

February 2012

WILLIAMSBURG'S

# Next Door Neighbors®

VOL. 6, ISSUE 2

PRICELESS

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## Volunteer!

**Dale Church,  
CASA**

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This issue is about volunteering. It is about celebrating a few people highlighted within these pages who are making a difference in the lives of others, and the hundreds - maybe even thousands - of volunteers in our community that we could not include in this issue.

For those who decide to give their time and talent to others through volunteerism, we salute you. Good works has its reward no matter what the situation. Our community is blessed to have so many people who have made the decision to devote themselves to good causes and to help those in need. However, we can always do more.

We encourage you to read this issue and ask yourself if you have the time and resources to help those who are less fortunate. Your efforts may help someone you may never even meet, but they will be significant to the recipient and will touch your own life in a positive way.

They say that with love, the more you give away the more you get back. Volunteering is an act of love in that what you give of yourself is intended to benefit another, but in doing so your own life is enriched.

As you read the following pages, ask yourself if you could become a volunteer. Turn to page 25 to learn about some of the volunteer opportunities our local non-profit organizations have in 2012. NDN



Meredith Collins, Publisher

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# THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CHILD

By Sandy Rotermund

The love of a child is unconditional and non-discriminating. That love forgives a parent's shortcomings, mistakes, and even their failures. Their little hearts seek only the same. Sadly, some children's hearts and spirits are broken by abuse and neglect at the hands of those who should protect them the most. It is then that volunteers, like Dale Church, must intervene.

As a volunteer for CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates (for children) – Dale Church, a retired defense attorney, must become the eyes of the child. He is one of many players in the life of a child who comes under protective court order because of abuse, neglect and other factors. Other players include the Department of Social Services (DSS) who investigates the child's situation, the judge, and the counsel for each of the parties involved. The *Guardian Ad Litem*, the child's attorney, is another key team member because he or she speaks in court on behalf of the child.

"We [the CASA volunteer] don't speak in court because we come under something called the 'hearsay rule,' and that is if we can't be cross-examined, we wouldn't otherwise – if there wasn't a legal exception to this – be allowed to even present our reports," Dale says.

The law or statute, according to Dale, allows the CASA volunteer to provide reports that are totally objective and are taken very seriously by the judge.

"We're not advocating on behalf of anything or anyone except the child. We're the one person in the courtroom who is there unbridled by any kind of constraints other than objectivity and reporting on the child," Dale explains.

Thanks to a judge practicing in Seattle, Washington twenty years ago, volunteers like Dale Church exist today.

"He concluded that nobody brought to him the issues involving the child – that everybody has some constraints within the laws that exist.

There is a heavy bias in the law towards biological parents, and so they're heavily protected by this," Dale says.

Dale acknowledges that even DSS has to abide by certain laws and regulations. The objective shared by all of the players working on a case is restoring the child's safety and changing their situation as soon as possible.

"The judge in Seattle," Dale continues, "said there's nobody who really speaks to me through the eyes of the child. They all have their idiosyncrasies and biases and regulations and things that they do in the roles that they play." Dale pauses and smiles. "And, so what he did was retire from the bench and become the first CASA volunteer."

That was in 1977. The judge created CASA and began training community volunteers to provide judges with written reports of a 360 degree view of the child's life. These reports would assist the judge in making more informed deci-

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sions about the needs of the child and the family and the child's placement.

The award-winning, nationally recognized Colonial CASA chapter – begun in 1995 by then Judge Hoover – serves James City County, Williamsburg, Poquoson and York County. Dale is one of thirty-six active volunteers, and he often works two cases simultaneously. The need for volunteers continues to grow, especially during tough economic times.

"You'll find in economic downturns, abuse and neglect get worse. There is so much stress in homes that things like arguments and fighting goes on among parents," Dale says.

Though Dale's background is in law, CASA volunteers are also educators and psychologists, among other occupations. "The first thing you have to have is the love of children," Dale states firmly. "I mean you have to really, really have empathy toward the plight of abused or neglected children. Because, as we often say, the cases we see, you couldn't make up. Some of them are just horrible." Dale looks down at the table before lifting his gaze to continue. "You have to become less than emotionally involved in those situations. You just can't throw up your hands and say this is so horrible I can't deal with it. You have to be able to delve in. And what's driving that, I like to say, is if you even turn around one child in the years you spend doing this, it's all worth it."

CASA volunteers needn't be retired, but most don't work full-time. After completing 40 hours of training that includes classroom instruction as well as courtroom time, the CASA volunteer will contact every possible person involved in that child's life. The order the judge signs which appoints CASA to a case allows visits with doctors, teachers, grandparents – even the child – to occur. The information and insights drawn from this process become crucial to the report compiled for the judge. CASA volunteers may follow a case for years or even see some cases return repeatedly to the court docket during that child's life up to age eighteen.

Dale doesn't minimize the time commitment or responsibilities of the CASA volunteer. Seeing a child flourish once their situation has changed makes it all worthwhile.

"Another saying we have is, 'thank God for grandparents,'" he says. "They have rescued so many situations even though they may be 50, 60 – even as much as 70 years of age. To come in and take over the development of a young child is an incredible burden at that age, but those that are willing to do it are, as I said, God-given to us. They're so necessary in this process."

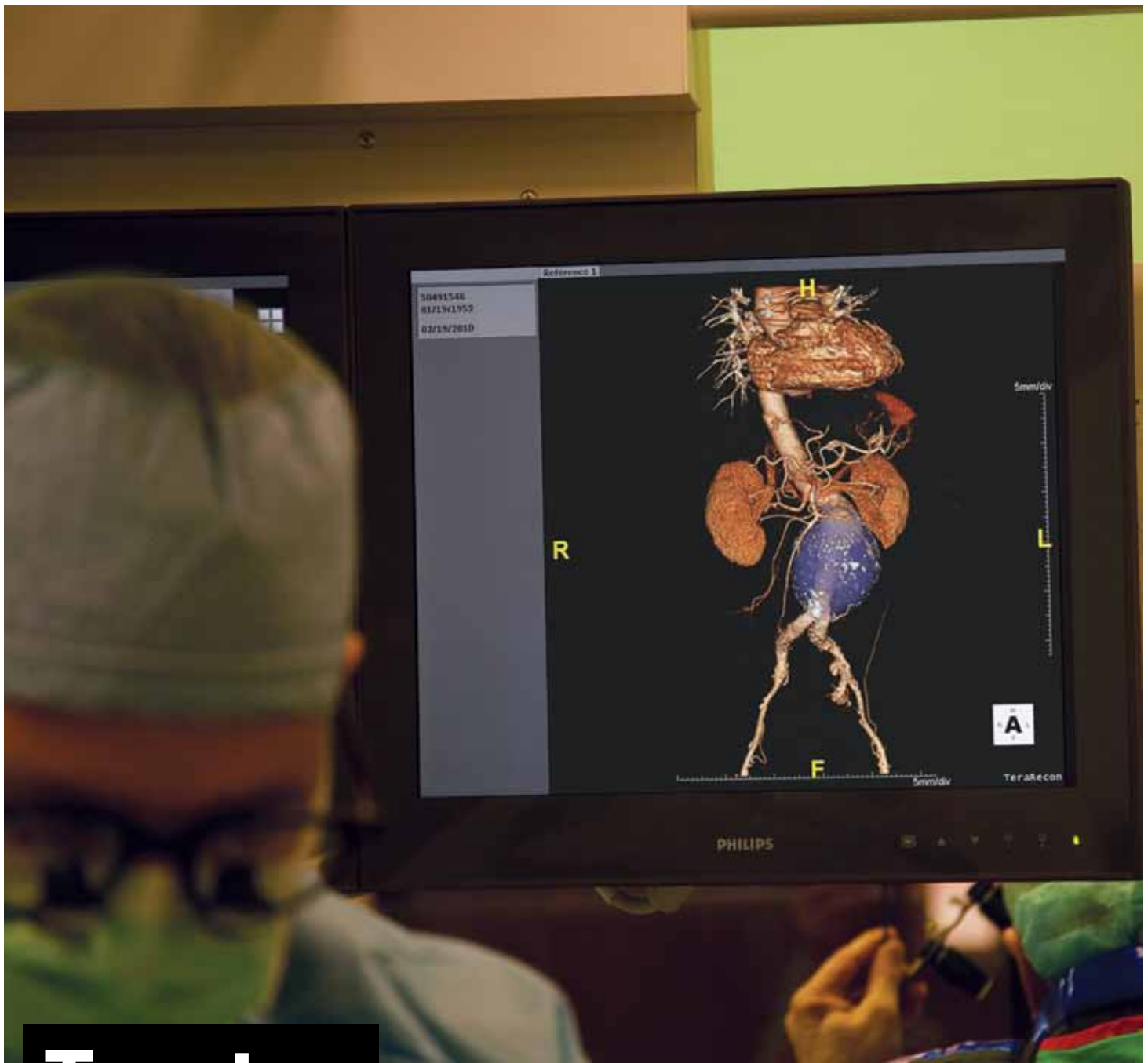
Now 72, Dale retired five years ago. A lawyer since 1967, he has practiced international law, travelling to 64 countries. He has also served as legal counsel to several companies and worked as a government executive. At one point, Dale had the oversight of everything the Pentagon bought from shoelaces to aircraft carriers – a 150 billion dollar annual budget.

Dale still stays involved with national security and defense, but his passion for fishing tugs regularly. His college roommate, who is from Dale's home state of Oregon, lives in Alaska – home to the largest Coho salmon. Dale, his former roommate and other buddies all trek to Kodiak Island once a year. Fishing, friends – even bears – make for an escape he wouldn't miss.

Dale's calendar fills regularly with service, recreational and family activities. Yet, his days are also committed to his mission with Colonial CASA. Its importance to a child is profound and can change that child's life forever.

"I see it [the situation] only through the eyes of the child. I don't care about anyone else in the process," he says.

Other's feelings don't matter to him. "I'm only there to worry about the feelings and interests of the child." Dale calls himself a "pure child advocate." To many, that should also describe a parent's natural instincts. Tragically, that is not always the case. For those children, Dale can be their eyes as he holds their hearts. NDN



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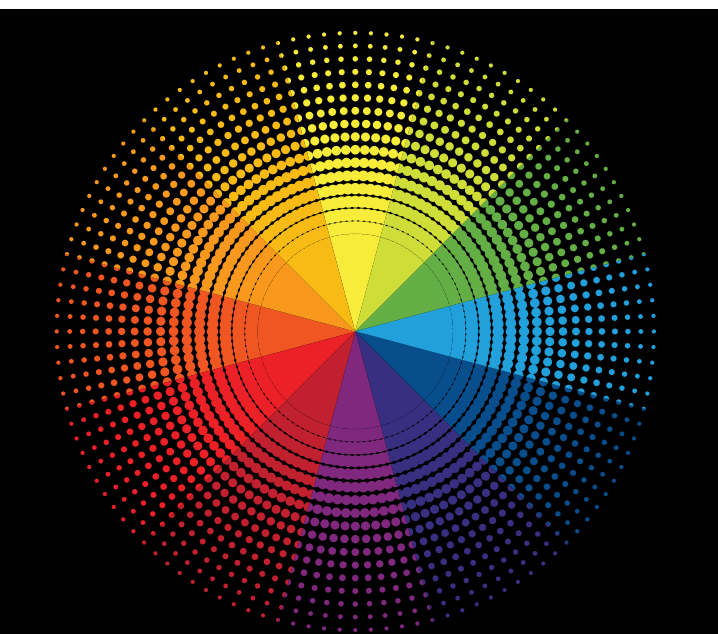
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**Rita Francavilla**

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# Giving to children

*By Alison Johnson*

As she searched for volunteer opportunities, Rita Francavilla hoped to find a place where she could see change firsthand. That led her to Child Development Resources (CDR), a nonprofit agency that helps babies and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays. CDR led her to an outdoor play yard one morning, kicking a ball to a little girl who doctors predicted would never walk.

The girl, then about two and a half years old, had ventured outside using a walker that day. This in itself was great progress given her delayed motor skills. When Rita kicked the ball her way during a game with a group of children, she didn't expect anything in return. Instead,

the little girl kicked it right back.

