

Learning, growing, and standing in solidarity.

Thank you for your unwavering support of Virginia Supportive Housing's mission and work, especially during these unprecedented times. As we strive to keep our clients and teammates safe amidst a pandemic as well as examine our role in a world grappling with racial injustice, your support enables us to face these challenges while maintaining our high standard of care for those we serve.

Our ongoing conversation on racial justice

Racial injustice is finally on the forefront of our national conversation. At Virginia Supportive Housing, we are examining our organization, uplifting the voices of our team members of color, and working to foster meaningful change at an institutional level. Two weeks ago, 19 of our teammates of color participated in a roundtable discussion, chaired by Director of Property Management Sheila Parker. Out of this discussion, we identified three immediate steps to take:

Prioritize creating space for, listening to, and supporting team members of color.

Survey the entire organization to get a better understanding of what our teammates need.

Make Juneteenth a paid holiday.



The third step was suggested by Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program Manager Laquisha Roach. Our Executive Director Allison Bogdanović immediately moved to make it happen and VSH celebrated Juneteenth, or Freedom Day, as an organization-wide paid holiday for the first time. This change was significant, but we are also mindful of the consistency, intentionality, and commitment that will be required over the coming months and years to ensure VSH is a space of equity and opportunity for all.

Linking race and homelessness

The links between homelessness and racial discrimination are strong. The [Richmond 2020 Point In Time Count](#) reported 67.4% of adults experiencing homelessness identify as Black, while Black people make up only 47.8% of the population of the city of Richmond. The [Hampton Roads 2019 Point In Time Count](#) reported that number to be 77%, while the regional population is only 41% Black. Our clients at VSH [reflect these statistics](#): 72% of our clients are people of color, 67% being Black. These numbers reflect the impact of structural racism in our communities and institutions.

That's why we are including in this newsletter a set of educational resources and tools for better identifying and understanding this reality. As an organization and community invested in making homelessness history for all people, we hope this empowers all of us

to become even more informed advocates for our clients and work.

Click a button below to access resource lists compiled by these organizations.

UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

["Resources To Help
Develop Knowledge And
Solutions For Tackling
Racial Inequity"](#)

NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS

["Why Are African
Americans In Particular
Overrepresented in the
Homeless System?"](#)

NATIONAL HEALTHCARE FOR THE HOMELESS COUNCIL

[Anti-Racism in
healthcare and
housing](#)

COVID-19 Update

Thank you for helping our staff and clients keep our VSH community safe and healthy. We have had two positive tests for COVID-19, a client and a team member, both of whom have recovered. Many of our teammates continue to work remotely, including those who normally work at our administrative office at Discovery Drive in Richmond. This office will remain for the most part remote through the summer. However, our Property Management team led by Sheila Parker has worked diligently to prepare for a broader return to our buildings following the June 10 lifting of Governor Northam's stay-at-home order.

Starting June 15, 2020

- Floor markings have been placed on the floor in various places of the building.
- Hand sanitizer stations have been mounted on the wall in various places of the building.
- Management team has begun working in the office a minimum of 2 days per week.

Starting July 6, 2020

- Non-urgent/non-priority repairs will begin inside the units.
- Management team will begin working a minimum of 3 days per week in the office.

Starting August 3, 2020

- Management team will resume the normal five day work week schedule.

Both residents and staff have continued following social-distance guidelines and wearing masks. Hand sanitizer is widely available throughout the buildings and our janitorial staff clean each building once per day.

Moving On to Independence

Despite COVID-19, our Supportive Services team has worked tirelessly for the past three months to provide uninterrupted care to our clients. This has included supporting clients who are ready to transition from VSH housing into independent housing through our Move On program. Last month, our Homelink team worked with our client Kimberly in Moving On to her own apartment in the community.

Congratulations Kimberly!



Virginia Supportive Housing | 804-788-6825 | www.virginiassupportivehousing.org

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