



The Citizens' E-UPDATE

It Starts
in Parks

Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

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Children donate to help others



Children in the department's After School Program participated in a Caring and Sharing Project prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. They collected and donated 468 pounds of food to the Central Virginia Food Bank - enough to feed 468 people!

Gloria Redmond, a recreation program specialist in the department's After School Program, delivers donations to the Food Bank.

Nearly 200 volunteers help create change in Richmond!

On Saturday, Jan. 24, Richmond City Councilmembers Ellen Robertson and Chris Hilbert and Richmond's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, with support from several other agencies and organizations, co-sponsored a cleanup of the property that runs adjacent to Cannon Creek and Richmond-Henrico Turnpike in Richmond's Northside.

Ultimately, the department hopes to create a bicycle and pedestrian greenway through the area that can be linked to the East Coast Greenway, which is being built in sections from Maine to Florida, and to the Virginia Capital Trail, which will link Richmond to Williamsburg and Jamestown.

A key partner in the cleanup is the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, which is currently revitalizing and rebuilding the nearby Dove Street area and has incorporated the greenway concept into its plans.

The cleanup is first step in this long-range project that has the potential to completely change this area of Richmond.

Department restoring 'keeper's house' at Shockoe Hill Cemetery

The department has now installed heat at the Keeper's House in Shockoe Hill Cemetery. The department plans to use the building as a small office and information center, however much cleaning and painting still need to be done.

Friends group seeking members, volunteers

The Friends of Shockoe Hill Cemetery is looking for volunteers to help research and create a database of information on the cemetery. In addition, the group will hold a cleanup of the cemetery on March 28. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Doug Welsh at dwelsh@apva.org or 648-7998.



Department continues 'City of the Future' improvements

A total of approximately \$18 million has been promised to the department as part of Richmond's "City of the Future" financing initiative, which over time will make a total of

approximately \$350 million available to the city overall. The department was the first to take advantage of this financing and complete a City of the Future project in 2007 when in repaved the tennis courts at Byrd Park.

In the past year, the department has continued on its path to make improvements to parks and facilities with City of the Future funding.

“When I arrived as the department’s director in January 2006, for many years funding for maintaining the city’s parks and recreation facilities had not been available,” said J. R. Pope. “My focus on how to use our City of the Future funds has been on bringing Richmond’s parks and facilities up to speed to meet current industry standards in a way that is balanced and equitable for Richmond’s citizens,” Pope said.

Following is a list of City of the Future Projects completed to date by the department:

Project	Description	Budget	Completion
Byrd Park Tennis Courts 0 South Boulevard	Repaved & painted courts, installed new nets	\$299,140	Fall 2007
Westover Hills Playground 1301 Jahnke Rd.	Installed new playground	\$95,045	Spring 2008
Oak Grove Playground Gordon Ave. & West 22 nd St.	Installed new playground	\$49,350	Summer 2008
Montrose Heights Playground Randall and Fenton Streets	Installed new playground	\$76,833	Summer 2008
Briel St. Playground 3600 Briel Street	Installed new playground	\$28,722	Summer 2008
Forest Hill Playground 4100 Forest Hill Ave.	Added new playground equipment	\$23,003	Summer 2008
Gillies Creek Playground Stony Run Drive and Williamsburg Road	Installed new playground	\$29,152	Summer 2008
Chimborazo Dog Park 2900 E. Grace St.	Installed new dog park	\$35,092	Summer 2008
Westover Hills Tennis Courts 1301 Jahnke Rd.	Repaved and painted tennis courts, installed new nets	\$18,000	Summer 2008
Federal Park 2100 W. Main St.	Installed new playground	\$40,706	Fall 2008
Chimborazo Park House 2900 E. Grace St.	Installed new HVAC system	\$17,070	Fall 2008
Pine Camp Playground 4901 Old Brook Rd.	Added new playground canopy	\$39,515	Fall 2008
Bryan Park "Tourist Camp" House 4300 Hermitage Rd.	Restoration of Tourist Camp House	\$85,135	Underway; 90% Complete
TOTAL		\$836,763	

Employee earns Master Gardner certification

Ken Starkes, a labor crew chief for Southwest, is now a certified Master Gardner!