"I could have sat down and cried," Rita remembers. "We were all clapping and cheering, and to see what that small moment meant to that child's mother was just amazing. Eventually she did walk. She did so much that doctors never thought she would. CDR changed her life, without a doubt."

Rita, 61, has seen many such moments during her six years as a CDR volunteer. Each week, she spends two hours working with a developmental play group, guiding young children on everything from molding Play-Doh to figuring out how to turn their bodies at the top of a slide to take the ride down.

"When they figure something out, they're just so proud and happy," she says. "Their smiles are unforgettable."

CDR began in 1966 as the Williamsburg Preschool for Special Children and has grown steadily since then. The Norge-based organization, a United Way agency, serves children from birth to age three in Williamsburg, James City County, York County and Poquoson.

Eligible children who have a disability, come from low income families or have other risk factors such as prematurity, parental substance abuse or teenage parents. CDR also offers developmental screenings, parenting classes, therapy during home visits and training for local child care and medical professionals who work with young children.

With help, some kids can wind up on pace developmentally compared to others their age. Others could never meet that goal, but CDR's mission is to help them be the best they can be. Sometimes, coaxing a child to say a single word at playgroup – to ask for "cheese" with a snack, for example – can be a major milestone for a family.

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~ *Peter Mellette, Literacy for Life Board President, with Isabel Haro, a new citizen*

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“The mom and dad will come to pick a child up, and we get to tell them about it and [we] all celebrate like crazy,” Rita says.

Like everyone at CDR, Rita is passionate about the power of early intervention to prevent many problems down the road. Those may include years of frustration for children, heartache for parents and money for more expensive services as a child gets older. “We’re going to pay at some point,” Rita says. “Why wouldn’t we step in as early as we can?”

A retired art teacher and graphic designer, Rita has always loved working with young children. The New Jersey native developed an interest in art at age eight, when a kidney infection landed her in bed for a couple of months and an uncle gave her a pencil set to pass the time. She went on to major in art education at the University of Dayton in Ohio and got a job as an elementary school art teacher.

“It was fun being the art teacher – much more fun, I imagine, than being the math teacher,” she says. “My favorite thing was the innocence of the very young children. I loved seeing the joy they got in the littlest things and how they learned to trust me, which are the same things I get to see at CDR.”

Rita and her husband, Bill, a financial consultant, moved to Virginia more than 25 years ago for his career. She dove into the field of graphic design, eventually becoming the first employee at Howell Creative Group, a James City County-based company that helps businesses and non-profits with Website design, brand makeovers, public relations and more. Rita was there before computers revolutionized the field – think no Photoshop – and at first was terrified by them.


“I thought, ‘I’m in my 40s and my career is over,’” she says. “I’ll never be able to design on a computer. But my boss brought in instructors and we all learned, and now I can’t imagine not having a computer to work on.”

Rita first came across CDR as part of a Howell project on recipients of local health grants. She was busy then with work and raising her three children but the group stuck in her head. When she retired, she called and asked to visit and then volunteer. “The staff is just so wonderful,” she says. “This work isn’t just a job for them. They care so much about these children and parents.”

Rita now sits on CDR’s Board of Directors and lends her design skills to projects such as the annual 5K run and fundraising auction. The former computer phobe also helped redesign the group’s Website. At the weekly playgroup, she has worked with babies and toddlers who may have trouble crawling, walking or speaking. Many come in very shy and rarely smiling, and Rita is thrilled when they begin to relax and trust her.

“One little girl just said one day, ‘You can go now, Mommy’ when I sat down with her,” she says. “I thought, ‘Oh my, now I have really arrived.’”

In addition to her volunteer work, Rita enjoys gardening, reading and most of all spending time with her nine grandchildren, who range in age from one-and-a-half to 15 years. A tenth grandchild is due at the end of January. She and Bill regularly spend time with them at their home. Yet even as she watches her grandkids play, Rita often thinks of the children at CDR.

“I’ve seen my children and now my grandchildren master these basic tasks that seem so easy, but I know they’re not so easy for all children,” she says. “I just believe so strongly that those kids deserve our attention too.” 

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**Emilie  
Pinto**



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# Service to Others

By Lillian Stevens

If the future of our community rests with its youth, then citizens like Emilie Pinto deserve special recognition for their efforts to make their hometown and surrounding regions a better place. They are getting recognition, too, thanks to scholarships provided through the Williamsburg/James City County (WJCC) Scholarship Fund at the Williamsburg Community Foundation (WCF).

In the spring of 2010, Emilie was awarded the first annual Kathy Yankovich Hornsby Honorary Scholarship for Community Service, one of nearly 50 awards given by the WJCC Scholarship Fund at the WCF.

Currently a sophomore at Clemson University, she is a graduate of Warhill High School, where she served as senior class president.

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"I went to Lafayette High School my freshman year then transferred to Warhill my sophomore year. I was involved in the Key Club at Lafayette but there was no Key Club at Warhill, so I started one. I recruited a teacher to be our advisor, and I served as president for two years," Emilie says.

She went on to serve as lieutenant governor for over 14 Key Clubs in the division – including two which she helped charter – and she served on the Capital District Board (which includes Virginia, Maryland, Washington, DC and Delaware). By the time she graduated from high school, Emilie had logged over 3,000 service hours.

"Service is something that I love and so I make time for it. It makes me feel fulfilled and good inside," she says.

Key Club is synonymous with service, and Emilie's primary mission was to make her Key Club a vehicle for spreading her passion for service to others and making her community a better place. She also applied for scholarships through her high school's guidance office.

The Kathy Yankovich Hornsby Scholarship for Community Service is given to one student each year who has demonstrated outstanding service to the school/community and has an interest in continuing a record of service. The recipient of the award is chosen by the Scholarship Selection Subcommittee, not the individual whose name it bears.

"Three years ago, I was both surprised and flattered to learn that members of the subcommittee created this award in my name. I was also thrilled to learn that Emilie Pinto had been selected for this scholarship in its inaugural year," says Kathy Hornsby. "She's one of those kids – not just a volunteer or joiner – but someone with an incredible amount of drive, enthusiasm and energy who initiates projects to make improvements in the community."

At Warhill High, with the help of her AP Government teacher, Matthew Crawford, Emilie grew the Key Club from ten students to 70 in just one year.

One of her favorite projects was called "Tinsels, Trees and Trim-mings," a joint effort with the Toano Kiwanis Club, which provides families in need with holiday dinners, presents and a Christmas tree.

During her tenure as Key Club Lieutenant Governor, Emilie was charged with selecting a service project for her division – a project which would unite all fourteen schools in service.

"It was a challenge because the schools are located so far apart," she explains. "I chose the Lackey Free Clinic in Yorktown."

Emilie's project was called Health Care Heroes and she encouraged all of her Key Club members to fund-raise for the Lackey Free Clinic and also to volunteer there, as she had done.

The Lackey Free Clinic is a faith-based, free health care ministry located in adjacent York County. Its mission is to "build a bridge of healing and compassion to serve the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the medically disadvantaged on the Peninsula."

"We did a huge fund-raiser between all of the schools – a benefit Dodge Ball Tournament, which was very successful and really fun," she says. "We had so much support from the community. There were sponsors, tee shirts, everything!"

The event, which was held at the Warhill Sports Complex, raised over \$2,200 for the Lackey Free Clinic.

"So, it was honestly amazing to give back to the community and then have the community give back to me with the Kathy Yankovich Hornsby Scholarship," Emilie says. "It was really a special thing because I felt like I had worked so hard with my own service, so to be recognized that way was awesome. It really helped with college expenses too, because I go to school out of state."

The WJCC Scholarship Fund at the WCF was founded in 1974, when it awarded seven scholarships totaling \$1,500. Originally called the Lafayette Educational Fund (LEF), and later the Jamestown-La-

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At Clemson, Emilie serves as Vice President for Community Service with her sorority, Kappa Delta. “I was attracted to Kappa Delta because it was the only sorority at Clemson that had four national philanthropies,” she says. “And that really hit home with me because I felt like I could make a difference.”

Kappa Delta’s philanthropies include Girl Scouts of the USA, Prevent Child Abuse America, Children’s Research Hospital in Richmond and the Kappa Delta Orthopedic Research Awards.

“So, I joined Kappa Delta as soon as I got to Clemson. Besides, my sister was a Kappa Delta and so that certainly influenced me too,” Emilie says.

Both of her parents, Drs. Robert and Anne Pinto, and her older sister are alumni of the university.

“My parents actually met in college. I applied to nine different schools but when I visited Clemson I fell completely in love with the

campus, and couldn’t imagine going anywhere else.”

Emilie and her sisters grew up in Chickahominy Haven. One sister, Caley, works as a marketing director at the Pinto’s chiropractic practice in New Town and the other sister, Jennifer, is a graduate student at Mary Baldwin College.

A biology major, Emilie hopes to go to medical school after she graduates.

“My vision for myself is to work for – or even open – a free clinic like Lackey one day because I’m so inspired by what they do there. But, I have a lot of back up plans in case medical school doesn’t work out,” she says with a laugh.

Emilie says that her love of service was prompted in large part by her parents because they stressed the importance of giving back to a community which offers so much to its residents.

“My dad especially set that example through his efforts in the Kiwanis Club because he would take me with him to volunteer with their service projects,” Emilie says. “So, I got to see first-hand what a difference service makes in the community and people’s lives in general.” NDN

## Next Door Neighbors

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# QUIET DETERMINATION

Liseth Borrego



By Narielle Living

There's nothing more determined than a mother trying to create a better life for her children, and Liseth Borrego is a shining example of that. A Cuban immigrant, Liseth arrived in this country not knowing how to speak one word of English. She has managed to not only learn the language but also steadily progressed to an advanced level of speaking. How did she do it?

She was determined to be successful in a new country, both for herself as well as for her

family. She did not have to face obstacles alone, however. Literacy for Life, a non-profit organization that tutors adults in reading, writing and speaking English, helped her achieve her goals.

Liseth and her husband came from Cuba to the United States five years ago. They had been married fourteen years and had a life together there. The decision to move was a difficult one.

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“We do everything together, my husband and I. We make all our decisions together,” she explains. “So when we wanted to move, we started asking around. We were told that this part of Virginia was a great place for kids and a good place to bring your family. When we researched where we wanted to live, we kept coming back to this area. So far it’s been good. We’ve been very happy here.”

With a degree in elementary education from Cuba, Lisseth found that she had no marketable talents when she came to the United States. Her limited language skills were an immediate barrier.

“It was very hard the first two years I was here,” she says. “I was nervous about going places because I wasn’t sure where it was safe and where it wasn’t. My husband and children were the only family I had here, so I didn’t even have anyone else to ask questions.” At that time her two young children were ages two and seven, and she was very careful not to wander far from home and risk going to unsafe areas or getting lost.

A life of uncertainty and fear got old quickly, and Lisseth found she couldn’t stay home forever.

“Going to the doctor was a trial, because I didn’t understand anything. But there were things I had to do, so I was going to have to make some changes.

and on-line retailer of gourmet Spanish foods, and it was there that she found assistance to make the changes she sought. La Tienda provides a pathway to learning English through the Literacy for Life organization. Literacy for Life tutors provide free classes at La Tienda for any employees who want to learn English.

Lisseth immediately took advantage of this opportunity. Once a week for two hours she attended classes with Literacy for Life, determined to learn as much as she could.

“You learn little by little, but you have to work at it. For me, I focused on learning at least one new word a day. That’s not much, really, just one word, but by the end of the month it adds up.”

Literacy for Life gives each student a test at the beginning of the program, and then gives them the same test at the end of the year to show how much they’ve progressed.

“In each class my tutor would ask, ‘What do you want to learn today?’ That was great. It gave me a chance to focus on either conversational language or work related language,” Lisseth says. “I’m learning to write now, too,” she adds with a smile.

“You learn little by little, but you have to work at it. For me, I focused on learning at least one new word a day. That’s not much, really, just one word, but by the end of the month it adds up.”  
~ Lisseth Borrego


I knew I had to learn to speak and read English or I’d spend my life being afraid. I didn’t want that for me or the kids.”

