

Loriella Park Tennis Courts Renovated with Support from the Spotsylvania Community

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A grant from the Spotsylvania County Community Investment Fund at The Community Foundation has helped bring new life to the Loriella Park Tennis Courts—an essential recreational space for residents of all ages. Originally constructed in 1980, the four lighted, regulation-size courts underwent a complete renovation in 2023. The \$700,000 grant included rebuilding the court base and replacing the playing surface, ensuring safe and modern facilities for decades to come. Routine resurfacing will continue every 10 years to maintain the courts' high standards.



Loriella Park Tennis Courts

These courts are more than just a place to play—they're a true community asset. In a typical year, over 15,000 people use the courts for Parks and Recreation programs, senior league play, and general public use. Parks and Recreation alone accounts for more than 640 hours of programming and nearly 3,000 participants annually. The Senior Tennis

Organization uses the courts for 288 hours a year, welcoming over 1,100 participants. Meanwhile, open public play reaches nearly 11,000 individuals across nearly 4,000 hours of use.

This grant investment reflects the Spotsylvania County Community Investment Fund's ongoing commitment to enhancing quality of life, promoting wellness, and building stronger

Celebrating Our Professional Partners: A Heartfelt Thank You

At The Community Foundation, we are fortunate to work alongside an incredible network of CPAs, attorneys, bankers, and financial professionals who help make our mission possible year after year. These trusted partners play a vital role in supporting charitable giving in our region—whether it's by guiding their clients through philanthropic decisions, assisting with complex giving strategies, or offering sound financial counsel that aligns with the goals of legacy and community impact.

To show our sincere appreciation, our team took to the road this spring and personally delivered thank-you gift baskets to several of our dedicated professional partners. It was a small gesture to recognize the big impact they have—not only on the Foundation but also on the generous individuals and families they serve.

We are so grateful for the continued collaboration, care, and expertise these professionals bring to the table. Their partnership helps grow the spirit of giving in our region and ensures that charitable dollars go further to support the causes we all care about.

Your guidance helps strengthen philanthropy in our community—and for that, we are deeply thankful.



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Foundation News

Newsletter
Spring/Summer 2025

The Community Foundation of
the Rappahannock River Region

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Building More Than a Playground

Since 2005, Youth in Philanthropy (YIP) has been shaping the next generation of community philanthropists. Guided by foundation mentors, Jane McDonald, Samantha King, and Jessica Dirks, high school students in the program learn firsthand how to evaluate grant proposals, conduct site visits, and make tough funding decisions. This year, after careful deliberation, they chose to fund a \$10,000 grant to Lois Ann's Hope House to purchase new and safe playground equipment for children experiencing homelessness.

But the decision wasn't easy. Two outstanding projects made the final cut, and students struggled with choosing just one. "It was really hard to decide," one student shared. "There were so many worthy projects, but visiting the shelter and seeing how much the kids there needed a safe place to play helped us make our decision."

Still, the students weren't satisfied. They asked, "Is there a way to fund another project, at least partially?" That's when CEO Teri McNally saw an opportunity to take them to the next level—learning the other side of philanthropy: fundraising. The foundation reached out to a longtime foundation donor, Mary Jane O'Neill, who

understands how to evaluate philanthropic investments. After hearing directly from the students about their project, Mary Jane was inspired to donate \$5,000 to help the second grant applicant, The Fairy Godmother Project with their Helping Hands program.

"As YIP students fund these projects, they're doing more than just giving grants—they're experiencing philanthropy from every angle," said Jane McDonald, The Community Foundation's YIP Program Leader. "With the guidance from the foundation mentors, they're gaining the skills and connections to become thoughtful, impactful leaders who will make a difference in their communities for years to come."



Want to join YIP?

Youth in Philanthropy is a fun, hands-on program where local teens team up to give back, build leadership skills, and make a real difference. You'll meet great people, learn about our community, and help decide where grants go. Find out more and apply at www.cfrrr.org/yip!

