The Kingsmill Resort

The ideal venue for meetings and conferences

Page 9
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SALAD Charred romaine hearts and grilled exotic mushroom salad with roasted pepper balsamic dressing, shaved Romano cheese and garlic oil grilled crouton $9
MIXED GRILL Grilled beef tenderloin with red wine demiglace and jumbo crab stuff shrimp, red skinned mashed potatoes, and asparagus $35
PASTA Sea scallops, shrimp and salmon sautéed with Mediterranean vegetables, farfalla pasta and feta-pesto wine sauce $24
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Publisher’s Point

A Time to Work and Now...
A Time to Play

Forty years is a long time for one career. So I have been told, and so I now tell myself as I prepare to retire. I’ve loved my business since day one, and have never regretted founding it, growing it, and loving all of it.

Not every day has been perfect, but not one day was bad enough to make me regret my choice of careers. I wanted it to last forever, but there’s a season for everything in life. So, going forward, I will find joy in my memories of an utterly fulfilling career.

I will, of course, miss my long-time team who made The Shopper what it is today. They have all been with me from six to thirty-three years. We have celebrated weddings, births, graduations, divorces, deaths, camaraderie, sorrow, joy. We became family.

Come June, after 40 years in business, I will be ready to enjoy vacations, finish my book, and love my new life. Stay tuned.

The clients and readers who, over the years, have gifted The Shopper with their devotion continue to encourage us as we go forward. For this I am eternally grateful.

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The Shopper is a monthly, direct-mail, magazine serving six community editions in Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Smithfield, Carrollton, in Virginia and communities in northeastern North Carolina. The Shopper has a circulation of at least 10,000 direct mailed in each zone, totaling over 60,000. Additional issues are placed in our advertisers’ stores and in professional offices in our circulation area.

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Note: If you’re tired of disappointing carpet cleaning results, give Bobby a try. You’ll be glad you did.

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The Kingsmill Resort
The ideal venue for meetings and conferences

By Rob Lauer

Look out that window and tell me how often you come across a view like that,” says James Gelfand, Vice President of Sales and Revenue for Kingsmill Resort.

Seated by a window in Elements 1010, one of Kingsmill’s premier dining venues, the view is indeed spectacular. Acres of beautifully landscaped lawns extend down to the James River, which sparkles in the morning sun. Beyond the James, the wooded Virginia countryside extends as far as the eye can see.

Elizabeth Grimes, Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations for Kingsmill Resort, nods as she takes in the scene. “It is a stunning view,” she agrees.

“...are too many places that offer a view of the James River like this.”

Though James and Elizabeth have offices at Kingsmill, one gets the impression that they never tire of the natural beauty surrounding this world-class resort. “Kingsmill isn’t just another resort,” Elizabeth says. “We’re like another world nestled in the heart of Williamsburg.”

With an unparalleled range of accommodations including one-to-three bedroom condos, cottages right on the river and the luxury private Estate, along with, two championship golf courses, and a boundless range of recreational activities and leisure pursuits, Kingsmill is a fun and memorable luxury waterfront escape.

Walk into Kingsmill’s beautiful Resort Center, and one is greeted by a smiling staff dedicated to treating every guest like royalty. One could say that the staff stands ready to serve—except that in their eagerness, one is greeted by a smiling staff dedicated to treating every guest like royalty. You come across a view like that,” says Kevin D. “The staff were polite, professional, and helpful. Our people absolutely loved the location, the facilities, and the many amenities. It was close enough to all of the action but secluded enough to feel away from the hustle. Great location, even better staff! Love it!”

Rose Gilliam of Novozymes North America Inc. notes that after holding a company meeting at Kingsmill, attendees from around the world had nothing but praise for the resort. “One of our colleagues from Denmark said this was the most beautiful location he had been to for a meeting,” she recalls.

“With the James River, the gorgeous landscaping, wildlife everywhere, The James Landing Grille, The Estate at Kingsmill, professional staff, great meeting room, and to-die-for food—Kingsmill was the perfect location.”

Mark Ashworth of GE Healthcare agrees. “If it were up to me, Kingsmill would host every event for us going forward,” he says.

Kingsmill’s location in the heart of Virginia’s Historic Colonial Triangle also makes it an ideal venue for conferences and meetings. “Kingsmill is a perfect home base for all that the Williamsburg area has to offer,” Elizabeth notes. “There is so much to do and experience in this area. Colonial Williamsburg and Busch Gardens are just moments away.”

“There are lots of other fun things to do locally—like zip lines and escape rooms,” James adds.

“...are too many places that offer a view of the James River like this.”

While one family member attends meetings, the rest of the family enjoys all that the resort and the Williamsburg area have to offer. “What started out as a business trip becomes a family vacation.”

—Elizabeth Grimes

“In addition to being a popular vacation destination, we’re focusing on the drive market,” James notes. “Kingsmill Resort is renowned for its 18-hole championship River and Plantation Courses. Now we’re offering new membership packages so that people throughout the region can take advantage of all we have to offer. A new National Golf Membership is available for those outside a 45-mile radius of the resort. This membership gives them full access to these courses, plus the private Woods Course—ranked as one of Virginia’s Top Ten Golf Courses by Golf Week Magazine.”

A new Health and Racquet Membership offers unlimited access to all the sports and fitness facilities at Kingsmill, including the Tennis Center, the Kingsmill Spa with all the sports and social events happening throughout the year. A new Lifestyle Membership package grants access to all of the resort’s dining venues, the Kingsmill Spa, and social events year-round.

“Kingsmill has been delivering wonderfully unique experiences to our members and guests for 30 years,” James concludes. “With these new memberships, we hope that more people will come and be a part of the experience. We’re affordable, flexible, and eager for new relationships!”

Burwell’s Ballroom with James River views is one of Kingsmill’s 16 meeting spaces. All rooms are soundproofed with individual climate and lighting controls, state-of-the-art equipment and ergonomic chairs.

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Okay, an estate plan is likely not the first thing to pop into your mind as a gift for your family, but you should consider it nevertheless. The truth is that life doesn’t always give us warning signs for mental incapacity and death.

“Bill and Sue” came to see me for an estate plan. Sue noticed that Bill wasn’t feeling well. They decided to return to finish our meeting when he was feeling better. That night, Sue took Bill to the emergency room, and he was admitted to the hospital. Two days later, Bill was in a coma. A week later, he died.

Surprises happen all the time all around us. Instant mental incapacity due to stroke, falling, and car accidents can throw a family into crisis and cause a lot of stress.

