

August 2019

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VOL. 13, ISSUE 8

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Meredith Collins, Publisher

There is an old adage that says “you learn something new every day.” That is an encouraging thought, but I often think that if I learned only one thing new, the day might be a disappointment. I find that most days I learn several things new. If you are listening and keeping an open mind you can learn from just about anyone or any interaction or any observation. Or, at the very least, be inspired to learn more. I also have found that there are times when the

true extent of what you have learned can sneak up on you. Sometimes the learning process takes reflection and time.

Which brings me to one of my closest friends and mentors, Mr. William Forloine. A long-time, highly active, and generous resident of Williamsburg, many of you may know Bill. I met Bill when I first started this magazine almost 13 years ago and we hit it off from the start. Ever since our first meeting we have gotten together regularly for lunch, dinner, or a beer and conversation on business, the community, and life in general.

Bill helped me learn the Williamsburg market from an “insiders” perspective. Joe and I moved here from Chesapeake and Bill helped shorten the learning curve for me. He introduced me to many people, businesses, and organizations here. He provided caring advice on how to grow and focus my business, how to engage with the community, and all the while peppering our conversations with rich nuggets on life. Over time, he has become my close friend and educator in every sense of the word.

I mention Bill in my intro because I could not put together an Education issue without reflecting on and acknowledging someone who has truly been an educator in life. The publication of this issue coincides with Bill and his wife, Gay, relocating to Columbus, Ohio to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Gay, as you may know, is the person who delivered each new issue of *Next Door Neighbors* to advertisers before they were mailed. I will miss them greatly.

So Bill, this is a salute to you. I am grateful to you for helping me make good decisions that have enabled me to operate a successful magazine serving the Williamsburg community. Above all, I am grateful for our friendship. And no matter where you go you will always be my neighbor. NDN



Bill Forloine

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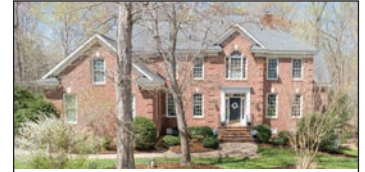
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Creating A Future for our Youth

By Narielle Living

One of Katrina York's favorite quotes is from Franklin Roosevelt. "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." As a recreation supervisor with James City County, it's easy to understand her passion for preparing kids to have a bright future.

Katrina was born and raised in York County, Virginia, and graduated from York High School. Even as a student, she knew she wanted to be connected to educating, teaching and working with kids. "I have worked with kids since I was 16," she says. "I worked for York County Parks and Recreation for a majority of the first part of my life, and I've been here for six years."

One of the aspects of working with young people that she likes the most is being able to create change and help kids grow and adapt. In her day-to-day role, Katrina often acts as a mentor and guide to the kids who are in her programs. "I like watching them grow and seeing where they start and where they end."

Katrina received her undergraduate degree in interdisciplinary studies. "I started out wanting to be an elementary teacher," she says. But

with her experience in the parks and recreation programs, she knew that there were more career options available to her. "That's where the interdisciplinary comes in." In addition, she has two master's degrees. "My first is in urban education with an emphasis in school counseling, and I have a second in adult education."

Married for 11 years, Katrina and her husband David live in Williamsburg. "We've lived here for five years," she says. "We also have a five-year-old daughter, Kaylen." Previously, Katrina and her husband lived at the edge of Hampton and York County, which was not ideal for either of them since they both worked in Williamsburg. "It made sense to move up here." Katrina mentions that despite having a passion for teaching and working with kids, her own experience of having a child has somewhat altered her approach to teaching kids. "It was a whole eye-opening thing," she says.

Katrina's office is in a nondescript building on Palmer Lane. The inside is somewhat institutional looking, which belies the creative work that goes into building all of the classes and programs that are offered. As a recreation supervi-

sor, Katrina wears many hats.

"I oversee the Youth Advisory Council, where we have teens who work in the community, and I bridge the gap between adults and kids," she says. She also strives to maintain positive community relations and oversees all of the teen volunteers, a position that requires her to assess the workshops and classes being offered and determine the best way the teens can assist in these programs. "I also oversee middle school summer camp and before and after school classes, and some of the elementary summer camp and before and after school classes there, too. My position encompasses a lot of different things."

Working with teen volunteers means training them to do the job they were asked to do. Katrina is more than up to the task. "Teens volunteer within our summer camps and our before and after school programs, in our parks, in the rec center, and they can do our specialty camps like our sports camps and any other camps we have out in the community." The only prerequisite is that a teen is 13 years of age or older. "We're teaching them job skills," she says, noting that at the age of 16 they then



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become qualified to work as paid employees in the same programs. "They can get community service hours for school. We sign off on all of those things for them." Teens are allowed to volunteer for up to 27 hours per week, and they receive a t-shirt and can attend any of the field trips offered by the camps. Katrina has to spend some time recruiting kids to do this, but in the end it's worth it. "I send out flyers to guidance counselors in the schools and there's also word of mouth. Most of the kids volunteer at least three years before they can work, so it's been an ongoing program."

There are times when Katrina is faced with dealing with a child who needs more help than the classes at Rec Connect can offer. In her current role, she tries to be proactive and form partnerships with other organizations who can reach out with different resources.

"Within our program we have a lot of partnerships. Recently we had Avalon come to our youth advisory council and discuss domestic cases. We incorporate different programs into our program." Currently, they have around 20 kids in their programs who are homeless. Katrina's role then extends to counselor as well as teacher. "We made it work out where they

only have to pay so much, and local churches are making their lunches. Our staff does a good job of mentoring the kids as best they can." Of course, sometimes Katrina might not have all of the pertinent information about a child before they come through the door. "Sometimes we're mom, we're dad, we're nurse or we're doctor," she says. "I've come across a lot of things but we try to train our staff on those situations and offer whatever help we can in any capacity we can."

In addition to coordinating curriculums for the programs and working with outside partnerships, Katrina also works with the social services agency when foster kids are in her classes. She sees it all as part of the same thing and is focused on teaching the kids how to give back to the community. "Our program was founded on community service and how we give back. We do community service projects all the time."

Twice a year Rec Connect organizes community service projects, and they have worked with both Avalon and FISH. "We just donated over 200 pounds of stuff to FISH. Community service is a big thing to me. I've tried to drive home that we need to do community service. It's a passion of mine."

When she was a teenager, Katrina York didn't participate in many activities outside of school and home. She explains that her parents did not see it as an option for her, and they would tell her that she could do things at her house or on her own. Very often activities were cost prohibitive, something she now works to overcome for many families. "

We offer a lot of free programs," she says. "They're out there, so I would say look for those opportunities. We have a lot of opportunities out there, and if we don't have it we're trying to create new ones." She insists that they have something for everyone. "Everybody can be included in our programs or everybody can participate in the things we offer. I want people to know that the sky's the limit when it comes to working in the community or being a child and being out there. It's just what you look for when you're trying to engage."

She shakes her head for a moment and looks into the distance as if witnessing a different scene.

"I feel like the teens are a lost population. As a teen coordinator, that's one of the things I'm trying to fix. I want to have more offerings for those children who need something." NDN

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ANDY ENGEL



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HISTORY ALIVE Beyond the Classroom Walls

By Caroline Johnson

For Andy Engel, coming to Williamsburg to teach was just the first chapter of his story here. Now in his twentieth year with Colonial Williamsburg, he's merged his love of teaching with his passion for history as he serves as the Manager of Program Development for Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Teacher Institute. The Teacher Institute is an immersive and interdisciplinary program that works with American History and Social Studies teachers from all over

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the country. Throughout the year, teachers from across the country find themselves in our own backyard, engaging themselves in history and taking it back to their students in a new and exciting way. As the Manager of Program Development, Andy organizes these Teacher Institute sessions and on and offsite workshops throughout the year. He is responsible for building up the programs, training staff, and implementing programming. While he may not have been able to predict taking on a role like this, his background and passions make him a great fit as he gets the opportunity to bring history beyond classroom walls.

Originally, Andy moved to Williamsburg for a few reasons. He knew he wanted to teach, knew the area represented a time period of history that he loved and was excited about the location. Moving from Ohio, he quickly found that life teaching outside of a classroom was an option as he began with the Foundation working in group interpretation. Knowing the ins and outs of working in this position has helped him seamlessly translate certain skills into his current position. Since part of his current position lies in training staff, including the group leaders,

coordinators, interns and master teachers, he's able to work closely with those in teaching roles at different points throughout the programs he runs. "I know what it's like to be in those shoes," Andy says.

An avid visitor to other historic sites around the country, Andy takes advantage of his proximity to sites in nearby places like Maryland, D.C. and North Carolina. A fan of live music and exploring the continually evolving craft beer and wine scene, he's settled into Williamsburg just fine over his past twenty-one years calling it home. "There's a sense of place here," Andy says. "There are magical places all around the world and country that you can literally feel the history and feel surrounded by it. This is one of those places."

He believes that the experiences that the Teacher Institute programs create give the visiting teachers a new lease on history. "Not only have they learned the history, but now they've gotten to experience it as closely as possible," Andy says. He helps these visiting teachers make a connection with history by giving them the ability to interact with it. "Teachers have commented that their students have a broader un-

derstanding of the subject after they visit," Andy says. "They have stories of historical people that their students can connect with, and that's one of the biggest pieces." Going beyond the textbook, Teacher Institute focuses on more than just the "key players" students tend to hear about in school. "We dive into the deeper stories of the people here," Andy says. "The enslaved, the merchants, the women and the families who were here supporting all that was going on." To Andy, building what was built here would have been impossible without the support of all of the people as a whole. "We're setting the stage to look at the origins of government."

Giving visiting teachers the foundation to talk about the people who lived here allows them to then give their students the opportunity to truly learn about what was happening with the emerging American government. "Teachers are sent back from the immersive program with new and different strategies for the students to interact with the content," Andy says. Some examples of these strategies in action include activities like roleplaying a person of the past or engaging students in a fake "debate" for independence. "The students don't have to just sit there and learn



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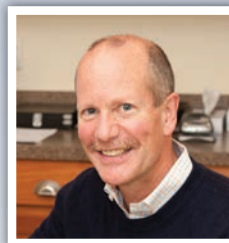
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dates.” It’s this approach that the Teacher Institute implements to help teachers and students around the country connect with the history of our country unlike ever before.

The Teacher Institute program itineraries vary and take place over three or six days, offering collaborative and immersive learning experiences for teachers on site in Williamsburg. Summer is by far their busiest season, with over five hundred teachers attending between June and August. Each program has a “Master Teacher” that is a Colonial Williamsburg Foundation volunteer. These master teachers are embedded in the program and stay to support the teachers, help them make connections and model classroom lessons. The two current themes are “Becoming Americans” and “Emerging American Identity,” hitting on two key components in the origins of our government.

“Teachers have time each day to collaborate and share ideas on what they’re experiencing and how they can translate it into their classroom,” Andy says. While each experience is tailored to the teachers attending, they all center around bringing the history alive. The program gives teachers a chance to visit Colonial Williams-

burg’s living history museum and two art museums amongst other one-of-a-kind experiences. “Each day they have an experience at Colonial Williamsburg that they won’t be able to have any place else,” Andy says. These experiences include moments like looking at Patrick Henry’s Stamp Act Resolves in the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation’s collections. “These experiences give us the opportunity to take the resources we have, whether content, objects, buildings or people, and connect it to a whole new set of people who are the future.”

This summer, the 10,000th teacher will attend the program, highlighting the impact that the Teacher Institute has made in how teachers across the country are able to get involved with history. With partnerships with school districts all over our nation, Colonial Williamsburg is viewed as an authority on education. As Colonial Williamsburg Foundation’s Teacher Institute continues to move forward with their program, they’re taking the time this fall to look at what they can do to continue to best serve teachers everywhere. “The history hasn’t changed, but the history that is being shared and taught is new to a lot of people,” Andy says. “The biggest shift is

looking at contributions of everyone as a whole, not just the movers and shakers.”

As the Manager of Program Development, Andy and his team are constantly looking at the curriculums to adjust them based on what is relevant in classrooms, the resources available to teachers and to the needs of the teachers they serve. His goal is to figure out ways for students and teachers to guide their learning as best as possible. For many of the teachers who visit Teacher Institute, Andy is proud that this program gives them a place of belonging. “Some teachers feel like they’re alone as they’re often the only social studies teachers in their building,” Andy says. “With our program, they’re able to network and share ideas with other teachers from around the country and realize they share the same successes and challenges as others.”

While Williamsburg residents get to see history in our own backyard on a regular basis, opportunities like these are essential for keeping history alive as our country continues to evolve. For Andy Engel, he’ll keep doing his part on the ground here taking history from the textbook pages to in-person experiences that’ll last through generations. NDN

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ERIC STONE



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

By Brandy Centolanza

The chance to change the life of a young person for the better is what drives Eric Stone as a mentor. For more than a year, Eric has been involved with the Men of Vision & Purpose mentoring program. He serves as executive director of the nonprofit organization.

Men of Vision & Purpose was founded a few years ago by Archie Jefferson and William

Capers, two Williamsburg-James City County School division employees. The program's aim is to promote personal development, academic improvement, confidence, self-discipline and drive in students in elementary school through high school.

"We provide guidance and direction to young people," Eric says. "Our goal is to help

every young person we work with meet their fullest potential after high school, whether they are furthering their education or joining the military or the workforce."

Through Men of Vision & Purpose, mentors hope to change the way society views all men, especially men of color, as well as the way men are treated institutionally. Mentors

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offer resources and assistance to children and teens in order for them to hone their communication, decision-making, goal-setting, leadership, and other life skills they'll need to be successful in life. Mentors meet with students on a weekly basis year-round, usually at Lafayette High School. Activities vary depending on the child's age, and, despite the name, girls can also participate in the program.

"Archie, William, and I all have daughters," Eric says. "We just feel that as males we also have something we can offer to females."

The Men of Vision & Purpose program also includes a community service component, which Eric views as an essential piece. The kids volunteer at two local races, the Colonial Half Marathon & 5K in the winter and the Run the DOG Street 5K in the spring. Volunteers hand out medals and water and act as cheerleaders for the runners, even in inclement weather.

"We want to instill in young people the importance of community service," Eric says. "We want the kids to understand the art of paying it forward. They may not see immediate results, but they understand why they should give back to their community because someone at some point helped them in some

way."

