A: Over the past twelve months there has been a slight decline in the number of sales in the Williamsburg area. The market still remains sluggish but this may be due to the summer period which traditionally is slow at this time of year. The number of available properties has been steadily climbing from the beginning of the year and previous reports of lack of inventory have changed to a much better supply of homes. The median sales price for the month for July is \$266,000 almost exactly where things were at the same time last year. While the number of days on market for the same period was 38.

Q: Can Realtors® use camera-equipped

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A: The short answer appears to be no, not legally, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

The long answer is a bit more interesting.

In general, the FAA has the authority to regulate things that fly — anything "from the ground up," as it explains on its myth-busting page. That includes drones.

That doesn't mean you always need FAA approval to put something into the air. You can buy a cheap model rocket at Toys R Us and launch it from your backyard without approval, or zip a model airplane around the park.

That's because the FAA has model-aircraft guidelines that let you fly things below 400 feet (as long as you aren't within three miles of an airport, or near populated areas).

But drones are a different matter. The FAA has some different rules for these "Unmanned Aircraft Systems" or UASs.

Here's the important part of those rules:

You may not fly a UAS for commercial purposes by claiming that you're operating according to the Model Aircraft guidelines [...] Commercial operations are only authorized on a case-by-case basis. A commercial flight requires a certified aircraft, a licensed pilot and operating approval.

The question is, does "commercial purposes" include Realtors®? Yes, according to the FAA. By definition, it says, Realtors® using drones are using them for commercial purposes. Ditto for any drone-flying services a Realtor® might hire.

Realtors® using drones to photograph properties are using them for commercial purposes, and thus must have a license.

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Ticket prices are Adults \$27, Children (ages 6-12) \$15. Includes all you can eat shrimp, hot dogs, baked beans, cole slaw, hush puppies and complimentary beverages. Discounted tickets can be purchased online: www.williamsburgkiwanis.org

LAURA CORNETT WANG BRIGHT BEGINNINGS



Corey Miller Photography

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By Susannah Livingston

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In any community, the road can be rough for young children with disabilities or other major challenges in their lives. In Williamsburg, the road is a little bit smoother for those children because Laura Cornett Wang, Teacher of the Year at Bright Beginnings, is traveling it with them.

Laura grew up in Williamsburg, graduated from Lafayette High School in 1997, and went on to Longwood University, where she earned a Degree in Therapeutic Recreation. Then she worked for a year at an adolescent psychiatric hospital in Kenbridge, Virginia, an experience that would prove not just formative but life-changing.

"One of the reasons I went into early childhood education was that I saw these kids who really hadn't had much intervention earlier," Laura says. "I was working with 16-year-olds and I saw what a disconnect there was. I mean, they were 16 years old, and they were wards of the state!"

Determined to do what she could to prevent such sad loss of human potential, Laura enrolled in a master's program in early childhood special education at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and went to

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work as a teacher in Henrico County.

Then Laura did something her 18-year-old self would not have foreseen: she moved back to Williamsburg. "In 1997 I thought I'd leave and never come back," she laughs. "But I had just always heard what a good early childhood program Williamsburg had. One of my professors at VCU actually told me she tried to get in to teach at Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) schools but couldn't." When she was offered a job with WJCC, Laura didn't need time to think it over.

The last eight years have been the kind of professional experience we all dream about. Under the mentorship of Renee Dino, supervisor of WJCC's Early Childhood Program, Laura has helped scores of children make the leap to Kindergarten and has built up a store of classroom wisdom along the way. She clearly loves to talk about Bright Beginnings, which she calls "a wonderful program and a model for other programs."

Bright Beginnings "has two sides: the early childhood special ed side, which serves young children with a diagnosed disability like au-

tism or Down Syndrome that can impact their education," Laura explains. The other half is "kids who are considered typically developing but have some kind of risk factor—poverty, a parent in jail, English as a second language." Having a sibling with a severe disability is also considered a risk factor. In recent years, Laura says, Bright Beginnings has increasingly found itself serving children who are homeless.

The goal of the program is to make sure kids with a variety of risk factors are ready for the regular kindergarten classroom. For children with particularly daunting challenges, that goal can seem well out of reach.

"I had a little guy in my class for three years," Laura says. "When he started with me, he probably said one or two words." Laura says she knew this was a child with autism, but the parents had not come to terms with it yet. "By the time he left Bright Beginnings, he went to a general education kindergarten class. He had this light when you talked to him, and he was playing, walking, talking, interacting with his peers."