“Sam” lives in Maine. His parents, “Al and Edna,” live here. Sam explained that his mother was in the hospital and not expected to survive. His dad was fighting cancer. Edna handled the finances, and Al just didn’t have the energy to figure things out. I was able to help by preparing a General Power of Attorney for Al so Sam could manage his parent’s finances. Sam felt stress, frustration, and had sleepless nights because his parents were not prepared.

If you want to make it easy for your family to help you manage your assets, pay your bills, and have a counselor to turn to in case of an emergency or death, call today for an appointment. I can help you prevent a family crisis.

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If you want to make it easy for your family to help you manage your assets, pay your bills, and have a counselor to turn to in case of an emergency or death, call today for an appointment. I can help you prevent a family crisis.

A Morning with Linda Sherfey, the Author of: “The 5 Declassified Estate Planning Secrets You Can’t Afford to Ignore”
Attendees receive a free copy of my book sold on Amazon for $24.95 (1 per household).
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MaidPro/Eco Carpet Pro
Helping others have better lives is what it’s all about

By Cristi Sanchez

Lily Carson’s business, MaidPro/Eco Carpet Pro, is a labor of love—love for people, love for community, and yes, a love of cleaning. “When I was pregnant with my first daughter, I had this eagerness to clean everything!” Lily laughs. “I’d never been a clean freak, but during my pregnancy, everything had to be clean! I had fallen in love with cleaning and really enjoyed it!”

It was also during that time that Lily was considering her next career move. With two engineering degrees from Purdue University, Lily had willingly walked away from her lucrative job in corporate America to focus on starting a family. Throughout her pregnancy, Lily began considering a new family-friendly career path.

“I wanted to do something that would allow me to be there for my child,” Lily explains with a smile. “Without any business background, I wasn’t sure where to start. I wanted my own business, so I began to consider a franchise.”

But which franchise remained a question until the day Lily’s friend pointed out a cleaning business truck. Knowing Lily’s newfound love of cleaning, her friend exclaimed, “You can do that! That’s a franchise.” Thus the seed was planted. “That piqued my interest,” Lily notes. “So, I started researching cleaning franchises online and found MaidPro.”

As part of her research, Lily applied to a local cleaning company to experience first-hand the life of a professional cleaner. “I wanted to know what it was like to work in the field,” she recalls, “so for two weeks, I actually worked as a cleaner for a different company before purchasing my franchise. I wanted to experience a cleaner’s life and see if it was something I would want to do.”

What Lily found during her brief employment as a professional cleaner would profoundly impact her philosophy on running her business and how she would treat her employees. “Not only did I see unhappy employees and low morale, but I was shocked at how differently people perceived me when they thought I was a maid,” she notes.

“Coming from corporate America I was used to being treated with respect, dignity and as someone with intelligence. When people heard I was a maid, they immediately treated me differently. The change in attitude was instantaneous. It was quite surprising. I decided then that I would foster an environment that was very supportive of employees, where they knew and feel they’re important. Essentially, we are the same; we just have different professions. No profession’s better or worse than any other. As long as someone honestly puts forth their best effort, they should be respected as an equal. I want to support and encourage my employees, so I treat them equally, fairly, and provide them opportunities.”

All of Lily’s employees are offered paid holidays, vacations and sick days, healthcare, 401K accounts with matching payments by the company, and profit-sharing. Lily’s dedication to providing a positive, supportive workplace has paid off in more ways than one. Since it opened in 2008, Lily’s MaidPro franchise has continued to grow, even during the recession.

Lily attributes this success to her team. “I believe it’s because we really have good people,” she states earnestly. “We have a group of like-minded people who are honest, hardworking and want to help others. We’re all a family. I wouldn’t be where I am without my team,” she states earnestly.

Lily and her team succeed because of the consistent, high-quality customer service they provide, from the first phone call until the job is done. “My goal at MaidPro is to provide top-notch service at reasonable prices,” Lily insists. “We work hard to understand our customers’ cleaning needs and budgets, and we tailor our services to their fit those. We also provide customers flexibility. We don’t require contracts, so people can cancel anytime.”

To ensure that her customers get the best cleaning possible, Lily never assigns newly-trained cleaners until they have cleaned her own home to her exacting standards. “After my employees are trained, they have to clean my home first,” she smiles. “Then, I can provide feedback. If they’re good enough for me, then they can clean for our customers.”

After every cleaning, MaidPro’s quality control coordinator reaches out to customers to ensure their satisfaction. “We have a 100 percent customer satisfaction guarantee,” Lily explains. “To stay successful, we have to provide customers with excellent cleaning and customer service. That’s what we do.”

After my employees are trained, they have to clean my home first.
Then, I can provide feedback.
If they’re good enough for me, then they can clean for our customers.”

—Lily Carson

Lily’s satisfied customers soon began to inquire about carpet cleaning. Unable to find a carpet company to partner with that would provide service according to her standards, Lily created her own. “My husband, Neil, heads Eco Carpet Pro,” she explains. “We offer carpet, upholstery, area rug, and tile and grout cleaning. In some ways, we’re like a one-stop shop.”

N

Neil and Lily Carson with their daughters, Eliana and Mira.

During this process, they can see what difference they can make in someone’s life, and it makes them feel good and gives their job meaning.”

Warm, friendly, modest, and smart as a whip, Lily Carson was able to take a strong case of nesting instinct 12 years ago and turn it into one of the most successful MaidPro franchises in the nation through her commitment to excellence, to her employees, and to her community. Her dedication to what she does is summed up succinctly. “We are in the people business. Our services help people have better lives, and for us, that’s what it’s all about.”

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February 2020   The Western Great Bridge/Grassfield Shopper   Page 11
What dermatological warnings do people need to know?
Rachel Byrd, MD is a board-certified dermatologist who attended the University of Richmond and went on to study medicine at VCU. She lives in Virginia Beach and is passionate about educating people about the dangers of direct sun exposure (particularly between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.) and tanning bed use, which can lead to skin cancer and accelerated aging of the skin.

Additional suggestions for protection are:
1. Use daily sunscreen of SPF 30+. Reapply every two hours when spending time in the sun.
2. Wear clothing with UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor) which is more reliable than sunscreen in protecting the skin.
3. All adults should consider getting a baseline skin exam by a board certified dermatologist to identify individual risk factors.
4. Check your own skin regularly. Skin lesions that are different than the rest, asymmetric, have irregular borders, multiple or dark colors, larger than a pencil eraser should be evaluated by a dermatologist.
5. Any skin lesion that is enlarging, painful, itching, bleeding or otherwise changing should also be evaluated.
6. Your family history of skin cancer and your own sun exposure history may contribute to your risk of developing skin cancer.
7. A large number of moles may increase your risk of developing melanoma.

