

Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court, Inc.

Keeping Children Safe And Families Together



Impact Report 2016/17



YOU CAN HELP GIVE PORTSMOUTH YOUTH A STRONG FOUNDATION



OUR MISSION

To collaborate with the courts to make a positive difference in the lives of Portsmouth's at-risk youth and their families.

OUR VISION

A community that provides the foundation and tools needed for all Portsmouth youth to achieve lifelong success.



Judi Luffman
President,
Board of Directors



Susan M. Fincke
Executive Director

Our vision for Portsmouth is simple: All Portsmouth youth should have a strong foundation and access to tools to achieve lifelong success. You, our generous donors, are helping make that vision possible.

This ambitious goal was shaped by a board of directors and staff who know too well the consequences families face when essential life skills are lacking or when a young person who wants to make better choices needs guidance to see a clear path. Our programs and services are designed to address these challenges.

We are grateful for partnerships with individuals and organizations who share our vision and are willing to contribute to it. Successful partnerships include The Wesley Center – a work site for young people ordered by the court to perform community service. Vulnerable youth in foster care would not have a voice without our dedicated team of CASA volunteers. And special friends serving through the Portsmouth Service League partnered with us to help mend relationships between teens and their parents.

Key elements of a successful nonprofit organization include a theory of change, a strategic plan and a financial plan. Our theory is clear – lifelong success tools for Portsmouth youth. Our strategic plan is set by a board of directors based on community needs. And our financial plan includes revenue sources from individuals, businesses, grants and foundations.

As with most nonprofit organizations, the majority of revenue comes from people in the community. We call our donors "friends." With friends like you, we expand the toolbox and build a better Portsmouth for everyone. Thank you.

VOLUNTEER TRIES TO SEE FROM THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW



When Michele Harrington was looking to volunteer in the community, the perfect opportunity popped up on her computer.

Harrington saw an online ad for the Court Appointed Special Advocate program, did some research and knew this was something she wanted to join.

With her experience as a substitute teacher, including several long-term positions in guidance and special education, and as a mentor to children through her church, she was drawn to working with children.

“I was interested in the legal process, what happens to these kids and how does the system work,” Harrington recalls. “The biggest part of it was a desire to work with kids and mentor kids. There are so many needy kids out there who just want someone to pay attention to them, really.”

Plus, she likes to write, so she figured that was a skill she could bring to CASA when she had to write reports for the judge. She also has a calm demeanor, which could be useful working with children in foster care.

Harrington went through several weeks of training with Portsmouth CASA in 2015, finishing in April. She was assigned her first case that June, working with a family of five children.

“I really was quite nervous meeting them the first time,” says Harrington, who lives in Chesapeake, near Portsmouth. “We had role-played and practiced, but you still don’t know how they are going to react to you. It was the kids who put me at ease very quickly.”

The children had been in foster care, in several separate homes, for 10 months by the time Harrington was assigned the case. She studied medical reports, school reports, anything she could find through social services. She also went to their schools to get

additional information from records, and spoke with teachers, therapists and counselors. She also met with the biological parents and the foster parents.

“It’s an investigative process, really,” she says.

Her background in education and guidance was helpful when it came to making sure the oldest child, who had moved among three foster homes in three cities and three school systems, received proper credit for classes she had taken so she didn’t fall behind.

“WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT SKILLS WE CAN USE TO HELP KIDS...”

“You really are the voice of the child,” Harrington says. As a CASA, “you have the full perspective. Parents come from one point of view, social workers come from one point of view, foster parents come from one point of view. For me, one of the greatest efforts I put into it was to be objective about everything and look at it from the children’s point of view.”

To learn more about Harrington’s work and how this case was resolved, please see *A CASA Success Story* on page 5.

Harrington now is busy preparing for her daughter’s marriage this fall. But come November, she will be ready to dive into another case for Portsmouth CASA.

“We all have different skills we can use to help kids,” she says. “We all can have a positive influence on kids, whether we are a teacher, the crossing guard or whoever we may be.”

