YOU’RE HELPING US END HOMELESSNESS.

Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH) was the first nonprofit in Virginia to develop and provide permanent supportive housing for adults experiencing homelessness. Founded in 1988, we follow the “Housing First” model, which calls for housing individuals first, then providing supportive services to help them maintain housing stability.

We customize those services according to each person’s needs. Services include: connecting clients to primary healthcare; helping them secure income, insurance, and benefits; providing case management, counseling, and skills training; assisting with mental or physical health recovery; and helping individuals overcome substance use disorder.

Our evidence-based supportive housing model works: 97% of individuals we serve do not return to homelessness.

VSH is particularly focused on serving the most vulnerable subset of the homeless populations: individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. People who are chronically homeless have experienced homelessness for at least a year – or repeatedly – while struggling with a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability.
Dear Partners,

This year, we’re celebrating the **30th anniversary of Virginia Supportive Housing** and documenting our incredible journey in this report. When we first set out, there was no roadmap to guide us. We simply followed the vision we shared with people like you to do the right thing and help our neighbors in need.

Our founders created paths to reach a place that didn’t exist but should — a place where each of us has a home, regardless of our strengths, flaws, and experiences. That’s the idea behind Housing First, a model you’ve helped us to perfect and introduce to communities across Virginia for thirty years.

In this year’s report, you’ll go back to 1988 and join a small group of volunteers who refurbished an old building into safe and private studio apartments for 47 people experiencing homeless.

You’ll meet visionary leaders in the South Hampton Roads region who helped us accomplish a “first” in the U.S.

And you’ll explore a parallel path, called “scattered site” housing. What started as an experiment we weren’t sure would work has now become the foundation for even more innovative programming, such as our “Move On” pilot.

You’ll also learn how our cherished partners, from funders to regional hospital systems, are helping us develop approaches that will have a profound impact in the years to come.

Your contributions and support have helped these paths become highways that lead to one of the most important places on earth — home. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Allison Bogdanovć
Executive Director

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**OUR FOUNDERS CREATED PATHS TO REACH A PLACE THAT DIDN’T EXIST BUT SHOULD — A PLACE WHERE EACH OF US HAS A HOME**
1,502 people lived at home instead of on the street, thanks to your support.

You helped provide permanent housing and supportive services to:

1020 formerly homeless individuals

91 low-income individuals*

You helped position our team as a leading provider of rapid rehousing and supportive services to veterans and their families.

391 served through Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

* Individuals earning 50% or less of the area median income (AMI). For these individuals, affordable rental housing is the primary tool that decreases their chances of experiencing homelessness.
Of the formerly homeless clients who receive permanent supportive housing...

Almost all remain permanently housed.
97% remain in stable, permanent housing

Many gain access to benefits.
60% report securing or maintaining mainstream benefits for which they are eligible

Almost all choose to stay with us for at least a year.
95% stay at least one year

On average, they choose to stay several years.
4.59 years is the average length of stay

Their income improves.
$184 average increase in monthly income per client, compared to move-in income

And some build on their strengths to the point that they can “move on.”
47 successfully moved into permanent housing and live independently*

* Their transition out of VSH properties creates availability of much-needed permanent supportive housing units for homeless individuals requiring intensive supportive services to maintain housing stability.
Thirty years ago, a small team of volunteers set out to solve one of Richmond’s most complex problems. It was 1988, and the number of people experiencing homelessness across the country was surging, fed by a range of issues: budget cuts, lack of affordable housing, the deinstitutionalization of individuals living in state psychiatric hospitals. Compounding those conditions, Richmond had also pursued redevelopment efforts that displaced hundreds of individuals from their homes. People who already struggled for equal footing now had less stability. Many ended up on the street. The volunteers were determined to find a way to help.

They pooled their knowledge of housing and human services and began an experiment built around the “housing first” approach. The model provides homeless individuals with permanent housing first — without imposing restrictive requirements such as employment, being sober, or agreeing to receive treatment for a mental health condition — then offers them an array of supportive services to help maintain housing stability. One program in California and another in New York showed promise. The volunteers believed it could work in Richmond, too.