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What is STOP Inc.?
STOP Inc. is a designated Community Action Agency with a 54-year history of addressing local issues of poverty for low-to-moderate-income families and individuals. Funded by various government sources as well as contributions from foundations and individuals, STOP attacks the root causes of poverty. Regina Lawrence, STOP's President and CEO, has been with the organization for 45 years. She explains, “We have four main departments. These cover health and wellness initiatives, homeless intervention and support, housing and economic development and management, support and special projects. We embrace a total family concept—a two-generation approach. We go to every individual in a family to determine the needs of each.”

Health and Wellness focuses on nutritional education and training. It issues referrals for much-needed physical and mental health services, with an emphasis on preventing opioid use and abuse. Led by V.P. Christian Joyner, it provides substance abuse prevention training and education. The team presents “Hidden in Plain Sight” demonstrations—interactive drug-educational programs for parents. Christian knows, “Parents need to look at their kids’ phones and be aware of signs.”

STOP interacts with the homeless and housing providers to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring. Plus, it works with the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program to assist veterans in finding employment.

STOP welcomes volunteers, donations, and community support. All help, no matter how small, is so appreciated!

STOP Inc.
5700 Thurston Avenue, Suite #101, Virginia Beach
(757) 858-1360 www.StopInc.org

What does every taxpayer need to know this year?
CPA Beverly Jones did not hesitate to answer. “I would like everyone to know if they owed money last year, now is the time to fill out a new W-4. This is a new form that will allow them to withhold more accurately.”

This simple statement is an example of why those of us who are not IRS savvy need a professional to help us through the trying and important tax season. Keeping up with tax changes takes a full-time commitment that few of us have, and all of us need.

We all need to remember that while we focus on tax time once a year, a CPA is essential year-round to entrepreneurs and individuals whose tax returns are just not simple.

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(757) 463-2585 www.bljcpa.com

What leads a young woman to become a dentist?
Simply stated, Dr. Kelly B. Paxton of Midgette Family Dentistry gives the credit to her childhood dentist, who was both kind and professional. The young Kelly loved going to the dentist, and remembers knowing since middle school that she wanted to be a dentist.

Kelly’s career path to becoming a dentist wasn’t always easy. She ran track during her undergraduate studies, and traveled with her team while pursuing her degree. She explains that when she went to dental school, it was a breath of fresh air because she could focus more on her studies and not be torn to pursue two passions at once. “I still ran,” she smiles.

When looking for a practice, Kelly remembers the day she discovered Midgette Family Dentistry. “I fell in love with this office and doctors from the moment I walked in, 14 years ago!” she explains. “Dr. Baker and Dr. Midgette had the same morals and values as my childhood dentist. They care about their patients and provide top-notch technology.”

When asked what advice she would give to women pursuing careers in business, she counsels, “Find what you enjoy doing and do that to the best of your ability. Don’t do something halfway. If you want to be the best at it, you have to keep going. Education, learning—it’s a long-term pursuit. Things are truly worth fighting for sometimes take a little longer, so don’t give up.”

Midgette Family Dentistry
3326 Taylor Road, Chesapeake (757) 483-4700 www.MidgetteFamilyDentistry.com

Kelly B. Paxton, DDS
**WOMEN in BUSINESS**

**Q** What is the best thing about owning a hair salon?

**A** Denise Query has owned Hair Kingdom for 31 years, and this attractive owner stands out due to her reputation for being a businesswoman who cares for three groups of people:
1. The hairstylists and personnel of Hair Kingdom are as important to Denise as she is to them.
2. Their clients are important, not just for their patronage, but for the satisfaction the entire team feels when each patron is truly happy with the results of their expertise. Long term clients have become more beautiful and part of the “family.”
3. Finally, everyone who works with Denise knows her heart goes out to anyone in need of help.

Hair Kingdom’s support of charities such as the Her Shelter, Locks of Love, and countless others, who have benefited from the devotion of Denise and her wonderful team.

Hair Kingdom
344 Battlefield Blvd S, Chesapeake
(757) 482-1900
www.HairKingdom66.com

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**Q** What distinguishes Premier Roofing and Siding from other home improvement companies?

**A** In the home improvement industry, it is rare to find women in charge. Premier Roofing and Siding is run by two such women: President Pam Standish and Vice President Ann Strader.

Premier has kept the same owner, company name, and slogan for 30 years! And all of the management staff have been with the company for 15+ years.

It’s sales consultants are very knowledgeable, going to clients’ homes to measure in person, working up the quotes, and answering questions. Pam and Ann note they are fortunate to have long-standing in-house installers who are employees of Premier, along with great subcontractors with whom they’ve worked with for years.

Everyone at Premier takes pride in their slogan of Promises Made, Promises Kept. They uphold their promises by writing down all work to be performed on the contract and keeping communication with customers open. Premier’s office staff is also available to answer clients’ calls directly.

Both Pam Standish and Ann Strader cite how very rewarding it is to have clients tell them they have done an outstanding job. They have set a standard for their industry.

Read our story at TheShopper.com

Premier Roofing and Siding
(757) 543-8958
PremierRoofingAndSiding.com

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**Q** What is the biggest attraction for the Corner Cafe at Bide-A-Wee?

**A** “The beautiful 18-hole Bide-A-Wee Golf Course is not only centrally located, but also open to the public for events and golf. Since expanding last year with Corner Cafe at Bide-A-Wee, we have also expanded our popular catering facilities to serve the Golf Course Pavilion!” Sheri Spires-Skipper, owner of both Corner Cafe and Corner Cafe At Bide-A-Wee, is excited about all the weddings and events held at this beautiful venue. The spacious Bide-A-Wee Golf Course Pavilion can accommodate any size event.

“We love catering there. Each event is different. We have everything from birthdays and retirements to family reunions, showers and weddings,” Sheri enthuses. “We love being a part of so many joyous events. Whether serving regulars and small informal parties in the Corner Cafe at Bide-A-Wee or the big events in the Pavilion, we are in a business that we love where we get to feel part of every event! Thank you, Portsmouth!”