Lisseth took a job with La Tienda, a local

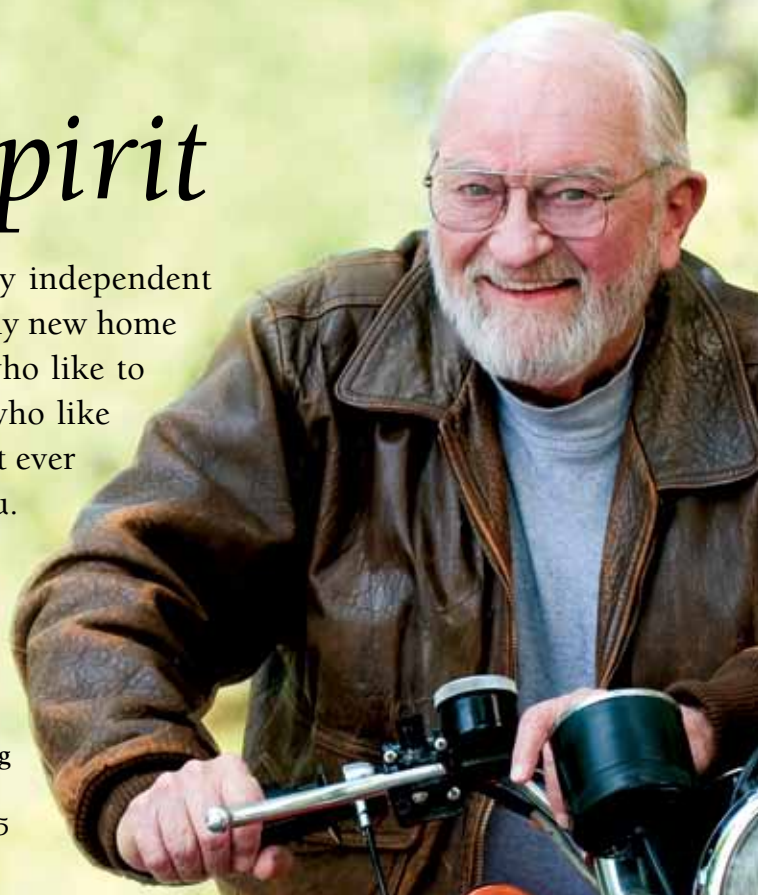
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Her children have had a somewhat different experience learning the language. Laughing a little, Lisseth shares, "I have to tell them to speak Spanish at home and not just English. I don't want them to forget their native language. I want them to have both. But they do everything in English. It's natural to them now."

It wasn't always so easy for them, though. At first, public school was very difficult for her son. "Nobody spoke Spanish in my son's first school, so my husband found an interpreter," Lisseth says. Eventually her son was able to receive one-on-one language services and help in school, and now both children speak fluent English. "Literacy for Life helped me help my son," Lisseth explains. "I had to help him with his homework, which I wouldn't have been able to do without knowing English."

Lisseth's language skills have progressed to the point where she now feels secure in her ability to interact in the community. She recently attended a Back to School Night at her children's school. She felt confident in her ability to communicate with others at the school.

Determined to develop her language skills quickly, Lisseth has been meeting with a volunteer tutor at the Literacy for Life office once a

week after work. They've worked together since September 2010, and her language skills have steadily progressed. The proof of her success is in the tests. Her tests had initially labeled her skills as "low beginning," but she is now at an "advanced" level, and is continuing with her studies.

Although she's met others in the Literacy for Life program, she says people are more focused on learning the language than developing friendships. "We're here to learn English, that's all." She has, however, sent friends to Literacy for Life in the hopes that it would expand their vocabulary and help with language needs. Tolerance levels for non-English speakers vary in this area, and Lisseth stresses that it's important to know how to speak English.

Literacy for Life and learning English has changed her entire world. "Wow, I can't even begin to tell you how much everything has changed for me since coming to this country," she says. "It's so much better, and I'm grateful to be here."

In September 2011, Lisseth passed her citizenship test and a month later was sworn in as a United States citizen. She credits Literacy for Life with making it possible.

"They helped me not only learn the language

but understand what I would be reading," she says. "Without them I might not have passed."

Although Literacy for Life has helped Lisseth create a new life in this country, she's still unclear about her long-term goals. She's not certain if she would ever be able to help others learn the language as a Spanish speaking tutor. "It's very difficult, but maybe. I still have so much to learn myself, I don't know." She has, however, been known to help others in her workplace who might not understand as much of the language as she does.

"Sometimes people in the warehouse might not understand a word or phrase or something, so I help them out. It's important. It helps to encourage others to learn English. Literacy for Life has made such a difference for me. I think it's important to take advantage of the classes they offer. It helps you become part of the community."

She has advice for those who might be struggling with learning the English language.

"It's hard, but if I can do it, you can do it," she emphasizes.

Leaning forward in her chair, she stresses her next words. "Nothing is too difficult when you want something. This is important, and I wanted to learn and I did. So can you." NDN

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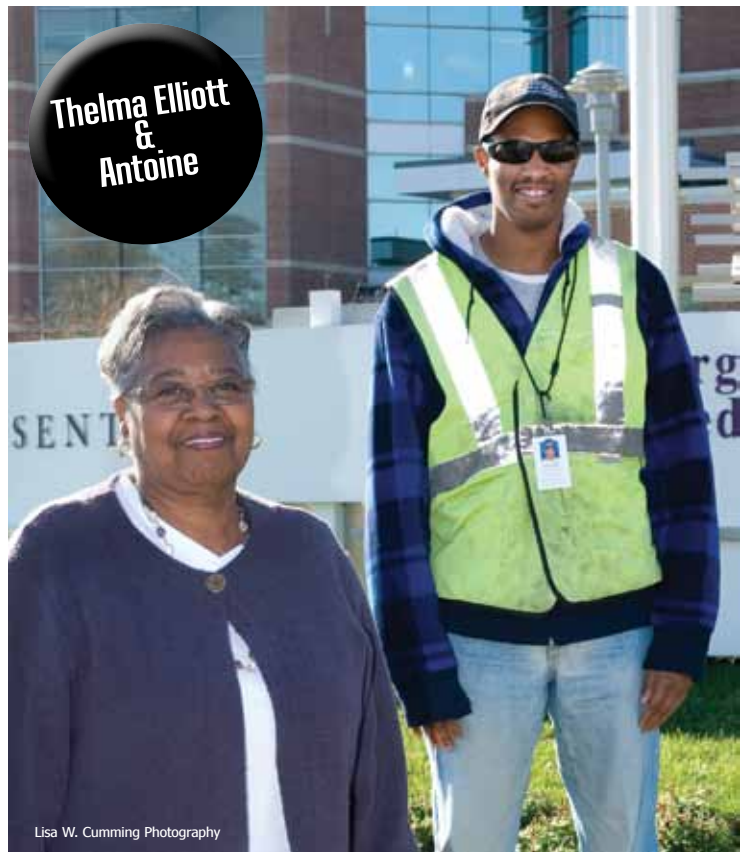
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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

For the Love of

# Antoine

By Narielle Living

Thelma Elliott has a ready smile and sweet warmth, but it's obvious she also has a steely determination in life. That's a good thing, since she's raised a special needs grandson, Antoine, in a world that doesn't always understand those with disabilities. That kind of mothering demands a combination of discipline with love.

"Children need structure. They need positive boundaries to help them find their way in this world," Thelma says. With the help of community services like The Arc of Greater Williamsburg, Thelma has been able to provide continuing education, structure and support in her grandson's life.

Originally from the James City County area, Thelma worked for 17 years for a candle company and later in the James City County school system cafeteria. Some of her most meaningful work, however, came as a volunteer with a service called Court Appointed Special Advocates, also known as CASA. She knew it was important being a court appointed advocate for children that couldn't otherwise speak for themselves.

"Some of the things that children go through, well, it's just not right," Thelma says, shaking her head.

She cares so deeply about helping children. When it came time to make a decision regarding her grandson, Antoine, she didn't hesitate to take him in. She and her husband felt strongly about offering the boy a home that would provide a level of care beyond what his parents were able to give him.

"It was actually my husband that approached me about taking Antoine in, when Antoine was around fourteen years old," Thelma says. "At that time he was in the eighth grade, going into ninth."

Antoine is now 28 years old, and although he is nonverbal he is able to communicate effectively and make his thoughts and feelings known to others.

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When Antoine first came to live with them, Thelma and her husband urged Antoine to get out and meet people and participate in various activities. He continued his schooling in the James City County school system and graduated with honors from Lafayette High School in 2002. "The school system, they were just wonderful. They really helped him with everything he needed," Thelma says.

Thelma knew Antoine's life would change upon graduating. She made some inquiries and learned about the Colonial Services Board, a local provider of services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health issues and substance abuse disorders. The Colonial Services Board then referred Antoine to The Arc of Greater Williamsburg.

The goal of The Arc is to encourage community activities and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities. This is accomplished through a variety of classes such as yoga, fitness, financial readiness and arts and crafts. Outings are also part of the program and include trips to concerts, parks and museums. The educational opportunities provided by The Arc are meant to prepare an individual for the transition from school to college or an appropriate job.

Another goal of The Arc is to provide respite for families and caregivers. The Arc advocates respite as the key to helping families and clients maintain a healthy balance in their lives, lead-

ing to overall wellness.

When Thelma's husband passed away she became the sole guardian of Antoine.

"Of course we love our children, and I love my Antoine so much, but we need to spend time away from each other." The Arc enabled them to have that time apart by giving Thelma windows of time where she didn't have to worry about caregiving.

Antoine has been fortunate to have had a few jobs since high school graduation, and she credits The Arc with helping him achieve success. His work has included a job at the Naval Weapons Station as well as at a landscaping company. He recently did landscaping work at Sentara Hospital. Thelma believes his time with The Arc has been instrumental in not only helping him navigate the jobs he's had but also learning to function in daily life. The Arc takes him out, helps him learn to interact with others and teaches him various life skills such as banking, nutrition and health.

"They're able to see that sparkle in my grandson, that piece of him that is special." She appreciates the fact that they are so meticulous in working with Antoine, teaching him necessary skills to help him grow and function in the world on his own.

Antoine is a very organized and punctual person, and each month he checks The Arc's schedule and signs up for the classes that in-

terest him. Some of his favorites have included gardening, yoga and fitness classes, as well as the outings. "He loves going to Busch Gardens, that's always fun for everyone," Thelma shares. "He also likes shopping, and he's learned to balance his checkbook and take care of his finances."

Although Antoine is nonverbal, The Arc has been instrumental in helping him interact with others as much as possible. He is extremely expressive and often writes heartfelt notes to The Arc staff. While he hasn't developed any truly close friends that are also peers, he has been able to spend quality time with others who function in a manner similar to him. This type of interaction is essential in underscoring the importance of social experiences.

"If you have a loved one with special needs, a program like The Arc will help them develop into who they truly are, and help bring what's inside of them alive," Thelma says. "It would be devastating if The Arc wasn't here to help us," she says. "And the companies that support them, they have been just as important."

Without the support of community churches and businesses, The Arc wouldn't be able to function. That encouragement and assistance, Thelma says, is the best gift of all. "When a community comes together and works to support each other, despite our differences, that's what it's really all about." NDN

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# HELP FOR THOSE IN NEED

By Rachel Sapin



Lisa W. Cumming Photography

Poverty is an ever-increasing concern across our nation. In a slow economy the availability of resources to meet the needs of those less fortunate is often not as available as in strong economic times. Locally, many nonprofit organizations that provide relief to individuals in need are also impacted by fewer resources.

That's where Florence Downes, a retired school counselor, comes in. She volunteers as a community resource assistant at the United Way of Greater Williamsburg's Community Resource Center. The Center is a relatively new collaboration between area faith groups and United Way to provide more in-depth aid

and services to the organization's clients.

"With just a minimal staff, it's difficult for them to do work beyond just providing for the immediate need," Florence explains of United Way. According to the most recent report by the state's Poverty Reduction Task Force, in Virginia alone, about 1 in 10 people live below the federal poverty line.

"You just try to go beyond stop-gap kinds of things, which are certainly needed," Florence says. "Like getting their water or electricity turned on."