This year, all of the kids who transitioned

from Laura's classroom went on to kindergarten. "I love this age group because they change and grow so quickly. It's just so important to get them when they're young."

One critical factor in Bright Beginnings' success is parental involvement. Parents must take part in at least one event every month, a library program or field trip, for example, or they can fulfill the requirement with a classroom visit. "We also have a requirement that we do a home visit each month," Laura says. "I have to say I get really close with some of my parents. We form a friendship. It's not so much 'I'm the teacher and I know everything,'" she says. "The parents know their child best, they know what they need."

Parental involvement is one of the things that sets Bright Beginnings apart from other programs, Laura says. "I know with tight budgets, it's hard, but it makes such a difference." Sometimes when a child starts at Bright Beginnings, the parents are still somewhat in denial about their child's disabilities. "So you continue to work with the family and the child until they realize it's going to be okay — just a

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little different than what they expected." Often, parents who started off in denial end up being strong advocates of children with special needs and of Bright Beginnings.

Laura generally has about 15 kids in her classroom, half with identified special needs, half considered at-risk for other reasons. "So it's an inclusion classroom," she explains. "I have the kids right before kindergarten: the four and five year olds." Two assistants are also in the class all day, supporting the children as they go through their routine of writing practice, outside play, circle time and other activities designed to help them learn while they have fun.

Laura says there's no mystery to what an early childhood teacher has to bring to the job. Above all, she says, "You have to be flexible. When you work with three and four year olds you can't have an idea of how things will go because that's not what's going to happen!" She remembers one student teacher who was observed by a supervisor from her college on the afternoon of the fourth day in a row of rain. "The kids were attached to the ceiling and I thought, 'This is so wrong,'" Laura says, laugh-

ing guiltily. "I felt really sorry for her. But she actually came and took a job with us, so I guess it wasn't as bad as I thought!"

What has she learned about herself from her years of teaching? "How to be patient," Laura replies and how to be constantly open to new ideas. "I've learned so much from the occupational, speech and physical therapists. They've really shaped my classroom. They've all given me ideas. Collaboration is huge, and Bright Beginnings really is a model of that."

Though she says she would not trade her current job "for the world," Laura is looking to the future. Her interest in behavior management has grown steadily over the years, and she's studying to become a board-certified behavior analyst. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy uses learning principles to address behavioral needs.

"ABA therapy is helpful with children with autism," she says, "and it's a lot about behavior management. I've been taking classes so that's my next step." Her dream job would be to help other teachers with children who have behavior problems. "To help them unlock those kids,"

she adds.

That may be Laura's long-range plan. Even bigger changes are much, much closer: Laura and her husband, Sung, will be moving into a newly built house in November and welcoming their first child just before Christmas. Laura plans to take some time off after the baby is born and then return to the job she loves. "My mom has said she'd stay home with the baby when I do go back," she says. "It's never been in my head that I'd be a stay-home mom. It's hard. I really admire my friends who do it."

In her spare time, Laura loves to read and take part in volunteer activities like the Jeremiah Project, a mission program of the Williamsburg United Methodist Church, where she's been a member since middle school.

"I really like helping people, taking that kid who has behavioral needs and figuring out what's going on." She recalls a child who was constantly biting and kicking when he first came to her classroom. "By the time he left me, he hadn't hit at all the last few months of school. To be able to figure that out is the coolest thing I've ever done." NDN

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To submit your non-profit event to Hey Neighbor! send a paragraph with your information to:
heyneighbor@cox.net

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG FARMERS MARKET

Ongoing, every Saturday

Enjoy the heart of Williamsburg in Merchants Square while shopping in this producer-only market for produce, fruit, potted plants, fish, artisan cheeses, meats, pasta, cut flowers and handmade soaps. The market includes live music, chef demonstrations and exhibits along with local shops and restaurants. The market now accepts SNAP/EBT, credit cards and W&M Express. For information, contact call (757) 259-3768, or visit www.williamsburgfarmersmarket.com.

Hey Neighbor!

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Ongoing

We are the Bruton Parish shop located in the Parish House of Bruton Parish Church on Duke of Gloucester St. We have been here since 1995 and are a 501c3 store. We give all of our net proceeds to the Outreach and Mission ministries of the church. It is not a necessity to be a church member but just a believer in our mission. All ages are welcome from teenagers to mature adults. Much of the money raised by the shop is used in Williamsburg and the surrounding areas. We need more men and women to staff our shop. We are open 7 days a week 7

hours a day except Sunday, when we are open for 4 hours in the afternoon. Call Carol Weaver, (757) 220-1489.