Corner Cafe at Bide-A-Wee
1 Bide-A-Wee Lane, Portsmouth
(757) 404-1801
www.CornerCafeAtBideAWee.com
and visit our other location

Corner Cafe
3601 Western Branch Boulevard
Portsmouth
(757) 397-5500
www.CornerCafePortsmouth.com

Read our story at TheShopper.com

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**Q** What happens to The Shopper when its founder retires?

**A** Jean Loxley-Barnard, founder, publisher, CEO, is planning to retire this summer as The Shopper celebrates 40 years. She is already in discussions with publishers and interested individuals. The Shopper may have a life of its own,” Jean hopes. “We have raving fans among our readers, who bring an issue to an advertiser, or simply say, ‘I saw you in The Shopper.’” I have always been grateful for them.

It is likely all issues will be acquired by existing publishers, but it is possible publishers will acquire particular areas, with others acquired by entrepreneurs, including account executives or writers like Jean. Interested parties showed up at the first inklings of her retirement.

Retiring entrepreneurs often refer to their business as their baby, and Jean can relate. “I might keep an interest in one or two of the issues,” she admits, but adds, “Being spiritually oriented, I am willing to be guided by what should be.”

The name The Shopper is generic and Jean owns TheShopper.com website, in an era when digital keeps growing along with thousands of visitors each month. When asked in 1997 what she wanted her domain name to be, Jean answered, “TheShopper.com.” Asked for her second choice, she replied, “I don’t have a second choice.” Told that, “TheShopper.com probably wouldn’t be available,” Jean replied, “Trust me, it will.”

The Shopper
133 Kempsville Road, Chesapeake
(757) 547-0520
www.TheShopper.com

You can read more about this in Publisher’s Point on page 4.
"I tell everyone, 'If you want a great response, advertise in The Shopper. I've tried other things, but The Shopper is what works.'"
— Linda Sherfey
Attorney & Counselor at Law and Estate Planner

"I've gotten 90 percent of my patients from The Shopper!"
— Dr. Julia Stevenson
Cardinal Plastic Surgery

"I feel that advertising in The Shopper has contributed to our having had one of our best years ever. It provided us the ability to remind people that Freemason Abbey is only minutes away."
— Lori Maddux
Freemason Abbey Restaurant

"I've gotten more clients from my Shopper advertising than from any other source of advertising I've done."
— Dr. Geoff Campbell
Edinburgh Animal Hospital

"For weeks after my story came out, I was busy every day. Jobs big and small came in. And I did not have to ask how my customers found me. It was because of The Shopper!"
— Will Watson
Watson’s Transport & Delivery

"I have had good results with The Shopper."
— Beverly Jones
CPA, PC

“Join our Shopper family by calling 547-0520!”

Love Notes
Our clients love their response from The Shopper.
On December 31, 2019, the FAA published a proposal outlining new rules enabling a system to track all drone flights in the USA. The proposal, released in the interest of public safety and awareness, has a few items that have many drone pilots very unhappy and on the verge of leaving the hobby. The FAA already requires all drones larger than 0.55 pounds (250 grams) to be registered. They also want the drone to broadcast identifying information in order to fly in most locations.

The main issue is that current drones do not broadcast all the information that the FAA wants. This means that current drone owners, both recreational and commercial, might have to buy additional equipment and also subscribe to a proposed monthly data service to comply. It is unknown how expensive these will be for regular users. There are fears that they could price out all but larger commercial operators.

Based on the wording of the document, a drone without the extra equipment and monthly subscription may not be able to take off unless traveling an estimated 15 miles to one of a few locations—usually fields called FAA-recognized identification areas (FRIA).

A major concern of most pilots is that the data subscription system will be cell-service based. This means that someone operating the drone in a location with bad, or no, cell service will also be stopped from flying.

I have flown my drones commercially in rural locations like the Eastern Shore, where there has been very weak cellphone service. If I was on a commercial job, not being able to fly when I arrived on-site would be expensive and frustrating.

Another concern is that the FAA wants pilot identifying information to be publicly accessible in real-time, for example, via cell phone apps.

This has led to concerns over issues of privacy and possible endangerment.

Because drones are still relatively new and have often been sensationalized in the media as spying machines, some drone pilots have been harassed, injured, and had their property destroyed while flying legitimately. There have also been cases of pilots being robbed or having their apparatus stolen from their vehicles.

Many pilots fear that if the public (including criminals) are able to see details on them, including their exact location, there could be an escalation in confrontations, thefts, violence, and worse.

The next few months are critical in the process, and we expect to see the initial version of the FAA’s rules soon.

Terry Young is an FAA licensed drone pilot and professional photographer and videoographer. His 30 plus years of experience in pre- and post-production of both still photography and video, coupled with the latest equipment, enable him to create amazing high quality images.
A MATTER OF TASTE
By Nathalie Dupree

Homemade spaghetti an institution in homes of all-American families

Spaghetti is one of those dishes that never will be dated and always is a pleasure to anticipate. When I was a girl, spaghetti was the first thing you wanted to learn how to cook. It was the first meal a bride served to neighbors and friends. It was what your mother made in the fall, simmering it for hours on the back of the stove.

The pasta was plunged into large pots—sometimes two or three—of boiling water. Only we didn’t call it pasta then; we called it noodles. No one ever had fresh spaghetti noodles, but we still loved spaghetti.

Naturally, the spaghetti was cooked just as you were ready for it, not a moment before. We reheated the noodles only if absolutely necessary, by placing them in a colander over the top of the pot with water simmering underneath.

Being able to cook all your noodles at one time was a sign of coming up in the world. As families gained affluence, they purchased tall pots that were called spaghetti pots. When the gourmet cooking rage swept the country, these same pots were renamed stockpots.

The spaghetti sauces were as good then as they are now, combining the best of ingredients and letting their flavors blend for a long time. We knew that spaghetti was supposed to be Italian, but, to us, it was all-American, with a designated position in the week starting in September and ending in May. Most homes had it once every week on a rotating cycle—every Thursday, for instance. It couldn’t be Wednesday because that would interfere with going to church Wednesday night.

Since my mother worked, our spaghetti day was Saturday or Sunday, days when she had time to let it cook all day. My mother made spaghetti once with mushrooms. She didn’t write down the recipe, and I long for it still.

One recent Saturday, I yearned for thick, rich spaghetti sauce made from scratch. I wanted to luxuriate in the promise of crisp weather, to fill my home with its aroma. I had an abundance of fresh, lush, nearly over-ripe tomatoes ready to burst with juiciness, purloined from a friend’s garden. As so many of my favorite spaghetti recipes call for canned tomatoes or Italian plum tomatoes, I made my recipe as I went along, using what was in the house.