Eric, who grew up in Williamsburg, has been paying it forward throughout the area for years. He started out as an officiate and coach for local youth basketball and softball tournaments. In fact, Archie Jefferson [next story] was once one of the children Eric used to pick up and drive to games. Eric was also a middle school basketball and softball coach back in the 1990s. For the past two decades, he's also volunteered for the football program and the theater program at Lafayette High School. In addition to Men of Vision & Purpose, Eric serves on the board of directors for Riverside Doctors Hospital Williamsburg and on the Advisory Board for Real People Educating Others, another community mentor group.

"I enjoy mentoring because I enjoy seeing the success of kids," he says. "I like working with kids. I like watching them grow and develop as people."

Eric is also well-known throughout Williamsburg as a long-time firefighter for the City of Williamsburg Fire Department. After graduating Lafayette High School, he spent 36 years as a career fireman, rising in the ranks to sergeant and fire captain before becoming

the first African American to serve as Battalion Chief. His last assignment before retiring three years ago was Technical Assistant to the Fire Chief for the City of Williamsburg. He also served as the director for the Tidewater Regional Fire Academy.

Eric first became interested in firefighting at the age of 11 after hearing fire inspector Jim Bell speak about fire education and safety at a 4-H Camp. He picked up an application soon after for the fire department's junior firefighter program.

"I thought it sounded pretty cool," Eric says.

His parents signed him up for the program which involved riding along in a fire truck on calls and spending nights at the fire station. "It was one of the most exciting things that ever happened to me," Eric says. "All the firefighters took really good care of me."

That experience is just one of many that inspired Eric to reach out to help others throughout his life.

"I didn't get to where I am by myself," Eric says. "I have had many mentors along the way. Teachers, family members and friends, co-workers, my wife, my daughter and all the young people who I've mentored also men-

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tored me. They didn't know it, but I was learning from them, too."

According to Eric, it is a willingness to develop personal relationships with kids that is the key to success for any mentor. "Some kids may be challenging and not willing to open up right away, but you have to work to build those relationships with them," he says. "That's important."

The payoff is worth it. Over the years, Eric has helped a few high school students find their way post-graduation as firefighters.

"There was one young man who was dealing with a tragedy going into his senior year, and he wasn't sure what he was going to do after high school," Eric says. "I told him I was going to make a firefighter out of him, and with my guidance and support, he went on and became a firefighter. That is just one example of what motivates me to keep going and working with young people."

Years later, Eric continues to see the results of his efforts of working with youth. As coordinator of James City County's summer youth football camp, Eric brings back former players who assist as coaches and mentors during the camp.

"There are former players who come back from Texas, Florida, Georgia," Eric says. "I love that they come back and help with the camp. That's the greatest feeling, watching them return and pay it forward."

Eric has had many influences throughout his own life, but he most likes to credit his family for making him the man he is today. They would be his wife of 30 years, Lisa, also an educator; his daughter, Shannon, a physical therapist; and, especially his father and mother, Robert and Louise Stone.

"My parents have been my biggest mentors without a doubt," says Eric, who has 11 siblings. "I was exposed to a lot of different things growing up. They made sure we always had what we needed. I can never thank them enough for that."

Mentoring is in Eric Stones' blood, and he hopes to continue to change the lives of the young people of Williamsburg. "I have been extremely fortunate to have had people help me along the way, and I appreciate that," he says. "I enjoy helping people, and my hope is that the young people I mentor will grow up and feel the same way and will also want to help other people." NDN

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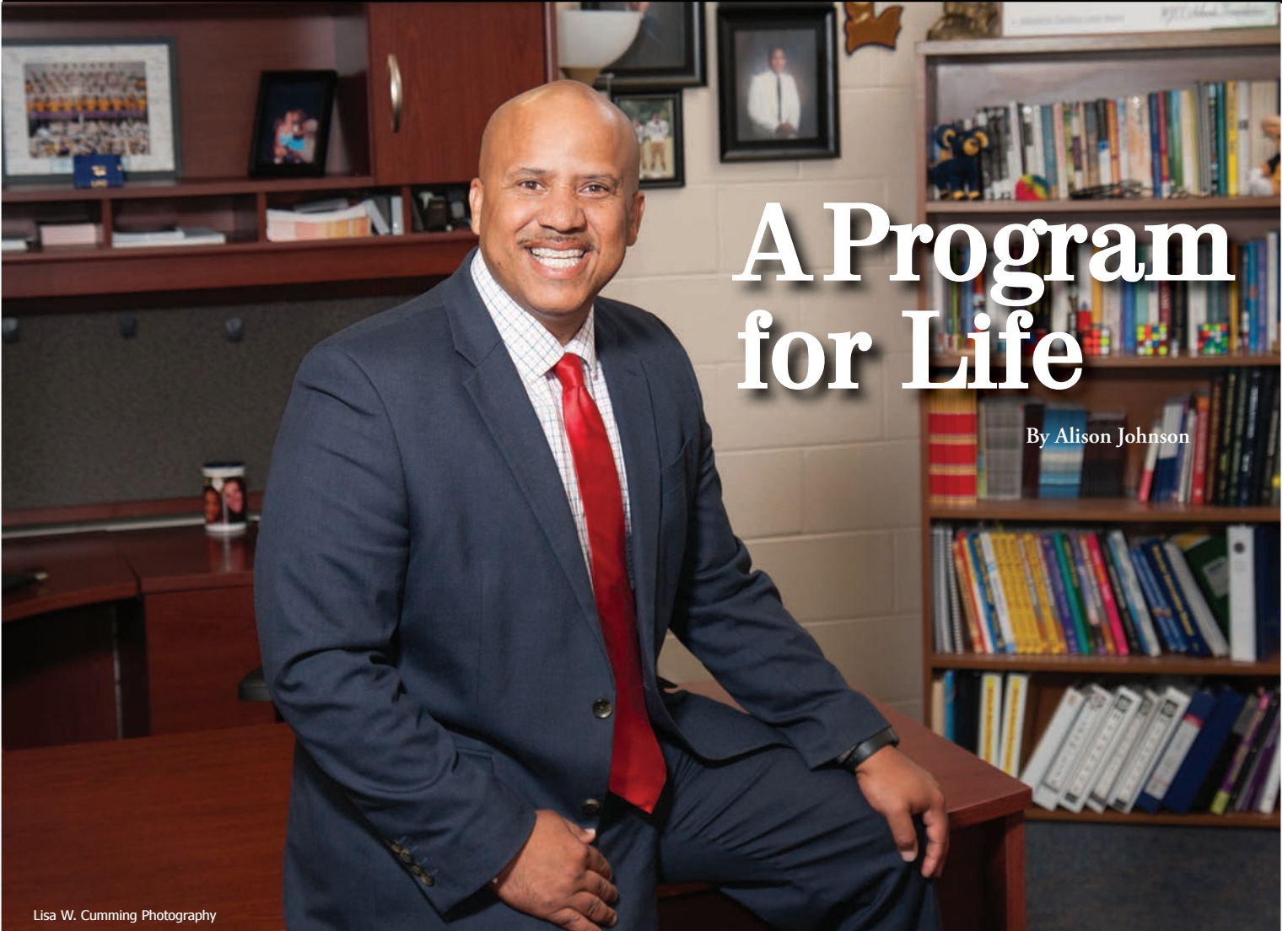
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ARCHIE JEFFERSON



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A Program for Life

By Alison Johnson

Archie Jefferson wasn't quite three years old when he first became a mentor. As soon as his little brother was born, Archie's mother put him in charge of fetching diapers and bottles and soothing the baby when he cried.

In the four decades since then, Archie has earned a college degree in social work and worked at a homeless shelter, a residential

group home, a social services organization and an alternative school. For the past 12 years, he has served as the Student Advancement Coach at Lafayette High School, where he once was a student himself.

Archie also is a founder of two comprehensive, school-based mentoring programs for boys and girls, Men of Vision and Purpose (MVP)

and Women of Vision and Purpose (WVP). Both aim to build self-confidence; provide purpose, direction and motivation; and promote leadership, teamwork, academic success and community service.

"I truly believe that your foundation determines how high you can go," Archie says. "Our students are living on the first floor of their

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lives. It's my job to convince them that they are skyscrapers and encourage them to take the next step, even when they can't see the stairs."

Open to all students, MVP and WVP together have nearly 300 members at Lafayette, along with about 40 more at James Blair Middle School. Archie helped develop the nonprofits' curriculum, workbooks and activities and hopes to expand them to other schools.

One of his main goals is very personal. Archie wants each student to know what a father's love should feel like. He was just nine when his own dad left his family, and he is now a devoted father of five, including 15-year-old quadruplets. "No matter how successful I am, I will always be shaped by missing my father," Archie says. "I always wanted that figure in my life. I remember looking over in the stands when I was playing sports and never seeing my dad there. That doesn't ever happen to my kids."

MVP and WVP members meet once or twice a week from 7:25 to 7:55 a.m. in Lafayette's gym. The organizations are open to students of all socioeconomic, racial, cultural and academic backgrounds, not just those at risk of not graduating.

Sessions might include discussions on skills such as conflict resolution, accountability and

time management, along with fun team challenges such as using yarn and rings to build a spider web across a basketball court. Members also participate in community service projects. Some days, boys and girls meet together or compete against one another. WVP squads often win because they're less impulsive and better at planning. "The guys see that these girls have a lot to offer. They're smart and talented, not just something pretty to look at."

The programs have improved school attendance and reduced discipline rates. For the last three years, members have a 100 percent graduation rate; many have gone on to college. This past year, three seniors also received \$450 scholarships to help cover books.

As Student Advancement Coach, Archie enjoys helping students who are struggling with any aspect of their lives to guide them toward graduation.

"I love the challenge and seeing when kids 'get it,'" he says. "Every day is different. There's no monotony. These are amazing kids who need your best on a daily basis. Either you check your baggage at the door and give your best to them, or you shouldn't have this job. My goal is to create an environment where they feel like they can do anything."

His personal mantra helps, too. "When things get too tough for the average man or woman, they're just right for me."

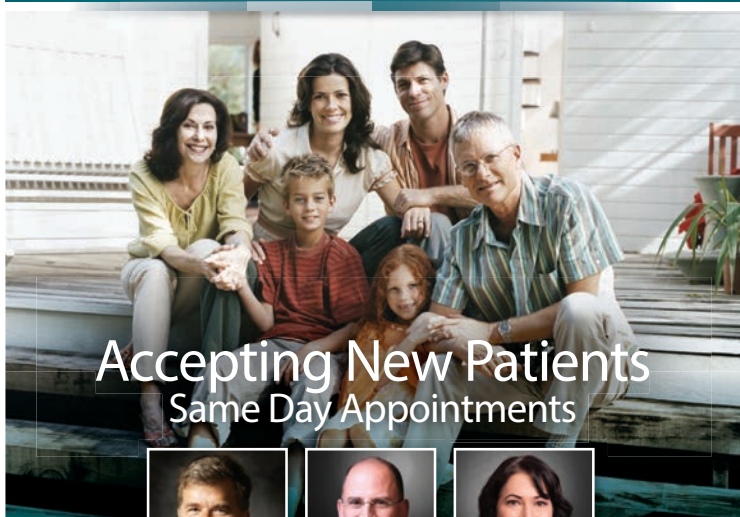
Archie, 47, credits his mother for showing him the joy of serving others and never giving up. Mildred Jefferson was that mom who always welcomed friends with snacks and home-cooked dishes such as meatloaf, macaroni and cheese and her famous homemade pound cake. "My mom is from Alabama, and her ministry was her food," Archie says. "She knew that with meals comes conversation and connection. She never minded us sharing. She was always asking, 'You hungry?'"

Born in San Francisco, Archie spent several of his preteen years in Alabama, where his grandfather had a pig farm. After his father left, Mildred relocated to Williamsburg to be near her sister. To support her two boys, she juggled two jobs: a hotel bartender and a waitress for Colonial Williamsburg.

"She is the reason I am where I am today," Archie says. "My brother and I were able to see so far because we were standing on her shoulders. She worked so hard for us." His brother, Brad, is now a teacher and football and track coach at a high school in Alabama.

After graduating from Lafayette, Archie took

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– Chef Hans Schadler, Waypoint Seafood and Grill



Mayumi Bracken

Mayumi is originally from Japan but she has lived in various places around the world. During her stay in London, she obtained a diploma in French pastry at Le Cordon

Bleu. She decided to enroll in ChefsGO in order to acclimate herself to the pace and pressure of full-time employment. After graduating this course, she would like a lead role in making pastries at a hotel or restaurant kitchen. She has enjoyed her mentorship with Chefs Hans and Stephen at Waypoint Seafood and Grill.



Amber Kunich

At 20 years young, Amber enjoys working with her hands not only with cooking, but also drawing, building and painting. She loves attending local Comic Conventions,

doing different Cosplays (dressing as favorite characters), and seeing vendors from all over the country. Amber is not a big fan of seafood, but she does love Italian and Asian cuisine. After completing her mentorship with Chef Travis at the Williamsburg Inn, she aspires to one day own and run a series of food trucks.



Kia White

Kia White is 20 years old. She moved from California to Virginia nearly a year ago. She works as a part time server at Cracker Barrel while working and completing her mentorship at Windsor Meade in Williamsburg

under the direction of Chef Adrien and Kevin Early. Her hobbies include cooking and reading. Her goal is to complete ChefsGO and continue with her education in culinary. She wants to travel the world to explore different types of food and hopes to own her own restaurant. Her favorite foods are enchiladas and Macaroni and Cheese.



Ruth Potter

After growing up in Lynchburg, VA, Ruth now calls Williamsburg home. Ruth served our country in the U.S. Army Active duty. She was honorably discharged

after 28 years and two deployments overseas. Along the way, Ruth completed two degrees, an AA General Studies and a BA International Business. She traveled around the world meeting amazing people of all cultures and ethnicities. Ruth is looking forward to gaining valuable culinary skills with ChefsGO as she is working towards becoming an Executive Chef in the future.



Shonda Mott

Shonda is from Tucson, AZ but has been in Virginia for 10 years. Shonda has many years of hospitality/housekeeping experience and is now looking forward to becoming an educated chef and working in a fine dining restaurant. She is completing her mentorship with Chef Scott at the Blue Talon Bistro in Williamsburg. She is CPR/AED certified and has a positive attitude and excitement towards satisfying people. In her spare time she loves baking cookies and cake while listening to music.

he is currently employed with Harris Teeter while he simultaneously completes his mentorship under the tutelage of Chef Steven at A Hound's Tale in Williamsburg. In the future, he hopes to use the culinary skill he learns in ChefsGO to open his own café.