They established SRO Housing of Richmond, Inc., with SRO standing for “single room occupancy.” They purchased a 100-year-old building that once housed the Home Brewing bottling plant and began creating Virginia’s first supportive housing apartment community. The historic property on Clay Street was owned by James Russell Stallings, Sr., a prominent developer of Richmond’s Jackson Ward and Carver neighborhoods. Stallings had already begun shaping the property’s future, establishing Clay House Shelter on the site to provide shelter and meals to people in need.

The team completed necessary renovations and opened the door to 47 homeless single adults in 1992. For almost 25 years, until the renovation completed in 2019, residents lived in 150-square foot units, each with a sink and toilet, and shared community kitchens and shower facilities.

With the opening of New Clay House, we began a journey that evolved into a best-practice solution for ending homelessness in Virginia. In 1999, SRO Housing of Richmond became Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH). As of 2018, VSH has opened 17 properties across the state and serves approximately 1,500 people annually.
Now I need to sit down and go through all this and get rid of some of the stuff in these boxes that I really don’t need. That’s my mantra!” An avid reader, Regina looked at one box filled with books. “Most of them are mysteries. James Patterson, Stephen King, Patricia Cornwell. They draw you in. A lot of times, I’m like, ‘I did not see that coming!’

Only one other resident has been a part of the VSH community as long as Regina Peyton and that was her friend Brenda, who lived in New Clay House for 25 years until she passed away in 2017. Peyton moved in two years after Brenda and has made it her home for 24 years.

Peyton was barely 20 years old when she fled to a shelter with her mom and siblings after they lost their apartment. During that upheaval, her mom began working with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), planning for her daughter’s future.

“She knew I had a disability. I had it all my life, pretty much. Nobody knows exactly what it is.” The DARS team helped Peyton develop independent living skills and figure out her next step. “My counselor helped me get into New Clay House because he didn’t want me living somewhere unsafe.”

Still, the move was a big change. “When I got here, I was sort of scared of pretty much everybody.” Everybody except Brenda. “She was working at the bakery, and she’d come in the building smelling like cookies and cakes. The first time I met Brenda, she was coming in the door covered in flour! I always thought that was hilarious.” Peyton smiles and wipes away tears at the memories of her longtime friend. “She was happy.”

Like others in the building, Peyton enjoys coming home to New Clay House. In 2019, after relocating for more than a year to extended-stay accommodations, the residents moved back into an expanded and fully renovated New Clay House. It was the first significant work done to the building since its opening. The project involved the historic renovation of the original building and expansion of its footprint to 80 units. Each 350 square-foot apartment contains a private full bath and a kitchenette with full-size appliances. Among other amenities, the heart of the complex honors the memory of the building’s previous owner. The James Russell Stallings, Sr. Community Center includes a community room, courtyard, and multipurpose room.

Peyton’s favorite part of her renovated apartment? “The bathroom and tub! All my own. I was so happy when I saw that!”
By 2005, thanks to a growing list of supporters, Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH) was providing almost 120 units of permanent supportive housing to Richmond’s most vulnerable. We hadn’t solved chronic homelessness, but we were making progress.

About 100 miles away, South Hampton Roads was confronting a homelessness crisis of its own. The region’s Point-in-Time Homelessness Survey for 2005 documented more than 1,800 homeless individuals in the Hampton Roads area, with almost one quarter considered chronically homeless — much higher than the national rate of 10%. The Southside Mayors and Chairs Regional Taskforce had heard about the progress being made in Richmond, and they invited VSH to try its approach in their communities.

Once again, VSH worked with like-minded people to chart a path where none existed. The cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, and Portsmouth worked together to navigate the permitting system, combined their funding from HUD, acquired housing vouchers, and assigned a certain number to each city. They supported VSH in converting an abandoned factory in Norfolk into Gosnold Apartments. When it opened in 2006, HUD recognized Gosnold as the first regional supportive housing in the country.