When it was done, all that was needed was someone to share it, so I called my friend Cliff and took a plate of it to him at his store. I held my breath as he ate, and only when he pronounced it “the best spaghetti he’d ever had” did I release my breath and feel satisfied.

It’s a darn good sauce.

A Different Spaghetti

4 tablespoons olive oil
2 onions, chopped
3 cloves garlic, chopped
2 pounds fresh or 1 1/2 lb, 12-oz can peeled tomatoes
1 cup tomato juice, optional
1 tablespoon fennel seeds
5 tablespoons combined fresh herbs—basil, thyme, oregano and/or rosemary (if fresh herbs are not available, use half as much dried herbs, taste and add more as necessary)

1 12-oz package country sausage links or country sausage
1 tablespoon sugar
2 tablespoons tomato paste, optional
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper or red pepper, optional
salt freshly ground black pepper
2 7-ounce packages spaghetti freshly ground Parmesan

Heat olive oil in heavy saucepan. Add onions and garlic and cook until soft. Cut tomatoes roughly and add to pot. Cover and let juices cook out. If liquid is needed, add tomato juice. Add the fennel seed and 2 tablespoons of the freshly chopped herbs. Cover and simmer for 2 hours. Fry spaghetti in separate pan, cut into slices or break into pieces and add to the sauce. Taste sauce and add tomato paste, juice, sugar, red pepper and salt as necessary. Move lid to half cover, and simmer very low for half an hour, taking care not to scorch. Cook spaghetti in boiling water 9-10 minutes. Drain well. Taste sauce, add rest of fresh herbs and serve with Parmesan. Leftovers may be mixed together and refrigerated or frozen to be reheated later.

Serves six.

Homemade spaghetti an institution in homes of all-American families

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Serves six.
Suffolk Art League’s 37th Antique Show & Sale
Treasures from the past support arts education in the future
By Allison Williams

Searching for an 18th-century Canterbury tavern table to fill that empty nook at home? On the hunt for an eclectic, repurposed piece of vintage furniture? Whatever one’s taste may be, the Suffolk Art League’s 37th Annual Antiques Show and Sale on February 22 and 23 will have something to satiate every appetite.

With 38 antiques and collectibles dealers from Virginia and North Carolina, the show will feature a variety of experts specializing in jewelry, silver, glass, furniture, and fine arts, according to Linda Bunch, the organization’s executive director.

The show, which is being held at King’s Fork Middle School, will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. It’s expected to draw about 2,000 people from across Hampton Roads, Richmond, and northeastern North Carolina.

“We’ll have something for everyone,” Linda says with a smile. “It’s a fun event. Even if you’re not buying, it’s always interesting to see things from the past and enjoy lunch with friends.”

The two-day antiques show and sale is the Suffolk Art League’s only fundraiser for the year, according to Linda. Proceeds help fund art classes and workshops held at the Suffolk Art Gallery, in Suffolk’s public and private schools, and at other off-site locations in the city.

“We have a lot of dealers returning this year, and we have nine new dealers,” Linda continues. “In addition to the wonderful antiques and collectibles, we have opened this year’s show up to include some vintage items.”

The art league is hoping to welcome more of the often elusive millennials into their fold of antique shoppers.

“Millennials want to invest in experiences and in things that have meaning to them,” Linda says. “We want to offer younger collectors the opportunity to purchase quality items that have history and soul.

Older pieces have a backstory, and buyers can find that history from the dealer.

“Repurposing well-crafted items from the past is also ‘greener’ than buying new,” Linda continues. “Buying old furniture is good because it is not harming another tree. It leaves no new environmental footprint.”

Collectors of Mr. Peanut — the late iconic legume that has represented Planters Peanuts for 104 years — are in for a special treat.

“The Peanut Pals—an organization of Planters and Mr. Peanut memorabilia collectors—will be making a fourth appearance at the antique sale,” says President Scott Schmitz. The group will have one display table showcasing some rarer Mr. Peanut treasures and six tables of Planters’ advertising memorabilia that will be for sale.

“Things created by past generations that are still in existence and useful today never cease to amaze me.”

— Van Worrell

“We always enjoy visits to Suffolk because that is where Mr. Peanut originated,” Scott says. “We have a lot of people stopping by our tables, sharing stories about how their mother used to work at Planters. Some show us photographs of Planters memorabilia that has been handed down in their families for generations.”

Dealer Van Worrell, owner of Father Time Antiques in Newsoms, always looks forward to the Suffolk Art League’s show.

“I always enjoy trying to get more people interested in antiques,” Van says. “Things created by past generations that are still in existence and useful today never cease to amaze me.”

Van’s professional expertise is in mechanical-time pieces: pocket watches, grandfather clocks and the like. But he will be bringing a variety of items to the Suffolk show, including furniture, glassware, collectibles and advertising pieces.

He will also be replacing batteries in watches and wall clocks on-site and providing verbal appraisals on vintage timepieces.

Dealer Madalyn Grimes, who has been coming to the Suffolk show for 24 years, will be offering a plethora of items: vintage postcards, sheet music, pocket knives, Boy Scout memorabilia, and several small pieces of furniture.

“I enjoy the Suffolk show,” she said. “This is also a social event. After all these years, you get to know many of the other dealers and your repeat customers.”

Veteran dealer, Peg Lockwood of Zuni, who owns a shop in Norfolk’s Ghent, is excited to return to the Suffolk.

“We always have a good crowd there,” Peg says. She specializes in 18th- and 19th-century English furniture, as well as English and Asian ceramics and silver.

Peg adds that she is glad the show’s proceeds support art workshops for young people. “I think art enriches all of us,” she declares. “It’s particularly important to foster an interest in creativity among kids.”

Kim Mason, an art teacher at Nansemond-Suffolk Academy, couldn’t agree more.

“No one of my students will go on to become a professional artist,” Kim says. “My goal is to have students who have experiences that make them appreciate and respect the arts when they become adults.”

For years, the Suffolk Art League has brought in professional artists to conduct quarterly workshops that rotate between the city’s public and private high schools. Small groups of students join one art teacher from each high school in hands-on workshops, learning new mediums and skills to take back to their respective classrooms.

“The best part is that teachers become students,” Kim says, a laugh in her voice. “We get to create and learn, as well. We can bring it back to class to share with students who weren’t able to participate in the workshops. As a school system, we could never afford to pay to have a professional artist come in and spend an entire day working with us.”