Philanthropy's Hardest Unpaid Job



Janet Gullickson



Stephanie Hanchey



Sharon Schmidt



Andy Withers

As we say goodbye to four incredible board members after six years of service, we want to take a moment to celebrate their immense contributions to our foundation. Board members are the backbone of our organization, and their dedication has been key to the foundation's success. These individuals have not only brought their expertise and passion but have also helped us earn the trust of our community. With almost \$60 million in assets, we rely on our board members to think strategically about how the foundation can continue to make a meaningful impact on our community's future. They have always acted with the best interests of the foundation and our donors in mind, guiding us through crucial decisions and ensuring that we stay true to our mission. We are deeply grateful for their service, and their legacy will continue to shape the future of our work.

Janet Gullickson

Dr. Janet Gullickson has been a driving force in advancing the foundation's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, particularly through her leadership on the Board Development and Search Committee. She has consistently brought strategic insight and a sense of purpose to our work, ensuring that the foundation remains focused on equity and long-term community impact.

Janet has also been a strong advocate for collaboration, consistently seeking opportunities for the foundation to partner with Germanna Community College (GCC). Her commitment to working together has fostered important connections, creating pathways that support both students and the nonprofit sector. Her impact on both education and philanthropy in our region is lasting, and we are grateful for her vision, her voice, and her unwavering commitment.

Stephanie Hanchey

As a former Board President, Stephanie Hanchey led with compassion and a deep commitment to community impact. A great listener and communicator, Stephanie believes deeply in giving back to our community and her perspective on rural communities has been invaluable.

Stephanie is particularly dedicated to understanding how our community nonprofits meet the needs of the people they serve. She consistently asks insightful questions about how the foundation can support and strengthen

these organizations to better serve the community. As a steadfast reviewer for our grantmaking, she has been instrumental in ensuring sound investments in the community. Her tenure is marked by thoughtful leadership, a strong advocacy for the mission, and a deep commitment to understanding and supporting our community needs.

Sharon Schmidt

Sharon Schmidt has been a dedicated and impactful member of the foundation's board. As current Board President, she has provided invaluable strategic input and support across key areas, including marketing, donor engagement, grantmaking, and fundraising.

Sharon's commitment to the foundation extends beyond her leadership role. She has been a passionate advocate for foundation initiatives close to her heart, including the Women and Girls Fund and the Schmidt Construction Trade Fund she and her husband established to support students pursuing trade education. Through her efforts, she has helped raise both awareness and vital financial support, strengthening important programs for our community.

Throughout her tenure, Sharon has worked alongside fellow board members and staff to enhance the foundation's visibility, build stronger relationships, and deepen trust with donors and partners.

Andy Withers

Andy Withers, a lifelong resident of our community, has been a steadfast voice on the Investments and Finance Committees, ensuring the foundation's resources were stewarded with integrity and foresight. His voice on the Board Development Committee and DEI Committees further expanded our capacity by helping to recruit strong leaders who share his commitment to the community. Andy knows our community well and cares deeply about its future, consistently bringing his local knowledge and passion into his work.

With his extensive experience as a banker and commercial lender, Andy's collaborative approach has been invaluable in ensuring that financial decisions are made with a shared commitment to responsible growth and long-term impact.

The Power of a Vote: Women & Girls Live Ballot 2025

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Empowering Local Women. Transforming Our Community.

Every spring, an extraordinary moment takes place in our community: the Women & Girls Live Ballot Event, where collective giving turns into a powerful impact. On Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the historic Mary Washington Monument, members of the Women and Girls Fund will once again come together to vote on which of four incredible nonprofit finalists will receive a \$50,000 transformational grant. This is not just another fundraising event—it's a movement that puts philanthropic power directly into the hands of women, and into the heart of our region.

A History of Collective Power

The Women and Girls Fund, launched in 2008–2009 by the Community Foundation's Board of Governors, and was created with a clear, compelling vision: mobilize 1,000 women, each pledging \$1,000, to build a \$1 million endowment dedicated solely to the needs of area women and girls. Since its inception, the fund has awarded grants that have strengthened access to education, mental health services, maternal care, workforce development, and beyond.

More than just dollars, this fund has become a local movement—where women from all walks of life commit their time, talent, and treasure to shaping a brighter, more equitable future. Over the years, Live Ballot has become the signature event to showcase that impact in action.