The hard work yielded 60 homes and a template to create more. The hard work yielded 60 homes and a template to create more. Over the next decade, VSH and the South Hampton Roads cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, and Suffolk created a total of six supportive housing communities that serve the entire region.

In a 2009 interview with HUD, Allison Bogdanovic, VSH’s director of housing development at the time, described the shared vision. “Without collaboration, each city would have had to bear the cost of developing supportive studio apartments on its own. This would be prohibitively expensive for most cities and would have required years of Continuum of Care voucher awards.” She also noted the important role that HUD’s Richmond Field Office played. “The staff was open to a new regional housing concept and recommended review and approval of the concept to the HUD Washington staff.”
If you believe one of our responsibilities is to help our poorest citizens — that we are our brother’s keeper — then we have the call to action to do something.” Paul Fraim, mayor of Norfolk from 1994-2016, speaks with such conviction that it seems obvious that five border-sharing cities would collaborate to solve homelessness. But in 2005, it was an idea no one had ever considered.

“We started to understand that it’s not only the right thing to do, but from a public policy standpoint, it’s also the smartest.” Fraim and the mayors from Virginia Beach and Portsmouth reviewed findings that put the annual cost of caring for the chronically homeless in Hampton Roads as high as $32 million for services that include emergency shelters, hospitals, emergency rooms, and jails.

The cities began working together to deliver an innovative solution that acknowledged a simple reality. People experiencing homelessness are like anyone — we don’t walk around thinking about city boundaries. “They routinely moved across city lines. The same people who are sleeping on the streets in Norfolk in December will be sleeping on the streets in Virginia Beach in the summer. Or in a park in Chesapeake in the spring,” Fraim explained.

Fraim had come to know many individuals experiencing homelessness by first name through Norfolk’s Project Homeless Connect, an event aimed at helping people and families experiencing homelessness access housing resources, social services, and veteran’s services, all in one location. They can also get legal help, health and dental screenings, and even a haircut. At the time, Norfolk was one of the few cities in the country to hold the large-scale event not once, but twice a year.

In December 2006, Gosnold Apartments opened in Norfolk. Fraim greeted each new resident, shaking every hand and welcoming them to their new homes that five communities helped to create.
A little more than ten years ago, Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH) turned to a new best-practice approach that was gaining ground in Virginia. We refer to it as the “scattered site” model, and it involves developing partnerships with private landlords who lease to our clients.

Despite lacking experience with the model, we embraced it because it provided a faster path to housing more people, and it gave our clients a choice. By introducing mobile case management services to support the scattered site model, we could say to our clients, “Here are several places you can live. Choose the one you like best. Whichever you choose, you’ll have access to the supportive services you want or need.”

We were excited for everything the concept offered, but we also had concerns about the risk. Our clients, many of whom were managing significant mental and physical disabilities, would be living independently in the community. But we forged ahead and adopted the evidence-based approach.

Today, VSH operates multiple scattered site programs, several tailored for specific groups of people. Scattered site programs include:

- **Housing First**, which provides rental assistance and supportive services to single adults with disabilities experiencing chronic homelessness in Hampton Roads.
- **A Place to Start (APTS)**, which serves chronically homeless individuals with severe and persistent mental illness and a history of psychiatric hospitalizations. APTS links supportive housing services with treatment for mental health, co-occurring substance use disorders, and chronic health conditions.
- **HomeLink**, which serves adults with a documented disability, including life-threatening medical conditions and/or mental illness, and who have experienced long or repeated episodes of homelessness.
- **Frequent Users System Engagement (FUSE)**, which serves individuals who have repeated contacts with the Richmond City Justice Center, to include a history of incarcerations, as well as a documented disability and a history of long-term homelessness.
When VSH launched A Place to Start (APTS) in 2007, Jerome Roberts was one of its first participants. “He had that type of personality that drew you to him,” according to Anthony Santalucia, the psychiatric nurse practitioner who served on Roberts’ case management team. “Even while he was battling stage-four cancer, he had a smile on his face, always looking for the next adventure.”