At the middle school level, the Suffolk Art League sponsors visits by local and regional artists for half-day workshops on mediums the schools don’t cover, Linda explains. Past workshops have included clay, quilting, bookmaking, and painting with pastels.

This year, for the first time, the organization has expanded its offerings to include one-hour art workshops in the city’s elementary schools, according to Linda.

Kim says she is looking forward to attending the antiques show and sale.

“I’m always a big supporter of the Suffolk Art League,” Kim says. “They care about the arts education in Suffolk’s schools, and are always looking for workshops that will continue to spark students’ interests in the arts.”

Suffolk Art League’s 37th Annual Antique Show & Sale
Saturday, February 22, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, February 23, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Kings Fork Middle School
350 Kings Fork Road, Suffolk

By Allison Williams

February 2020   The Western Great Bridge/Grassfield Shopper   Page 17
What is a Penny Worth?

Children First

By Dr. Becky Adams

Walking through any parking lot of a big box store, strip mall or fast-food chain, all you have to do is look down. Inevitably your eyes will spot a small coin nestled in the concrete or sidewalk. Some are shiny, and others appear to have been there for years. People walk by or step on them. No one seems to pay attention. Every few years, a news story will suggest that the federal government is considering the possibility of doing away with the penny since it is not worth what it used to be, and people find it annoying to carry it around in their pocket or purse. What exactly is a penny worth? Can it make a difference in a child’s life? How could that happen?

I remember a teenage boy in our city who would stop at the drive-through line on a Friday night and open the car door at the pick-up window. On the ground he sometimes found enough dropped change to buy a dollar taco or two. What did he learn about managing money and how to accumulate it for what you desire?

What exactly is a penny worth?
Can it make a difference in a child’s life?
How could that happen?

In 2000-2001 the Chesapeake General Hospital Foundation had a Silver Millennium Campaign to raise funds for an endowment and to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the hospital’s founding. School children participated in the Million Pennies Project and raised thousands of dollars. Some schools had Math-a-thons that included having children complete a booklet of 200 math problems with parents and collect pledges for the program. Schools counted the pennies donated and made long lines outside the school building to measure how many miles their collected pennies represented. Pennies were integrated into math and science lessons. What were those pennies worth as children learned not only math skills but also the importance of community service?

Parents can have a fun activity with their children with pennies and a magnifying glass. Start by having both parent and child guess what is on the front and back of a penny and write it down on a piece of paper. Don’t look at a penny until after you have written your ideas. Then take the magnifying glass and check out your answers. On the front of the penny is the profile of President Lincoln with the word Liberty on one side of his head. On the other side of his head is the coin’s mint date, as well as a letter indicating where it was minted. Around the top will be the words In God We Trust. On the back of the penny the words United States of America will be at the top followed by E PLURIBUS UNUM (United States motto in Latin meaning for “out of many, one”) above the picture of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. What is a penny worth in this activity as parents share time together learning about the history of our country and noticing the little things in their daily lives?

As I handed a dollar bill to the young man at the drive-through window last week and waited for my penny change, he closed the cash register. He then looked at me and said, “I didn’t think you would want a penny back.” I smiled as he reopened the register and handed me the penny. I dropped it into the cup holder in my car and drove off. He’ll probably get it back next week with some other coins. What is a penny worth? It depends on how you use it.

A career educator, Dr. Rebecca Adams has served as a teacher in grades two through graduate school, reading specialist, principal, and an educational foundation administrator. She was selected as Chesapeake’s First Citizen 2016 for her community service.

Relationships

The Power of Reminiscing

By Dr. Bill Austin

Every year, my wife, Karen, and I get together with two of my childhood friends and their wives. I have known both of them since we were in Boy Scouts together. We stay connected by getting together each year at a different location. Since we live in different parts of the country, we have found that reminiscing helps us reconnect. Last year, we traveled to Missouri to the home of one of our childhood friends. While we were there, we visited our old Boy Scout camp. Seeing it brought back wonderful memories of times we spent there long ago. The special thing about this was that these two old friends knew my past; they had been a part of it. Most of the people around us now only know the person we are. They didn’t experience the past events and witness the struggles of the person we were.

Research shows that it’s essential to maintain strong long-term relationships ties. A great way to boost our present happiness is to remember happy times from the past. That’s why reminiscing while looking at old photographs, scrapbooks, souvenirs, and home movies is so worthwhile and precious.

Reminiscing can help revitalize a marriage. Sometimes, our relationship may get into a rut. We focus on what is wrong with our marriage. One way of changing how we see our marriage is reminiscing about the good memories. We talk about the times when we felt close to each other. We talk about such things as what we thought when we first met, the funny times, and special life events. By reminiscing, we see our marriage in a more positive light, and this gives us hope.

Studies have shown that reminiscing can help people suffering from Alzheimer’s and dementia. Looking at old photos of an ice cream truck, a car with a food tray on the door at a drive-in restaurant, a childhood school, or family pictures can stir memories. Also, playing music from our early years can help. Looking at old school pictures of ourselves might make us laugh. I have to laugh at the photos of my brother-in-law in some of our family pictures. He is dressed in a leisure suit with sideburns!

A great way to boost our present happiness is to remember happy times from the past.

One caution: in an organization, we have to be careful about reminiscing if someone is new to the group and doesn’t share our history. It could make them feel left out. We also have to be careful reminiscing with people who did not have a good history with us.

Reminiscing with others allows us to review our life stories and contemplate our accomplishments. This can lead to feelings of self-worth and of a life well-lived.

Dr. Austin has decades of experience dealing with relationships. He charges clients on a sliding scale according to their ability to pay. His first book, Creating Our Safe Place: Articles on Healthy Relationships, published in 2004, and his second book, Keeping It Safe, published in 2009, can be purchased through Amazon, publisheramerica.com, and at the Parish Book Store at Eastern Shore Chapel in Virginia Beach—call (757) 425-0114 for book availability. Dr. Austin is also a sought-after speaker.

Tidewater Pastoral Counseling
(757) 623-2700
Friends Gather to Celebrate!

Keith Tolarchyk, husband of Shopper Graphic Designer Jennifer Tolarchyk, recently gathered with family and friends to celebrate his birthday. Lockside Bar and Grill in Great Bridge was a perfect location for the laid-back festivities.

That's a lot of candles!

Back row from left: Brian Thompson, Don Eason, Eric Gyuricsko, Keith Tolarchyk
Tim Westerman
Front row from left: Michele Thompson, Nilima Gyuricsko, Jennifer Tolarchyk and Jolene Westerman

See these and other photos at TheShopper.com

Congratulations Graduates!