Sebastian Martinez

Sebastian is eighteen years old. As a military kid, he has lived in Germany, North Carolina, and Tennessee. While in high school, Sebastian worked at Panera Bread, and

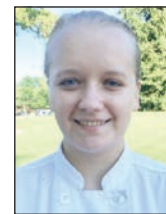
he is currently employed with Harris Teeter while he simultaneously completes his mentorship under the tutelage of Chef Steven at A Hound's Tale in Williamsburg. In the future, he hopes to use the culinary skill he learns in ChefsGO to open his own café.



Randy Munford

Born in Queens, New York, Randy is 18 years old. Until starting his mentorship at the Trellis under the supervision of Chefs Jonathan and Scott, Randy had not had an

opportunity to work. Instead, he has been very busy with high school (he was an honor student), his church youth group, choir and services, physical exercises, house chores and video games. Once Randy completes ChefsGO, he would like to open his own restaurant or bakery.



Rebekah Pettus

Rebekah just graduated from Williamsburg Christian Academy. She lived in Ukraine for 17 years and then moved to the U.S. in 2015 when she was adopted by a wonderful

family in Williamsburg. She hopes to open her own restaurant and she wants to help homeless people and serve the community. Chef Uwe is happy to have Rebekah at Kingsmill for her mentorship where she is learning the rigors of a resort kitchen.

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classes at Thomas Nelson Community College and Virginia State University in Petersburg before completing his social work degree at Alabama A&M University.

Archie's first job was as a social worker aide at a homeless shelter in Petersburg, where for two years he helped people find employment and created arts, recreation and tutoring programs for kids. He also spent six years as lead counselor and house parent for a therapeutic foster home in Alabama, supervising teenagers with emotional and behavioral problems.

In 1999, Archie got a full-time job with the Department of Human Services in Williamsburg, where he served as At-Risk Youth Mentor/Behavior Specialist. With a caseload of more than 40 families, his tasks included coordinating after-school and summer activities, checking on grades and homework and lining up needed transportation.

Then came a life bombshell for Archie and his wife, Julie, a fourth-grade teacher at James River Elementary School. Already parents to a 6-year-old son, Julian, they welcomed quadruplets, three boys and a girl, in 2004 without using fertility drugs. "It was chaos, and it was overwhelming," Archie says of those early days with Brandon, Brock, Brad and Justice.

To boost the family's income, Archie started his own cleaning, landscaping and moving business, which was successful until the economy crashed after three years. He also worked at the Academy for Life and Learning, an alternative school in Williamsburg, helping kids with academic and behavioral issues for four years before starting at Lafayette.

In 2016, Archie launched MVP, developed with André McLaughlin, a police officer and school resource officer at Lafayette, and William Capers, a school security officer and motivational author. Eric Stone, a longtime volunteer with the school's football program, later joined the effort.

Seeing the program's success, the team added WVP in the fall of 2018. "Some people said, 'You shouldn't be the one to do this, you are males,'" he recalls. "I don't agree with that at all. We're fathers, and we have daughters."

Archie's other work at Lafayette has included planning three school proms. "It's one of the most romantic nights in a young person's life," he says. "They get to dress up, act like adults and have a great time. It's a lot of work, but it's so worth it to see them happy."

In his spare time, Archie enjoys riding motorcycles, playing tennis, reading and writing,

although his first priority is always his family. Julian, now 22, is in the Army and living in Colorado, while three of the quadruplets are at Lafayette. The fourth is on the autism spectrum and receives services at Warhill High School. Mildred Jefferson, now retired, helps care for her grandkids.

Last year, Archie also faced a major health challenge when he was diagnosed with kidney cancer and needed his right kidney removed. While he continues to struggle with low energy at times, he recently underwent a scan that showed he is cancer free.

Love from his students encouraged Archie during treatment last spring. While on leave from Lafayette, he was flooded with letters and banners of support. "I thought, 'I've got to get back to these kids.'"

Not surprisingly, Archie likes to stay in contact with Lafayette students after they graduate, including his MVP and WVP alumni.

"They're in this program for life," he says. "They can always call us. And then at some point, it will be their turn to give back and help others." NDN

For more information, visit menofvisionandpurpose.org.

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Leading by Example

By Susan Williamson

William Capers Jr. grew up in the small town of Whiteville, North Carolina. His first job was in law enforcement. He was three years into that career when a mentor suggested he join the Army. William says, "It was the best advice I ever received." As a Special Forces Army soldier, he was lucky to have many more excellent teachers and mentors. "I never had a bad leader."

Paying that forward, William, along with Archie Jefferson, a student advancement coach

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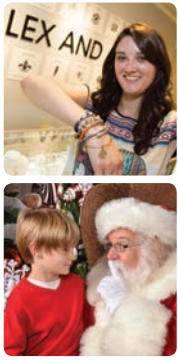
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with James City County Schools, founded Men of Vision and Purpose (MVP) in 2014. MVP is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit comprehensive mentoring program that provides purpose, direction and motivation to young men and women. It is open to all youth, regardless of race, color, creed, religion or gender. Retired firefighter and Battalion Chief Eric Stone joined the organization in 2018. MVP has several curriculums to help facilitate mentoring.

The newest of these is the Genesis Drone Academy, a subsidiary of MVP which will begin next fall. Genesis includes an academic curriculum that facilitates the learning process of sixth through 12th grade students to help them understand drone technology as a tool and future career option. The three phases of the curriculum are: walk, which is basic learning; crawl for specific learning; and run which involves passing the FAA test and actually operating drones. Studying drones, also known as UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) gives students a better understanding of science, physics, robotics and aeronautics. An after-school program will prepare students to take and pass the FAA Part 107 Aeronautical Knowledge Test when they are sixteen in order to become licensed drone operators. This training will enable students to become entrepreneurs and/or enter the workforce with a highly marketable skillset.

“Drones offer entrepreneurship opportunities limited only by imagination,” William says. For example, he lists city planners, traffic planners, wedding venues, real-estate developers, athletic coaches, car dealerships, construction supervisors, news outlets and search and rescue teams as possible customers for a drone owner/operator. He is enthusiastic about equipping students with the means to become entrepreneurs, to monetize their immediate future and to become lifelong learners.

William wrote and received a grant to buy four drones for the Williamsburg James City County School system where he is employed as an In School Suspension Aide at James Blair Middle School. Funds raised by MVP purchased an additional five larger drones. The Genesis program also includes a scholarship portion and the opportunity for the top graduating senior to receive a drone.

In 2008, William and his family moved to the Hampton Roads area when he was stationed at Fort Eustis. He retired from the military after 23 years of active service in 2012. His wife and high school sweetheart, Rendessa, also retired and had relatives who settled in Fredericksburg, Virginia after completing military careers. William said she wanted to be near family members and after moving her all over the country, it only seemed fair. The couple decided to stay in the Williamsburg area and build a house in James City County. All five of their children, Bryan, Monique, Jaquetta, Ashley and William are now adults, with Ashley, who just joined the Navy, and William still living at home. They have two grandchildren. Bryon lives the farthest away, in Columbia, South Carolina. Monique is in Virginia Beach and Jaquetta in Newport News.

William says he loves Williamsburg for the beautiful scenery and the opportunity to be engaged in so many activities. He loves reading, flying drones, sky-diving and fitness. Hunting and fishing were boyhood hobbies which he continues to enjoy. “I love learning,” William says. “At 51, I am still learning and plan to continue to be a lifelong learner.” Rendessa’s hobbies include counted cross stitch, and she loves spending time with family. William says, “I’m still getting used to the stability of

living in one place. We lived all over the United States; our youngest son was born in Alaska.” He believes the travel gave his children a well-rounded education, but it made it hard for them to form relationships.

Feeling a little at loose ends in retirement, he accepted a job as a security guard at Lafayette High School where he met Archie Jefferson. While there, they came up with the idea of MVP as a way to mentor and encourage students to reach their potential. “When the seed of MVP was planted, I wanted to give young people something intangible like the ability to have mentors in their lives.”

William remembers his high school days in Whiteville. “There were very few mentors and outlets for young people at that time.” After four years at Lafayette, William transferred to his position at the new James Blair Middle School. His primary focus in his job is to help students on in-school suspension keep up with their course work. Students are sent to his classroom for discipline issues, usually for two or three days. “The main issue stems from lack of self-discipline,” William says. This is why he values having the opportunity to teach character development and give the students something intangible which includes a relationship with a mentor. “I run a tight ship,” he says about his classroom. “I try to convince students that they don’t want to be suspended.”

His job is separate from his MVP work, but he tries to build relationships with many students. William is well spoken with a friendly and courteous manner. To date, there are 291 middle and high school students participating in MVP and WVP, Women of Vision and Purpose. Other programs which come under the MVP umbrella are Real Men Read; Vision for Maximum Impact known as VMI which deals with decision making, goal setting and communication; No Opportunity Wasted, N.O.W.; an elementary school level of life skills learning known as T.O.Y.S program; and Anti-Bullying.

William holds Bachelor’s Degrees in Business and Religion and this year completed a Master’s Degree in Education with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction from Regent University. As a part of his work in MVP he has written and co-written ten books which include curriculum guides for the various MVP programs, which are available from the MVP website.

“MVP believes that every young person has the right to go to bed with a dream and wake up with a vision for their life,” William says. “And if we can connect teamwork, team-building, relationships and what we are attempting to do in the field of education to the student’s dream and vision for their life, only then can we get the productivity we are looking for.” One of the books William co-authored is Rule # 1 Teamwork makes the Dream Work: Six Traits That Makeup Highly Effective Teams. In the book he talks about being a servant leader and introduces the Titanium Rule which he quotes from Claire Gaines: “Do unto others, according to their druthers.” The book uses lots of real life examples and includes a fill-in–the-blank study guide for each trait at the end.

As a mentor, William Capers Jr. leads by example. His servant attitude and genuine care for the young people he meets come through in his actions as well as his speech. Another of the MVP books is titled *Average Just Won’t Do!* The MVP leaders are not satisfied with the status quo for themselves or the young people they work to encourage. NDN



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A Commitment to Help Others

By Susan Williamson



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Skip Shannon began his career as a reading teacher, and now, as a volunteer for Literacy for Life, he is once again a reading teacher. One of his pupils/mentees is Rogie Johnson, a thirty-five year truck driver for Colonial Williamsburg who wanted to learn to read so he could read to his grandchildren. With the

encouragement of his wife, Mary, and his five children, Rogie enrolled in Literacy for Life. When he attained the minimum math and reading level required, he entered the National Educational Development Program (NEDP) in order to earn a high school diploma. Rogie had dropped out of school after the eighth

grade to help support his family. It was important to Rogie and his wife that their children receive an education, and all five have earned college degrees.

Skip served as one of Rogie's two tutors as he worked to master the ten competencies of the NEDP. Much of the NEDP curriculum is on-

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line, but once a month students must travel to Newport News for an oral evaluation to make sure they understand the concepts.

“Sometimes Rogie got it on the first try, and sometimes he had to work more and have another evaluation,” Skip says.

Unlike the GED program which is more curriculum based, NEDP uses and teaches life skills. Practical math analysis was one of the more difficult skills. “Rogie had to make out a budget and figure out interest rates and what portion of his income went to rent, food, utilities and other expenses. First, he had to make an excel spread sheet, then a pie chart,” Skip says. “He had to be able to justify his choices such as renting a home instead of buying one.” Other competencies included in the program are giving presentations. Rogie had to research agricultural crops of Virginia and create a PowerPoint presentation. Skip says, “Rogie grew up in a city and only worked briefly on a farm, not caring for it. He had to learn where to research the Virginia farm output.”

Rogie completed the NEDP and now hopes

to study auto mechanics through the community college. “Rogie and I really have a good relationship,” Skip says. “We will continue as friends for life.” Matching the right tutor or mentor is crucial. “Literacy for Life has hundreds of volunteers and hundreds of people seeking their services,” Skip says. Mary Lynch, the Human Services Coordinator for the organization, matches teachers with students. “Mary Lynch does a great job of matching tutors and mentors to students.”

The NEDP program has an \$800 enrollment fee, and Skip also served as fundraiser for Rogie’s class. Skip now has a new student, a Honduran mother of two who wants to be able to answer her children’s questions and help them succeed in school.

Literacy for Life offers several programs including Empowering Parents; EmployEd Program, for career development; ABE, Adult Basic Education; ESL, English as a Second Language and HEAL, Health Education and Literacy. The center is located on the first floor of the William & Mary School of Education,

301 Monticello Avenue in Williamsburg.

Skip is actually Dr. Albert J Shannon. He earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Marquette University in Milwaukee, but he says, “I’ve always been ‘Skip’”. He grew up in the Penn Hills area near Pittsburgh and attended a small Jesuit boy’s school. “One of the values that the Jesuits instilled in me was to ask myself what I am doing to help others.”

He began teaching reading in inner city Milwaukee schools and eventually ended up at the higher echelons of Catholic education with several years as president of St. Joseph College in Rensselaer, Indiana and then headmaster of St. John’s Preparatory School, in Danvers, Massachusetts, outside of Boston. “I credit my wife, MJ, with all that I was able to do in education,” Skip says. “A large part of administration jobs is fundraising, and we were entertaining people in our home several nights a week. MJ made that possible.”

After retiring from St. Johns, Skip worked as an educational consultant in the Boston area. His brother and sister had both moved to Wil-



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Williamsburg, and he and his wife liked the area. They had lived in a small town outside of Boston, and they liked the small town friendliness and the abundance of history in Williamsburg. When they first walked inside their Ford's Colony house and saw a huge window overlooking the woods, they knew they had come home. Their children live in Chicago and Boston so they made a commitment to keep in touch with their children and grandchildren and manage to see them a few times a year, along with frequent Skyping.

"We wanted someplace where we could reinvent ourselves," Skip says. "Just be Skip and MJ." He laughs and indicates his shorts and tennis shoes. "I can go out like this. I thought I might miss being the important person on campus, but I don't."

He signed up to volunteer at Literacy for Life when they moved to Williamsburg four years ago, again with the encouragement and support of MJ. He spends about two hours a week tutoring.

Skip enjoys the freedom of retirement. "I was

a reading teacher, and now I have time to read, without feeling guilty. When I was an administrator, our time was never our own." He is also an avid biker, having participated in the Pan Mass Challenge, a two-day 200 mile ride across Massachusetts from Sturbridge to Cape Cod. The Challenge is a cancer fundraiser and back then every participant had to pledge \$4,000 in sponsorships. "You had to write a check, and if your sponsors didn't come through you paid the balance." The ride usually raises 30 to 40 million with 15,000 riders participating.