Hey Neighbor!

ST. MARTINS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Ongoing

1333 Jamestown Rd. Williamsburg, (757) 229-1111. 10 am Sunday School (resumes in September); 8 am, 9:15 am, 11 am worship on Sunday, Noon Healing, worship on Wednesday; 5 pm Taize Service on Saturday. Visit www.stmartinswmbg.org.

Hey Neighbor!

BIBLE STUDY

Ongoing

If your church or Bible study group leaves you wondering about Biblical questions such as what really happened in the Garden, where did Cain get his wife, what is the mark of the Beast, or any other lingering questions, perhaps you should join us for our weekly Bible study at the Norge library. Every Monday from 6 - 9 pm. Contact (757) 253-0172 or cell (757) 604-6649.

Hey Neighbor!

CALL FOR MUSICIANS

Ongoing

The Williamsburg Players is looking for musicians to help bring the joy of musical theater to the area. You

should be able to read music. Come and share in the excitement as we put on the Hampton Roads premier performance of the second longest running musical in Broadway history, "CATS." Email Mike McCoy at wmmccoy01@cox.net, or call and leave a message at (757) 229-1679.

Hey Neighbor!

JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY

Ongoing, Second Sunday

The Jane Austen Society North America Southeastern VA Region meets on the second Sunday of every month at the Schell Room, Williamsburg Regional Library (515 Scotland St.) at 2 pm. For more information visit our facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/JASNA-SoutheasternVa>. For membership information visit the national site at www.JASNA.org.

Hey Neighbor!

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Ongoing

Historic Jamestowne seeks volunteers to greet and engage guests as well provide accurate information about this premier historic site. If you are interested in volunteering at Historic Jamestowne, please contact Kelly Williams at kwilliams@preservationvirginia.org.

Hey Neighbor!

MEETINGS – REPUBLICAN

COMMITTEE

Ongoing

The City of Williamsburg Republican Committee meets at the Williamsburg Regional Library the second Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. For more information please email [rhc.lbg@gmail.com](mailto:rpc.lbg@gmail.com).

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN'S CHORUS

Ongoing

The Williamsburg Women's Chorus is seeking new members to join our group for the celebration of the 50th year of the chorus' existence. Special music and events will headline this year, so inquire now to become a part of a great group of women who love to sing! Contact Ann Porter at aportermusic@verizon.net or www.williamsburgwomenschorus.org for information.

Hey Neighbor!

IN THE TRENCHES TOUR

September 2 & 16, 2014

10 am. Guests get an "inside the ropes" tour of the original 1607 James Fort, once thought lost to history. Join Dr. William Kelso who led a team of Jamestown Rediscovery archaeologists that found the original fort site in 1996. Tickets are \$40 per person and can be purchased online. Historic Jamestowne, Jamestown. Call (757) 229-4997 or

Harvest Festival & Scarecrow Stuffing

**Saturday, September 20
11 a.m.–4 p.m.**

Chickahominy Riverfront Park

Admission: \$5/car (cash/checks only)
\$15/scarecrow (includes all supplies)

jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation



James City County's annual Harvest Festival features carnival games, hayrides, petting zoo, arts and crafts, inflatables, live entertainment, local food and craft vendors and much, much more! Scarecrow Stuffing is back, so come make the biggest, the best, and maybe the only scarecrow in your neighborhood! First come, first served while supplies last. Cash/checks only on site. Don't forget your camera! Weather permitting.

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Hey Neighbor!

MUSIC AND THE BRAIN™

LECTURE-CONCERT

September 6, 2014

Neurologist Kamal R. Chémali, MD, will be joined by Prisca Benoît, concert pianist at the Williamsburg Regional Library, 515 Scotland St. One of the program's objectives is to increase awareness in the medical and musical communities, as well as in the general public, of the important interaction between music and medicine. The presentation begins at 4 pm and is open and free to the public. Information: (757) 229-9857.

Hey Neighbor!

WALT FALL CLASSES

September 6, 2014

Williamsburg Area Learning Tree (WALT) will open registration for the Fall 2014 Schedule of Classes. Try something new: WALT offers more than 65 different classes led by people in the community who have a talent or interest that they want to share with others. A complete listing of classes is available online at www.wuu.org/walt or in the W/JCC Libraries. Registration is either online or through the mail. For more information, call Jill Whitten, director (757) 220-9975.

Hey Neighbor!

EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC SCHOOL FALL CLASSES

September 8, 2014

The Early Childhood Music School of Williamsburg United Methodist Church is accepting registrations for the next session to begin September 8. The school is in its 25th year promoting excellence in music education. Weekly classes in music and movement are offered for children ages 2 months through 8 years. Contact Cindy Freeman for a fall brochure at (757) 229 - 1771 or freeman@williamsburgumc.org.

Hey Neighbor!

CURATOR'S ARTIFACT TOUR

September 10, 2014

3 pm. During the "Curator's Artifact Tour," senior archaeological curator Bly Straube provides an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at the archaeological collection which provides a glimpse of the artifacts discovered at James Fort, most of which will never go on public dis-

Hey Neighbor!

MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY

September 11, 2014

Williamsburg Botanical Garden, 7 pm, James City/Williamsburg Community Center, 5301 Longhill Road. Felice Bond, Historic Rivers Chapter Master Naturalist and expert photographer, will show how to achieve "up close and personal" photographs of plants and critters. The program is open to the public with a suggested donation of \$5. Contact Karen Jamison, (757) 880-1893, karenjamison@cox.net for information.

Hey Neighbor!

NIGHT OUT AT WELLSPRING UMC!

September 12, 2014

From 6 -9 pm, for children ages 0-11. We will provide dinner for everybody. We will watch Lego movie with older kids and nursery with toys and activities will be provided for the younger ones. Registration forms and more information is available on www.wellspringumc.org.

Hey Neighbor!

3rd ANNUAL CHCF CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC

September 12, 2014

Colonial Heritage Community Foundation kicks off registration for its 3rd Annual CHCF Charity Golf Classic to be held at Colonial Heritage Golf Club. Registration begins at 8:30 with a Shotgun start at 10 am. Proceeds from the tournament support the Innovative Senior Champions Program, which provides a free adult day services program for older adults. Registration for the tournament can be done online at CHCFonline.org or call Don Lewis at (757) 645-4112.

Hey Neighbor!

WCA EAGLES FORE E2 GOLF TOURNAMENT

September 13, 2014

This annual golf tournament at Kiskiack Golf Club will benefit Williamsburg Christian Academy's Educational Enrichment (E2) program. Check in at 8 am, start at 9 am. Cost is \$75 per person and includes 18 holes, light breakfast, practice balls, greens fees, cart fees and lunch. To register, visit Wil-

liamsburgChristian.org or email Karen at plumleyk@williamsburgchristian.org.

Hey Neighbor!

SECOND ANNUAL CAR AND TRACTOR SHOW

September 13, 2014

Hosted by the PTSA, Warhill High School will hold its Car & Tractor Show from 10 am – 3 pm. Browse collectible cars. Search for treasures at vendor and crafter fair by 4 Event Planning. Car registration from 10 am – 12 noon; \$20. Awards at 3 pm. Food, silent auction, music, kid's activities, and restrooms available. Nonperishable food drive. Free admission to public. All funds raised go to After Prom and student and teacher programs.

Hey Neighbor!

"CHASING ICE" FILM

September 15, 2014

The League of Women Voters will present a showing of the film, "Chasing Ice." Follow National Geographic photographer James Balog across the Arctic as he deploys time-lapse cameras designed for one purpose: to capture a multi-year record of the world's changing glaciers. Speaker after Film: Professor Carl Hershner, "Sea Level Rise" Virginia Institute of Marine Science. At 6:30 pm (Doors open at 6:15 pm). Williamsburg Library Theatre, 515 Scotland St., Williamsburg

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG KIWANIS CLUB'S SHRIMP FEAST XXXV

September 16, 2014

The 35th annual Shrimp Feast will be from 4-7 pm at the Jamestown 4-H Camp, rain or shine! Proceeds will benefit Bacon Street, Erase the Need (a school-based program to feed children over the weekend), the Jamestown 4-H Camp, and many other community organizations. Ticket prices are Adults \$27, Children (ages 6-12) \$15. Includes all you can eat shrimp, hot dogs, baked beans, cole slaw, hush puppies and complimentary beverages. Discounted tickets can be purchased online: www.williamsburgkiwanis.org

Hey Neighbor!

W&M MIDDLE EASTERN ENSEMBLE

September 17, 2014

The Williamsburg Music Club will

open its 51st Season with a performance by the Middle Eastern Music Ensemble from the College of William and Mary sharing their unique artistry of music and instruments. Professor Anne Rasmussen leads the ensemble. Program begins at 11 am preceded by "Coffee & Conversation" at 10 am in Lewis Hall of Bruton Parish on Duke of Gloucester Street in downtown Colonial Williamsburg. For further information, access the club's website at www.williamsburgmusicclub.org.

