

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

News from the Grassroots

October 2022 Issue 119



Newport News Housing Action

Chapter members held a media conference on October 6 outside the Peninsula Regional Animal Shelter to call attention to the fact that the region provides shelter for animals but not unhoused people. Members want the city to build a shelter and also find ways to make housing more affordable for all residents.

The conference received TV coverage and an article in the Peninsula Chronicle.



Rep. Luria in Suffolk

Congresswoman Elaine Luria came to a barbershop in Suffolk to meet with the chapter on October 8. The chapter often holds community discussions there.

Members thanked Rep. Luria for her support for abortion rights and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The IRA will make health care and prescription medicine more affordable, increase spending on environmental justice, and tax corporations at a higher rate.

They also told her about their campaign to have an effective Civilian Review Board in Suffolk.

Please welcome...

Patrice Smallwood of the Norfolk Chapter!

the newest member of the State Governing Board



"What I love about Virginia Organizing is that we are resolute.

There's no compromising on the truth and what is right."



We are so proud to announce that Patrice Smallwood of Norfolk has joined the State Governing Board!

Patrice's first experience with Virginia Organizing was in 2019 when she took part in our three day Dismantling Racism Workshop. She joined the chapter and later became an intern and is now a very active leader in local and statewide work.

Patrice has been an IT site manager on naval bases for the last 24 years, and she is soon to be ordained as a minister. She works with youth at her local church and encourages church members to get involved in organizing for social justice. She says Virginia Organizing is "all about truth telling and caring about the needs of people, and we do it in such a way that it is unapologetic."



Newport News/Hampton also held an affordable childcare demonstration in October.

Giving Tuesday

Did you know Giving Tuesday has become the most important day of giving worldwide?

Non-profits receive more donations on Giving Tuesday than on any other day. The purpose of Giving Tuesday is similar to Virginia Organizing's purpose--to bring people together in a spirit of generosity and cooperation to address the urgent needs of the moment.

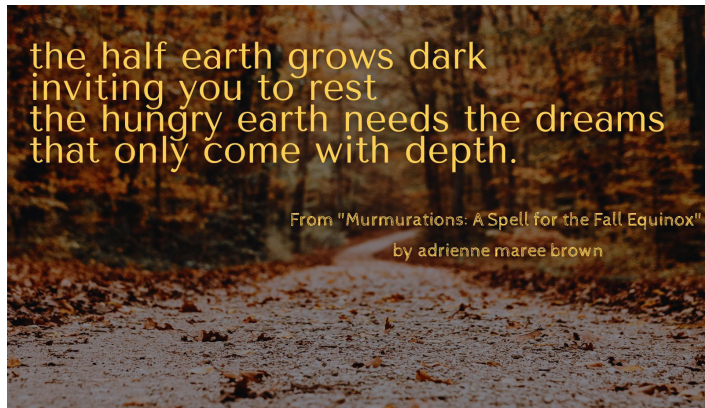
We work to develop leaders, build power, and bring change to our communities.

We are focused on

- the housing crisis,
- funding for our schools,
- destructive fossil fuel projects and landfills,
- mental health needs in our communities,
- disability rights, and much more!

Virginia Organizing's donors, board members, chapter leaders, volunteers, staff, and interns all give generously of their time and talent to make this grassroots organization powerful.

Please remember Virginia Organizing when you donate this year!



Resiliency and Self-Care Autumn Issue

Ronna Wertman has shared another beautiful newsletter full of resources to explore community and self-care. Excerpt:

Dolly Joseph, a community builder from the Charlottesville area, shared during the opening session of this year's virtual Virginia Organizing Grassroots Gathering about being with the complexities and contrasts within ourselves. It was a beautiful, deep, wide-ranging, and honest conversation showing the power of self and group reflection.

Questions Dolly wrestles with when building community:

- How am I rooted in my own values?
- How do I show up in ways that are flexible and cooperative, and where and when do I need to be firm and consistent in my boundaries?
- What are healthy traditions to build on, with respect to the ones who built them? What oppressive behaviors and ideas within myself do I still need to unpack and dismantle?
- Is what I do enough, and does it matter?

Read more on our website!

Chapter News

The **Danville** Chapter helped defeat a recent proposal to criminalize homelessness in the city. Chapter members spoke at the city council meeting (along with many other organizations), and the proposed ordinance was tabled for further research and discussion. People power won in Danville!

Portsmouth Chapter leaders Pat Burns and Sergio Neal published this op-ed in the Virginian-Pilot urging the city school board to implement mindfulness training in the schools. After voting for a mindfulness program in elementary schools, the board has not followed through. Students have been traumatized by the pandemic and the subsequent violence in Portsmouth and need this intervention.

In **Stafford County**, 1000 schoolchildren were kept home from school with flu-like symptoms last week. Members of the Fredericksburg Chapter recognize that such a widespread infection only underscores the need for respect for the importance of custodial workers. They continue to urge the Stafford School Board to hire cleaning workers directly instead of relying on contracting corporations that overwork their staff, pay poorly, and offer no sick leave or health benefits.

Harrisonburg will host a Day of the Dead celebration on Saturday, October 29 from 12-5 p.m. at Our Community Place (OCP). Live music, food trucks, and artisan vendors will be there as a fundraiser for OCP and unhoused people in the area.

The **Wythe County** Chapter will host a candidate forum on Thursday, November 3 at 6 p.m. at the Wytheville Heritage Preservation Center. Candidates for Congress and Town Council will participate.

More ways to donate!

Virginia Organizing is proud to be participating again in the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) for state employees.

Our ID number is 200029.

Local Chapters and Areas Served:

Charlottesville/Albemarle County, Danville, Eastern Shore, Harrisonburg/Rockingham County, Fredericksburg, Lee County, Lynchburg, Martinsville/Henry County, New River Valley, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Richmond Area, Suffolk, Washington County, Waynesboro, Wise County, Wythe County

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