THE IMPACT OF YOUR DOLLARS

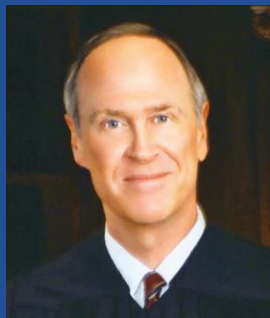
WELCOME JUDGE MEALS AND BEST WISHES, JUDGE CROWE

Before he was a juvenile and domestic relations court judge, Joel P. Crowe was a friend. When the organization was being founded, Attorney Crowe was among those in the legal community offering suggestions and giving feedback. He has served on the FOPJC board in an advisory capacity. After 19 years, we say goodbye to Judge Crowe and wish him well as he moves to the Portsmouth Circuit Court.

Judge Bryan K. Meals replaced Judge Crowe in Courtroom 1. Judge Meals brings a fresh perspective and unique insights. At his investiture, he shared a bit of his own history. He and his brother were adopted at very young ages by a loving couple. He's quick to say how lucky the two boys were. We welcome Judge Meals and look forward to working with him.



Judge Bryan K. Meals



Judge Joel P. Crowe



BECAUSE OF YOU:



> 67 Portsmouth children in foster care had a highly skilled and motivated Portsmouth CASA advocate on their side.

> 9 people were sworn in by a judge as Portsmouth CASA advocates after being thoroughly interviewed, screened and trained.



> More than half of the children with a Portsmouth CASA advocate achieved permanence, meaning they have a safe and stable home.



> Portsmouth children with a CASA advocate received special holiday presents wrapped with love just for them.

> Almost 100 young people made restitution to their community by providing 1,268 hours of volunteer service.



> 9 parents kept the lines of communication and caring open by making 27 trips to visit their young adults in custody.

> 24 teens learned to set goals and prepare for a job interview.

FRIENDS LIFTS KIDS UP AND PERFORMS UNIQUE ROLE



Bart Tuthill and Diane Pomeroy Griffin

Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court recently said goodbye and thank you to Bart Tuthill and Diane Pomeroy Griffin. After six years on the board of directors, it was time for both to step down.

Tuthill became involved with the organization through his wife, Traci. While working as a juvenile probation officer in the '90s, she was asked to help set up a community outreach project. "I'm the nearest thing she could grab," jokes Tuthill.

As an attorney practicing family law, Pomeroy Griffin was always aware of the critical services Friends provides.

"WE ARE FRIENDS OF THE COURT AND WE TRY TO ACT AS ANY GOOD FRIEND WOULD ACT..."

For more than 20 years, FOPJC staff and volunteers have worked hard to support children and families transitioning through the court and child-welfare systems.

The Juvenile Court Services Unit provides intake, probation and other services for young people "but can't lift these kids up," Tuthill explains. "They have to hold them accountable."

"Lifting them up" is where FOPJC comes in. Children who come before the juvenile court often have committed crimes because they were abused or neglected, Tuthill says.

"The kids come in, and they have issues," he says. "It's nice to

have a volunteer organization that can handle those issues. We're the ones that help the kids."

"Friends fulfills a role that no one else is filling," says Pomeroy Griffin, who most recently was vice president of the board.

"We're really an adjunct of the court," she says. "We are friends of the court and we try to act as any good friend would act, to be loyal and to provide service and comfort to families who come before the court for whatever reason."

Pomeroy Griffin, who also is a certified mediator and a substitute judge, returned to the board when Susan Fincke became executive director. The organization was facing several challenges, including funding. Fincke reached out to former board members to get historical information and to gauge their commitment to the organization.

FOPJC since has been reborn in "a leaner, better style," Pomeroy Griffin says. Support staff positions were eliminated and the organization moved briefly to a smaller office space.

More recently, Pomeroy Griffin spoke with judges about unused office space in the new courthouse, into which Friends relocated. The move put staff and volunteers just steps away from courtrooms and clients.