Why It Matters

At the heart of the Live Ballot experience is a simple belief: women know what their community needs—and they're ready to lead the change. As our membership grows, so does our ability to dream bigger and invest deeper. Increasing the amount available to grant means we can encourage nonprofits to pursue bold, lasting solutions, not just short-term fixes.

This year's \$50,000 grant will go to one organization, but the ripples of this collective generosity will be felt far beyond a single program or calendar year.

Meet the Finalists for 2025

Each of these finalists has crafted a powerful vision to uplift women and girls in our region. Now, it's time to decide which one will receive the \$50,000 grant to bring that vision to life.



1. Fairy Godmother Project

Project: Childhood Cancer Moms' Support
The emotional and financial toll of pediatric cancer is immense. This project will expand critical services for moms—including financial aid for travel and lodging, counseling support, care packages, and respite services—so no parent must choose between financial stability and being at their child's bedside. *Impact: Direct relief for families in crisis, enhanced emotional support, and reduced maternal stress during unimaginable times.*



2. Girls on the Run: Piedmont

Project: Empowering Her Potential: Breaking Barriers for Girls
Girls on the Run inspires confidence and wellness in girls aged 8–13 through mentorship and movement. This project will provide scholarships, shoes, and program materials for 300+ girls from underserved communities. *Impact: Expanded access to a program that builds confidence, mental health, and life skills through teamwork, resilience, and goal-setting.*



3. The Motherhood Bridge

Project: Connecting Moms to Care & Community
New motherhood can be isolating—especially for women with limited resources. This initiative will expand postpartum mental health programs, provide essential supplies, and foster meaningful connections for mothers. *Impact: Improved maternal and child health outcomes through direct care, emotional support, and peer-to-peer community-building.*



4. WIC Veggie Vouchers Program

Project: Food Access for Healthier Families
Fresh produce shouldn't be a luxury. This program provides vouchers to low-income mothers and children, enabling them to purchase nutritious food while supporting local farms. *Impact: Better nutrition for families, economic growth for local farmers, and reduced food insecurity through sustainable partnerships.*

**Invite a Woman You Love.
Build a Legacy Together.**

**There is power in a single gift.
There is even greater power in a shared one.**

This year, as we look to grow the Women and Girls Fund and deepen our impact, we invite you not only to become a member—but to bring someone along with you.

Houses That Keep Giving

A Donor Advised Fund at The Community Foundation enables you to recommend charities that support causes important to you. To learn more about establishing this type of fund, contact us at info@cfrrr.org or 540.373.9292



Houses come in all shapes and colors, and they are essential in providing comfort, safety and shelter. Some houses, such as “Give Back Homes” built by Atlantic Builders, provide even more support and benefits for our families and communities.

In 2024, Atlantic Builders sold their eighth “Give Back” home and donated \$1 million to several nonprofit organizations and to the Atlantic Builders Giving Fund managed by The Community Foundation. Through this Donor Advised Fund, Atlantic recently awarded 55 grants totaling \$263,697 to nonprofits in and around Fredericksburg and Charlottesville.

“With more than three decades of experience in designing and building homes for Virginia families, our employees and trade partners believe in giving back,” says Director of Purchasing Brian Roinestad. “Our people are passionate about helping, and most of the grants we award go to programs and organizations suggested by our employees or trade partners that support areas where we build, live and work.”

One grant went to support creative exploration through arts programming for young people with disabilities at Sensory Theatre Endless Possibilities (STEP VA). Founded in 2013, STEP VA offers programs and camps in a wide range of topics, including creative writing, art, dance, choir and drumming.

“Many people with disabilities are not given a chance to explore their talents,” says Vice Chair Carolyn McKinney. “During our spring musical, 52 people with disabilities ranging from age eight to thirty-something performed or helped with costuming, sets, props and publicity to showcase their talents. We are so grateful for this grant that will enable us to continue to grow and serve this community of children and their families.”

A nonprofit that provides services and support for children and families living with a pediatric cancer diagnosis received one of the grants. Founded in 2012, the Fairy Godmother Project helps ease day-



to-day burdens in little ways that make a big impact, including meals and groceries, housecleaning, lawn care and some bill pay assistance.