Hey Neighbor!

THE US CONSTITUTION:

THEN AND NOW

September 17, 2014

4 pm. Celebrate Constitution Day, the 227th anniversary of the signing of this seminal founding document, with a discussion of how the 13 original states came together through compromise to form "a more perfect union." 1 hour – included in museum admission.

Hey Neighbor!

8TH ANNUAL CONSERVANCY CHALLENGE GOLF TOURNAMENT

September 18, 2014

Ford's Colony will host the ever-popular event that will take place on the Blue Heron Course with a 1:15 pm Shotgun Start. Tournament day raffles, prizes, and an after play awards reception and more will make the day a fun event for all who participate. For information and to register visit www.williamsburgconservancy.org or call (757) 565-0343. Sponsored by the Williamsburg Land Conservancy.

Hey Neighbor!

THE CHESAPEAKE LOG CANOE

September 19, 2014

Objects from collection of The Mariners' Museum are featured in this year-long special exhibition tracing the evolution of the dugout canoe through the centuries, from the watercraft of the Powhatan people 400 years ago to multi-canoe trade vessels and work and racing boats. Museum hours are 9 am-5 pm daily. Jamestown Settlement is located on State Route 31 in Williamsburg. For information, call (888) 593-4682 toll-free or (757) 253-4838, or visit <http://www.historyisfun.org/chesapeake-log-canoe.htm>.



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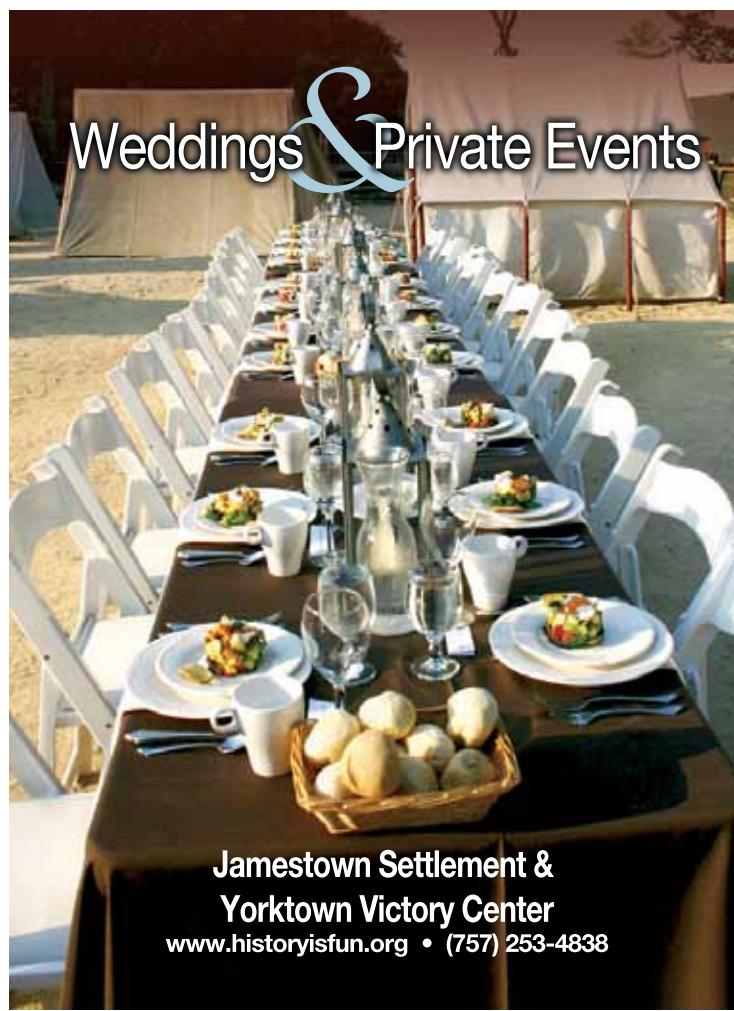


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Entertainment will be provided by Emma St. James and her Jazz Gentlemen.

Artist Vicki Foster is creating an original painting to be auctioned
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Date: September 28th, 2014

Time: 6:00 pm

For information and tickets call

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Original Art By Vicki Foster

Hey Neighbor!