Florence was born in West Virginia, and then moved to Vero Beach, Florida where she

was raised alongside her two sisters. She is the youngest in the family. Her father passed away when she was eight years old. She remembers her mother, who became a widow at age 39, teaching the girls to respect others even before the era of Integration and Civil Rights.

"Through that respect, we learned how to get along with all kinds of people," she says.

Florence embraces this lesson to the volunteer work she does with United Way as she works to help people from all walks of life.

"It's really important for those of us who have the time and the inclination to do whatever we can to make it a community in which

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everybody feels cared for and respected,” she says.

One may never know the full circumstances affecting another person’s life. Florence recalls an incident at the Resource Center where she was able to dig deeper after a United Way staff member helped a couple get their water turned back on in their home. Florence spent some time with the couple to get a better understanding of their needs. She learned they had six kids, and that the mother had stopped working due to illness. The father had a job, but was having trouble providing for the family.

“We started talking about the need for budgeting,” Florence remembers, “and how difficult it is to make it on what they have. In some cases, you want to try to break the cycle of poverty, but in other cases, it’s just circumstantial with the economy.”

Through Florence, the couple learned about Catholic Charities, which provides free and confidential budget counseling to those in need. “It’s all about building relationships with people,” she adds.

Despite the brief amount of time she is able to put into volunteering at the center, which is typically twice a month for three hours each time, the stories Florence has already accumu-

lated reveal the quality in her efforts and the reward that comes with them.

She recently helped another woman who came to the center in need, having put off pursuing a career in nursing after having a child.

“I could tell she was sharp,” Florence says, going on to explain how she helped the woman connect with a Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program at Thomas Nelson Community College.

Florence keeps diligent notes on the clients she helps, and it’s not unusual for her to follow up with them to see how they’re doing.

“It’s not always a happy ending,” she says, “but at least you want the experience, in which they felt like somebody cared, and maybe next time, somebody would be able to provide help for them.”

Helping others solve problems is a skill Florence has honed for many years both in her academic and professional life. As a college undergraduate, she double majored in social work and elementary education at Florida State University. After teaching for six years, she went on to earn her Master’s Degree in Counseling, serving first as a middle school counselor in Montgomery County, Maryland, then as a counselor for an elementary school in Richmond. She finished her decades-long

career as a secondary counselor at Gloucester High School.

“I think in my 20 years at Gloucester High School, there wasn’t much I didn’t deal with,” she says. “From suicides to addiction to pregnancy to abuse. The thing I didn’t like about high school counseling was the paperwork. I ended up working long hours and bringing stuff home because the important thing to me was being available to the kids.”

After retiring from counseling in 2006, it didn’t take long for Florence to return to a mentoring role in the community. In 2008, she helped St. Martin’s Episcopal Church start a Stephen Ministry program, which provides one-on-one pastoral care to congregation members in crisis. It was through another church member that she found out about the volunteer position with United Way.

The opportunity with United Way provides Florence with yet another perspective on Williamsburg, a place where she has lived for almost 19 years.

“You think about our being in a community that is probably not dealing with poverty nearly as much as some areas, and yet,” she says, “we have huge numbers of people who are below the poverty line, or who are out of work and homeless.” NDN



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~ *Louis Stathis, Williamsburg*



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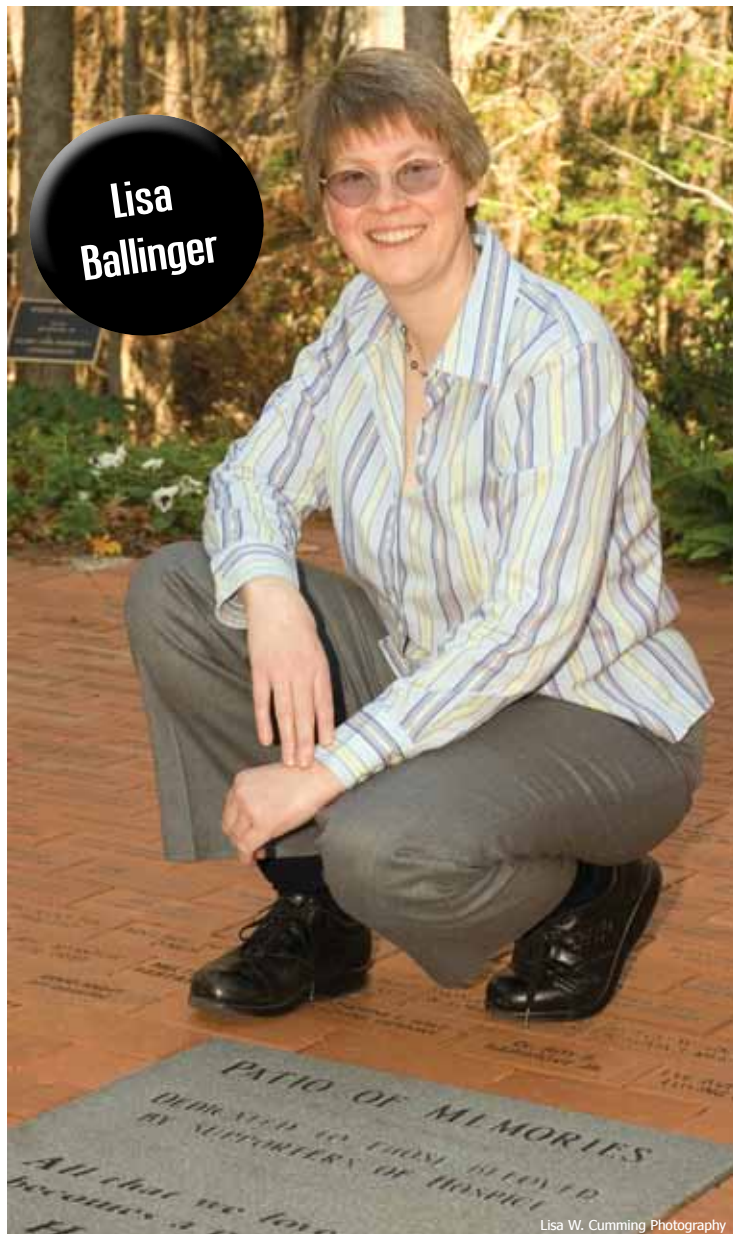
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## Help in a Time of Need

By Ryan Jones

*Losing a spouse or loved one is not something you get over. It's something you live with. I'm not the same person I was before I met my husband. I'm not the same person I was when I was married to him. Sometimes I wonder, 'Who am I?' It changes, though. It does get better.*

-- Lisa Ballinger

Since losing her husband, John, to a terminal illness in 2010, Lisa Ballinger has found that maneuvering outward from the epicenter of grief is easier said than done. To help keep her footsteps pointed in the

right direction, she looks forward to outings on Tuesdays and Saturdays with a special group of walking buddies she met through the non-profit, donor-funded Williamsburg Hospice House (WHH).

"We just walk around town and chat," Lisa explains. "Simply being with people in a similar situation helps many of us to deal with our losses. A few weeks ago, two members of our group were late for a scheduled walk, and they couldn't figure out where the rest of us were. They decided to go for a short walk on their own. During their walk, they passed by a local charity benefit, and one of the booths happened to be peddling a small selection of soups. It turned out that the soups were ones that this particular member's husband had enjoyed when he was alive. She burst into tears... right there in line. Fortunately, she was with someone who understood her feelings. It's kind of nice to be around other people who aren't going to look at you and think 'Oh my gosh, you're crying again?'"

As is evidenced by the creation of Lisa's walking-group, WHH fosters initiatives that account for the needs of both terminally-ill patients and the loved ones who will be left behind. Since its creation as Hospice of Williamsburg in 1982, WHH has dedicated itself to "enhancing the quality of living for individuals facing the last phases of life and supporting the people they love."

According to the WHH website, the four-bed Hospice House located just off of News Road was built on a foundation of over \$1 million in monetary and work-related donations. Its doors opened in 2002, and the volunteers and staff members have since provided a much-needed respite for those in the community who stand at the threshold of one of life's most important junctions.

"John passed away in July of 2010," Lisa remembers. "He was sick for about a year and a half. He was trying so hard to make his body do something it couldn't do, and he finally realized it was going to shut down, and that he didn't have to fight anymore. As his health declined and we both realized he was terminal, I had a conversation with one of my work colleagues about how we were going to handle it. This particular colleague had served on the board for WHH, and asked if I had thought about contacting the organization to request help. I told her I had, but that we would probably wait until John was more toward the end of his life. My colleague encouraged me not to wait until that point, but to contact the Director of Patient/Family Volunteer Services [Linda Osborn] at WHH immediately. She told me there were a lot of things that could be done even in the early stages of decline. I called Linda and she told me about the whole hospice program. I was set up with a volunteer who visited my home right away."

In many ways, Lisa didn't realize the extent of the weight she had been shouldering until outside help arrived and her duties were made lighter. A volunteer named Shomer was the first of two friendly faces to show up at Lisa's door.

"Shomer was just a really laid back guy," Lisa says. "He taught meditation classes at WHH. He came by once a week for two or three hours and allowed me to just get out of the house. I would either rush to work and get something done or run a few errands. As my husband got sicker, he wanted to talk — I mean really talk. Most of the time, I was physically exhausted, so I wasn't always up for a big, heavy-duty conversation. Shomer was a Jewish Buddhist, and he enjoyed having those kinds of conversations. They'd talk about the meaning of life, or just life in general, and John loved it. I could always tell when John had been talking to Shomer, because he'd say something really deep. That was a really important part of Shomer's role with John. He could have the kinds of conversations I wasn't always up for."

By June of 2010, John's health had declined significantly, and Lisa was having a difficult time coping with the ripple effects. "I was really



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stressing out," Lisa explains. "By summer, John had to have someone at home with him all of the time. I asked for another volunteer, and got a man named Dick. He was a completely different personality than Shomer. Dick was more extroverted; he was the guy who was probably the life of whatever party he was at. If you put Shomer and Dick at the same party, they'd both have a great time, but in a very different way. Dick was very familiar with the nuts and bolts of being ill. He was very good about understanding when John needed to enter Hospice House at the end."

Fortunately, when the time came to make the last portion of his earthly journey, John was at ease with where he was going. Earlier in the spring, Shomer had taken the time to drive him over to WHH and give him a tour of the grounds. John was happy with his surroundings and was particularly relieved that Lisa would be getting a reprieve from her job as full-time caregiver and bread-winner.

"WHH was gorgeous," Lisa says. "You didn't feel like you were in a hospital at all. When I first walked into the building, I was kind of intimidated. The whole situation was really overwhelming, but the staff and volunteers were very nice and down to earth. There were a lot of little things they did that made a big difference. One night, I stepped out for dinner and, when I got back, someone was there with John, just to make sure he wasn't alone. I was typically there from 7:00 a.m. until evening, and at this point, John was in a coma, but they still made sure someone was with him. I also remember a particular nurse (referred to at WHH as 'companions') who liked to sing spiritual melodies. One night, I overheard her going to check on a patient. The nurse peeked in the room and found the patient to be restless. After making sure the patient was physically okay, she began to comfort her by saying 'It's all right.... It's going to be okay.' Then she started singing to her. The patient calmed right down and was fine after that."

Lisa says that many patients in hospice care worry about what will happen to their loved ones after they have passed on. Staff and volunteers at WHH help to ease patients' minds by letting them know that care for loved ones will continue after their passing.

"WHH follows the survivor for a year," Lisa says. "They check in and make sure you're okay. And there are lots of different bereavement options. Among other things, there is a meditation group, a group for people who have lost children, and a group for people who have lost spouses. I just took a workshop back in November, and really bonded with the group during the sessions. After sitting together, sharing stories, trials and tears for six weeks, the group members become your best buddies. Everyone is going through the same thing."

Having faced the challenges and pain that inevitably follow the loss of a loved one, Lisa believes she is a much different person than she was a few years ago. "It all comes down to learning to have a different life," she says. "It's kind of strange, but once you go through something like this, you almost feel invincible, like nothing can destroy you. You can do anything you want, burn my home, take my things, but you're not going to destroy me."

With that in mind, Lisa will continue to put one foot in front of the other as she moves forward into a new life. To be sure, hers is not a path she would have chosen for herself, but it is one she will nonetheless navigate one step at a time.