Roberts’ smiling face came to represent APTS in several 2012 news stories when he led the media on a tour of his former living spaces. He showed reporters the crumbling brick wall where he hid his belongings and described using a tarp to protect himself from the rain. A talented musician, Roberts wrote a song about that former life:

No kinda life, liven the worst dreams that you can...Life got me digging thru the trash.

I once owned property and land - now I'm digging thru trash cans, holding up the homeless man sign, begging for change, sleeping where I can.

You say it can't happen to you. But I'm proof it can.

Cause I once owned property and land. All they see is a homeless man.

In all, Roberts spent about eight years living on the streets. He suffered from a combination of affective disorders that caused him to experience disorganized thoughts and speech, hallucinations, and delusions. The APTS program provided Roberts with stable housing and access to a range of supportive services that included case management, psychiatric treatment, and medication monitoring. He stabilized his life, and even when his condition sometimes caused him to plunge, he now had a way to pull himself up.

But in 2018, it was Roberts’ physical illness that eventually caught up with him. Santalucia went to visit him in the hospital. “When I walked in, Jerome looked at me and said, ‘I don’t think I’m going to make it through the night.’” Santalucia called Roberts’ VSH team and asked them to come to the hospital as quickly as possible. “We were his family. We got to spend more than two hours at his bedside. It was bittersweet. He was struggling, but when he passed, we were all with him, holding his hand.”
Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH) moved through the first decade of the new millennium without slowing down. After Gosnold opened in South Hampton Roads, two more 60-unit communities rapidly followed: Cloverleaf Apartments opened in Virginia Beach, and South Bay Apartments was being developed in Portsmouth. And because VSH was becoming well-known for its expertise in providing supportive housing solutions, leaders from the Charlottesville area invited us to their region.

The region had received pre-development funding from the state to create a supportive housing community. As with Richmond and South Hampton Roads, the formula for success required visionary leaders plus a caring community. Collaboration was also key, as Albemarle County contributed nine vouchers toward the project. The team found ways to make everything from zoning laws to collaborative investments work together, instead of independently, to solve a problem that had seemed unsolvable.

The Crossings at Fourth and Preston opened in Charlottesville in 2012.

The Crossings at Fourth and Preston opened in Charlottesville in 2012. At the ground-breaking ceremony, Mayor Dave Norris recalled that it had been more than five years since his first conversations with city leaders about building supportive housing in Charlottesville.

“It really has been the product of so much blood sweat and tears, so much financial investment and investment of time from so many people.” He called the Crossings a “labor of love for so many people” — people who share the vision that permanent supportive housing can transform lives.
In 1991, a handful of US chefs began embracing a culinary innovation called sous vide, and Kenny Payne was in the kitchen with them. He had helped open a restaurant in Washington, DC and learned the method of cooking vacuum-sealed food in hot water from one of its pioneers. “I’m pretty sure I’m one of the first people on the East Coast to use the sous vide system,” Payne said, describing the professional “secret” that only recently has become a hit in home kitchens.

Payne’s skills led to a successful career in the restaurant business, working in some of the most popular restaurants in DC, Richmond, and Charlottesville, and training aspiring chefs. The pace was fast, so when he began to notice some dizziness, he brushed it off. Eventually, though, he learned he had experienced a series of mini-strokes.

“Then, on the morning of April 21, 2017, I woke up, and my arm was numb.” It was a stroke. He was hospitalized for a month and released. “I had no income and had to leave the apartment I was sharing.” In a matter of weeks, Payne went from having a home and a career to living in a homeless shelter. “The money I had saved up over the years, I went through quickly, using it for food. Trying to stay alive.”

“Homelessness is a humbling experience. I didn’t know anything about shelters or soup kitchens or food banks. But I did know how to survive. I had been in the army. I had discipline.” He secured disability benefits and began saving to get back on his feet. That day came when he learned about an opening at The Crossings. “I had to get there early because there were others on the waiting list. I was waiting out front when the office opened.”