“We want families to be able to focus on the child and not worry about all those everyday things that take time and energy away from caregiving,” says Executive Director Cathleen Pessolano. “This year has been especially tough for our families, and we are seeing increases in both requests for our services and in the length of time our services are needed. This new grant from Atlantic Builders comes at a great time, and we are truly grateful.”

Another grant funded a greenhouse at The Oberle Academy for 5th grade through 12th grade students interested in horticulture to augment their technical and alternative educational programs. Al Fagan, President and CEO, says the grant enabled Oberle to purchase a 20-by-40-foot hoop house, which was then assembled onsite by a crew of 17 volunteers representing Atlantic Builders.

“Our students are now learning how to grow flowers and vegetables, and we hope to serve some of the food in our cafeteria. This experience may lead to career opportunities for students down the road,” says Al. “We are appreciative of the support from the folks at Atlantic Builders. They are truly attuned to the needs of our community, and they step up to do so much for so many.”

In addition to funding for organizations in the Fredericksburg area, Brian notes two significant grants suggested by Atlantic’s Trade Partner Council: One went to support the Shenandoah House hospice center at Augusta Health in Fishersville, and another went to UVA Health Children’s pediatric care facilities in Charlottesville.

“Atlantic’s give back program is critically important to all of us,” says Brian. “It is our hope that organizations receiving these grants further their missions, while continuing the necessary services they provide within our communities.”

Shining a Light on our Founding Families

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Where would you go to examine a land grant of 400 acres signed in 1730 by Virginia Governor William Gooch? How would you read a letter written in 1789 by Betty Lewis to her brother, George Washington, offering an update on their mother’s health and asking him to send Hemlock? These are just two examples of archived items curated by The George Washington Foundation in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Thanks to a recent grant from The Community Foundation made possible by the Virginia Heritage Fund, these centuries-old documents and historic photos soon will be digitized and available for all to view in their original formats.

William “Bill” E. Garner is President and CEO of The George Washington Foundation, which owns and operates both Historic Kenmore and George Washington’s Ferry Farm. Mary Washington lived at Ferry Farm for 34 years, managing the farm and guiding George and the rest of her family and staff. Kenmore is where George’s sister, Betty, lived for nearly 45 years after her marriage to Fielding Lewis.

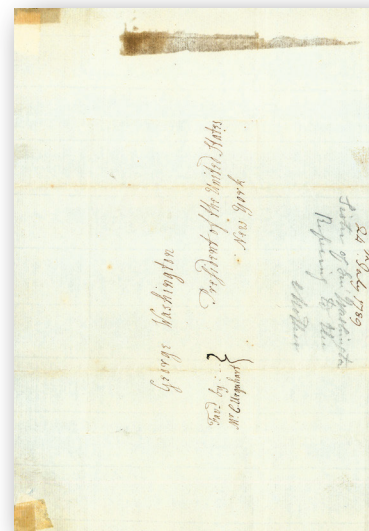
“These two properties are vital touchstones in understanding the lives of our founding families, especially the Washingtons and the Lewises,” says Bill. “Along with Ferry Farm and Kenmore, we have hundreds of photographs and incredible documents including, wills, probates, inventories, sale listings and letters. Together, these provide a snapshot of what colonial life was like at that time in this area, and it helps us understand all the people who helped build and support our community during the early days of our Republic.”

Paula Felder was a dedicated preservationist and well-known historian about all things related to Fredericksburg. She was the author of numerous articles and two books: *Forgotten Companions* and *Fielding Lewis and the Washington Family*. Prior to her passing in 2012, she worked with The Community Foundation to help create the Virginia Heritage Fund to ensure

that “important historical documents are both protected and available to historians, genealogists and the public – now and in the future.”

Gretchen Pendleton, Aldrich Director of Curatorial Operations at The George Washington Foundation, says this grant perfectly aligns with their future plans. “We will utilize these funds to purchase a high-quality scanner and other resources to begin the digitization process of 50 of our most important artifacts. We’ll create procedures to standardize our process, develop an online catalog of documents and photos and establish an essential framework that we can build upon to make additional digital records available to the public for years to come.”