"It changes," she says. "It does get better."

It's certainly no coincidence that, these days, the road to higher ground is a little smoother than it was a year ago. There is still a long way to go, but thanks to the kindness of two very special volunteers, the continued support of few good walking buddies, and the companionship of other friends and family members, Lisa won't have to make the journey alone. NDN

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Lisa W. Cumming Photography

# Back in the Saddle

*By Alison Johnson*

Years ago, Judy Vitale decided she was better off admiring horses from ground level rather than riding them. At age 12, she fell off of a pony on a trail ride and had another horse leap over her as she lay on the ground, clipping her knee with its back hoof. At about 35, she tumbled off of a horse while jumping a fence during a riding lesson and, as a mother of young children, gave up the sport for fear of injury.

However, Judy never lost her love for horses. She also was passionate about her chosen career as a registered nurse, devoting 35 years to caring for patients in critical care units or with heart problems. Little did she know that her two interests could merge into one perfect volunteer opportunity after retirement: helping children and adults with special needs, illnesses or injuries via therapeutic horseback riding at Dream Catchers, a program based in upper James City County.

Since learning of Dream Catchers one and

a half years ago, Judy has become a devoted volunteer – the kind who not only shows up for scheduled shifts but drops by unannounced to see if anyone needs help. She usually goes to the riding center three mornings a week, helping with barn chores, leading the horses during sessions or walking alongside to make sure riders don't fall off. She has worked with everyone from young children with autism to an 80-year-old stroke survivor.

"I've seen so many little miracles there," Judy says. "Sometimes it's very difficult to even get a child on a horse, but once they're on they just change. They might go from screaming and kicking to just beaming, so happy. It's magic. And the look on their parents' faces is just amazing because for many of these kids, every little inch of progress is really a milestone."

In 2011, Dream Catchers named Judy, who describes her age as "70-plus," its adult Volunteer of the Year. The management at the center

honored Judy's can-do attitude and her initiative to help at any time with any task.

The program, officially named Dream Catchers at The Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center, grew from an effort launched in 1993 by two nurses at Cumberland Hospital for Children and Adolescents in New Kent County. Now located on 22 acres in Toano, the center is home to 18 horses and hosts more than 110 lessons weekly in its indoor and outdoor riding arenas. Cori Sikich's family donated the land in 2003 to honor their daughter, an accomplished rider who died from complications of an eating disorder.

During lessons, riders practice basic commands for directing horses and go through stations designed to improve their fine motor skills, self-esteem and confidence. Tasks might include placing rings on poles, picking up bean bags and throwing them through hula hoops and learning vocabulary words such as "over"

or “under”. “It isn’t just aimless riding,” Judy says. “It’s working on both physical and mental strength through very definitive lesson plans.”

Common health issues involved are autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy, developmental delays, seizure disorders, bipolar disease, Down syndrome, stroke, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain or spinal injuries. In addition to individual lessons, the center hosts groups of school children and military veterans, mainly from the Hampton Roads region.

Judy is especially awed by families with severely disabled children. “I have such respect for the parents,” she says. “They take such joy in what would seem the tiniest accomplishments to most people. If any place can make a difference for these kids, I believe it would be Dream Catchers.”

Judy grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut, where by age five she had decided she wanted to become a nurse. She earned an associate’s degree in nursing from Indiana University when her children, Pamela and Matthew, were in elementary school. “We did our homework together and brown-bagged it with lunches,” she recalls. Judy later received a Bachelor’s Degree in Health Care Administration from Iona

College in New York. As a nurse, she worked on critical and intensive care units and in the cardiac catheterization lab, where doctors diagnose and treat heart problems.

During vacation time, Judy embraced a hobby based on another childhood dream, owning a Jeep Wrangler. Once she bought the vehicle, she and her husband, John, took it on about eight off-roading adventures organized by Jeep, with Judy in the driver’s seat. “You go through mud and rocks, over hill and dale, and you meet people from all walks of life,” she remembers. “We had a wonderful time.”

Judy slowed her life down a few years ago, retiring from nursing and giving the Wrangler to her daughter. She now drives what she calls her “Medicare Jeep”: a Cherokee with creature comforts such as heated seats. She and John moved to the Stonehouse community of James City County in 2005, where she found friends to play canasta with and nurtured hobbies such as reading, yoga, playing Sudoku and Angry Birds and caring for three pet birds, a yellow-and-white cockatiel and two parakeets she rescued when their owner passed away.

Perhaps not surprisingly, though, Judy soon grew restless. “I was such a workaholic and had a very social environment at my job,” she says. “I missed all of it.” Her husband first told her

about Dream Catchers, where another Stonehouse resident was volunteering. Judy immediately fell in love. “The staff treats the volunteers like family, and you get very attached to the families and children who come,” she says. “My only regret is I didn’t know about it sooner.” Volunteers, she adds, don’t need prior experience working with special needs children or horses.

While Judy can’t lift heavy objects, she happily pitches in on tasks such as feeding horses, bringing them in and out of the barn and sweeping floors. She has a soft spot for the program’s oldest working horse, Blackie, a 27-year-old former show horse who likes to devour carrot cakes on his birthday and is patient with kids who stick their fingers into his nose.

“All of the horses there seem to have a sense of the special needs of these children,” she says. “They tolerate so much.”

Judy, now a grandmother of two, did end up getting back in the saddle again: she recently completed six riding lessons offered for Dream Catchers volunteers. While she still prefers keeping her feet on the ground, she has no plans to give up her horsey volunteer work anytime soon.

“As long as I can walk and they’ll let me keep coming, I’ll be there,” she says. NDN

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# VOLUNTEER!

*Next Door Neighbors* wanted to find out what some of the 2012 volunteer needs are among non-profit organizations in the community. With the help of United Way, we sent two email blasts to a number of local non-profit organizations to ask them to send us a list of their needs with the hope that we could help them find volunteers. Below is a list of the volunteer opportunities that were sent to us. If you have the time and the motivation, please contact a non-profit organization below to find out how you can help.

## The Arc of Greater Williamsburg

229-3535  
www.thearcgw.org  
Facebook:  
www.facebook.com/TheArcGW

### • **Client Support**

Evening program volunteers to work with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

### • **Administrative**

Administrative support at the McLaws Circle office

## Beyond Boobs! Inc.

Vicki Vawter  
645-2649

www.beyondboobs.org

### • **Advocates**

Help spread the message of early detection and breast health through speaking engagements, health fairs, family events, fashion shows, bazaars, sporting events and more.

### • **Committees**

There are committees for most events that require meeting time in all areas of planning. Beyond Boobs! welcomes anyone interested in experiencing the success of an event as a result of great team effort.

## Blooms That Brighten

229-1665

www.bloomsthatbrighten.com

### • **Arrangements**

Create flower arrangements to be delivered to brighten someone's day. This is a great group volunteer activity for Girl Scouts, Key Clubs and other civic organizations.

### • **Vases**

Vases donation and collections are always needed.

## Dream Catchers

Gwen Zimmerman  
Volunteer Coordinator  
566-1775  
www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org

### • **Horse Leaders**

Be in the lessons with the students as side walkers or horse leaders. New Volunteer Orientation is held monthly with many training clinics for new volunteers.

## 4-H Youth Development

Jeremy Johnson  
564-2170  
www.jamestown4hcenter.org

### • **Program Leaders**

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### • 4-H LEGO Robotics

Plan and lead educational activities related to computer programming and LEGO Robotics to teach youth science, technology and engineering.

### • 4-H Archery

Assist youth in learning the parts of the recurve bow and arrow, safe range command, proper shooting technique and other shooting sports education policies.

### • In-school 4-H Club

Teach science lessons to 4th graders once a month, October-May.

### • 4-H Cloverbud Club

Work with at least one other adult to organize, manage, and/or lead hands-on educational activities for 5-8 year old youth, once or twice a month.

## Grove Christian Outreach Center

887-1100  
godspeed974@cox.net  
[www.groveoutreach.com](http://www.groveoutreach.com)

### • Bread Day

Wednesday's 9:00-1:30 Weekly food distribution to 120+ families make a difference.

### • Clothes Closet

Processing and distributing clothing and household items to the Grove community

### • Pantry

Sort, distribute and pack food and hygiene items

### • Front Desk

Customer service, data processing, and multi-tasking general office skills

### • Undergarment Closet Coordinator

Collect, organize and distribute items in the undergarment closet. Three hours a week and can do some work from home.

### • Food Pick-Up

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## Heritage Humane Society

Michael Rhodes  
Director of Communications & Outreach  
208-0382  
[www.heritagehumanesociety.org](http://www.heritagehumanesociety.org)

### • Super Duper Clean Up Crew

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### • PETCO in-store adoption volunteers

## Hospice House

253-1220  
[www.williamsburghospice.org](http://www.williamsburghospice.org)

### • General Support

There are many ways people can volunteer for Hospice House in support functions besides working directly with terminally ill patients and their families. Hospice House is always pleased to have new volunteers in these Guild Volunteer areas.

### • Patient/Family Support

Support not only to terminally ill patients but also to patients who are receiving curative treatment and are anticipating a good recovery. Hospice House knows what a stressful time this is in the life of a patient/family.

## Literacy for Life

Mary Lynch  
221-1203  
[www.literacyforlife.org](http://www.literacyforlife.org)

### • Tutors

Tutors receive ten hours of initial training then receive ongoing support from staff members and through in-service workshops. Teaching experience is not necessary.

## United Way

253-2264  
[www.uwgw.org](http://www.uwgw.org)

### • Community Resource Assistants (CRA)

Skills needed include basic computer literacy, good communication and interviewing skills, previous professional experience in counseling, social work or a related field and excellent record keeping skills. Training is required and various training classes are available.

### • Receptionists

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### • Committee Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities to network with other professionals, use your professional experiences and skills, and serve the community.

### • Events

United Way's annual Day of Caring is a one-day volunteer opportunity to complete a meaningful service project for a local nonprofit.

# Next Door Neighbors Business



LANCE ZAAL

Kim Kiely Photography

## SMALL BUSINESS STRATEGY:

# Affinity Marketing

By Greg Lilly, Editor

Operating a small business successfully is challenging, and it can be especially difficult during a slow economy. One of the ways small business owners survive times like these when business tends to be slow is to look for opportunities to partner with other businesses in ways that can offer additional value to consumers. Smart partnerships can become a “win-win-win” situation for the participating businesses and their customers.

Lance Zaal, the owner of Taste of Williamsburg culinary tours, uses an affinity relationship with local restaurants to help residents and visitors discover the variety of cuisines in town. People who enjoy and appreciate all elements of food, sometimes called “foodies,” are one of the main demographics for the culinary tours. The restaurants and food-related establishments are eager to present their offerings to potential customers. Lance and his tour guides love talking to people and showing them around town and sharing insider tips. All this adds up to a busi-

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ness model that benefits all involved.

A current College of William and Mary Master of Business Administration (MBA) student, Lance is using what he learns in the classroom in his business venture.

"The three most valuable classes that have helped me in getting this business going are: Managerial Accounting, Communications and Marketing," he says.

Originally from Southern California, Lance joined the Marine Corps after high school. "I signed up and was sworn in two weeks after I started my senior year in high school on September 18, 2001," he says. "I wanted to do something different and exciting. I wanted to do something besides going straight to college after graduation. I wanted a challenge."

A challenge is what he got. Instead of being stationed in sunny Southern California, as he had thought, Lance was sent to Norfolk, Virginia.

"I ended up in Virginia on a cold, windy and rainy February morning surrounded by trees at the Norfolk airport. I wasn't happy," he says.

He settled in and began to explore the area.

"The first out-of-town weekend I had, I went to Busch Gardens and Colonial Williamsburg," he says.

After his service in the Marine Corps, which

included three deployments, Lance came to Williamsburg and enrolled at the College of William and Mary as an undergraduate. He graduated with a double major in economics and international relations.

"I saw this type of culinary tour in many cities around the world," Lance says of his idea to start the business. "There are a lot of excellent restaurants around Williamsburg, and I always thought it would be great to be able to give visitors a taste of everything Williamsburg has to offer. As a William and Mary student, even now, when I'm walking around downtown Williamsburg, I'm asked by visitors where they should eat – where's a really good place to eat?"