Payne describes how The Crossings provides him with a full apartment with a full kitchen he uses every day — and more. “The staff brings in food from the food bank each week. If you’ve got an appointment with Social Security or anything to do with your health or finances, they help you get to the appointment.”

His unique blend of first-hand experiences and a passion for cooking are nourishing a project he’s working on to introduce after-school cooking classes to underserved youth. “Teach them the basics so that they can cook their own food.” He reels off a list of why this practical skill has big benefits. The kids will become more self-sufficient. They’ll eat healthier. And considering that Payne began working in a kitchen when he was 14, those classes might be the beginning of another young chef’s career.

Payne is concerned about the effects of poverty on the people of Charlottesville. “I’m from New York, and I can tell you, Charlottesville is more expensive. A lot of people here who work are still homeless.”
Our 30th anniversary also marks a time of maturing. As we begin our next decade, we are well-positioned to continue fulfilling our mission thanks to hard-earned experience and a commitment to pursue “wise growth.” To us, that means serving our clients today and serving more tomorrow in a way that always meets the highest standards of care, and ensuring we’re always able to sustain that level of service.

We are well-positioned to continue fulfilling our mission thanks to hard-earned experience and a commitment to pursue “wise growth.”

While we continue to invest money and time into building and renovating properties to create high-quality supportive housing communities — on average, $18 million and five years or more from concept to completion — we also are seeking ways to make an impact on homelessness in a shorter amount of time.
**Move On Program**

In 2018, thanks to a grant from the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, we launched the innovative “Move On” program in Hampton Roads. Move On is designed to help those residents who demonstrate the potential to graduate from our supportive housing programs to successfully move into their own residences in the community, living independently without the ongoing assistance of caseworkers and comprehensive supportive services. The impact is two-fold: the individuals who move on are able to lead independent, self-determined lives, and their transition out of VSH properties and programs creates availability of much-needed permanent supportive housing units for homeless individuals requiring intensive supportive services to maintain housing stability.

**Sustainable Revenue**

A grant from the Bob and Anna Lou Schaberg Foundation has helped us to develop our staff’s capacity to shift funding away from a heavy dependence on traditional government grants to a fee-for-service Medicaid reimbursement model.

Prompted by the expansion of Medicaid in Virginia, we restructured our services team to create a role focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our Medicaid billing process. Since establishing this position, we have provided a higher quality of services for our participants, while also improving revenue and increasing efficiency. We will expand this expertise to other programs as the opportunity becomes available, particularly as additional services become eligible for Medicaid billing through the expansion of the Medicaid program in Virginia.
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING...

CHARLOTTESVILLE

63 individuals served
36 with permanent supportive housing.*
27 with affordable housing and access to supportive services.**

THE CROSSINGS
AT FOURTH AND PRESTON
Built in 2012 · 60 units

CENTRAL VIRGINIA

881 individuals served
490 with permanent supportive housing.*
391 veterans (includes immediate family) received rapid rehousing, prevention, and supportive services.

NEW CLAY HOUSE
Built in 1992 · 47 units
Renovated and expanded in 2019 · 33 units
80 units total

STUDIOS AT SOUTH RICHMOND
Built in 1996, renovated in 2016 · 39 units
Expanded in 2011 · 21 units
60 units total

BLILEY MANOR
Built in 1998 · 8 units

STRATFORD HOUSE (Cherokee Hill)
Built in 1998 · 8 units

THIRD AVENUE APARTMENTS
Built in 2002 · 4 units

CARY STREET APARTMENTS
Built in 2004 · 4 units

CHESTNUT HILL APARTMENTS
Built in 2004 · 4 units

INDEPENDENCE HOUSE
Built in 2005 · 6 units

JAMES RIVER APARTMENTS
Built in 2008 · 14 units

VETERANS APARTMENTS
Built in 2008 · 4 units

HAMPTON ROADS

558 individuals served
494 with permanent supportive housing.*
64 with affordable housing and access to supportive services.**