"Ford's Colony and Williamsburg are excellent places to bike." Skip is working to get back in shape after having two spinal surgeries. He gave up golfing due to back issues and recently sold his golf clubs. Woodworking is another hobby, and Skip made the Mission style chairs and table that sit overlooking the woods in his living room.

MJ enjoys having time for counted cross stitch and other pursuits. And, Skip says, "You can tell by looking at me that she is an amazing cook."

As a couple they enjoy a few date nights a week, trying out local restaurants. "There's no shortage of good places to eat," he says. "We like to take drives in the country. We have a convertible, and we put the top down and enjoy the scenery." They drive to Chicago and Boston to visit their kids and grandkids.

Skip sees the role of mentor as differing from that of a teacher. "A teacher is the person at the podium lecturing but the mentor is one behind the scenes, asking questions, encouraging and occasionally administering a figurative 'kick in the pants' when needed."

As an example, Skip says, "If someone tells me they want to work in the medical field, I would ask where they see themselves and then help them to analyze the steps they would need to take to attain their goal."

Skip is humble and says he doesn't want to sound pious, but he always remembers his early introduction into how to serve others. For now, and the immediate future, he sees his work at Literacy for Life as a way to use his education to meet that commitment. NDN

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REVEREND LISA GREEN



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Making the Journey with others

By Narielle Living

The Reverend Lisa Green finds it somewhat improbable that she landed back in Williamsburg, yet here she is, working as the associate rector for St. Martin's Episcopal Church. After graduating from William & Mary (W&M) in 1983, she lived near Richmond before relocating to New Jersey. "I was there for 17 years. That's where I got ordained, then I went up to

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Massachusetts.”

When her husband, who is also an Episcopal priest, was called to a church in Hampton, they moved back to Virginia. During that time, Cathy Tyndall Boyd, the rector for St. Martin's, posted an announcement that she was looking for an associate. Lisa was excited, as it seemed fortuitous to her. She and her husband had a personal connection to Cathy. “My husband and she went to the same seminary and knew each other,” Lisa says. “It's kind of like a dream come true to be back here.”

When Lisa attended W&M and first lived in this area, she was Roman Catholic. “I was very involved in the Catholic student association, and there was a covenant at that time with Canterbury, the Episcopal student group. That's how I found out about the Episcopal church, so it was a very important formational time for me when I was in Williamsburg.”

After graduating from college, she worked in publishing for a few years and then freelanced for a while after her daughter was born. “Around the time I got divorced, I started feeling the call to the priesthood,” she says. When her daughter was in high school, Lisa returned to school, this time to a seminary in New Jersey.

Feeling the call, for Lisa, was both an inner and outer experience. “Your life circumstances conspire to help you align with your deepest purpose but there's something that comes from inside, too, and we believe that there is the call from the spirit as well. For me, it was like re-connecting with the excitement and passion I had felt when I was here; it was about being part of a spiritual community and making the world better and connecting with people.”

In her current role, a big part of Lisa's work is connected to teaching and mentoring others. She describes working with others in this capacity as a two-way street. “There's a kind of mutuality to it,” she says. When she was first ordained, she had to do a sort of supervised ministry which is part of the experience of becoming an Episcopal priest. At that time, she was on a committee for healing and pastoral care. “It's not like it was brand new to talking about people needing healing, but I had this sense that instead of being just one of the crew now the expectation is that I'll be captain of the ship. A lot of that was me projecting onto the role. It really doesn't work that way, because of course we're all human beings, and we're all learning about our lives and learning about God. There's a mutuality where I've learned as much from people who I've visited or talked to about spirituality as they have from me.”

Lisa feels like that's true of her role as priest in general, too. “Obviously I went to seminary, I learned certain things, I have life experience and I bring all of that to my ministry,” she says. But when she stood up to speak to people and preach from the pulpit, she knew she needed the confidence that what she said came from a place of sharing her gift; she needed to relinquish any fear. She knew on a deeper level that it was okay not to know everything, an idea that is important for anyone who is in the role of teacher or mentor.

“We're fellow travelers,” she says. “It was daunting at first, but I've been ordained now for almost 10 years, and part of the learning of that time is that it's a partnership. For me that's the highest, the best.”

Lisa is involved in a number of programs at St. Martin's that puts her in the role of mentor and teacher. As she works with the outreach com-

missions, she teaches and mentors people who assist with program's such as Williamsburg's Walk the Talk, support for the incarcerated before and after re-entry to the community; Open Table, a new program that works with people coming out of poverty or homelessness or a struggle of some kind; Justice League, which plans and implements experiences to help strive for justice and peace among all people; Creation Care, which advocates and promotes "green thinking" and policies; and a new fund that benefits House of Mercy. She also supports a number of other institutions such as Spiritworks and The Arc.

The work is never-ending but Lisa does it with a smile and determination to share her gifts. "We all need a little help," she says of the Open Table program. "But people in poverty don't necessarily have that social support that a lot of us benefit from." For this work, Lisa's group has partnered with New Zion Baptist Church, and they are bringing people together to help. "Open Table is like a surround kind of model where everybody has a different kind of expertise, a different skill they can offer, but what you're really offering is companionship and relationship. For me, that's the best part of parish ministry, when you can have that kind of relationship with people in the parish."

Lisa and her church support a growing list of organizations in a variety of ways. "I think that's a growing edge in the church now, what do we do for the people in the community versus what do we do with the people in the community. I think increasingly we're looking to make connections with other organizations and to partner."

Lisa acknowledges that there is a lot of work going on in her community. "That's one thing I've been so impressed by with my return to Williamsburg. There's so much happening here for helping people, and it's really well networked. It's so important to have a partnership among the faith communities."

In life, every now and then a plan or goal is not achieved. This can lead to a sort of malaise of the spirit and a questioning of one's purpose. But as Lisa says, it's important not to stop just because there's a hiccup in the road. "That's life in some ways. It kind of speaks to 'what is the goal.' Obviously, we want to make people's lives better, but no matter how good your life is you might get sick, you're going to lose people you love, you're going to have setbacks. I think if your goal is relationship building then it can withstand these things. That's like the safety net for people who are inevitably going to have setbacks and issues, but if they have some connection to other people, they can get through it. That's how we all get through it."

One of the lessons of being a teacher and mentor that Lisa shares is that as tempting as it may seem, managing someone's process is not prudent. "That's one of the challenges of this way of being," she says. "You can't just fix things. You can't make everything better with waving a magic wand but you're accompanying people as they make their journey. And we have to be patient with ourselves too, because nothing is an overnight fix."

Overall, Reverend Lisa Green is thrilled to be here in Williamsburg and working with the community. "Part of what was wonderful about coming here was to have Williamsburg as the carrot. That is a gift, and working with Cathy is a gift." NDN



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THE BEST KEPT SECRET

By Narielle Living

Sue Williams, Executive Director of the Jamestown 4-H center, might be a Jersey girl but she's been involved in camping and outdoor activities for about 24 years. Her original plan was to become a veterinarian, but after getting waitlisted for veterinary school that dream was put on hold. "I graduated from University of Delaware with a Degree in Animal Science Biochemistry," she says. "I got waitlisted for

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veterinary school then I ended up working for the park service and the forest service. I was an outdoor educator for environmental science schools, kind of like a seasonal naturalist where I taught wildlife ecology, map and compass, climbing and team building.”

Being an outdoor educator has fit well with Sue’s career path, mostly because she loves working in that setting. She credits her positive rise in the field of outdoor education with the fact that she had many good mentors.

“I started in outdoor environmental education as a seasonal naturalist educator. I then became a year-round outdoor education center director, then when I got into the YMCA I operated as a camping services director. We had a day camp, resident camp, equestrian center and wedding venue.”

With a wealth of experience behind her, Sue’s enthusiasm for the field has not dimmed in the least. “I was a camp director for 13 years and an administrator after that,” she says. “This is my 24th year overseeing camps and conference centers. This is the smallest one I’ve worked with but it has the most potential because it’s

on the river. My location couldn’t be better.”

For a time, Sue worked for the YMCA in Wernersville, Pennsylvania, as Summer Camps Director and then as Associate Executive Director. In all of her positions, she was responsible for creating and working with programming and education for the facilities. That is no small task when faced with the number of people who take classes, workshops and recreational programs at these facilities each year.

For now, she loves working with the 4-H Center, and especially loves what 4-H provides to people. “I did 4-H in New York for a long time early in my career.” She worked with a seasonal summer camp in the Adirondacks, an especially picturesque area. “It’s gorgeous up there. Then I moved to a lot of outdoor schools such as Outward Bound, Project Adventure, then I worked with lots of YMCA’s as far as camp and conference centers.”

Sue says that the 4-H Center in Jamestown is one of six 4-H Centers in Virginia and is the first fully dedicated 4-H Camp built in the commonwealth. When she was still working for the YMCA, Sue began looking for her

next step. “I have a history with 4-H from years ago, and I ended up giving this a try.” She is now the executive director and works to provide year-round educational and recreational programs for 23 counties. “I report to my volunteer board of directors but I also report to 4-H camping leader for Virginia Tech, so I’m actually faculty for the university. I came here for the next step up to kind of run my own operation, and I oversee everything we do here year round.”

Three years ago, Sue started Jimmy James Adventure Daycamp, thinking it would be a relatively small program for kids. “Before I knew it, I had 100 children every week for my summer with a double-digit waitlist. Fortunately, the program is so well received, the kids and families are so good.” One of the things Sue noted that they need is more land. With outdoor workshops and classes on both land and water, the center is generally filled to capacity each week. “I need more land. We’re 16 acres of land, and eight usable acres of land. I have room to expand but I have no place for parking or for campers.” But with her positive

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attitude, Sue knows that at some point she will be able to work that out in a way that benefits the people who use the facility.

A large number of kids and adults utilize the facility, which includes a dining hall, rec hall, sleeping cabins and a few learning spaces in addition to the outdoor spaces. In the summer, the overnight camp serves more than 2,500 children, with an additional 100 children attending for day camp.

One of the partnerships that Sue has established at the center is National Military Family Association partnership, a group who sought camps across the nation to partner with military families. "This is our third year as a host camp. All the children have parents who are actively deployed or in a 15 month deployment window, injured since 9/11 or have PTSD since 9/11, so the amount of need is phenomenal." In addition, they partnered with the local fire and rescue organizations who came out to have a military theme day. "When the flag goes up and the flag goes down, you can hear a pin drop. It's my favorite week of camp by far."

In addition to the regular programming that

people have come to expect from the 4-H Center, Sue is excited about the new workshops and classes that will be offered through Williamsburg Area Learning Tree (WALT). The 4-H Center is now the new home for WALT, and they are gearing up for a new season of classes beginning in the fall.

Sue is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the center and has input into the programs offered. Her enthusiasm for all of the classes shines through when she describes them. "We do the general family camp for any family who wants to come Friday to Sunday. The day camp and the military programs didn't exist when I got here; I brought them here, and they allow us to offer more programs for 4-H campers. It all kind of combines. We have 30 program staff who are college students age 18 to mid-20s. I hire half of them international because the local college students go back to school so early, my internationals can stay from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and they're vetted. They're on a travel work visa. They're amazing. They add a diversity to the camp that the kids love."

Deciding which programs and workshops to run is prioritized by the team at 4-H. "I want the curriculum to be strong and sound, and I really try to gear us toward an educational component." Sue gestures as she speaks, encompassing the area around her. "There's always potential. You can see it when you walk the property and see the sunset."

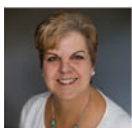
With a host of programs for children and adults it's no wonder Sue Williams is so enthusiastic about the classes and education available at the 4-H center. "Jamestown 4-H education center caters to children in the summer for youth development and youth leadership, all of our summer programs, but year round we operate as a retreat center, a training center and an educational site. We are a resource for the community, so if you are having an event you can hold it here but you also have the opportunity to do the ropes course, you can go out on the water with the kayaks, canoes or paddleboards. We do the full food service. We're more than summer camp, it's the heart of our program but we're more. It's the best kept secret in the community." NDN



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LAURA HILL



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Coming to the Table

By Narielle Living

Laura Hill is a soft-spoken, articulate woman with a big purpose: to bring people together. Her new chapter of *Coming to the Table* is focused on bringing people in the community together to raise awareness, talk, develop workshops and heal.

Laura is originally from St. Mary's County, Maryland. "It is a very historic area, much like Williamsburg in that it's the oldest county in Maryland," she says. And similar to Wil-

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Williamsburg, St. Mary's County was initially the capital before the capital moved to Annapolis. St. Mary's County is host to a naval air station, which is how Laura's story begins. "My father was stationed there, and my mother was from St. Mary's County," she says. Her parents met and married, and Laura ended up being a Navy brat, a kid who moved from station to station with her military family.

As a teen, Laura moved to Norfolk, Virginia. "It was my father's last duty station," she says. "He was a 26-year Navy veteran." Laura went to high school in Norfolk and graduated from Lake Taylor High School. She then went on to study at Hampton University, an experience that would shape her life.

"I studied journalism and mass communications." That is where she met her husband, Brad, who she married a few years after they graduated. Brad has a career in architecture, and that is what brought their family to this area. "His career actually brought us here in 2000. I've been here nearly 20 years now. This is the longest I've ever lived anywhere," she says with a smile. "It's interesting because when you're from a military family you want to establish roots, so this is home, and this is where my children were educated." Her children are now older. She has a 20 year old who was only one year old when they moved here. Her daughter is 16 and was born in Williamsburg. "Because they've been here all their lives they want to leave," she says. "They're the opposite of me in terms of their childhood and growing up."

Currently, Laura is using her knowledge in journalism and communications to work on a couple of things: writing a book and developing materials for *Coming to the Table*. Laura is the founder of the Williamsburg chapter, and in her current role with the group, she leads the meetings, plans their activities and events and helps determine if there are any classes or outreach workshops she might be able to facilitate.

Coming to the Table is national organization with more than 30 chapters. Initially the group began in response to racial healing that occurred during family reunions. Co-founder Will Hunt Hairston's family was one of the largest slave owning families in the Antebellum South. The family has both white and black members. The other co-founder, Sue Hutchison, is a descendant of President Thomas Jefferson. When Jefferson's descendants came together for a family reunion they acknowledged and embraced family members who were descendants of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, an enslaved African woman that Jefferson owned. Out of the desire to serve as models for racial reconciliation, *Coming to the Table* was born, an organization that seeks to repair the harm that racism has done to people and communities nationwide and to dismantle systems of racial injustice and oppression.