Portsmouth CASA also has received a boost from the hiring of Natasha Knight as coordinator, Pomeroy Griffin says, praising Knight for her fresh ideas.

Pomeroy Griffin leaves the board happy in the knowledge that Friends "at the moment is as stable as I've seen it. During the last six years, I've seen the agency come into full bloom under Susan's leadership."

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Our work with families and youth is made possible by the generosity of many individuals, companies and foundations along with public funding. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

City of Portsmouth
Victims of Crime Act
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act

CORPORATE, CIVIC AND FOUNDATION FUNDERS

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Chapman Law Firm
Children's Specialty Group, PLLC
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E.C. Wareheim Foundation
Elizabeth River Crossings OpCo, LLC
Elizabeth River Ferry
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First Presbyterian Church
G-Force Karting Portsmouth
Grove Church
Hampton Roads Community Foundation
Harbor Point
I.C. Norcom High School Senior Class
Kozak, Davis & Renninger, P.C.
Kroger Community Rewards Program
The Landmark Foundation
Mario's Restaurant
Massimo Zanetti Beverage Co. – USA
Pam's Hair Designers Inc.
Portsmouth Dept. of Social Services
Portsmouth Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Portsmouth General Hospital Foundation
Portsmouth Moose Lodge #898
Portsmouth Police Department
Portsmouth Service League
Portsmouth Sheriff's Office
Southeast Virginia Community Foundation
Sprinkle & Sprinkle, PLLC
Tidewater Community College – Portsmouth
Tidewater Home Improvement
TowneBank
TJX Foundation, Inc.
Trinity Episcopal Church

United Way of South Hampton Roads
United Way of Virginia Peninsula
W at W, Inc.
Walmart
Warden Family Foundation
Western Branch Diesel, Inc.

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CASA VOLUNTEERS 7/1/2016-6/30/2017

Janice Bowers
 Kathryn Bryant
 Kayla Cooper
 Janice Drewry
 Shakebra Eley
 Jennifer Gallagher
 Alana Glover
 Mary Hardy
 Michele Harrington
 Jackie Hicks
 Stacey Hill
 Bryane Ingram
 Troy Joyner
 Da'Necia Joyner-Madison
 Laniesa Kasperski
 Brenda Littles
 Cynthia McCoy
 Andrea Morgan
 Latoya Parker
 LaKiesha Pierce
 Lynn Piersall
 Aviance Robins
 Willie Scott, Jr.
 Anthony Simmons
 Kathy Wilder
 Isiah Williams
 Karen Wilson
 Rochelle Wolfe

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

ASSETS

Cash/Cash Equivalents.....	\$	108,421
Fixed Assets.....	\$	5,081
Deposits.....	\$	149
Total Assets.....	\$	113,651

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities.....	\$	-918
Net Assets.....	\$	114,569
Total Liabilities and Net Assets.....	\$	113,651

A CASA SUCCESS STORY: FIVE SIBLINGS REUNITE WITH THEIR DAD

Neglected by their mother, five siblings were placed in foster care. They were scattered among three different homes at different times, never all together. In 2015, Portsmouth CASA was appointed to the case. A CASA volunteer worked closely with the father. While he was not the reason the children were removed, he completed every requirement of the Portsmouth Department of Social Services. After being in foster care for a little over two years, all five children finally got to go home with their father. Although he is not the biological father to one of the girls,

the father loves her as his own and wanted to make sure she remained with her half-siblings. Shortly after being reunified, the father and the children moved together to another state to be closer to family for support. **At Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court, our goal is to provide a CASA volunteer to all children** who come through Portsmouth's foster care system to help ensure they grow up in safe, permanent and loving homes. *Thank you for making success stories like this one possible with your support.*

GET INVOLVED TO PREVENT ABUSE, PORTSMOUTH MAYOR IMPLORES



Portsmouth Mayor John L. Rowe Jr. wanted to say that a happy, healthy childhood is the norm in Virginia.

