



# VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

## News from the Grassroots

April 2024 Issue 136

### Power Analysis 2024



"We are the little engine that became a locomotive," --Jay Johnson, State Governing Board member.

We were delighted to convene for our annual Power Analysis again this year in Massanetta Springs. About 40 of our Virginia Organizing State Governing Board members, staff, and chapter leaders came together to discuss issues from the past year and determine how to advance in our efforts for this year. Not only was the discussion rich with deliberation and creative thought, but members were also productive in taking collective action steps over the weekend.

For this Power Analysis, we focused on examining issues surrounding housing, restoration of rights, energy and environmental justice, and childcare. In always keeping issues that matter to our community members at the forefront, our leaders spent time determining effective ways to address concerns, identify key players, and consider tangible outcomes for progress. The weekend concluded with the Board's annual meeting to evaluate the work done during the Power Analysis and to discuss strategies for moving forward.

Our Board was also given a special opportunity to share stories and answer questions related to decision-making, responsibilities and procedures, and membership. While each chapter community focuses on its community members and specific issues, it is the responsibility of the Board to take a birds-eye view of how state and local action progresses the collective effort.

Jay stated that "sometimes you make a decision because it is the right decision," even if it is not popular. This was followed by Del McWhorter stating that even though supporters may decide to step back after difficult decisions are made, they eventually tend to "come back in the fold because of the type of organization we are and our integrity."

This speaks to the value of having a Board made up of members who are integrated throughout our communities and working alongside our members. As Del stated, in the end, it is "all about relationships."

### Moss Clinic Rally

In Fredericksburg, over 100 protesters came out to Sunday's rally to support the Lloyd F. Moss Free Clinic and make their voices heard. Cars driving past the protest showed their support for the clinic by honking.

We partnered with the clinic and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg to bring the community together to save the most important local source of health care for immigrants and other vulnerable people.



### Keep Childcare in the Budget

In May, the General Assembly and Governor Youngkin will have to work together to produce a budget after attempts to complete the process during the session failed. The governor's original budget proposal included generous funding to make childcare more accessible to families, and he also included \$40 million for workforce development. Unfortunately, the governor's proposed amendments eliminated these funds.

The workforce development funds are crucial because they would subsidize training for new childcare workers. Early childhood education centers have been closing all over Virginia because they can't find enough staff to keep children safe.

We don't want these funds to be cut in order to fund some other priority!

Please contact your state senator and delegate and ask them to support this childcare funding. You can find them at this link: <https://whosmy.virginialegislature.gov/>





## Danville Housing Campaign

On April 17, one of our chapter leaders, Lisa Jones, spoke on behalf of the chapter about affordable subsidized housing before the Danville City Council.

One of the requests Lisa presented was to “require a diversity of housing units for new developments.” Danville residents have been forced out of their current rentals because of rising prices. They want to see the city fund affordable subsidized housing of many kinds, rather than public housing developments.

As a result of their action, Council is interested in the Danville Chapter meeting with the City Manager to discuss growth, the need for housing, and future development.

The campaign is off to a great start!



## CNU Social Justice Conference

Members from the Newport News/Hampton Chapter presented at Christopher Newport University’s 3rd Annual Hampton Roads Social Justice Conference on April 10.

Chiquita Hubbard (left) spoke about the issue of lack of child care on the peninsula, and LaCher Griffith-Denton (right) spoke about homelessness in Hampton Roads.

“We need the continued support of community resources, along with businesses and professionals agreeing to work together to provide coordinated care,” Chiquita said at the conference.

## Please Welcome our New Director of Communications!

We are happy to welcome Michelle Tabbanor as Virginia Organizing’s new Director of Communications! Michelle is from Virginia Beach, where she has been involved with many community service projects and organizations, including partnering with Virginia Organizing campaigns.



Michelle earned her Ph.D. in Communication from Regent University. Before coming to Virginia Organizing, she spent almost seven years teaching an array of communication courses at universities in Hampton Roads. She has traveled internationally with multiple humanitarian organizations for which she also volunteered her administrative, graphic design, and media services.

Michelle has a passion for cultural storytelling and is enthusiastic about supporting the arts. The thing that she loves the most about Virginia Organizing is the “culture of empowerment and encouraging our communities to share their voices.”



## Youth Alliance for Housing Featured Community Partner

The Youth Alliance for Housing is a New York City-based collective of young people fighting to radically transform the housing system in the United States. While most efforts to tackle the nationwide housing affordability crisis are focused on fighting for policy reforms to regulate our market-based system or seek government interventions to increase the housing supply, YAH is trying to shift the paradigm of housing justice altogether.

Read more on our website: <https://virginia-organizing.org/youth-alliance-for-housing-featured-community-partner/>

## Local Chapters and Areas Served:

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

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