As a group leader, Laura sets tables and chairs up at the Jamestown Christian Fellowship Church in preparation for the meetings. "You would show up. You might be invited to come out or you'll read about it and decide to check us out. We begin our meetings, we have tables set up and we light a candle. We acknowledge those who have come before us, so we acknowledge the first peoples, the Powhatan Indians, the African Americans and the abolitionists. We understand that the abolishment of slavery was the result of abolitionists who opened their hearts and homes to enslaved Africans who were running away to resist

slavery.”

After the candle is lit, the meeting continues with introductions, a meal and dialogue. After that they discuss community engagement and how they might reach out to others who would benefit from their activities. Laura’s role is to facilitate the discussion and outline the conversation topics that would best allow the group to express their ideas and experiences.

Laura has spent much time, thought and prayer deciding which direction her life should take. When she began investigating racial reconciliation groups, she found *Coming to the Table*. “When I contacted the national office, they told me they didn’t have a group here, and the closest was Richmond. So, I asked how to get a group started here.” She was given a very specific set of guidelines and she knew she had the resources of the organization to call upon should she have any questions. “This is my focus,” she says.


So far, her experience has been positive. “We are the newest chapter of the *Coming to the Table* group. Our first meeting had a total of 16 people,” she says. The best thing about it was the diversity of people who came to the first meeting. “We had eight African Americans and eight Caucasians. We had six men and ten women, and we had 15 baby boomers and one millennial.”

The values that *Coming to the Table* try to embody as a group are simple: inclusion, respect, honesty, transparency, justice, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, love, peace and reconciliation. Laura encourages members to research their past and talk about it with others. “We work together to heal; there has to be healing.”

One of the driving forces behind Laura deciding to take a role with the *Coming to the Table* organization was the constant stream of media coverage about the breaking down of race relations. “In January, Virginia governor Ralph Northam declared that 2019 was the year of reconciliation and civility. I thought, what can I do to help usher in racial reconciliation in the Historic Triangle.” She has experienced the cruelty and harm of racism and felt called to help others understand the history of racism and how to work together to “right the wrongs.”

One of the things the people with *Coming to the Table* work on is projects to engage the community and spark civil conversation. “Our first project is to commemorate the arrival of the first Africans in Virginia. We have planned a special weekend event. *Coming to the Table* members nationwide are coming to Williamsburg the weekend of August 16th -18th for a meeting, where the co-founder, Will Hunt Hairston, will address the group. On August 17th we will spend the day at Historic Jamestown for a day of special programming commemorating the first Africans in Virginia. On August 18th we will come together for breakfast, a worship service and visit to local attractions.

We are really excited about this opportunity for a once-in-a-lifetime experience in the Historic Triangle.

One of the things that Laura Hill and *Coming to the Table* stress is that great things can happen for the Historic Triangle as a result of racial reconciliation. “We have the responsibility to make our world better for future generations. Through reconciliation efforts, we can educate our community and help people heal from racial wounds.” 

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Arc client, Elliott Sun, and several other members of the Williamsburg Area Bicyclists (WAB) were at the 2019 Bike Virginia Tour bicycling festival June 21-26 in Woodstock and Harrisonburg. Elliott and his bicycling friend, Charlie Hart (a long time Arc benefactor and volunteer), served together as full-time volunteers each day at the Hospitality tent, which was the information center for the 1,500 bicyclists. These two volunteers gave directions; answered questions about the event, services, and routes; and sold cold drinks. The two “dined” together at the food trucks for most of their meals, and they slipped away from Hospitality two mornings and went bicycling together.

Elliott is 26 and joined The Arc about three years ago. He enjoys bowling, the dances, and the Spring Carnival at William & Mary. He will also volunteer at The Arc’s 10th annual Williamsburg Landing 5k on October 5. Elliott’s brother, Matt, age 32, is also an active member of The Arc and added that he also enjoys meeting new people.

Elliott (and Matt) Sun are The Arc.

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ADAM PARKER

THE MAGIC OF CAMP

By Narielle Living



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Adam Parker is young and energetic, two qualities that have served him well in his role as teacher and guide to the scores of children who have spent time at the Jamestown 4-H Center summer camp. Now, Adam is expanding his role and has become the program director for the facility, a position that will allow him to further develop his reach as a mentor.

Adam was raised in Yorktown and attended Tabb High School. He started attending the 4-H camp when he was nine years old. "A lot of elementary and middle schools take trips here to either Jamestown settlement or Williamsburg, and a lot of times they stop by and we do some programming for them; kayaking, canoeing, cool things like that," he says. "When I

was eight years old, we took a field trip here. I thought it was cool, and my parents signed me up for camp because I said I liked it here. I just kept coming back."

Clearly Adam really enjoyed his time at camp, because he spent nine years as a camper and a teen counselor. "I was on staff for four summers, and I taught kayaking and sailing.

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Then I was the staff coordinator.”

After graduating high school, Adam went on to attend college at James Madison University and majored in criminal justice. “I thought I wanted to be in the FBI or CIA going into college, but I also knew I loved camp.”

His first summer home, he applied and was accepted to be on staff at the 4-H center. “Of course, I loved it,” he says with a smile. He returned to school, determined to get an internship in criminal justice the following summer. That didn’t work out, as he continued to be drawn to working on staff with camp programs.

“I knew I liked camp, but I didn’t realize I was also good at working with children.” Adam says that adults and staff at the center would often tell him he was good at working with kids, something he had never previously considered. “They told me I knew how to communicate and handle situations well. So, I started thinking yeah, actually I’m pretty good at this, and that felt good. When you see a kid, especially on a Monday, and it’s their first time away from home, they don’t know anyone at camp, they’re

really bummed, they’re sad, and you work with them, talk to them, connect with them... then on Friday they’re crying because they don’t want to leave. That doesn’t happen every time. It would be great if it did. If you can provide as many opportunities for them to enjoy their time here as possible I think that’s really nice.”

When he worked during the summers for the camp, Adam says the staff all had made up names. “We use camp names because it kind of adds to the magic of camp. Also, it makes it a little tougher for kids to find us on social media. A majority of the kids and teen counselors don’t know our real names at all, and they just know me as Starfox.”

While attending JMU, Adam says his experience there was very positive. Of course, he was involved in a number of programs during those four years. “I like to get involved in things, so I led a program called Make Your Mark at Madison which was a leadership development program and Outriggers, which is a facilitation group where you go to clubs and facilitate team building activities.”

Perhaps one of his favorite programs and one that he is rightfully proud of during that time is Camp Kesem, a national organization run through universities. “I found out about it four summers ago because William & Mary had their chapter of Camp Kesem here. My boss at the time asked if I could stay back and teach the programs. It’s a camp for kids whose parents have cancer, and it’s free for the children.” The camp is actually run as a club at the university level, and students who are selected as counselors for the summer are tasked with raising enough money for each child to attend camp.

“I thought it was a very cool program so I went back to JMU and we won a \$40,000 grant to start it there, so that was one of the coolest things. Now it’s running strong.”

After completing school at James Madison University, Adam was determined to find employment somewhere else, preferably in the field of criminal justice. “I told myself I need to try something other than camp,” he says. “I love it but I need to try something else so I



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went to New York City and got an office job.” The only problem with that was that he did not like being stuck in an office. After some consideration, he decided to try the same thing in a different location. “Then I tried an office job in D.C., and I still didn’t like an office job,” he says with a rueful grin. “Then I started talking with Sue, the executive director here, about a position that was coming open.” That position was as a full-time program director, and Adam thought it was the right time for him to make that move. “Thankfully, they agreed.”

Adam has been busy since he started as program director. “I’ve become an American Canoe Association kayaking instructor. I’ve become challenge course instructor certified. I’m a lifeguard and I’m going to become a lifeguard trainer.” Because of these trainings, during the months around the camp season Adam and his team can provide opportunities for the local community and outside groups to come in and use the facility. “We can facilitate the challenge course, kayaking, canoeing and swimming. I’m archery certified. I’m riflery certified. It’s been a

busy couple of months getting certified!

He says that he and the staff have focused on growing the classes offered during the off-season and trying to provide additional opportunities for folks who are interested in using the facilities. “We’re here all the time. We’d love to have people join us and have nice experiences. We’ve got our sign and everything way down the road. We don’t have a big light up board that says what’s coming next, which is a good thing! But we do want people to be aware that we’re here, and we’ve got space for them.”

There is no space available during the months of June through August, however. During that time they have summer camp, both day camp and overnight camp for kids ages nine through 18. This year, the 4-H Center will host Operation Purple Camp during the last week of summer. “It’s an amazing program,” Adam says. “It’s a camp for children whose parents are in the military or who have served.” Because of the popularity of the program, they are now assessing ways they can fit more Operation Purple Camps into the schedule over the course of

the year. “We had over 500 children apply, and we only had 150 spots,” he says with a shake of his head. “We can only take so many for one week of camp, and especially in this area we’ve got so many military families with all the bases. In the future we want to serve as many children as we can, and I believe it’s really important that we do.”

Today, there are glimpses of the enthusiastic young boy in Adam Parker as he talks about teaching the kids who come out to the 4-H Center. He is excited to step into a role where the opportunities are limited only by the space they have. “There’s so much more that we provide other than summer camp. People just assume it’s summer camp and that’s it, but we’re always open for just about anything. A lot of times people stop by. They might take a wrong turn and come down or they schedule a tour and they want to see the place, and the most common thing I’ve heard is: I had no idea this was back here, this is incredible. We’re open, and we’re always looking for more involvement from the community.” NDN



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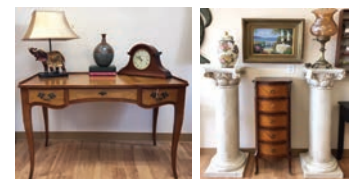
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By Dawn Brotherton

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Since she was a little girl, Melinda has wanted to be a hairstylist. But she didn't get into it right away. Originally from Ironton, Ohio, she moved to Mechanicsville, Virginia

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with her parents when the railroad industry relocated her dad. After graduating from Lee Davis High School, Melinda worked as a telephone operator and got married soon after. Children quickly followed. As her family grew, she took odd jobs that allowed her to keep her daughters with her. She drove a school bus and cleaned houses.

When all four girls started school, Melinda trained to receive her Certified Nursing Assistant license and worked at Johnston-Willis Hospital on the oncology floor. "I had fabulous patients and loved them dearly, but it was hard," she says. Forming attachments and then losing the patients was tough.

Melinda knew it was time for a switch. The girls were older and could be at home alone a few nights a week, so she reached back to her original dream of working as a stylist. Getting her foot in the door, she managed two Sports Clips stores for the next ten years. "After going through managing the clientele and all, I just decided I could do this on my own," she says.

She attended Richmond Technical Center in the evenings and received her certificate in cosmetology. In 2013, she opened her first barber shop, Fadez and Bladez, in Mechanicsville. By this time, Melinda had gone through a divorce and was raising her daughters on her own. She continued to grow her business for ten years, and two of her daughters also became stylists.

One day a group of motorcycle riders stopped outside of her shop. Melinda's only thought was related to the business opportunity in front of her. When she went outside to pass out business cards, she had no idea she would meet the man of her dreams.

Jeff Gragg works at NASA and lives in Williamsburg. They dated long distance for five years before deciding to get married this past November. Melinda sold her half of Fadez and Bladez to her daughter and moved to the Historic Triangle. She worked at various places cutting hair until the shop on Richmond Road became available. "Jeff said he loves me so much, he bought me a job," she says. Mel's

Beauty and Barber, LLC has almost reached the two-year mark.

Melinda thrives on running her own business. "I get to set the tone for how the shop runs." She believes the customer is always right and treats each client as she would a family member. Many of her clients have been with her since she set up shop in Toano, and she has become invested in their lives, sharing stories, updates on family, and even the low points. They laugh together, cry together if needed and even pray together. Through her clientele, she has created a large, extended family.

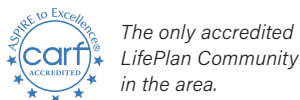
She loves the community feel and openness of Williamsburg. "I've come across some extraordinary people here," she says, although her adjustment to Williamsburg took some time. In Mechanicsville, Melinda's busy times were after five o'clock and on weekends as young families rushed around to fit in a haircut between other activities. In Williamsburg, she stays busy throughout the day, then it trickles off by three or four in the afternoon. Adjust-



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ing to the demographic differences has been a challenge, but one Melinda relishes. She has been able to spend the evenings with her husband and working around the house.

Her biggest hurdle has been finding employees. Currently she has two other part-time stylists and a receptionist. Because so many salons rent space rather than hire employees, stylists have a plethora of choices on where to work. Melinda would like to bring on more stylists, massage therapists and an aesthetician. She is considering renting out space within her building if she can find the right match for her shop.

For people looking to start their own business, Melinda recommends they talk to others who have gone before them. "It's your baby, twenty-four seven," she says. There are many long hours preparing, setting up and getting established. She even put Jeff to work fixing flooring and pulling down walls to open the space more. Running a business is a lot more than what most people see, but she would do it all again.

"The biggest reward [to having my own business] is if it's a day that I've got something very important to do, or a family member gets sick, or somebody needs help, I can put a sign on the door and go take care of the emergencies," Melinda says.

An extremely positive person, Melinda credits her mother for inspiring her to be the person she is today. She says she would never want to do anything to let her mother down. "My mother is always in my ear, even though she has passed on. She was a wonderful lady and saw the positive in everything. She taught us to do our best at whatever we're doing."

Melinda believes negativity is an emotion you have the ability to push aside. "You can get out on the wrong side of the bed or the right side of the bed. It's a personal choice." She suggests smiling at everyone. You don't know what kind of day that person is having, and your kindness may improve it for them. Melinda puts this into practice in her shop daily.

Jeff is still riding motorcycles, but now Melinda is right behind him. This gives her the

opportunity to relax, enjoy the scenery and let her mind drift. "When I'm on the back of the bike, I can clear my mind. I think about my business and talk to God. It's time just for me."

When they aren't taking a day for motorcycle riding, Melinda keeps herself busy at home. As a newlywed, she has been repainting and organizing the house to turn it into a home. She and Jeff love doing yardwork and growing vegetables. In the colder months, Melinda is teaching herself how to quilt so she can make blankets for her grandchildren.