“But sadly – sadly – it’s not,” Rowe said at the dedication of the 2017 Pinwheels for Prevention garden planted by Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court as part of a national campaign to promote awareness of child abuse and neglect.

The pinwheel is the symbol of National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Each year since 2012, FOPJC has secured sponsors for the garden. This year, 800 blue-and-silver pinwheels were on display at Festival Park at the Portsmouth Pavilion from April 3-23.

Rowe shared some alarming statistics:

- > 51,000 children were reported last year as possible victims of child abuse or neglect in Virginia.
- > Of those 51,000 children, 52 died due to child abuse or neglect.
- > Every 41 minutes, a child in Virginia becomes homeless.
- > Every 80 minutes, a child is abused or neglected in Virginia.
- > Every seven and a half days, a child in Virginia dies because of abuse or neglect.

“We need to care, and we need to be concerned about our children,” said Rowe, who challenged the crowd to share the information with their neighbors to help spread awareness. “We all have a role in this.”

He also urged the crowd donate their time to volunteer to help families and donate their dollars to organizations like FOPJC to help buy school

supplies for children at risk, supplies for volunteers and travel stipends for family visits. With that, he handed FOPJC Executive Director Susan M. Fincke a check from his wife, Carol, and himself.

Rowe also asked every member of the crowd “to get your blue and silver thumb out” and plant a pinwheel garden like the one in Portsmouth and others that crop up throughout the Commonwealth in April.

ROWE ALSO ASKED EVERY MEMBER OF THE CROWD “TO GET YOUR BLUE AND SILVER THUMB OUT” AND PLANT A PINWHEEL GARDEN...

“The pinwheel is associated with happy memories and the hope of childhood,” he said. “The campaign is about awareness and people working together to educate our entire community and entire state of the importance of a healthy childhood.”

Rowe finished by reading a proclamation by the City of Portsmouth decreeing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month because “prevention remains the best defense for our children and their families.”

“Thank you, all,” he said. “Get involved!”

2017 PINWHEELS FOR PREVENTION SPONSORS



Executive Director Susan Fincke

Sergio Neal with son, Tashawn



HEROS

Children's Specialty Group, PLLC
Massimo Zanetti Beverage Co. – USA
Elizabeth River Crossings OpCo, LLC
I. C. Norcom High School Senior Class

CHAMPIONS

First Presbyterian Church
Earl & Diane Pomeroy Griffin
Financial Counselors of Virginia, Inc.
Grove Church

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Tidewater Community College –
Portsmouth
The Honorable Elizabeth M. Psimas
Norfolk by Boat

Portsmouth Sheriff's Office
Sprinkle & Sprinkle, PLLC
G-Force Karting Portsmouth
Portsmouth Dept. of Social Services
Portsmouth Police Dept.
The Honorable John & Carol Rowe

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT IS OUR PRIORITY

On any given day, The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has between 4,500 and 5,000 youth under its supervision. Almost all of the children – 90% – are receiving services in their communities through local juvenile probation and parole offices. Several years ago, DJJ launched an ambitious campaign to remake the Commonwealth's juvenile justice system.

A significant change was moving away from housing youth in large, central facilities and toward detaining them closer to home in smaller, treatment-oriented facilities. This shift helps keep people connected to their community and supportive family members.

Since our founding in 1993, we have promoted family engagement by helping parents who lack transportation. A grant from the Portsmouth Service League supports our Transportation Motivating Change Program. Parents can apply to the program for stipends to help defray the costs of travel to DJJ facilities.

"The transportation program has really been a great asset to me. There have been a few times I really didn't have the funds to cover the traveling expenses but I know my son looks forward to his visits," said a parent who has used the program several times. "Knowing that I can get reimbursed for those expenses really helps me out."

Your support, no matter the amount, helps bring a child and parent face to face. Thank you.