Ken graduated from the Virginia Cooperative Master Gardner Program on Dec. 10th after a year that included 50 hours of classroom study and 50 hours of volunteer work. His volunteer assignments included working at plant clinics and staffing the Master Gardner Hotline.



Employees mentor young girls

Shaunn Casselle, art outreach coordinator at Pine Camp, and Yewande Lewis, a recreation aide at Westhampton, are serving as SOHO mentors to two preteen girls living in Gilpin Court.

SOHO (A Space of Her Own) is an art-based program serving preteen girls ages 9 through 12. Loosely based on the popular television show *Trading Spaces*, the program teams the girls with mentors in a year-long project to remodel their bedrooms using artistic concepts and techniques to create expressive and attractive artwork. Projects might include personalized chairs and lamps, construction of creative storage units, embellished mirrors, photo frames, woven blankets, or wall hangings, and ample lighting and study space are incorporated.

The program, which requires a year-long commitment, fosters relationships and includes homework, life skill, communication, and anger-management support.

Richmond's SOHO program is held at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond and is modeled after an award-winning program in the City of Alexandria. It was highlighted in the winter 2008 issue of *Urge* magazine.

Cultural Arts Division raises money for scholarships



The Cultural Arts Division's art department holds a popular artisan gift sale every year during the holidays to raise money for youth art scholarships.

This year's sale was held from Nov. 15 through Dec. 20 at the department's Pine Camp Arts and Community Center and featured original items by local artists such as pottery, jewelry, scarves, folk art, wood pieces, paintings, cards and other items.

In addition, the staff brought many of the items on sale to City Hall for a day.

Department staff brought the art sale to the lobby of City Hall for a day.

Flag flying again!

Thanks to our Parks Maintenance Labor Crew Chief Dan Bremner the flag at the Byrd Park tennis courts is flying again!

The flag's rope broke in December, but Dan quickly purchased new rope and arranged for a bucket truck and help from Mike Traynor in the Department of Public Works' Urban Forestry. The bucket truck wasn't quite high enough, but they improvised and managed to thread the rope with a pole pruner!



Westhampton holds successful 'Women's Day Spa'

The staff at the Westhampton Community Center, in partnership with Kenecko Robinson, a local massage therapist, held a successful Woman's Day Spa at the Humphrey Calder Community Center on Nov. 8. The spa offered manicures, pedicures, massages, facials, and waxes.



Theater program ends successful year; hits 2009 running



A scene from the upcoming production of "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest." See the calendar section for exact times and dates.

The Cultural Arts Division's theatre program ended 2008 on a festive note with the annual production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" at the Landmark Theater. The division also provided an Open House and concert at the Carillon on Veterans' Day. Carillonneur Larry Robinson's concert was well-received, as always, and attendees were enthusiastic about the opportunity to view the inside of the World War I Memorial building as well as photographs, artifacts, and a candle memorial.

The division hits the ground running in 2009 with Henley Street Theatre Company's production of "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest" at the Pine Camp Arts and Community Center, which opened Jan. 15 and will run through Jan. 31. This is the play that inspired the Oscar-winning movie starring Jack Nicholson.

The division also will welcome back the African American Repertory Theatre and Artistic Director and Derome Scott Smith, who suffered a stroke in October. their production of "Trailblazers," a play focusing on the contributions of notable African Americans., opens Feb. 6 and will run through Feb. 15 in the Pine Camp Theater.

Tree Steward classes start in February

Tree Steward Classes are starting again Feb.9

Tree Stewards are volunteers dedicated to improving the health of trees by providing educational programs, tree planting, tree care demonstrations and tree maintenance assistance throughout their communities. Through classroom training and hands-on practice, Tree Stewards learn the basics of tree biology and physiology, tree identification, and planting and maintenance techniques. The purpose of the program is to increase public awareness of the intrinsic value and beauty of trees, to help educate residents about urban forestry and to help the city and neighborhoods maintain healthy trees.

Being a Tree Steward is a challenging, rewarding volunteer opportunity. For more information, contact Norm Brown at 646-6785.

Employees asked to "Go Red" on Friday, Feb. 6

The department is supporting national "Go Red" Day on Feb. 6 by asking all employees to wear red!

Go Red is a program of the American Heart Association that aims to raise awareness about the *No. 1 killer of women – heart disease*.