Melinda also enjoys history, so spending the weekend walking around Colonial Williamsburg is a special treat for her.

"As you get older, you get wiser, and you see what's important. And history is very important." She and Jeff like to read history books and see how things were done before all of the technology.

Whether she's doing a straight-razor shave, a trim or a new hair style, Melinda can be found in her shop most days staying positive and handing out friendly smiles. NDN

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Dedicated to Hard Work

By Dawn Brotherton

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Dreams Gymnastics Center, which offers all three Olympic disciplines of gymnastics: Artistic, Rhythmic, and Trampoline and Tumbling, has made its home here in the Historic Triangle. They opened their doors in 2017 with thirteen kids in a small corner of a building in Newport News and have quickly grown to over 150 athletes and a state-of-the-art facility in Toano.

Pavlin Yordanov and Galina Yordanova have grown their business with outstanding coach-

ing and a family-friendly environment, where every gymnast, both recreational and competitive, can reach his or her full potential.

It's hard to beat the credentials of the staff. In Bulgaria, Galina was on the elite gymnastics track for the Olympic Games until an injury at the age of sixteen took her out of the running. Pavlin specialized in national dancing and studied for seventeen years. Now his specialty is acrobatics gymnastics, which is often accompanied by music, focusing on choreography,

courage, strength and stamina, and demands flexibility, coordination and skill.

It's been a long road for Pavlin and his family to get from Bulgaria to Williamsburg. After high school and completion of his 18-months of compulsory military service, Pavlin worked as a dancer and acro-gymnast in a resort in Turkey for three years. He and Galina met during the initial showcase for the resort, but they didn't begin dating until they had finished their tour. Once they returned to Bulgar-

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ia, they started the same type of entertainment company for resorts in their home country. Soon after, Galina obtained a green card, and their American adventure began.

Pavlin and Galina came from Bulgaria twenty-five years ago with their nine-month-old daughter, originally moving to Wisconsin to be with family. The weather wasn't ideal for Pavlin, who worked construction outside, so when they got the chance to follow Galina's boss to North Carolina for a gymnastics coaching position, they jumped on it.

Pavlin established a tractor trailer business while Galina continued to coach. Their daughter Desislava started competing in gymnastics. She was a hard worker but at times struggled with some skills. Pavlin began going to the gym to spot her as she practiced. He spent more and more time there, eventually becoming a coach himself. When they decided to move to Williamsburg in 2012, Pavlin sold his trucking business and took a job coaching full-time.

When Pavlin and Galina decided to strike out on their own, Larry and Jennifer Walk joined them as business partners. Their chil-

dren had been training under the Yordanovs for years, and the Walks had faith that the Dreams Gymnastics Center would be a success.

In 2017, they trained a team of seven girls for the state competition while still in Newport News. The following year, they placed 15th in the state out of 56 silver division teams, most of them with many more girls competing to earn points for their team. Individually, the Dreams' gymnasts brought home numerous medals from the various events. The Center also put forward a trampoline and tumbling team, and seven of the individuals qualified for the nationals.

Desislava Yordanova, now 17 years old, competed at the nationals with a broken ankle and still placed eighth out of 28. In the higher division, six gymnasts came back with three gold medals and one bronze. Pavlin and Galina's 15-year-old son Martin was also named a national champion in trampoline and tumbling.

Off to a great start with such small numbers, they began looking for their own building. In

January 2018, they moved Dreams Gymnastic Center into a 12,000 square foot building located in Toano, specifically designed by Pavlin for safety, featuring more equipment and space for both traditional and acro-gymnastics. The location is so well laid out that they have been asked to host the next state competition.

In 2018 and 2019, Dreams Gymnastics Center brought home even more medals at both the state and national levels, including a gold in tumbling for Walk's daughter Morgan. Now offering both a recreational program as well as the competitive team, the Center is expecting more than 165 athletes this fall. With four senior coaches and six recreational coaches, the athletes have the opportunity to learn various techniques from people with different backgrounds. Dreams Gymnastics Center also sends coaches to camp to learn different styles and ways to do things.

Pavlin learned many of his techniques from Galina's coach from Bulgaria, who now lives in St. Louis, Missouri. Her coach trained seven gymnasts who have gone to the Olympic Games. Pavlin attended three coaches' camps

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where he was instructing. “Ninety-nine percent of what I’m doing, he taught me, and it’s working,” Pavlin says.

Although listed as the head coach, Pavlin doesn’t ever feel like he is running this business alone. He works alongside his wife, business partners and other coaches to constantly improve the Center. They are already contemplating an expansion of the building to keep up with the demand. They need a 36-foot ceiling to accommodate synchronized trampoline competitions.

In December 2018, they hosted a trampoline and tumbling meet with over 80 competitors from six different states. They are hoping to hold the six-state regional meet for trampoline and tumbling at William & Mary next year, which will bring several hundred kids and their families to Williamsburg.

A lot of work goes into setting up the gym for competition and audience observation. Pavlin says they couldn’t do it without the families of his students. They stay very involved and are willing to lend a hand when needed.

Because of the time dedication needed for

gymnastics, families often spend a lot of time at the gym. Pavlin described one case where a twin brother was constantly at the gym while his sister practiced. Although not interested in artistic gymnastics, when he saw the trampoline, he was excited to give it a try. Seven months later, he competed in Trampoline and Tumbling and became a national champion in his division.

The Dreams Gymnastics Center strives to make attending practices easy for the families. They have recently partnered with an after-school pick up service to transport students from school to practice while the parents are at work. They hope to establish scholarships for their graduating seniors in the near future.

“First priority is school,” Pavlin stresses. If the kids are struggling with their homework, he tells them not to come to practice.

“I love what I’m doing. I’m very strict. I don’t teach the kids only to do gymnastics. We teach them respect and how to respect other kids.” He finds the hardest part about coaching is when they go to meets and the kids don’t do as well as they do in practice. He feels bad

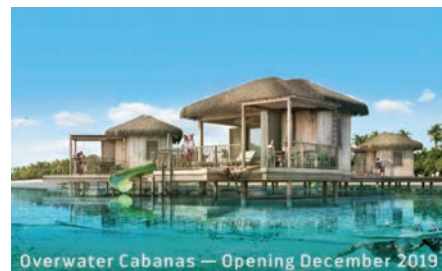
because they feel bad.

The athletes range from five to 18 years old. During the school year, the gym is open six days a week, while most weekends, the team travels to meets between Virginia Beach and Washington D.C. College coaches visit the gym to scout talent for competition at the college level, sometimes even offering scholarships.

Pavlin is excited to announce that three-time Olympic coach George Videnov is coming to instruct at Dreams Gymnastics Center. “He came to see the gym and fell in love with it. We worked together in North Carolina and have known each other for fourteen years.” Videnov was the coach of the national Bulgarian team before coming to the states. His wife Sylvia is also a coach, and they will both be coaching at the Center starting this fall.

Coming to a new country with a wife and a baby and starting over with nothing but a suitcase can be daunting. Pavlin Yordanov kept his grandfather’s advice foremost in his mind, and it kept him going. “He said if you work hard, you can get whatever you want.” NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Inspiring

a Community of Artists

By Narielle Living

The School of Art sits tucked away in an unlikely strip mall off Monticello Avenue, with a restaurant on one side and a pet store and department store across the parking lot. Upon entering the space, visitors are greeted with a wall of busts and a variety of paintings. The combination is both peaceful and energizing, as if the creativity of the combined artists welcomes people into the room. Cozy and inviting chairs and couches are scattered throughout.

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The program director for Virginia, Kelsey Johnson, is bright and vivacious, the perfect complement to the artistic surroundings. The studio opened around 2005, when the owner, Tina, moved here from California. "She had always worked in art studios, and she decided to do this herself," Kelsey says. "She moved out here with her partner Justin, and they started the studio." About five and a half years ago, Tina and Justin decided to return to California where they would open the west coast branch of School of Art. Rather than close the Williamsburg location, they brought Kelsey on board to run the school.

Kelsey was born and raised here in Williamsburg, and she majored in business in college. Although that may seem a far cry from teaching art, she has been involved in artistic endeavors her entire life. "My mom used to teach art over at the rec center so it's always been around me," she says. "I've always wanted to teach, and I always liked kids, teens, adults, everybody," she says with a laugh.

Kelsey enjoys interacting with people of all

ages, and it was through her relationship with Tina that this dream job became a reality. "I met Tina when I worked at Sacred Grounds, the coffee shop. She was a regular, so we became friends. When it came time for them to leave and they were looking for someone, I popped in her head, and she contacted me." Once she accepted the position of program director, Kelsey had to learn everything that happened at the school. She came to the school every day, seven days a week, and studied. "I studied the entire program within a year and half with Tina. I was coming in every day, seven days a week, training and teaching at the same time."

Despite the amount of hours she works, Kelsey is not overwhelmed. She attributes that to the fact that this doesn't feel like "work" for her. "I definitely enjoy what I do, and it's never felt like too much. There's a lot of it, and there's long days in the beginning, but it's okay."

One of the benefits of teaching art is that Kelsey is able to work with her students, especially the younger ones, on defining their ca-

reers. For kids who want to turn their art into a living, she has very specific advice. "We always talk about their passion and what's realistic, too, because you always hear the term 'starving artist,'" she says. She talks with her teens about the importance of marketing and promotion and techniques for doing both. "I talk about how to promote yourself, how to network and if you are getting a good price for any artwork you're selling. Because I've been there, and I've undersold myself." She encourages the teens to go out there and talk with people, let the world know what they're doing. And she has seen success among her students. "A couple of my teens have been successful in selling their artwork and getting commissions; it's so exciting. I'm just thrilled. It's a good ego boost for them, too."

In addition to selling fine art, she takes the time to discuss other creative career options with her students. "What else can you do as a career? I've had students want to get into fashion design or interior design, things like that, so we talk about other options and things they

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Because she has lived here her entire life, Kelsey has seen a few changes to this area. “I remember when none of this was here,” she says, gesturing with a wide sweep of her arm. “This is all relatively new. I remember when Kmart was our only department store. It’s changed a bit.”

Just like the changes in the area, Kelsey has seen changes in the local arts scene as well. “We’re seeing a shift toward more arts and culture here. It’s becoming bigger which I’m so excited for,” she says. Rather than having to travel to larger cities she notes that the arts are expanding in this area. “I’m seeing more studios, more galleries, things like that. Of course there’s the festivals and the fairs happening, like Second Sundays and the Lavender Festival, so I think we’re definitely getting there. I’ve seen more stores, even, having artists selling their work, like over at Retro Daddios. I have my art up there in August. It’s a good direction we’re going in.”

The School of Art provides instruction for both children and adults. “We teach from ages

five to seniors. It’s all one-on-one instruction. We instruct in the classical method but we do branch out so we’ve got oil painting and drawing and portraiture, pastels, watercolor, anything 2D you can think of.”

The busts on the shelf when visitors first walk in are still life props, and to Kelsey’s disappointment the one thing they cannot teach is sculpture and pottery. “Unfortunately, it’s a space issue. If we had room for a kiln, we could do it. We would love to if we had a larger space.”

Although Kelsey does not have a particular art specialty, she does prefer working in certain mediums. “I prefer to work in soft pastel and oil painting, those are my personal favorites, but I enjoy all, and I enjoy teaching it all. I think different personality types gear toward different art, so that’s just where I find myself going.”

The one thing Kelsey stresses to everyone is that it’s never too late to start. “I have had an 83-year-old man come in and paint for the first time in his life, and he did great,” she says. She notes that some folks might experience

a little personal doubt when beginning, but that’s natural. In fact, her 83-year-old student had some doubt when he started. “He had never picked up a paintbrush before but it’s something he always wanted to do, and now he has time. He’s been a student for about four years.” She says that they get a lot of young students but they also get a lot of retirees, people who decide they just want to learn this. “They’re saying it’s time for myself, this is something I want to do. And I know it’s a little intimidating for a lot of people but we don’t judge. Everybody’s got to start somewhere.”

When Kelsey Johnson talks about art, she lights up. It is clear that she is doing what inspires her. She says that she really loves teaching in this setting because it allows her to have one-on-one instruction in a group of people.

“I can have an oil painter and a watercolor artist and a pastel artist all in the same class doing their own coursework so they can’t really compare themselves to another. They can’t say he’s doing better than me because it’s something totally different. If you want to try just go for it. There’s nothing to lose.” NDN

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No Place Like Home

By Lillian Stevens

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Aging is a gift, a beautiful and sometimes complicated process. Many look forward with great eagerness to their retirement years. Will they travel? Help out with grandchildren or great-grandchildren? Where best to spend some volunteer time? Will they move to a retirement community?

According to Susan Lewton, personal services coordinator with ChooseHome, aging

in place is an increasingly popular trend, with many seniors continuing to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

“For those individuals who join ChooseHome, my job is to help them extend their independence, and also improve their safety and comfort as their needs increase,” she says.

ChooseHome is a community-based continuing care program available to adults who’ve

reached the golden age of 60+. Through Riverside Health System and a program known as At Home Partners, which is a partnership of Riverside and Williamsburg Landing, ChooseHome members have access to one of the largest networks of services for seniors in Eastern Virginia.

Licensed and regulated by the Commonwealth, the program is among the first of its

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kind in the state.

“There’s a definite need for continuing care facilities like Warwick Forest, in Newport News, or Williamsburg Landing here in town,” Susan says. “But ChooseHome is a viable option for a variety of reasons.”

Some consider the cost of retirement communities out of their reach. With ChooseHome, membership plans and terms of coverage offered by the organization vary to meet an individual’s specific situation. There is an entrance fee and a monthly fee based on the member’s age at the time of enrollment, the comprehensiveness of the plan and the duration of coverage chosen.

“There are different levels of memberships,” Susan says. “So, fees are based on the level of services needed, but of course can be expanded as necessary.”

As a personal services coordinator, she is a member’s trusted advocate. Her role is to help tailor the resources available through the program to a person’s specific needs. She quickly gets to know a member, learning his or her lifestyle preferences. Whether she’s helping navigate the complexities of health care or pro-

viding members with resources and relevant services, she is committed to their safety and well-being.

This kind of work has truly been her life calling.

Susan met her husband in her native England. The couple moved to the United States about 25 years ago. After taking time to start a family, she earned her license in practical nursing through the Riverside School of Nursing.

