

### Supporting & Celebrating Our Community

The Village Initiative received a first time grant from WCF this spring. The grant supported the Williamsburg Juneteenth Celebration which drew over 600 people. “The event was truly historic and brought state level attention to the city of Williamsburg,” said Founder and Director Jacqueline Bridgeforth-Williams. “It was a powerful community-building event.” The Juneteenth Celebration featured entertainment with three bands, children’s activities, and a community art project collaboration with artist Steve Prince. Lil Mr. and Miss Juneteenth Williamsburg were crowned, and a mobile STEM lab was present.



“Celebrating Juneteenth is part of the Village Initiative’s broader effort to shine a spotlight on Black history through our Local Black Histories Project. The Project is an online archive of over 100 oral histories and powerful exhibits interpreting the post-Emancipation history of the Black community in the greater Williamsburg area,” Jacqueline explained.

“Those interested in learning more can explore digital exhibits on The Reservation, a community displaced by the U.S. Navy in WWI, the history of segregated schools in Williamsburg, and more at [localblackhistories.gs.wm.edu](http://localblackhistories.gs.wm.edu).” In addition, the Village Initiative has established little libraries, which have provided over 5,000 books to children in the community to support early learning and literacy.

The mission of the Village Initiative is to work with Williamsburg-James City County schools to address the achievement gap and the disproportionate percentages of expulsion and suspension of minority youth which leads to the pipeline to prison. They seek to educate the community on voting at all levels and promote social justice by inviting everyone to be part of the process.

“What sets the Village Initiative apart from other organizations is our grass-roots approach, our focus on relationship-building and partnership, and our core leadership’s close ties



to the African American community,” said Jacqueline. “Our strength lies in our diversity and our commitment to equity for all children. We recognize that educational disparities affect diverse groups of students, including the growing numbers of English-Language Learners in our schools”.

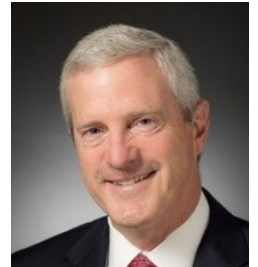
#### Save the Date

**Fall Lunch and Learn Dates:**  
**Sept. 6th, Oct. 10th, and Nov. 15th.**  
**Come learn more about WCF!**

**Fall Grant Award Luncheon:**  
**September 28th**

**Next Grant Application Deadline is Dec. 15th**

## Five Community Leaders Join the WCF Board in 2023



Pictured are new Board of Trustees members  
The Rev. Jan Brown, Thomas Cardwell, Rick Overy, Iris Porush, and Scott Stabler

**The Rev. Jan Brown** is an ordained Deacon and serves at Bruton Parish Episcopal Church. She is the Founder/Executive Director of Spiritworks Foundation Center for the Soul.

**Thomas A Cardwell, Ph.D.** is a retired Air Force Colonel and spent 20 years with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) as Vice President for International Operations. He founded PlanIT Group LLC, an international technology company.

**Rick Overy** is a graduate of W&M Business School and the first class of LEAD Historic Triangle. He serves on the Kiwanis Club of Williamsburg Foundation and has served as a charity auctioneer for many local organizations.

**Iris Porush** is a Partner at Legacy Financial Group and co-founder of Business Leaders of Williamsburg. She has served on the Boards of several local organizations.

**Scott Stabler** retired as the executive vice president and chief transformation officer of Huntington Ingalls Industries in 2021 after a 37 year career with the company. He currently sits on the Boards of Hospice House, N.C. State Engineering Foundation, and Williamsburg Landing.

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## 84 Scholarships Awarded in the Spring of 2023



WCF awarded **\$152,853** in scholarships this spring to high school seniors from Jamestown, Lafayette, and Warhill High Schools.

These scholarships make an impact! As one recipient said in the thank you note to a scholarship donor, “As a first generation student facing financial difficulties, your support has made my dream of studying computer engineering at George Mason University a reality. Your belief in me and investment in my education will inspire me to excel. Thank you for changing my life!”

This year six new scholarships were awarded: the Virnell Ann Bruce Scholarship, the Goggin/Boykin Scholarship, the Me-

guNamu Scholarship, the Sutton Family Scholarship, the John O’Hare Memorial Scholarship, and the Debbie Todd Memorial Scholarship. We are so grateful to the donors for providing these scholarships.

Founded in 1974 as the Lafayette Educational Fund, the Williamsburg James City County Scholarship Fund will celebrate 50 years in 2024. A gift to the scholarship fund will help a local student begin their educational journey.

## Spring Grant Awards

With support from many local donors, WCF presented **27** grants to nonprofit organizations totaling **\$91,156** at the 2023 Spring Award luncheon. Generously sponsored by Rick & Lara Overy of Compass Wealth Strategies, the lunch provides an opportunity for grantees to tell their stories.

“Program Officer Ginny Gasink and Board Chair Kate Slevin have done an enormous amount of outreach to engage emerging local organizations and to encourage them to apply for grants, as well as providing assistance to those groups that may have less experience with the process,” said Nancy Sullivan. “It has been very effective. The number of applications increased by 25% and we funded seven new organizations this spring.”

WCF provides grants in the areas of Arts & Culture, Children & Young Adults, Environment & Conservation, Health, Economic Mobility, and Senior Services. By making a gift to the Community Endowment, you can help us expand the support WCF provides in these areas.

To see the full list of grants, please visit [WilliamsburgCommunityFoundation.org](https://WilliamsburgCommunityFoundation.org).



Noah Scruggs, WCF Chair  
Kate Slevin, Laura Overy, Rick  
Overy and Heather Fletcher



**Our Vision:**

A **vibrant** community  
with a commitment to  
ensure that everyone  
has the opportunity  
to **thrive**.



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CVC Code 003187

## Leaving a Legacy: The Allison A. Sheppard Scholarship

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The Dr. Allison Sheppard Memorial Scholarship was created in Allison Sheppard's memory by her mother Donna and her sister Jocelyn. The scholarship is given to a WJCC student who plans to pursue studies in the humanities, while displaying the character traits of caring and compassion for others.



Allison's career in education began in 1992 as a high school French teacher, and she quickly became known as a dedicated teacher, coach, and mentor. "Allison always felt a deep connection to Williamsburg, but her love of the French language and culture began when our family lived in France when we were very young," said her sister Jocelyn. Committed to educational equity and to unlocking the potential of all students, Allison left the classroom in 2005 to get her Ph.D., specializing in gifted and talented programs and services. "When my mother and I were looking for a way to honor her memory, a colleague of Allison's at WJCC schools suggested a scholarship through WCF. Allison got her love of education from our father, Tom Sheppard, who was a professor at William and Mary. A scholarship felt like a wonderful way to recognize Allison's dedication to education."

Shortly after creating the scholarship, Donna Sheppard decided to leave a bequest to WCF to ensure that the scholarship would continue. "My mother loved the local impact of WCF's work overall and wanted to continue to support the scholarship through her estate. She felt that this was the best way to memorialize the amazing work Allison did and our family's legacy in the field of education," said Jocelyn. Thanks to Donna's legacy, local students will receive financial support to pursue higher education.