GOSNOLD APARTMENTS
Norfolk
Built in 2006 · 60 units

CLOVERLEAF APARTMENTS
Virginia Beach
Built in 2008 · 60 units

SOUTH BAY APARTMENTS
Portsmouth
Built in 2010 · 60 units

HERON’S LANDING APARTMENTS
Chesapeake
Built in 2013 · 60 units

CRESCEnt SQUARE APARTMENTS
Virginia Beach
Built in 2016 · 80 units

CHURCH STREET STATION STUDIOS
Norfolk
Built in 2017 · 80 units

* Clients live in an apartment building that Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH) owns and operates, or in “scattered site” apartments made available through VSH’s partnership with private landlords who lease apartments to our clients.

** Affordable housing units serve individuals earning 50% or less of the area median income. For these individuals, affordable rental housing is the primary tool that decreases their chances of experiencing homelessness.
...Serving the most vulnerable among us.

Of those formerly homeless clients receiving permanent supportive housing:

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<tr>
<th>MOST ARE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS UPON INTAKE</th>
<th>MOST ARE OLDER</th>
<th>MOST ARE BLACK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronically homeless</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOST HAVE A DISABILITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chronic physical disability</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chronic mental health condition</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>White</td>
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<td>Multiracial/Other</td>
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<td>SOME ARE VETERANS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>MOST ARE MALE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37%</td>
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As we strive to achieve our mission of ending homelessness in Virginia, we have a concrete goal in sight. We want to help the communities we serve to reach “functional zero” for chronic homelessness.

We achieve functional zero when the community has the capacity to provide housing within 30 days of anyone experiencing homelessness.

Functional zero means getting to a place where homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring. We achieve functional zero when the community has the capacity to provide housing within 30 days of anyone experiencing homelessness.

In 2019, Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH) is embarking on a strategic growth initiative aimed at bringing the regions we serve closer to achieving that goal. This initiative involves the creation of two new supportive housing communities over the next four years. The communities—one in Richmond and one in Charlottesville—will add a combined 166 units of affordable housing to our region. Of those units, we expect 80 to 90 to be reserved for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, with the remaining units reserved for individuals earning 50% or less of the area median income.
VCU Health Pilot
Our longtime partnership with VCU Health System includes an innovative pilot program. VSH is providing permanent supportive housing in our recently renovated and expanded New Clay House to 10 VCU patients with a chronic disease (including at least five with sickle cell disease) and who have demonstrated housing instability. We expect this program to establish that secure housing plus wraparound supportive services will have long-term benefits for these individuals.

We also expect to measure the financial impact a hospital may realize as a result of providing permanent supportive housing to medically vulnerable, underserved patient populations. This program will serve as a model for other patient populations in similar circumstances.

Client-focused tools
VSH recently formalized how we collaborate with, and learn from, our clients. As of 2018, we’re now one of only 11 organizations in the country to receive the Certified Organization for Resident Engagement & Services (CORES) Certification recognizing organizations that have developed a robust commitment, capacity, and competency in providing resident services coordination in affordable rental housing.

The CORES certification reinforces our mission to provide the highest quality services with an emphasis on resident engagement and program evaluation. In working to achieve this certification, we explored a number of best practices that are now part of our standard process, such as conducting a client feedback survey and holding resident council meetings.

COMPLEMENTARY PATHS
We’re embracing unique approaches to helping our community’s most vulnerable.
SINCEREST THANKS
TO ALL OUR DONORS
This list represents all contributions made between January 1 and December 31, 2018.

CAPSTONES
$100,000 and above
The Home Depot Foundation
William A. and Jane M. Charters Fund of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation

CORNERSTONES
$25,000-$99,999
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Altria Companies Employee Community Fund
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In memory of John and Mary Urbano
The Veil Brewing Company
Virginia Credit Union  
In honor of Janet Wiglesworth

$100-$499
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