Susan also worked in the clinic at Riverside Regional, but has spent the majority of her career in wellness advocacy, first in the Wellness Clinic at Warwick Forest and then as a wellness coordinator with Life Care at Home, the predecessor to the ChooseHome program.

“I’ve been doing this since 2001,” she says. “So, when the opportunity came up to be a personal services coordinator through ChooseHome, I jumped at the chance. I love doing this. I get back far more than I give.”

For a member’s home, Susan can arrange safety assessments, action plans, home supportive technologies and an emergency medical alert system. There are also comprehensive assessments that cover general health and medications. Some services may not be needed but

all are available as needs can change. ChooseHome is structured to help members navigate their long-term care needs, transitioning them to assisted living, skilled nursing care, and memory care if needed.

On a typical day, Susan may conduct several member assessments before heading to the office.

“I like to see what’s going on with people, and they look forward to me coming to their homes,” she says. “We may go over some skills and mini cognitive function assessments, or they will tell me about any new diagnosis so we can try to find a service if needed like here at CEALH.”

The Center for Excellence in Aging and Lifelong Health (CEALH), is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for the community’s older citizens. Led by a geriatrician, CEALH’s interdisciplinary team conducts comprehensive geriatric assessments which may include changes in memory or behavior, medication reconciliation, and addressing geriatric syndromes or concerns.

“After an assessment is completed, recommended strategies are presented to families and



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caregivers to help them address concerns that are identified in the evaluation,” Susan says. “Where warranted, community resources for continued support are provided.”

Family members are encouraged to attend and participate in these conversations.

“Sometimes our members don’t have family here, but if they do, we want to keep a good rapport with the whole family. It’s really helpful so everyone can all talk as a group to reach conclusions about what options and services may be best.”

As people get older, for instance, one highly charged and personal subject can be something many take for granted: driving. “Where warranted, we encourage a driving evaluation, along with the family, of course, so the driving evaluation is a great tool to have here.”

After assessments are finished, Susan heads to her office to check on any new developments that may have arisen there and checks her messages.

“Sometimes, we get calls from family members who may have concerns, so I will try to connect them with any of the resources and

services that may help.”

The day’s tasks might range from assuaging a concern to springing into action when someone has been suddenly hospitalized.

“Members will usually call me directly on my mobile phone if something has happened,” she says. “For example, if someone falls, they will call me, or the family calls me, and I go to the hospital to check on them. If they’ve broken a bone and require surgery, they may not go straight home from the hospital, as they may need a little more recovery and rehabilitative time at an interim facility.

Susan makes the next level of care arrangements, where necessary, often setting up in-home care post-op.

“If family is there, we will plan with the family what is needed,” she says.

Beyond the coordination and navigation of health and/or medical needs, there’s also the social aspect for seniors. As people age, they must also sometimes face the loss of friends, whether to illness or death.

“People can get lonely,” Susan says. “So, we will sometimes host get-togethers for the mem-

bers. We have a holiday party that we do each year, and we’ve recently started a lunch bunch just to get them together.”

Many of Susan’s responsibilities with ChooseHome mirror the sorts of responsibilities she has held over the years in her former roles in the health arena. These days, Susan says she has it made for two reasons. She thoroughly enjoys the dynamic she has with her work colleagues, as well as good relationships with the members.

“For one thing, we have such lovely older people here in Hampton Roads, with so many interesting stories. I get to know them and I love to hear their stories. Also, I think it’s nice to have a job where you feel you are helping people, which is why I originally got into this. It’s a sincere joy to help people. And the people I work with are wonderful, so lovely.”

It is easy to see that Susan Lewton is proud of the ChooseHome program.

“We’ve been doing this for so long, so we know what resources and services exist and we try to guide families to the right ones. Our goal is to keep them healthy, active and living in their own homes for as long as possible.” NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

LIVING A HAPPY LIFE

By Erin Fryer

The Decorating Den vehicle seen around Williamsburg is driven by none other than the creative and spunky Amy Ahearn.

A school teacher turned interior designer, Amy has endured more loss than most people do in their lifetime, but she has never let that define her. “What defines me is I always pick myself up,” she says. “Like my mother used to

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say, life is for the living.”

Originally from New Jersey, Amy moved to Williamsburg four years ago with her husband, Jimmy. “We initially tried to get down in 2008 but the economic crash prevented that. We couldn’t sell our house. New Jersey was becoming untenable. The quality of life was not ideal, taxes were very high, the area was congested and people were stressed out.”

The couple had originally planned to move to Charlottesville and even had a down payment on a place there but when the sale of their house fell through, they had to back out. “It took us seven more years to get here because of the crash,” Amy says. “My business is directly related to housing, so it was lean times for us.”

In 1998, Amy was teaching high school English in New Jersey and burned out very quickly. “I became a teacher because, like most other educators, I wanted to give back,” she says. “I loved having the opportunity to

give back, but I also felt like it wasn’t for me. My husband suggested I go back to school for what I truly love: interior design.”

Amy went back to school full time and got a two-year degree in interior design. Though she started working right away, her husband was diagnosed with lung cancer and passed away three months after she got her degree. One week after her husband’s funeral, Amy’s mother had a stroke and passed away. “In a matter of two months I lost my husband and my mom,” Amy says. “I learned you can only grieve for one person at a time. I grieved for my husband and then a year later I started grieving for my mom. You have no control over grief, but you have to grieve. There’s no way around it.”

For six months, Amy cried every day. “After six months, I was ready to pull myself out of my funk,” Amy says. “I took little jobs here and there but then I decided to buy a condo down the street from my dad. Then, I met

someone a year to the day of my husband’s death.”

The day Amy moved into her new condo, she met Jimmy. “I met him at a party for my cousin and his sister who had gotten married a couple of months earlier,” she says. “We hit it off right away and started a friendship.”

While she was getting settled in her new condo, Amy decided it was time to renovate the kitchen. She drew up the design and went to a lumberyard to pick out her cabinets, and when she showed the owner her drawings, they were blown away by her talent and offered her a job on the spot.

Amy worked for the lumberyard for eight years doing kitchen design, designing showrooms from the ground up, as well as the owner’s home office and kitchen. “I took that job as far as I could take it then I left and went out on my own,” she says.

Amy married Jimmy and the pair came to Williamsburg for a vacation. “I grew up va-



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cationing in Virginia and loved camping in Shenandoah as a kid. Virginia is in my blood, and I have always wanted to live here. I belong here.”

During their trip to Williamsburg, Amy and Jimmy realized this is where they wanted to spend the next chapter of their lives. They moved here, and Amy started her own interior design business called Tidewater Designs. “I thought I would do kitchen design down here, but it’s very slow to start a business like that. I saw a Decorating Den vehicle in a parking lot, and I researched them. It’s the largest home furnishing franchise in North America, and they’re all independently owned and operated. What drew me in was the supplier base,” Amy says. “As an independent designer no one would give good terms because I am such small potatoes. At Decorating Den, we procure all of the furnishings for your home.”

As a franchisee for Decorating Den, Amy’s days are always different. She meets new clients, discusses projects, what items she needs to procure, then she assigns the items a value range and comes up with a budget. “I don’t design blind,” she says. “If I am pulling all high-end stuff, and your budget is not high end, it’s a waste of time. Once we are set on a budget, I put the design together, get pricing, check stock, put it all together and present my plans to the client in their home or office.”

While she never set out to work for herself, Amy says the light bulb went off after working for several firms. She didn’t want to work

for anyone else. “I interviewed with an interior designer when I moved to Williamsburg, and they regretted not hiring me because I am now their competition. Since I am a kitchen design specialist, they ended up hiring me to help them with their client’s kitchen designs.”

Outside of designing spaces for others, Amy is very active in the community and sits on several boards, including the Virginia Symphony Society and the Historic Virginia Land Conservancy. She also recently joined the board for An Occasion for the Arts.

Jimmy’s membership with Kiwanis has helped the couple meet some of Williamsburg’s most altruistic people. “The group is all about serving kids,” Amy says. “They have been blessed in their own lives, and now they just want to give back.” Amy loves the people she has met through Kiwanis and has created some great friendships and connections through the group.

Amy is also a huge fan of traveling, especially to Europe. “I am a city girl,” she says. “Living in a suburb of Manhattan has made me always love the city, especially NYC. I am definitely not a country girl. Sometimes Williamsburg is even too country for me,” she says with a laugh. Amy and Jimmy also love playing pickleball and golfing.

Amy says her favorite thing about her career as an interior designer is kitchen design. “It is a fixed space, finite,” she explains. “You have to fit boxes in between walls and make it look pretty and have it functional for the fam-

ily who lives there. There’s a five-year learning curve for kitchen design. In those first few years you are making mistakes, coming across things you wouldn’t have thought of. I have been designing kitchens for 17 years. I have never seen a kitchen plan that I can’t improve.”

Amy says the beauty of being a designer is that you are both a trendsetter and trend spotter. “I don’t follow the trends, but I am creating new trends,” she says. “Four years ago, I designed a kitchen with a blue island. My client wasn’t sure about it, but I told her to trust me. And now all I am seeing is blue islands everywhere. I am always trying to think ahead of the curve but have to temper that with my client’s comfort zone.”

As far as upcoming trends go, Amy says she is seeing a lot of black stainless appliances as well as a lot of color. “I’m seeing colorful appliances, fixtures, faucets, sinks and cabinetry, as well as more decorative backsplashes. The white subway tile that I did in 2004 is still classic, but now people want more color. Americans are definitely more hesitant about color. When I go to Europe and look at the homes there, their cabinetry is almost always a color. Americans typically just want a pop of color, but that is starting to change.”

Despite the tremendous loss she has suffered in her life, Amy Ahearn is an inspiring example of how to overcome tragedy and realize life’s dreams. “I made a choice to live a happy life and not let the loss define me. That’s my mantra.” NDN



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Hey Neighbor!

Please visit

www.WilliamsburgNeighbors.com,

Click on **Hey Neighbor!** for a complete list of current community announcements.

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

Hey Neighbor! 5th ANNUAL WHISTLE BELLY FESTIVAL

August 3, 2019

The event will be held 7 to 11 p.m. on the 400 Block of Duke of Gloucester Street. The 2019 Whistle Belly Festival will host 45 breweries, 10 non-alcohol vendors, games, and multiple food stations. General admission is \$55 inclusive of food and drink. Tickets sales benefit local non-profits and scholarship opportunities via the Junior Women's Club of Williamsburg. To purchase event tickets and learn more, please visit whistlebelly.com. Proceeds from raffle tickets benefit local non-profits and scholarships to high school students via JWCW.

Hey Neighbor! HOSPICE HOUSE SUMMER BEREAVEMENT GROUP

August 6 and 13, 2019

This support group is recommended for any adult in the community who is grieving the death of a loved one. Focused resources on grief and coping are provided at each session, and conversation at each session is centered on the grief experience. Group sessions meet 10 - 11:30 am in the bereavement lounge at Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg. There is no cost to participants, but donations are encouraged. Registration is necessary as space is limited. To register, contact

Chaplain Hannah Creager at (757) 206-1177 or via email: bereavement@williamsburghospice.org.

Hey Neighbor!

CPR FREE TRAINING CLASS

August 7, 2019

The Greater Williamsburg HEART-Safe Alliance is working to improve survival of sudden cardiac arrest in our community. Citizens play a vital role in the cardiac chain of survival by calling 911, starting CPR and using an AED (if available) as soon as possible following a sudden cardiac arrest. Our organization encourages everyone to learn hands-only CPR and for that reason, we provide free training to the community. Currently, we offer classes at Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center at 6 pm or 7 pm on these other dates: September 11, October 9, November 6 and December 11. We also offer classes at Riverside Doctors' Hospital on these dates: August 21, September 18, and October 16. November 20, and December 18. If you have questions email info@heartsafewmbg.com or visit our website: www.heartsafewmbg.com.

Hey Neighbor!

LEARN ABOUT ZOOPLANKTON

August 9, 2019

Join us for a tour of VIMS! During this 2-hour guided tour you will receive an overview of VIMS, a guided tour of our Visitors Center, and you will visit two of our research laboratories where

you will talk with our scientists. We will visit a lab that studies zooplankton (animals that drift in ocean currents) from the Chesapeake Bay to Antarctica and the Environmental Chemistry lab. Tours of VIMS take place from 10 am - 12 noon and are designed for adults. Children must be at least 9 years old to attend. Space is limited and registration must be completed at least two days in advance. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call (804) 684-7061 for more information or to register.

Hey Neighbor!

SUPER TURF SATURDAY

August 10, 2019

At JCC Recreation Center at 5301 Longhill Road, join regional experts to learn about how to grow and maintain a healthy, environmentally-friendly lawn! Learn about different species of turf, proper management techniques, weed control, soil testing, compost, and more. Vendor Expo to include local businesses providing expert products and services. For more information, or to register for the event, please call Robyn Goad at (757) 645-4895.

Hey Neighbor!

WCAC'S FALL MEMBERS' CO-OP SHOW

August 13, 2019

The Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center's Fall 2019 Members' Co-op Show runs through September 27. Featuring emerging and established

artists with larger bodies of work, the show will offer a wide variety of 2D and 3D mediums and styles in the Main and Middle Galleries. Running concurrently in the Fireside Gallery will be the popular annual "Camera to Brush and Beyond" exhibit, where member artists and artisans interpret photographs provided by member photographers. WCAC is located in the "Blue Building" at 110 Westover Ave. (off Lafayette St.) in the Arts District; (757) 229-4949. Hours are 11-3 Tues.-Sat and 12-4 on Sunday. Closed Monday. Free.

Hey Neighbor!

PUBLIC TOUR OF COASTAL GEOLOGY LAB

August 16, 2019

Join us for a tour of VIMS! During this 2-hour guided tour you will receive an overview of VIMS, a guided tour of our Visitors Center, and you will visit two of our research laboratories where you will talk with our scientists. You'll learn about VIMS' research on our ever-changing shorelines and barrier islands. In the Multispecies Fisheries Research lab you'll hear about how VIMS monitors populations of fishes and sharks in the Bay and along the Atlantic Coast - including how we determine the age of a fish and how we tell what it eats (can you say stomach dissection?!). Tours of VIMS take place from 10 am - 12 noon and are designed for adults. Children must be

If you know someone you think we should write about, please email our Editor, Narielle Living, at:

narielleliving@gmail.com

Next Door Neighbors



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at least 9 years old to attend. Space is limited and registration must be completed at least two days in advance. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call (804) 684-7061 for more information or to register.