He decided to combine going to restaurants to sample the food with a fun walking tour of the town.

"I knew we would have something that was challenging and fun," he says.

Lance employs William and Mary students in an effort to give them real life business experience. The first tours started this past summer.

"An example is our New Town tour," Lance describes. "A guide would meet the tour at the fountain and walk to Center Street Grill and a few others. We stop for about 20 minutes and taste samples of the food. The guide talks with the tour participants about the types of food

offered there, the restaurant, a bit about the philosophy of the chef."

As the tour moves from one restaurant to another, the guide talks about such non-food aspects of the area as the area's history, interesting facts and the architecture.

"Each area in town has its own history, its inside story," Lance adds.


"We try to offer a taste of the whole area. Some people think it's only upscale food or high-end restaurants, but that's really not the case," Lance explains. "We include all different types of local restaurants."

The downtown tours encompass the College of William and Mary and Colonial Williamsburg areas.


"We cover the delis, which brings out the college aspect," he says. "We also tour places like Friends Café, which is Korean food. That's really different than anything you see around Colonial Williamsburg."

As the tour ambles through Merchants Square, the guides talk about the area from an insider's point of view.

"We promote the restaurants," Lance says. "One thing I've found is that visitors who take the tour return to the restaurants. We've had people bring family or friends back to the restaurants after they've tried them on our tour."



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This is the benefit for the restaurants who participate because more potential customers have the chance to try their food. The visitors and locals on the tours enjoy the opportunity to experience several different establishments.

“It’s a good way to get an introduction to many different restaurants in an afternoon,” Lance says. The benefit for him and his guides is that they like showing Williamsburg to their guests as part of their jobs.

This example of affinity marketing pulls together complementary parties: the guide, the curious guest and the restaurant. It takes the personal one-on-one relationship the guides have with the guests and adds value to their Williamsburg tour by showing them restaurants and letting them sample the food. The restaurants have the opportunity to reach new customers, who might not have tried them without the guided tour. The tour customer, the restaurant and the tour guide all benefit.

Lance states that other businesses and industries can employ similar affinity marketing techniques, such as clothing stores who have a relationship with a tailor, hair salons working with wedding planners, and art galleries partnering with interior designers.

To keep his two branches of customers (tour

participant and restaurant) happy with the service, Lance says managing satisfaction is an

Lance states that other businesses and industries can employ similar affinity marketing techniques, such as clothing stores who have a relationship with a tailor, hair salons working with wedding planners, and art galleries partnering with interior designers.

important part of the equation. “Managing satisfaction...” he begins, “people think it’s what customers think after the tour, but half the battle is managing the expectation before they buy a ticket. That’s telling them exactly what the tour is about, what they will see and do. Our customers are also the

restaurants’ customers; we want to make them both happy by managing the relationships.”

For the restaurants, Lance makes sure they know how much time the tour visitors can spend and the number of samples that is appropriate.

“We can’t fill them up at the first stop,” he adds. “We try to keep a healthy balance of food and history on our tours,” he says. “We mix the food in with the history – the culture of food is an important part of our area’s culture.”

The tours constantly change and improve. “We go to restaurants, wine stores, food stores, bakeries,” Lance says. “We visit four to six establishments on each tour.”

The most important thing Lance says he’s learned is thinking about relationships “outside the box.” He says, “I’m thinking of other opportunities that fit what I’m doing. We do walking tours that feature restaurants, but there’s a whole lot more we can do. In the next year, we’ll start a restaurant blog for people to talk about food. We want to expand with a focus on the local restaurants, on the area and on food. We’re still exploring what we can be.” NDN

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# Building Character

By Greg Lilly, Editor



**JOHN SPENCE**

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

“Saturday mornings used to be Kung Fu Theater on television,” John Spence says. “My brother and I would watch that then go out in the yard and end up hurting ourselves.”

Today, John Spence, a fifth grade teacher at Matoaka Elementary school and founder of Shorin-Ryu Karate of Williamsburg, helps introduce the ancient martial arts and the idea of

competition with oneself through body, mind and spirit.

John is a lifelong resident of Williamsburg. “My family is from Williamsburg, downtown near Merchants Square,” he says. “I went to Lafayette High School, and then I went to college in North Carolina, but always knew I wanted to come back here to live and raise a family.”

After college and a brief time in Louisiana, John returned to Williamsburg to attend graduate school at William and Mary.

“I fulfilled my lifelong dream to end up back here in a town that I adore,” he says. “I can’t imagine living anywhere else. I wanted to be close to my family.”

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Rob Harrell

County school system 16 years ago. "Right out of graduate school," John adds. "I was at D. J. Montague Elementary for 13 years and this is my third year at Matoaka Elementary." He teaches fifth grade reading/language arts, science and geography.

John's interest in karate started in high school and with watching Saturday morning Kung Fu Theater on television. He also played soccer and wrestled in high school.

"I wasn't as enamored with the cultural part of martial arts in the beginning," he admits. "When I first saw karate, I wanted it to give me something that I didn't have – maybe confidence, or to be a stronger or tougher kid than I was."

Watching the 1970s television show "That's Incredible!" hooked his teenage interest in karate. "On the show, these guys went into a house slated for demolition," he describes. "With their own hands and feet, they just broke everything in the house and brought the house down. I remember seeing that and thinking that was the most incredible thing in the world."

He began his karate training while still a teenager. "The first place I went was a kick boxing school, which drove my mother up the wall because she thought it was violent," he says of the physical part of the sport.

Not long after, he discovered the deeper aspect of martial arts.

"I remember at soccer practice at Lafayette, there was a recreation class going on at Berkeley Middle School. I never saw them punch or kick, but remember them doing this solemn, traditional bowing ceremony," he says.

The cultural ceremony intrigued John much more than the relatively simple acts of punching and kicking. "That led me on a quest to study traditional arts," he states. "I'm thankful today that it takes me to Japan every summer. It led me to learn the Japanese language; it brought me the friendships in Okinawa that I have now."

According to John, all karate first originated in China and then was adopted by the Okinawan people. "Two years after Jamestown was settled, across the world, Japan sent warriors to the island of Okinawa to claim it and control the trade that passed through to China. The Okinawan people were peaceful people – agrarian and fishermen. They didn't have an army to fight." Like any invading army, the first thing the Japanese Satsuma clan did was confiscate all weapons from the Okinawan people. "Simple things used to protect their villages or homes," John says. "The Japanese collected the spears, swords, bows and arrows leaving them nothing to protect themselves."

The port nation of Okinawa was a stopping place for trade heading to China. The Chinese and the Okinawan people had a good trade relationship. Along with pottery, textiles and poetry that were traded, so were the martial arts.

"For the Chinese, it was a health-based activity like Tai Chi, teaching the body to breathe correctly and to enhance flexibility," John explains. "The Okinawan people took those arts that had combative elements and made them more usable for defensive actions. That was needed for an island with so many people passing through the trade route and the occupying army that sometimes got bored and caused trouble."

The Okinawan art of karate originated in China and was refined by the Okinawan people. "It didn't actually go to mainland Japan until 1921," John states. "It was unknown to the mainland until then when it was introduced to the public school system."

Karate is a traditional form of self-defense. John says that it employs forty percent kicking and forty percent use of the hands. The remaining part involves grappling techniques.

"Other martial arts from Korea, like taekwon do," he adds, "are more like 85% kicking and a little more sports-based than self-defense. All martial arts have some self-defense component, but what they are today depends



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on where they have gravitated over the decades and centuries.”

While some martial arts lean heavily toward competition, John says this style stays true to its origin.

“Okinawan karate is still a very traditional self-defense system with its traditional curriculum of forms and basics training and not so much of the sporting aspect of competitions. My teacher and his peers in Okinawa try to instill in us the importance of not letting it gravitate toward a competition.”

The focus is training yourself with the mindset that it is for protection, not for a contest or tournament. Karate incorporates the mind, body and spirit.

“We all have an element of shugyo, which is an attitude of being pushed past your believed capabilities,” John states. “There’s a collective attitude in the dojo (the karate school) that no one gives up because they are uncomfortable or because they’ve had a bad day. Everyone is expected to give 100% effort. My role as teacher, in this particular aspect of training, is when we realize the student has found a mental limitation, we push past that. What that teaches us in life is that when things get rough, you don’t quit, you don’t give up.”

That mental training is constantly present in

John’s karate school and invokes the spiritual aspect as well.

“The spiritual training comes from the influence from the teachers in Japan,” John says. “In the front of the dojo is the dojo code: Kimka (to be humble) and the proverb ‘Tall trees catch much wind.’ Be mindful of two things: being humble and being patient. What color belt you have doesn’t mean a whole lot. Don’t be concerned about judging yourself against others. Focus on training yourself.”

Self-image seems to be a trapping of the young student, John explains. “At the beginning of training, students worry about the belts, which one they have, what that means to their self-image – wanting to compare themselves to others. In time with the martial arts training, you realize the belt doesn’t signify if you have had a good day of training or a bad day. You evaluate yourself constantly.”

The mental and spiritual side of martial arts is the perfection of character.

“There’s an old saying, ‘The ultimate aim of karate is not in victory or defeat, but in the perfection of your character.’ I try to convey this to my students in fifth grade and in karate,” John explains. “My teacher in Okinawa says ‘When animals die, they leave behind bones. When men die, they leave behind their

name and what they did while they were here.’ I tell my students at Matoaka the same thing. ‘Next year when you go to sixth grade, I won’t remember what grade you got on this science test, but I will remember what kind of person you were, what kind of student you were, how you treated others and your respect for the teachers and everyone at the school.’”

The character component is always present in the physical and mental training of martial arts.

“What drew me to karate was this whole idea that karate is so much more than physical,” John states.

Teaching fifth grade and teaching martial arts keeps John’s life busy.

“I have a supportive family. My wife, Lorie, has supported me on these eleven trips to Japan and with the schedule I have of teaching elementary school and karate school. My daughters, Madison and Emily, are very understanding, too. The only regret I have is that I spend more time with my students and their families than with my own.”

John’s wife and daughters help out at the karate school as well, an aspect he appreciates in his quest to teach the incorporation of body, mind and spirit in the practice of karate. “They see my love for this and support it.” NDN

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Nan Piland



# Look Up!

By Greg Lilly,  
Editor

Arts  
& ENTERTAINMENT



DR. KELLY HERBST

Lisa W. Cumming Photography

It's the biggest show in the universe – and it's free. All you have to do is go outside tonight and look up.

"There's a natural fascination with the night sky," Dr. Kelly Herbst, Astronomy Curator at the Virginia Living Museum's Abitt Planetarium, says. "During the day, the sun washes out the sky and it all looks like one solid color. But at night, that one solid color is filled with all these twinkling lights. It's just natural that we want to look up at them. It's instinctive."

Dr. Herbst was born and raised in New York

City, and her interest in the stars began there.

"I spent most of my childhood on Staten Island, New York," she says. "I've always loved astronomy. When I was very young, I wanted to have a telescope, but living in New York City, getting a clear view away from light was difficult." She kept asking for a telescope, and one Christmas, her parents bought her one. "I wanted to go up on the roof of the house to get the best view. My mother wasn't too keen on this idea because we had a slanted roof. My papa came up with a good solution to this prob-

lem: he took me up on the roof and nail-gunned the back of my sweatshirt to the roof and said 'There, now she won't fall off.' I've been observing the sky for a long, long time and haven't fallen yet."

The Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History in the city drew Dr. Herbst every Saturday as she grew up. "That was one of my favorite places to visit," she says.

At Wagner College on Staten Island, Dr. Herbst majored in physics since the school didn't have an astronomy program. One day,

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she and a classmate found a door no one ever went into while poking around in the physics department. “That was an instant magnet for us,” she confesses. “We wanted to find out what was behind that door. We finally found the right keys and got it open. Turns out, it was a planetarium theater that no one had touched for 20 or 30 years.”

Dr. Herbst and her classmate restored it and began doing programs in the theater for their fellow students then began programs for local school children. “That was a lot of fun. I kept up my love of astronomy even as I was studying physics,” she adds.