Collections Manager Heather Baldus says the process will open up access to the Foundation’s archives. “By scanning these, we’ll be able to protect the existing archival files, some of which are very delicate and light-sensitive,” she says. “Once we put them online and make them searchable, we’ll have a user-friendly avenue for people to explore and hopefully learn about our regional history, as well as its significance within the context of national and world history.”

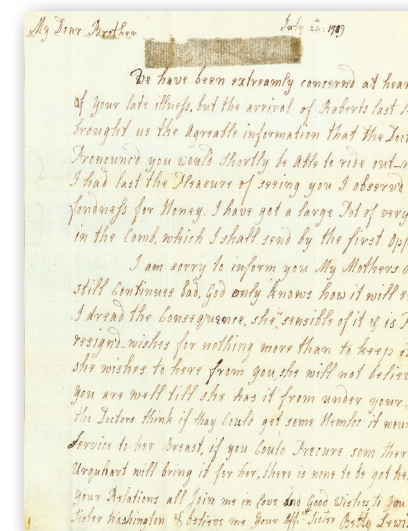


A letter to George from his sister, Betty in 1789

Bill notes that researchers and authors, including Ron Chernow for his Pulitzer-Prize-winning book titled “Washington: A Life,” have long utilized The George Washington Foundation’s archives. “Most of them had to travel across state lines and spend days carefully reviewing photos and documents, or they had to rely on someone else transcribing the words.”

He adds, “It’ll be great when the public can access high-quality scans from their homes or offices to see actual handwriting and formatting of each document. They can read a letter written by George Washington in 1752 requesting his first military appointment. Or, they can see a letter in which George’s sister casually mentions his fondness for honey and offers to send him a large pot of it ‘very fine in the comb.’ All in all, history is becoming more accessible to all, and we are excited to be a part of it.”

The Virginia Heritage Fund is one example of a competitive grant opportunity for nonprofits within Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Stafford, King George, or Caroline. The Fund is managed by The Community Foundation. For information about creating a fund to support future grants, contact us at info@cfrrr.org or 540.373.9292.



59 Students, 1 Community, Endless Impact

The Community Foundation is pleased to announce the results of its 2025 scholarship program. A total of 82 scholarships, amounting to almost \$220,000 in financial support, will be awarded to 59 local students who will be heading off to college this fall. The scholarships are designed to alleviate the financial burden of higher education and help students achieve their academic goals.

"Applications opened on December 10, 2024, and closed on February 26, 2025. This year, we received a strong response with 752 completed applications from 185 students," said Jane McDonald, Program Specialist. "These applications came from students across 18 local high schools, as well as several home-schooled students, reflecting the diversity and talent within our community. It's always inspiring to see such a wide range of dedicated students applying for these opportunities."

Reader Testimonials:

"This is my fifth year serving on the Scholarship Committee, and I continue to be impressed by the caliber of applicants. It's inspiring to see so many students who are not only academically gifted but also deeply committed to making a difference in their communities. Reviewing these applications reminds me of how important this work is—these students are the future leaders we need." Stu Ashton, Long-time Reviewer

"This was my first time reading applications for the Scholarship Committee, and it was very difficult choosing the final recipients because all the students were worthy. But I enjoyed reading and learning of all their goals and aspirations. These students will definitely make a difference." Sandy, New Reviewer

"As a new member of the Scholarship Committee, I was struck by how passionate and hardworking the applicants are. I was especially moved by the stories of first-



Stu Ashton, reviewer and former board member

generation college students and those who have overcome significant challenges to get to this point. It's an honor to be part of this process and to help provide support to such deserving individuals." Amy, New Reviewer

Committees were tasked with reviewing approximately 70 applications each, with the goal of selecting the most deserving students for the scholarships. After reviewing the applications individually, committee members came together in April to discuss and finalize their top choices. As a result, 82 scholarships will be awarded to 59 students this year.

For over 25 years, the Community Foundation has been awarding scholarships to local students, and each year the program continues to grow thanks to the generosity of donors and community members who understand the value of supporting higher education. With 82 scholarships being awarded this year, the Foundation remains committed to investing in the future of our students and empowering them to succeed academically and professionally.