Hey Neighbor! ROTARY CHARITY CONCERT SERIES

August 17, 2019

Kimball Theatre. 7:30-9:30 pm. Featuring Soul Intent. Tickets available at jccrotary.org or through eventbrite.

Hey Neighbor! 6th ANNUAL YOUNG WINGS CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

August 17, 2019

Youth Aeronautics Educational Foundation's annual golf tournament will be held at Ford's Colony Country Club Blackheath Course. It will benefit youth programs. Captain's Choice, 8 am registration and 9 shotgun. Lunch and prizes are included. To register, visit www.yaefwings.org or contact Samuel Billings at (908)397-9059 or contact Sam at youthaeronautics@gmail.com

Hey Neighbor! GRIEF SHARE

August 18, 2019

Walnut Hills Baptist Church, 1014 Jamestown Road, will offer GriefShare, a grief recovery seminar and support group. GriefShare is a video seminar that features some of the nation's foremost Christian experts on grief and recovery topics as seen from ASIA'S LAST NATURAL AND UNSTUDIED MAJOR RIVER DELTA August 29, 2019

Half a billion people worldwide live on river deltas, areas that are constantly changing and are at high risk of land loss and flooding. Dr. Steve Kuehl, faculty member at VIMS, has spent his career studying river deltas and the effects that nature and humans have on these environments. His current research focuses on the Ayeyarwady Delta in Myanmar, one of the least studied river deltas on earth. Join us as Dr. Kuehl tells the story of his research journey to Myanmar, the complexities of international research, and how his findings in Myanmar will help us understand and predict how future environmental and human-induced changes will impact deltas, and the people that inhabit them, around the world. Time and place: 7 pm in Watermen's Hall on the VIMS campus, 1375 Greate Road, Gloucester Point.

Reservations to this free, public lecture are required due to limited space. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call (804) 684-7061 to register or to find out more information about this and future After Hours lectures. Can't attend in person? The lecture is also offered as a live-streamed webinar. Register for the webinar at www.vims.edu/events.

Hey Neighbor! DISEASE ECOLOGY LAB

August 30, 2019

Join us for a tour of VIMS! During this 2-hour guided tour you will receive an overview of VIMS, a guided tour of our Visitors Center, and you will visit two of our research laboratories where you will talk with our scientists. We will visit the Disease Ecology lab and the Nunnally Ichthyology Collection. Tours of VIMS take place from 10 am – 12 noon and are designed for adults. Children must be at least 9 years old to attend. Space is limited and registration must be completed at least two days in advance. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call (804) 684-7061 for more information or to register.

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE - FALL REGISTRATION

August 31, 2019

The Williamsburg Senior Softball League completed its inaugural season mid-June. After a summer break, the fall season will begin just after Labor Day. Registration for the fall season is now underway! Don't miss out! Information and forms are available on the WSSL website: www.wsslva.org or email: wssl2019@gmail.com. Players aged 55 and older are invited to join us for practices Thursday mornings during our break."

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG WOMEN'S CHORUS NEW MEMBERS

Thru August

The Williamsburg Women's Chorus is accepting new members for their fall season 2019. The first practice will be at 10 am in the Bruton Parish House lower level. Fall season runs from August thru early December. If you are interested in joining, please contact Beckie Davy, director, at bdavy@brutonparish.org.

Hey Neighbor! ANNUAL OVARIAN CANCER RUN/WALK

September 7, 2019

The 11th annual Ovarian Cancer

Memorial Run/Walk will be held at New Quarter Park. Race day registration begins at 7:45 am, a 1-mile fun Run/Walk at 8:30 am, and a 5K Run/Walk at 9 am. The entry fee is \$30 until August 30 and \$35 thereafter. The Run/Walk is conducted in partnership with the Williamsburg Community Foundation. You can register online, become a sponsor or make a donation at our web site at www.hareandtor-toiserunwalk.com. John M. O'Hare, Race Co-Director. john@hareandtor-toiserun.com

Hey Neighbor! PENINSULA AGENCY ON AGING – CAREER CLUB

September 10, 2019

9-10:30 am. Join the Experienced Employees in Transition (40-and-Over) Career Club. This program is provided by the Peninsula Agency on Aging for speakers, workshops, networking, emotional and resource support throughout your job search! 312 Waller Mill Road, Room 801, Williamsburg

Hey Neighbor! PENINSULA AGENCY ON AGING - JOB FAIR

September 12, 2019

1:30-4 pm. JOB FAIR for job seekers 40+. Sponsored by the Peninsula Agency on Aging, AARP, and the Virginia Employment Commission. Location: Historic Triangle Messmer Community Services Center, 312 Waller Mill Rd.

Hey Neighbor! WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OPENS ITS 2019- 2020 CONCERT SEASON

September 13, 2019

The WSO 2019-2020 season begins with the first concert of its Masterworks series, Brahms and Sibelius. Each Masterworks concert will feature a guest artist. These guest artists will each give a Masterclass or take part in an educational activity during their stay in the community. Masterworks will take place at the Williamsburg Community Chapel and will be performed on one night.

Hey Neighbor! FREE CARWASH

September 14, 2019

Calvary Chapel Williamsburg will host a free car wash for the community. Let us clean your car, truck or van while you have a bite to eat. . . also free!! Join us 10 am – 3 pm at C&F Bank, 4780 Longhill road, corner of Longhill and

Old Towne Road, across from 7-11.

Hey Neighbor! CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT

September 17, 2019

The Chamber Music Society of Williamsburg presents the Neave Trio at 8 pm in the Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre, Scotland Street. For information & tickets visit -- chambermusicwilliamsburg.org

Hey Neighbor! FORECASTING TIDAL FLOODING

September 26, 2019

Join us as Dr. Derek Loftis shares how the use of innovative technologies and citizen scientists is helping Hampton Roads communities predict and prepare for flood events and rising seas. After Hours lectures take place at 7:00 pm in Watermen's Hall on the VIMS campus, 1375 Greate Road, Gloucester Point. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call 804-684-7061 to register or to find out more information about this and future After Hours lectures.

Hey Neighbor! 5K FOR THE ARC

October 5, 2019

The 10th Annual 5k for The Arc! Registration is now open. The race is currently looking for sponsors. Visit thearc.org for race and sponsorship details, or call Pam McGregor at (757) 229-3535

Hey Neighbor! PENINSULA AGENCY ON AGING – CAREER CLUB

October 8, 2019

9-10:30 am. Join the Experienced Employees in Transition (40-and-Over) Career Club. This program is provided by the Peninsula Agency on Aging for speakers, workshops, networking, emotional and resource support throughout your job search!. Location: 312 Waller Mill Road, Room 801, Williamsburg

Hey Neighbor! HICKORY NECK 19TH ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL

October 19, 2019

10 am – 3 pm. Home-style cooking, BBQ, hot dogs, beats, silent auction, amazin' grazin' baked goods, arts and crafts show and sales, attic treasures, free kids events and hay rides. All proceeds benefit local charities. \$170,735 has been raised so far! Hickory Neck Episcopal Church, 8300 Richmond Road, Toano, VA 23168. Phone number (757) 566 – 0276. www.hickory-neck.org/festival

Hey Neighbor!

CYBOTOTS IN THE BAY

October 24, 2019

Harmful algae blooms, or HABs, occur when algae in the water grow excessively and produce toxins and other harmful effects on the environment and people. Algal species capable of producing HABs have increased in abundance in the Chesapeake Bay during the last decade, causing concern among resource managers, industry members, health officials, and the public. Join us as Dr. Smith describes the innovative technology she is using to protect public health as well as her vision for a network of cybotots throughout the Bay. All After Hours lectures take place at 7 pm in Watermen's Hall on the VIMS campus, 1375 Greates Road, Gloucester Point. Reservations to this free, public lecture are required due to limited space. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call (804) 684-7061 to register or to find out more information about this and future After Hours lectures.

Hey Neighbor!

DRIVER SAFETY COURSE FOR SENIORS

October 29-30, 2019

An AARP Driver Safety course is coming from 8:30 am - 1 pm in the Community Room in Riverside Doctors Hospital at 1500 Commonwealth Ave. Attendance on both days is required. Cost is \$15 for AARP members or \$20 otherwise payable by cash or check made out to AARP the first morning of class. You will need to bring a valid Virginia Driver's License and, if applicable, a current AARP membership card. Since class size is limited, pre-registration is required. Call (757) 220-0463 to reserve your seat. We need to know the names, tel#s and e-mail of each registrant.

Hey Neighbor!

BERKELEY PLANTATION CELEBRATES 400TH ANNIVERSARY 1619-2019

November 3, 2019

From 11 am - 4 pm, at Berkeley Plantation, 12602 Harrison Landing Rd. Charles City (directly off scenic Rt. 5 between Richmond and Williamsburg). House Tours 9:30 am- 4:30 pm. Berkeley Plantation hosts the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival. Join us for a day immersed in the history of early Colonial America as we celebrate the First English Thanksgiving in the New World. The public is invited to bring

chairs and blankets to enjoy the event. Discounted rates for seniors, military and children ages 6-16. For more information call 804-829-6018 or 888-466-6018

Hey Neighbor!

PENINSULA AGENCY ON AGING - CAREER CLUB

November 12, 2019

9-10:30 am. Join the Experienced Employees in Transition (40-and-Over) Career Club. This program is provided by the Peninsula Agency on Aging for speakers, workshops, networking, emotional and resource support throughout your job search! Location: 312 Waller Mill Road, Room 801, Williamsburg

Hey Neighbor!

HERITAGE HUMANE SOCIETY 19TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY BAZAAR

November 23, 2019

Join us at the Bruton Parish Hall on Duke of Gloucester Street, Williamsburg. Doors open at 9 am. You'll find unique gifts and stocking stuffers for all the people and pets on your list. All proceeds benefit the homeless animals at the Heritage Humane Society. Come early for the best selections of gourmet soups and baked goods for your celebrations. We have themed baskets and hand-crafted gifts—and a wide selection of jewelry, scarves, books, stuffed animals, holiday decorations, fabric creations and more! Your favorite pets will enjoy toys, togs and treats in their holiday "critter baskets". Try your luck at our raffles, with a chance to win exciting prizes.

Hey Neighbor!

WILLIAMSBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (WAARC)

Ongoing

The Williamsburg Amateur Radio Club (WAARC) meets every month on the Second Tuesday at 7 pm in the Community Room of the JCC Library on Croaker Rd. Vast opportunities to enjoy amateur radio and perform public service to the community. Members meet for breakfast every Saturday. Visit us at k4rc.net or email to info@k4rc.net for more details.

Hey Neighbor!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED, WILLIAMSBURG FAITH IN ACTION

Ongoing

Faith In Action relies on volunteers to help keep seniors living independently in their own homes. Volunteers

transport care receivers to doctor's appointments, the grocery store, bank, pharmacy, etc. Volunteers also provide in-home services such as care giver support, visits, and light chores. Faith In Action offers a flexible schedule for its volunteers. If you have a few hours to dedicate to someone who may need to get to a doctor's appointment, or just enjoy a friendly visit, then we have the place for you. If you are interested in volunteering, call the Williamsburg Faith In Action Office at (757) 258-5890.

Hey Neighbor!

JAMES CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

Ongoing

"A Door of Hope" No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, we're glad you're here. James City Community Church is located at 4550 Old News Rd., Williamsburg. Services: 9 am (nursery provided) and 11am (birth - 5th grade programs provided). Come join us and feel free to participate as much or as little as you feel comfortable. We also offer Celebrate Recovery every Friday at 7 pm. Visit our website at www.jccchurch.com to learn more about JCC.

Hey Neighbor!

BIBLE STUDY IN NORGE

Ongoing

Not getting enough from your Bible study or church group, then perhaps you should join us at the Williamsburg library in Norge every Monday at 6 pm to get your biblical questions answered, such as what happened in the garden concerning the two trees, or what happened between Adam and Eve and the serpent (that is to say the devil), or why isn't Cain in Adam's genealogy or where did Cain get his wife from, or did Adam and Eve really die the day they ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge, and what was that fruit? or such questions as what is the mark of the beast 666 and what does it mean and oh yeah what about the unforgettable sin and have I committed it, so (757) 253-00172 or (757) 604-6649 .

Hey Neighbor!

VOLUNTEER WITH JCC PARKS & RECREATION

Ongoing

Volunteer with James City County Parks & Recreation! Lend a hand, Make a difference, Be a part of something great! Volunteering is your gift to our community. For a list of volun-

teer opportunities both in parks and recreation and County-wide, contact Angie Sims at angie.sims@jamescity-countyva.gov or call 75-259-5403.

Hey Neighbor!

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOSPICE HOUSE

Ongoing

We invite you to tour our home and gardens and learn about all we do for the community. On the first Thursday of the month, drop by between the hours of 12 - 2 p.m. to learn more about our organization. Questions or to RSVP (not required) Call: 757-345-5195. Email: Diane Schwarz , dschwarz@williamsburghospice.org, 4445 Powhatan Parkway, Williamsburg VA 23188 www.williamsburghospice.org. Caring for people at the end of life, comforting the bereaved and empowering others to do the same.

Hey Neighbor!

LOCAL FARM ANIMAL SANCTUARY

Ongoing

Life with Pigs Farm Animal Sanctuary in Williamsburg rescues farm animals that get to come and live out their happily ever-after here. We currently have a calf named Winnie who just arrived and has some mobility issues. She drags her back legs when walking and while she currently seems to be doing great, we are seeking a solution so that once she reaches full weight, she can continue to be mobile into old age. We also have another calf named Jenna who was born infertile, 4 turkeys, 7 chickens, and 3 pigs (who sleep on the couch inside often with a chicken in diapers on their backs). For more information, contact Ryan at Life with Pigs Farm Animal Sanctuary, (219) 331-6204.

Hey Neighbor!

TURF LOVE PROGRAM

Year-Round

The Turf Love program is offered by the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District to JCC residents who wish to grow and maintain a healthy lawn while protecting our surrounding environment. Through this program, homeowners can request a visit from a trained Virginia Cooperative Extension James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener, known as a Lawn Ranger, who discuss the importance of environmentally-friendly lawn care. To learn more about this program, please call (757) 645-4895.

Williamsburg's
IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
photo challenge

SCHOOL
CROSSING
at the Providence
Classical School

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

Enjoy!

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

JULY 2019
In the Neighborhood
Photo Challenge



INTERMEDIATE



You Don't Want to Miss A Beat



Vasudev Ananthram, M.D.

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