SHRED EVENT

September 19, 2014

2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Free community shred event to help area residents get rid of old documents and papers in a safe and secure manner. There is no limit to the amount of material that an individual can bring to the event. The shred truck will be in the parking lot of Middleburg Bank's Financial Service Center located in New Town. 5372 Discovery Park Boulevard

Hey Neighbor!

REFLECTIONS ON BACON'S REBELLION

September 20, 2014

Guests meet Governor William Berkeley to hear an accounting of his time in Virginia and the unhappy circumstances that led to the rebellion during the program, "Governor Berkeley Laments the Rebellion" at 10:30 am, 1 pm & 3 pm. During a special evening tour at 7 Call (757)229-4997 or visit www.historicjamestowne.org. Free with paid admission.

Hey Neighbor!

NO BEES, FEWER FUN FOODS!

September 20, 2014

Williamsburg Botanical Garden, Freedom Park Interpretive Center, 10 am, open to the public, \$5 donation for each guest is recommended. A member of the Colonial Beekeepers Association, Pam Burton will be the speaker. For information, contact Pam Burton, pburton@ncsc.org.

Hey Neighbor!

FUNDRAISER FOR MOOSE LODGE CHARITIES

September 20, 2014

4:30 pm. Williamsburg moose lodge 757 will hold a special event for Lodge charities. Chinese auction and a 50/50 raffle. All money raised goes to our Moose charities and community. Contact information: (757) 208-0628 ornabiscolover31@yahoo.com.

Hey Neighbor!

COMMUNITY DAY: ON THE RIVERFRONT

September 20, 2014

Discover the progression of log canoes during family exhibit tours, shanty music, children's crafts and hands-on activities. Outdoors, visit

the re-created Powhatan Indian village to see the process of making a dugout canoe. Museum hours are 9 am – 5 pm daily. Jamestown Settlement is located on State Route 31 in Williamsburg. For information, call (888) 593-4682 toll-free or (757) 253-4838, or visit <http://www.historyisfun.org>.

Hey Neighbor!

ARTSPEAKS: OLD AND NEW

September 21, 2014

This Century Art Gallery will bring one of Arts Month's best events to Legacy Hall in New Town at 5:30 pm. Dedicated to the memory of renowned local artist Polly Nunn, the evening will be chock full of art appreciation and musical entertainment! Includes silent and live auctions of new and pre-owned artwork donated by prominent regional artists and collectors (including three Polly Nunn originals), and other exceptional items donated by local businesses. For information/reservations, call (757) 220-2217, or email ArtSpeaks@thiscenturyartgallery.org.

Hey Neighbor!

PURPLE HEART GOLF

September 22, 2014

The Military Order of the Purple Heart is holding a captains choice golf tournament at Viniterra Golf Course. Start time: 10 am. The funds raised will go to the aid and assistance of combat wounded veterans of Virginia. We provide some funding to active duty soldiers and their families in the area through the Sgt. Majors Fund. To play, go to www.purpleheartvirginia.org or contact James E. Samuel at james.samuel@cox.net. We are a 501©3 nonprofit organization.

Hey Neighbor!

CATCH THE VISION! TOUR AT WCA

September 25, 2014

Get an up-close view of Williamsburg Christian Academy when you visit the beautiful campus for this informative one-hour tour at either 8 am or 2 pm. 101 Schoolhouse Lane, Williamsburg. For more info, visit WilliamsburgChristian.org or call (757) 220-1978 ext. 113.

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF

HEY NEIGHBOR!

SUBMISSIONS, VISIT:

www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com

Williamsburg's
**IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD**
photo challenge

**WILLIAMSBURG
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CENTER**

Find the 12 differences
between the original
photograph (top) and
the altered photograph
(bottom).

Enjoy!

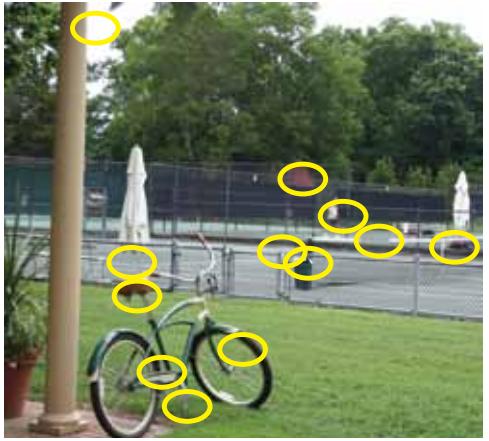


ADVANCED LEVEL

Look for the answers
in the next issue of
Next Door Neighbors

AUGUST 2014

In the Neighborhood
Photo Challenge



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