Congratulations to the graduates of the 14th Session Chesapeake Sheriff’s Office Basic Deputy Training Academy. After 16 weeks of training—which included, firearms, defensive tactics, emergency vehicle operator courses, and physical training, 21 graduates received certificates and badges from Undersheriff W.C. Bennett Jr. and Chief Deputy K. Kight. City Council Member Dwight Parker was the guest speaker. Deputy Court Clerk Robin Kilgore swore in 20 of the new deputies and one new HRRJ officer. Welcome to the family!

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See these and other photos at TheShopper.com
Throw a Dinner Party and Save the World

Recently, my friends, Brigitta and Christian, recalled how, shortly after moving to the U.S. from Germany, they invited friends for dinner. “We spent the day preparing the food,” Brigitta recalls. “Our friends arrived. After appetizers and drinks, we sat at the table and ate. When we tried to usher them to our living room for drinks and conversation, they said it was getting late, and they needed to go.”

“I was confused,” Christian says. “I asked them, ‘How can it be late? It’s not bedtime yet?’”

“In Europe, a dinner party is not only about eating but spending an entire evening with friends,” Brigitta explains.

I wish it was so here. Seven years ago, Carey and I invited friends over for dinner one Saturday night. After we cooked all afternoon, our guests arrived at 6:00 and were gone by 8:45. We wanted them to stay longer, but we cooked all afternoon, our guests arrived at 6:00 and were gone by 8:45. Our social lives revolve around breaking bread together, but are we doing much more than filling our bellies?

The average U.S. household spends around $3,000 a year eating out. Our social lives revolve around breaking bread together, but are we doing much more than filling our bellies?

When I was younger and living in New York City, I worked for six years as an actor in national theatrical touring companies. Nine months each year were spent on the road, eating every single meal in restaurants.

Eating out ceased to be a big deal by week two of my first job. The people with whom I shared a table and our conversations became the main course. To this day, I remember stories and jokes we shared over meals, with no memory of the food over which that sharing occurred. Eating out is overrated and expensive. For less than what Carey and I spend on one meal out, we can prepare dinner for six at home. Of course, that preparation takes time—the one thing most of us have convinced ourselves we lack. But the time we put into preparing a meal is a gift to our friends and family. And the time that they take to enjoy that meal and the conversation afterward is our gift to us.

In 2017, Rico Gagliano and Brendan Francis Newnam published a hilarious—and in my opinion, important book. *Brunch is Hell: How to Save The World by Throwing A Dinner Party.* They contend that the dinner party—“where friends new and old share food, debate ideas, and boldly build hangovers together”—is the cornerstone of civilized society. By reviving “the fading art of throwing dinner parties, the world will be better off, and our country might heal its wounds of endless division.”

Societal salvation through dinner parties? Think about it. Greek philosophy was born as dinner conversation. Judaism has survived for four thousand years because of weekly Sabbath meals. Christianity has lasted for two thousand years because believers gather for a symbolic meal—“Communion.” Studies show that families who regularly eat dinner together deal better with the problems that life inevitably throws their way.

Perhaps a better response to the seismic social divisions all around us is not another online post or Tweet but a dinner invitation.

Throw a dinner party and save the world? Hey, it’s worth a try.

Rob Lauer is an award-winning, nationally-produced and published playwright with over 35 years of experience in the entertainment industry. His national credits include production work for MGA Films, Time/Warner TV, The Learning Channel and The History Channel. Locally, Rob has been producing, directing and hosting three TV series for PCTV (the City of Portsmouth’s official channel) since 2011.

Rob Lauer
by Rob Lauer

Preventing for a Spring Sale

This is traditionally the time that the market is deluged with new listings for homes. I am not a realtor, but I love being the photo and drone pro for sellers.

When potential buyers and realtors are looking over the MLS properties, aerial shots of houses can tell much more about the area around the house.

Rather than simple outside shots of the front and back of the house, aerial photos can give the buyer a feel for the whole neighborhood.

Seeing well-kept properties all around their possible future home can create an immediate extra trust in that house.

Photos showing, for example, nearby water, woodland trails, a golf course, or proximity to interesting places, can be invaluable when trying to get a lead on the other houses in the search results.

Aerial photos can also give the viewer an overview, literally, of the property and how it is laid out. Whether showing a deck, pool or patio, the viewer can see how things are positioned in relation to each other.

They can also enhance selling features, by showing things like the condition of the roof.

Photos from normally unobtainable positions can captivate more people; a shot showing a dock from out over the water will be extra attractive for a boater. When you want to make an impression using aerial photography or video, imagination is the only limitation. Call me to discuss how to bring a new perspective to buyers through your listings.

Terry Young is an FAA licensed drone pilot and professional photographer and videographer. His 30 plus years of experience in pre- and post-production of both still photography and video, coupled with the latest equipment, enable him to create amazing high quality images.

Terry Young
by Terry Young

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**Gala Brings Mardi Gras to Chesapeake**

The 20th Anniversary Mardi Gras Gala was recently held at the Chesapeake Conference Center. The gala has been a signature philanthropic event for nearly two decades, raising funds in support of Chesapeake Regional Healthcare. Net proceeds from the annual black-tie event provide substantial support to help fund program and equipment needs, such as the Interventional Neurology Suite, the renovation of the Emergency Department and the purchase of new furniture in the Mother/Baby Department.

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Call Mike Poole today at 757-513-1254 for more information or to schedule your free, no-obligation consultation.

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A Vision of Youth

The Journey

By Breonna Loxley

It still seems strange to reflect on my high school graduation and acknowledge that five years have passed. I had no idea what my life would look like after receiving my diploma. I felt daunted by choosing what I wanted to do and be for the rest of my life, and I recognized the same uncertainty in many of my peers. Some people identify their calling at age five and never stray from it. Others are in college, still trying to figure out their career paths. In the end, I sought a position at an animal shelter and remain in that field today. I also pursue my love of writing and aspire to publish a novel. Sometimes our passions will not lead us into sustainable careers, and we must weigh the pros and cons of following a more unconventional path. Now that some time has passed, I can look back and recognize the significant experiences throughout my childhood that influenced where I am today.

My passion for animals and animal rescue blossomed throughout my childhood. What began as a fundraiser for our local animal shelter turned into years of dedicated volunteering. I got my first look at what it meant to be a guardian of the forsaken, and I discovered a mission I feel blessed to fight for every day. Similarly, I began authoring short stories as soon as I learned how to write. I have always adored bringing worlds, characters, and adventures to life upon the page. I was a child in perpetual motion, spinning from one hobby to the next. Each experience shaped who I am today, and it was through these activities that I discovered the callings I felt most compelled to follow.