CHILDREN'S CHAIR AFFAIR SHOWS PORTSMOUTH CARES



*left to right: Arden Pfeiffer, Barbara Vincent,
Pat Pfeiffer and Barrie Harper*

Barbara Smith and Kenneth Wright



*left to right: Kristin Wright, Kevin Terry,
Miriam Terry and Jennifer Smith*

Elizabeth Psimas and Kim Keene



“UNLESS SOMEONE LIKE YOU CARES
A WHOLE AWFUL LOT, NOTHING IS GOING
TO GET BETTER. IT’S NOT.”

– DR. SEUSS, “THE LORAX”

Some of Portsmouth's most imaginative artists, inspired by one of the most imaginative authors of children's books, created little masterpieces to help children and families going through the court system. The Children's Chair Affair on June 29 featured 11 child-sized wooden chairs creatively decorated to evoke the Cat in the Hat, Yertle the Turtle, Thing One and Thing Two and other iconic Dr. Seuss characters.

Supporters bid on the chairs during a silent auction, with all proceeds benefitting Portsmouth Court Appointed Special Advocates. The artists – Kenneth Wright, Robert Burnell, Kas Lippa,

Robert LeMasters, Barbara Vincent, Pat Pfeiffer, Colonna Borjes, David Ratcliff, Kim Keene, Jennifer Smith and Kristin Wright – all have some connection to Portsmouth.

Guests enjoyed light jazz performed by Port Town Magic, Portsmouth Public Schools' premier musicians under the direction of John Jenkins, and nibbles served by Brutti's Catering at The Woman's Club of Portsmouth.

We think Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, would have approved.

FRIENDS DIRECTS REGIONAL COLLABORATION TO CREATE RESOURCE FOR PARENTS



The child welfare system can be cumbersome and confusing. This is especially true for families under stress. When the Department of Social Services removes a child from a home, even the most organized parent can easily become overwhelmed.

Now there is a simple, concise and practical resource.

We spearheaded a collaboration with the Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA, programs that serve Chesapeake, Franklin, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach to help parents navigate the child welfare system. A grant from the Sue Cooke Winfrey Memorial Fund at the [Hampton Roads Community Foundation](#) supported the project.

When Your Child is in Foster Care: A Handbook for Parents and Guardians provides a brief description of the legal process, explains the roles and responsibilities of the professionals involved and defines commonly used terms.



Along with CASA volunteers in each locality, attorneys, social workers and even judges have access to the handbook. The project promotes our commitment to a community that provides the tools and resources for families to be successful. We acknowledge the generous individuals who join us in pursuit of this vision.

To obtain a copy of the handbook, please contact us at (757) 397-2799 or info@fopjc.org.

WORKSHOP HELPS PROFESSIONALS, LGBTQ YOUTH

Gay adolescents may face traumatic rejection from their families. In foster care, problems can be worsened if the professionals charged with their care lack understanding or feel uncomfortable with them.

After attending a workshop presented by Dr. Chris Downs at the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Conference in Seattle, Natasha Knight, Portsmouth CASA's program coordinator said she had a new perspective on being an ally for the LGBTQ community.

With funding from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, Knight brought Downs to Portsmouth for a daylong workshop. Juvenile justice and child welfare workers, police and

teachers from throughout Hampton Roads were invited to attend the interactive training, "Working with LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care," in June at Trinity Episcopal Church. Topics covered included the process of coming out and why it's important to youth, resources for LGBTQ youth and LGBTQ terminology.

Downs, who spent the first few years of his life in foster care, has more than 30 years of academic, policy and community service to older youth and young adults associated with child welfare and education. He is president of The Downs Company, LLC, based in Seattle. The company's mission is to improve services and outcomes for youth living in out-of-home care, such as foster care.



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Natasha Knight, CASA Program Coordinator
Tony Armistead, Community Service Program Coordinator
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Graphic Design: CT Design Group; Copywriting: Sonja Barisic and Susan Fincke



1345 Court Street / Portsmouth, VA 23705
Phone: (757) 397-2799 / Fax: (757) 397-2994
Email: info@fopjc.org

Connect with us: www.FOPJC.org