After graduation, Dr. Herbst and her future husband, Philip, were looking at graduate schools. They both applied to and were accepted at William and Mary. “That’s what brought us to Williamsburg,” she says. “Philip earned his MBA at William and Mary. I stayed on for the full seven year for my Master’s [Degree] and my PhD in Physics.”

While at William and Mary, Dr. Herbst indulged her love of astronomy as a Teaching Assistant for the astronomy and cosmology classes. “I really enjoyed that and working at the William and Mary observatory on top of Small Hall. I’m really proud that I won the best Teaching Assistant award for three years while I was there.”

Dr. Herbst began attending William and Mary in 1990 and by 1992, she wanted to find something to help take her mind off her thesis. “I had visited the Virginia Living Museum a few times, as something fun to do. I noticed that they had an observatory, but every time I came, it was closed,” she explains. “The observatory was volunteer-operated, and they had a hard time finding volunteers during the week. I said I’d do it. I volunteered for about five years. I found I really enjoyed teaching and working

with the public. I wasn’t that excited about remaining in the university setting. I wanted to engage the public in science.” The museum offered her a position as the Planetarium Lecturer.

Today, Dr. Herbst is the Astronomy Curator. “That means I’m in charge of everything that has to do with astronomy here at the museum,” she describes. “We create many of our own programs, so I do a lot of writing, production of planetarium shows, and the creation of programming for the school children.”

One of Dr. Herbst’s programs explores the winter sky. “The wintertime months are a great time to be outside looking at the stars,” she says. “It’s cold out and that’s great for the air. You want cold, crisp air that will give you the best view of the nighttime sky. Summer’s great, but the nights are short and the air is soupy. It’s harder then.”

In the winter, in the early evening, the most prominent constellation is Orion the Hunter. “He will be in the southern portion of the sky – the most brilliant constellation we see all year,” Dr. Herbst states. “The most famous part is his belt – Orion’s Belt. It is made up of three stars that make a perfect straight line. Two bright stars will be above the belt and two bright stars will be below the belt, so it makes this hourglass shape. Those seven really incredibly bright stars on Orion dominate the winter sky beautifully.”

While looking at Orion’s Belt, Dr. Herbst suggests following the line it makes that angles down toward the horizon. That will point to the brightest star in the nighttime sky: Sirius.

“Sirius is in the constellation Canis Major (the Big Dog). Canis Major is not too easy to spot, most of the other stars in it are fairly faint, but Sirius is absolutely gorgeous — a big, beautiful, bright, white star,” she says.

Starting again at Orion’s Belt, but looking in the other direction, up and away from the

horizon, that points in the general direction of stars in a V shape. “That’s the face of Taurus the Bull,” she explains. “What you’re actually looking at in the V is a very bright reddish star, Aldebaran, the red right eye of Taurus. The rest of that V is a star cluster called the Hyades. This V pattern is really gorgeous and then you have this brilliant red star that goes with it.”

A great thing about an evening of stargazing is that all you need is to go outside and look up – no high-tech tools needed. If you want to see more details then you might need to start thinking of equipment. Dr. Herbst suggests stepping your way up in technology. “Don’t jump right into a 16 inch telescope because you’ll probably end up frustrated,” she says. “You’ve gone from no equipment to this huge piece of equipment – that’s a learning curve. If you have a pair of binoculars, start with those; even though they aren’t originally designed for astronomy, that’s okay.”

Dr. Herbst’s enthusiasm can hardly be contained when she talks about astronomy. “I really am one of those few lucky people who have their dream job,” she states. “I get to teach and interact with everybody from preschoolers to centenarians, and I get to talk with all of them, which is great fun.”

The Virginia Living Museum Star Party is the second Saturday of each month. The next two that take advantage of the winter nighttime sky are February 11 and March 10.

“We encourage people who might have a telescope that they don’t know how to use, to bring it and there will be enough people here to help you get it set up,” Dr. Herbst says. “We’re happy to help people with their scopes.”

A show that took an eternity to stage is free and available on clear nights. Dr. Herbst wants to share the splendor of the universe with her friends and neighbors. All you have to do is go outside and look up. NDN



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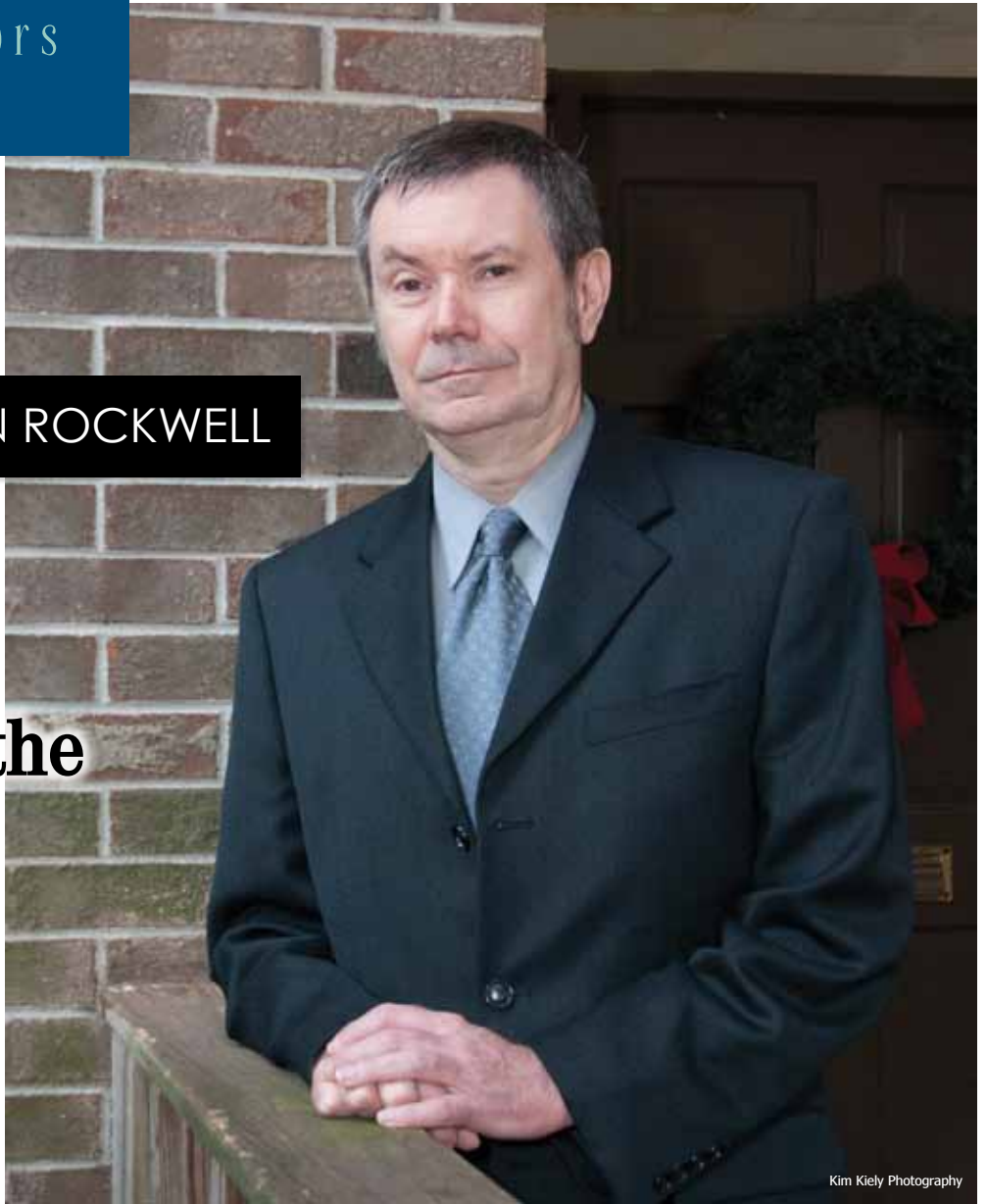
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DR. STAN ROCKWELL

## Caring for the Caregiver

By Greg Lilly, Editor



Kim Kiely Photography

Everyone experiences stress. Dr. Stan Rockwell explains a continuum measuring the amount that starts as normal stress then increases to distress and finally to the extreme of burnout. No one wants to experience burnout, but people who care for others – either professionally or as volunteers – sometimes reach that point. Dr. Rockwell advises ways to avoid

caregiver burnout.

“I became interested in psychology in high school,” he says. “I would read a lot. There was a television quiz show for teens when I was growing up. We had to drive up to Roanoke [Virginia] by bus. I grew up in Charlotte County, Virginia. When we went to Roanoke for the TV quiz show we’d have dinner at Tow-

er Shopping Center.”

A bookstore in the shopping center had books on psychology. “I picked up books on Freud, Fromm and Jung,” he adds. “I got interested in it, and when I came to William and Mary as an undergraduate, I learned more.”

Dr. Rockwell double majored in psychology and philosophy - “Which was a good combina-

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tion,” he states, “because I have an interest in Eastern philosophy and those two go together really well.”

To help him get to William and Mary, Dr. Rockwell had support from the Veterans Administration (VA). “My dad was a disabled World War II veteran,” he explains. “I was considered a ‘War Orphan’ by the Veterans Administration because my dad was totally disabled. I had to go through the VA to get some assistance to go to college. One of the things they did was to send me to Richmond for a full day of testing by psychologists and psychiatrists for aptitude testing.”

These tests revealed he had a talent and interest in words and ideas. “The tests suggested I should go for a Master’s Degree in English. Once I came here, I changed my major to psychology. Some of my curiosity came from going through all that testing by the VA in Richmond. It was interesting to me.”

During his master’s studies, Dr. Rockwell worked at Eastern State Hospital in training and research. His father became ill and the multiple trips to the VA hospital in Richmond each week postponed his master’s degree completion but he eventually finished it and began working. He completed his doctorate in 2008.

Throughout the years, Dr. Rockwell has

studied the interconnection of Eastern and Western philosophies and their effect on psychology.

“About ten years ago, I started taking Tai Chi. I’ve been working with Bill Hansell,” he says. “I use a lot of that in my psychology practice, the Eastern philosophy, the Tai Chi and yoga.” He explains that how people frame experiences influences how much stress a situation may cause them. “How you change your perceptions of the situation, how mindful you are of that,” he describes, “that’s a big thing in counseling these days: mindfulness and awareness.”

Caregivers have a particular experience with stress – sometimes they aren’t aware they have it or to what degree. “That’s the problem,” Dr. Rockwell says, “that you get so focused on the other person or what you are doing that you lose track of yourself.”

He says there are a couple of ways to deal with that loss of self-awareness: a support circle and a self checklist.

#### Support Circle

A support circle means having people around who can tell when you become stressed from the task of caring for others. “Someone who knows you and can tell when you are stressed,

maybe a little snippy, or tired looking,” he explains. “They would ask when you last slept or when you last ate. Things you can sometimes lose track of. I remember when my dad was in the hospital, there were times I would go up to Richmond about seven in the morning and come back home at midnight. Dinner was out of a vending machine.”

Listening is another thing a support circle can do. They can listen to you so you can vent and talk about whatever frustrations you may have. “Many times when a person is working in hospice or in a place like the animal shelter, they see things there that are very distressing, just having someone to talk to helps. There is a sense of powerlessness, which can trigger anger,” he warns. Talking out frustrations helps defuse the senses of hopelessness and vulnerability.

#### Self Checklist

A self checklist gives you a physical act to stop and take time within each day to evaluate your own state of wellbeing. “Having that strong sense of awareness and taking time each day to check your own health,” Dr. Rockwell states, “helps catch stress before distress and burnout creep in. A checklist is good to do, so you have the actual paper in front of you.

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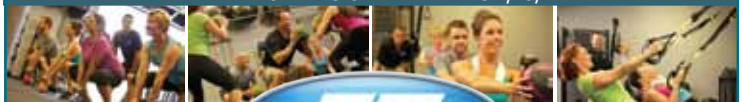
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Make sure you have the basic things like sleep and eat on it. One of the things on the checklist would be maintaining awareness of the things you have control of and what you don't have control of, and finding some way to come to terms with that – that's not always easy."

Members of a caregiver's support circle should be there to listen when the caregiver needs to talk.