In addition to the dedication of the scholarship committee, the involvement of

our donor reviewers has been crucial in selecting the recipients. Their ongoing commitment not only helps sustain the legacy of each scholarship fund but also ensures that the values and intentions of the donors are honored. Their contributions to the review process reflect a deep commitment to the next generation of leaders and a shared belief in the transformative power of education.

For more information on how to apply for scholarships or to learn about establishing a scholarship fund, please contact the Community Foundation. Scholarships@cfrrr.org or 540.373.9292

Starting a scholarship fund is easy and a meaningful way to support students. You can set criteria, choose a specific institution or eligible high school, or create a scholarship in honor of a loved one or family legacy. Stay involved or let the Community Foundation's Scholarship Committee handle recipient selection. We manage all the details! Minimum fund start is \$25,000.

Jane and Jessica Leaders. Listeners. Doers.

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The Community Foundation is happy to introduce two new staff members who will be co-leading our programs: Youth in Philanthropy, the Women and Girls Fund, the Nonprofit Leadership Cohort, and the over 50 scholarship funds currently administered to help support local students in their pursuit of higher education.

Jane McDonald joined The Community Foundation full-time as Program Specialist in January 2025. Jane retired as Executive Director from the Rappahannock Area Community Services Board in 2022 after 34 years in the behavioral health arena. Jane received her undergraduate degree in Sociology from Mary Washington College in 1988 and a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Boston University in 1992. Jane is active at St. George's Episcopal Church, was recently appointed the Fredericksburg Planning Commission, and serves on the board of a few local nonprofits. She is the proud mother of Kate, a 2024 James Monroe graduate who is currently enrolled in Sewanee- The University of the South.

Jessica Dirks started as Program Specialist for The Community Foundation in March 2025. She comes to us from Big Brothers Big Sisters Greater Fredericksburg where she spent the last 10 years. Jessica has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Clarion University of Pennsylvania and a Master's degree in Counseling from Gannon University. She has worked in a variety of family and youth support programs prior to moving to Fredericksburg with her family in 2013. She has been an active band mom of two with the Chancellor High School Lightning Regiment Marching Band. Jessica is also a Leadership Fredericksburg 2025 Fellow. She has two children, a sophomore

at Chancellor High School, and a sophomore (and Marching Royal Duke) currently attending James Madison University.

Jane and Jessica have been busy working with Youth In Philanthropy, a program that encourages student leadership, volunteerism and community giving by engaging young people in decision-making about the distribution of grant dollars. The first cohort of 2025 just awarded a \$10,000 grant to Loisann's Hope House and applications for the Fall 2025 program will begin soon.

Scholarship season is also in full swing as they have managed the inflow of hundreds of scholarship applications that have been evaluated and reviewed by teams dedicated to ensuring that those funds make it into the hands of deserving local students.

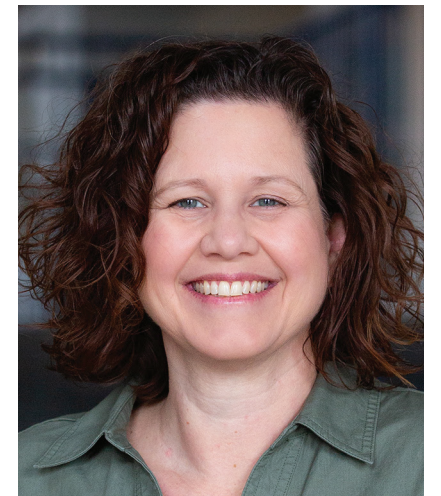
Both Jane and Jessica bring a wealth of community knowledge to our organization and they are looking forward to collaborating and further developing The Community Foundation's Programs and Initiatives.

Programs of the Community Foundation

The Community Foundation offers a variety of programs that strengthen our region and create meaningful impact. Our Scholarships help students achieve their educational dreams. The Nonprofit Leadership Cohort builds the skills and capacity of local nonprofit leaders. Youth in Philanthropy engages young people in giving and community action. The Women and Girls Fund supports programs addressing the needs of women and girls. Through Education Tax Credits, donors can direct support to K-12 scholarships



Jane McDonald



Jessica Dirks