I can look back and recognize the significant experiences throughout my childhood that influenced where I am today.

High school students sometimes struggle to dictate their future because they haven’t yet had a chance to truly live. My experiences guided me through the decisions I’ve made and continue to make each day. Classes, camps, hobbies and other activities provide wonderful enrichment to a child’s life, but their true value runs much deeper. Exposure to life experience prior to life choices can help us make more educated, confident decisions for our futures. Until we start, we can’t know for sure that we have a true grasp of where we want to end. Sometimes our journeys reach a different conclusion than we thought they would when they began. We are never too old to discover a passion our heart feels called upon to answer. In the face of infinite possible directions, moving forward is easiest with an open heart and open mind. We never know where a single day might take us, or which days we will later look back on as the building blocks that shaped the happiness we find along the way.

Breonna Loxley is an animal care technician at an animal shelter. She is an avid artist, writer, and animal-lover. She lives with her parents, a younger brother, two cats, and one dog.

UPCOMING SPEAKER

Mae Jemison

March 3, 2020

7:00 PM - Musical Program by local youth musicians
7:30 PM - Keynote Speaker Program
Chesapeake Conference Center

Engineer and physician Mae Jemison is the first woman of color in the world to go into space as a NASA astronaut. Dr. Jemison leads 100 Year Starship – nonprofit focused on human travel beyond our solar system.

For more information and tickets www.thechesapeakeforum.org

D-debs Did Not Disapoint!

The Shopper Publisher Jean Loxley-Barnard and her good friend Elaine Thompson stopped by this quaint restaurant in the heart of Great Bridge. They exclaimed that D-Debs serves the best liver and onions she’d ever had!

Chef John Kerr talking with frequent diner Elaine Thompson

Waitress Nicole Wallace with Landscaper Kelly Linehan, right

The restaurant is nestled off Battlefield Blvd. S on Old Drive in Great Bridge

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Page 22   The Western Great Bridge/Grassfield Shopper   February 2020
STOP Inc.
Addressing the root causes of poverty and making a big impact

By Christine Knapp

STOPlc. is a designated Community Action Agency with a 54-year history of addressing issues of poverty in communities throughout Hampton Roads. Focused on aiding the low-to-moderate income population, STOP (Supporting Transformational Opportunities for People) is funded by various federal and state sources as well as contributions from private foundations and individual donors. Working hand in hand with these partners, STOP attacks the root causes of poverty.

“We have four main departments,” says Regina Lawrence, STOP’s President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Having been with the organization for 45 years, she has held over a dozen roles ranging from executive assistant to grant writer to public relations manager and now, CEO. “These departments cover health and wellness initiatives, homeless intervention and support, housing and economic development and management, support and special projects,” Regina continues. “We embrace a total family concept—a two-generation approach. We go to every individual in a family to determine the needs of each member. During my entire tenure here, I’ve tried to develop, write, and implement programs that are going to have the greatest impact on the greatest number of people.”

Health and Wellness is a new department focusing on nutritional education and training. It issues referrals for much-needed physical and mental health services, with an emphasis on preventing opioid use and abuse. Led by Vice President Christian Joyner, PA, the Health and Wellness Department provides substance abuse prevention training and educational programs to individuals and families.

The team works with many local partners, including the Wellness Coalition, to host REVIVE training events. At these events, individuals learn how to administer NARCAN, an injectable or nasal spray that will help reverse the effects of an overdose.

The team also presents “Hidden in Plain Sight” demonstrations. These are interactive drug-educational programs for parents. A mock-up of a teenager’s bedroom displays everyday items that can be indicators of drug use or risky behavior. “Parents feel they need to give their teenagers space and some privacy, but that’s where a lot of things fall through the cracks,” Christian explains. “Parents need to be looking at their kids’ phones. They need to be aware of the signs. These demonstrations provide valuable information to families in local Hampton Roads communities. We’d love to expand the forums into other jurisdictions where we can have the greatest impact.”

Homeless Intervention and Support Vice President Charnitta Waters and her team provide supportive services to veterans and their families. These include a homeless veterans’ reintegration program and housing counseling services. These services are offered to the low-to-moderate income population experiencing a housing crisis due to eviction or other life-altering hardships.

“It’s in those moments when a child tells me who they want to become—and they’re talking about their character, not just a profession—that I realize the impact STOP is having.”
—Regina Lawrence

“We interact with various homeless and housing service providers, as well as income support contributors, to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring,” Charnitta says. STOP is always seeking additional donations and partners to help create home environments for homeless veterans. They also work with the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program (HVRP) to assist veterans in finding gainful employment. Recently, the two organizations even hosted a hiring event in their Virginia Beach office.

STOP welcomes volunteers, donations, and community support to help with items for the homeless that other funding sources don’t always cover. These items include hygiene essentials such as toothpaste, shampoo, and other toiletries. Discretionary funding to purchase such items for those experiencing homelessness is always needed and appreciated.

“The need is always increasing, and sometimes we can’t keep up with the demand,” Regina explains. STOP also seeks furniture donations to help provide furniture to homeless veterans who are in its program.

“A house is not a home until you put furniture in it and make it individual and unique,” Charnitta says. “Companies like Vets on Track, led by Rick Ecker, work with STOP to make this happen.”

Under its housing initiatives, STOP administers the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), which is a federally-funded program. The weatherization program provides free energy-efficient measures to help lower utility bills and increase the efficiency of houses occupied by income-eligible individuals—particularly the elderly, the disabled, and families with children age six and under. Free energy audits are provided to those who meet specific criteria.

STOP offers additional services ranging from childcare financial assistance, employment support services, and employment training to consumer education and workforce preparation/development. During fiscal years 2014-2019, STOP addressed more than 11,500 conditions of poverty and barriers to economic security.

Other STOP programs include a mobile technology bus that provides training and learning opportunities to students from the elementary grades through high school. Stopping in cities throughout Hampton Roads, the bus gives young people access to computer programming, software design and robotics, as well as exposure to technology-related fields.

“We’ve had some of our students say, ‘I finally know who—not what—I want to become,’” Regina smiles. “It’s in those moments when a child tells me who they want to become—and they’re talking about their character, not just a profession—that I realize the impact STOP is having. Once you become of good sound character, you can pick any profession you want. I am so proud of that. And that’s what our youth development team is doing.”

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