"To listen is difficult for most of us because we want to do something," Dr. Rockwell states. "Listening seems passive. People always want to give advice, or say 'It will get better,' but you don't really know that. Knowing what not to say is important. When someone is upset, the best thing you can do is acknowledge it. 'I can tell you are really hurting or you're really angry. I'm here for you.' Then just let them say whatever they need to say."

As part of a support circle, you can offer to fill in for them. "That will allow the caregiver to get some rest," Dr. Rockwell says. "You can do that by taking on some household chores or bringing them something to eat. Support for the support person can be very helpful because it takes some of the pressure off."

When the caregiver feels stress building, he or she should have a plan to help deal with it. Exercise or relax, suggests Dr. Rockwell. "Either going for a run or taking time to meditate – you want to do things that are constructive for you, that are healthful, that are not going to cause more problems," he says. "Sometimes people are used to coping with things in a more destructive way by using alcohol or drugs, which is a quick fix because it takes you on a chemical vacation, but it doesn't solve what is going on and can sometimes make the situation more difficult."

Meditation or just simple breathing can be a mental vacation that brings clarity without the baggage associated with a chemical vacation. Dr. Rockwell suggests this exercise in stress-relieving breaths: "Breathe [in] for a count of five; hold it for a count of five; release it on the count of five. Practice that. You'll notice it calms you down. Anything you can do that focuses on your breathing will calm you down."

He says people evolved to manage stress in specific ways: fight, flee, freeze, fail or faint. "It hits us quickly. You feel it before you think about it. Your heart rate goes up. Your blood pressure increases. You breathe faster and shallower. When all that happens, you want to cut that cycle out because it just builds on itself. The quickest way to do that is just breathe." He says not to worry about the meditation practice of clearing your mind and pushing thoughts out. "That's one thing people have trouble with in meditation. Just focus on slow breaths."

Another strategy to manage stress is a physical check-in. "Maybe set a time throughout the day to stop and do an inventory from head to toe of how you are feeling," Dr. Rockwell suggests. "If your shoulders are up to your ears, you're probably a little stressed. Take a second to focus on letting that tension go." The simple, deep breathing exercise helps bring back calmness.

"If your mind is racing on everything you need to do, bring yourself back to where you are at that moment," he advises on another technique. "Focus on how your feet feel on the floor, the chair feels against you, the temperature of the room... Use your senses. Look around the room and pick out three or four shapes or colors. Listen to sounds. Bring a mindful awareness of where you are at the moment. It helps calm those stressors while you are at hospice, the hospital or at the shelter."

Dr. Stan Rockwell believes that caregivers can become so involved in caring for others that they neglect themselves. Stress can become distress and eventually burnout. Early detection by the caregiver or his/her support circle can circumvent this progression and simple methods such as exercise, relaxation and breathing techniques can relieve the strain. NDN

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**ANNE REYNOLDS**

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# The Bright and Fresh Winter Home

*By Greg Lilly, Editor*

Winter may seem to drag by the time February trudges in. A cure for the winter blues, according to decorator Anne Reynolds, can be as easy and inexpensive as rearranging furniture and adding some color to a room.

Anne began sewing when her parents told

her that if she wanted a new dress for each dance she attended, she'd better learn to sew them herself. She did.

"I didn't care how it was made – all I cared about was that it was different for the dance."

She left home for college at Courtland State,

which is now part of the State University of New York, to pursue a teaching career. She met her husband, Dick, while he attended nearby Syracuse University.

"About one week after I graduated, I was married," she says.

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Anne moved around the northeast most of her adult life. Her husband's work took them from the Syracuse, New York area to Reading, Pennsylvania and back north to Buffalo, New York then to just outside New York City.

"Dick had been transferred to the city and we moved to Morristown, New Jersey," Anne says. "From there we went to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he traveled a lot."

She continued to sew to make clothes for herself and their daughter. With each move, she would sew drapes and table coverings and other pieces for the new home. While in Pittsburgh, Anne's and Dick's two children graduated from high school, and Anne restarted her teaching career.

Another job transfer moved the now empty-nesters back to Morristown. This was Anne's preferred town for Dick's commute into New York City because her brother and his family lived there.

"I wanted to get a full time teaching job," she explains, "but it was March, which made finding a teaching job difficult. My brother had his own real estate agency and asked me to work for him."

As Anne studied for her real estate license, she worried she may have a hard time selling

a home she didn't like. She realized she had to get into the client's head to understand what they wanted, not what she liked or wanted for them.

"That was a learning situation for me," she says.

Dick's last transfer took them to Fairfax, Virginia, where he handled his company's accounts with the government agencies. "We lived in Fairfax for eight years [and] then Dick retired," Anne says, "and we came to Williamsburg. A lot of friends said we should look here." They had thought of Williamsburg mainly as a tourist town, but decided to take a look anyway. "We checked out Ford's Colony," she adds. "We had a ten o'clock appointment time that morning, and by six o'clock, Dick had pulled out his checkbook. We lived in Ford's Colony for about twenty years."

Her neighbors saw Anne's sewing creations for her home and encouraged her to branch out and make window treatments for other people. She started a small business of sewing and creating window treatments.

Her experience in moving from one town to another, selling her own home and those of her real estate clients plus making her window treatments, helped Anne refine her sense of dé-

cor, for both comfort and for staging a home for resale. She found that making a room more comfortable, brighter and more inviting didn't require expensive remodels. Anne likes to use what is already in a house to punch up the style for a lighter and sunnier feeling.

Anne's three main tips focus on re-arranging items you already own, brightening windows and adding new color with fabrics and accessories.

With rearranging, the first step is to eliminate the clutter. "I've helped people trying to downsize," Anne explains. "That's hard for people to do." She starts by having the person consider individual pieces. "I hold up two things. I give them ten seconds and ask which one they like better. I start making two piles: 'like' and 'don't like.' We may go back and re-evaluate, but at least that's a start of getting rid of things you just don't have room for. Then, you know you are keeping the things you really love, things you made a conscience decision to keep."

Once the clutter is reduced, Anne likes to walk a client through the house to view their furnishings with a new perspective.

"An example is when I helped one woman a few months ago," Anne describes, "and as

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she pointed out things she loved in the rooms upstairs, I asked her how often she came up there. She said 'never.' We took them downstairs where she could enjoy them. She hadn't considered it because those things had always been upstairs."

Just because a painting or a favorite chair is considered a guest room item, doesn't mean it can't be repurposed into the living room or den.

"Just rearrange," Anne says. "See things in a new way. Just mixing it up and putting things in different places is fun." Rearranging items in a house can create a whole different feel.

When a room feels dark and dreary, Anne advises that you take a long look at the window treatments. "I don't do draw drapes," she says of not covering the windows. "I'll install fabric side panels, but they're usually extended beyond the width of the window so they don't block the light. I do a lot of valances up at the top of the window. That keeps most of the glass exposed while still cozying up a room and puts color into it."

For privacy, some windows need to have blinds, drapes or shutters drawn at night, but during the short winter days, Anne suggests pulling them wide open to allow the sunlight

inside.

"Not all windows need to be covered or have a window treatment," she reminds her clients. So when the window dressing doesn't add color to a room, look toward wall paint or fabrics to bring light and brightness. "Add bright pillows to the couch and chairs," she says. "A cozy throw, vases of flowers or an arrangement of candles can create a pop of color to lighten your space."

Anne suggests walking into your own home as if you were a first time visitor.

"What is the focal point of your main room?" she asks. "For instance, sometimes it's the fireplace, sometimes it's a magnificent piece of furniture, and sometimes it's the view out the window."

She recalls helping a family use what they already owned to rearrange around a focal point and make their home more inviting.

"They had a huge window in the back of their living room," she says. "The couch was under the window facing in. Well, we had more fun. We moved the couch around and the chairs so that they could take in this gorgeous view that presents a different picture each season, four times a year. It was just changing the furniture that made all the difference."

When remodeling or redecorating, Anne cautions to remember that the most expensive part of the décor should be neutral. This makes life easier when you want to update for a new style and when you are ready to sell the house.

"Get your flair with paint, pillow fabric, that sort of thing," she says of the easily changed components of the home.

"Remember when bathroom sinks and tubs were aqua?" she asks with a laugh. "That really dates the house. The safest thing is to stay with white or beige so other people can move in and have the flexibility to add colors they like and not have to replace all the tiles and sinks." This advice applies to carpeting too.

"Get neutral carpeting," she states. "Not everyone may like a deep green, blue or rose, and too, you can get tired of it yourself. Get your color other ways: bedspreads, pillows, vases, lamps, things that are easily updated or replaced."

When the winter doldrums invade your home, Anne says let the sun shine in, declutter and rearrange for a lighter feel and new look, and treat yourself with splashes of new color in changeable accessories.

"It's inexpensive and can make a world of difference," she promises. NDN



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January 27, 2012  
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#### CHOCOLATE CHARIOT RACE

February 25, 2012

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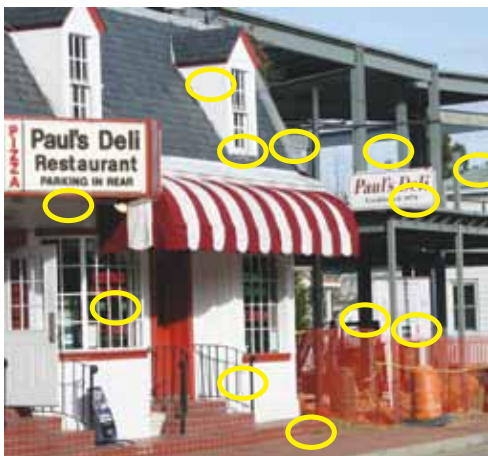
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[dianebeal@lizmoore.com](mailto:dianebeal@lizmoore.com)



**6763 EVENSONG**

Golf Course view from private backyard of this sought after Turnberry model in Colonial Heritage. Almost 3,000 sqft of living space. This golf course home is priced to sell. Truly 1st floor living, incl. office, LR, DR, MA BR & Gourmet Kitchen overlooking sunroom! Secondary BRs for guests upstairs. Upgrades throughout. HWs, tile and granite galore! \$329,000.



[andrea@williamsburghomefinder.com](mailto:andrea@williamsburghomefinder.com)



**201 CHERWELL**

Quality, custom, all brick home on quiet street & almost 2 acres of wooded privacy. Just minutes from I-64 & 199. Great room opens to beautiful sunroom. Spacious MBR with sitting area, FP & private deck. 3 add'l BRs as well as 'flex' room & home office. Amazing outdoor workshop complete with HVAC & power. 3,731 sqft. 4 BRs, 2.5 BAs. \$529,000.



**757-503-1999**

[deelynneilson@lizmoore.com](mailto:deelynneilson@lizmoore.com)

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



**QUEENS LAKE • LAKEFRONT**

Amazing 4B/3B, 2,942 sqft. home on one acre lakefront parcel with breathtaking water views. Formal & casual spaces throughout one level plan. Extensive hardwood. Spectacular brick floored sunroom faces lake. Stunning master suite with sitting area, FP, large tiled bath & wall of glass windows to private deck and lake views. This is a rare find! \$495,000. MLS#30029946.



**Susan B. Smith**  
Working Hard. Opening Doors. Working for You.

**757-876-3838**

[susansmith@lizmoore.com](mailto:susansmith@lizmoore.com)

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**228 PATRICK CROSSING**

*Savannah Green*

Brick Georgian in City of Williamsburg. 4 BR, 2.5 BA, 2,946 sqft. Open great rm w/ gas FP, kitchen, & eat-in breakfast area. Formal DR & LR separated by columns. Room sizes are generous. Large master suite w/sitting area & well appointed bath. Extra large bonus room or 4th BR. Detached shed. Shows like new, used as 2nd home. Low HOA dues. \$360,000.



**Charlotte Turner**  
757-784-4317

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



**156 OAK HOLLOW**

*Ford's Colony*

Golf view cul-de-sac home with open floor plan and updated architectural detail. Timeless design transforms from everyday one level living to abundant flexible space for family and friends. Don't miss this impeccable 4 BR, 3 BA home built in 2006. Offered for \$799,000.



**(757) 869-5533**

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