Women are frequently unaware of the significance the symptoms for heart attacks and strokes. Getting emergency help quickly is critical in each of these situations and can help save a woman's life.

Please visit www.AmericanHeart.org to learn about symptoms and how to make smart choices. You can also make a donation at the site to support research and education to fight this number one killer.

The department is also asking employees to send in group photos of their units wearing red and will select one to feature on it's website at www.RichmondGov.com/parks. Park staff who wear uniforms and the department's male employees are being encouraged to get creative with red bandanas, hats, pocket handkerchiefs, etc.

Upcoming Department Events		
Jan. 28, 7:35 p.m.	Richmond Renegades vs. Twin City Cyclones	Coliseum
Jan. 30 & 31	Acquire the Fire Conference	Coliseum
Jan. 30, 6:30 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Blackwell & Westover Community Centers & Boushall School
Jan. 30 & 31, 8 pm	Henley Street Theatre Company's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"	Pine Camp Arts & Community Center Theater
Jan. 31, 9:30 a.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Thompson, Blackwell, Hotchkiss, Humphrey Calder & Bellemeade Community Centers; Kennedy, Boushall, Armstrong, Henderson, George Wythe & Elkardt Schools
Jan. 31, 11 a.m.	Dora the Explorer Live!	Landmark Theater
Jan. 31, 1 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Hotchkiss Community Center & Boushall School
Jan. 31, 2:30 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Blackwell Community Center
Jan. 31, 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.	Dora the Explorer Live!	Landmark Theater
Feb. 1, 11 a.m., 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.	Dora the Explorer Live!	Landmark Theater
Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m.	Stephen Sondheim	Landmark Theater
Feb. 4, 5:45 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Richmond Outreach Center
Feb. 6, 6:30 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Hotchkiss & Westover Community Centers & Elkhardt School

Feb.6, 7:35 p.m.	Richmond Renegades vs. Twin City Cyclones	Coliseum
Feb. 6 & 7, 8 p.m.	Stomp	Landmark Theater
Feb. 6 & 7 8 p.m.	African American Repertory Theatre's "Trailblazers"	Pine Camp Arts & Community Center Theater
Feb. 7, 9:30 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Blackwell, Bellemeade, Hotchkiss, Humphrey Calder & Thompson Community Centers; Elkhardt, Henderson, Armstrong, Kennedy, George Wythe & Boushall Schools
Feb. 7, 1 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Thompson Community Center & Boushall School
Feb. 7, 2:30 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Westover Community Center & Elkhardt School
Feb. 7, 7:35 p.m.	Richmond Renegades vs. Huntsville Havoc	Coliseum
Feb. 8, 4 p.m.	African American Repertory Theatre's "Trailblazers"	Pine Camp Arts & Community Center Theater
Feb. 11, 5:45 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Humphrey Calder Community Center
Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Blackwell & Westover Community Centers & Boushall School
Feb. 13, 7 p.m.	Richmond Ballet: Cinderella	Landmark Theater
Feb. 13, 7:35 p.m.	Richmond Renegades vs. Knoxville Ice Bears	Coliseum
Feb. 13 & 14, 8 p.m.	African American Repertory Theatre's "Trailblazers"	Pine Camp Arts & Community Center Theater
Feb. 14, 9:30 a.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Bellemeade, Blackwell, Hotchkiss, Humphrey Calder & Thompson Community Centers; Kennedy, Elkhardt, Armstrong, Henderson, George Wythe & Boushall Schools
Feb. 14, 1 p.m.	Youth Basketball Games	Thompson Community Center & Boushall School
Feb. 14, 2:30	Youth Basketball Games	Blackwell Community Center & Boushall School
Feb. 14, 7 p.m.	Richmond Ballet: Cinderella	Landmark Theater
Feb. 14, 7:35 p.m.	Richmond Renegades vs. Fayetteville Fire Antz	Coliseum

Feb. 15, 4 p.m.	African American Repertory Theatre's "Trailblazers"	Pine Camp Arts & Community Center Theater
Feb. 15, 2 p.m.	Richmond Ballet: Cinderella	Landmark Theater
<p><i>Coming to the Coliseum Feb. 18-27 – Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus!</i> Landmark Theater & Coliseum Tickets can be purchased through Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000</p>		

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