



keeping children safe
and families together

Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court, Inc.

Impact
Report 15/16

You Can Help Make Our Community a Safe, Nurturing Place for All



Judi Luffman
President,
Board of Directors



Susan M. Fincke
Executive Director

For nearly 20 years, Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court has been at the forefront of tackling child abuse and neglect, and juvenile delinquency, in our community.

Our programs have transformed over time, but our focus has remained consistent: to create a better future for the children and families who appear in Portsmouth courtrooms.

Did you know about a quarter of the Portsmouth population is less than 18 years old? Nationwide, more than half of all children — 58 percent — have been exposed to violence and 41 percent have been physically assaulted, according to the National Study on Children's Exposure to Violence.

The trauma created in these young lives makes our work essential. And your support is critical.

Our staffers often come face-to-face with the most critical issues afflicting families: homelessness, addiction, violence and dropping out of high school. For many of the children and young people we see, we are the only caring and consistent adult presence in their lives.

We strive to keep children safe and families together. With the support of trusted partners and donors like you, we will accomplish this goal.

You can help make Portsmouth a safe and nurturing community for all. Thank you.

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.



Commonwealth's Attorney Urges Adults to Be Positive Voice for Children



Grownups, dealing with adult responsibilities, can forget what it's like to be children, and how monumental childhood stresses can be to those going through them, said Portsmouth Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie N. Morales.

"Just imagine what it would be like if you were enduring an abusive and neglectful environment," she said.

Children need adults in their community to be a positive voice for them, she said as a crowd watched hundreds of blue pinwheels whirl in the wind.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and every April since 2012, the Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court has planted a pinwheel garden as part of Pinwheels for Prevention. The national campaign aims to raise awareness, educate people about child abuse and neglect, and promote prevention strategies.

"The very best way to prevent child abuse and neglect is to advocate for strong families by providing them with the resources they need to raise children who are happy and healthy and have every opportunity to prosper," Susan M. Fincke, executive director of FOPJC, said during a ceremony to dedicate the 2016 garden created in Festival Park at the Portsmouth Pavilion.

As Portsmouth's top prosecutor, Morales is well aware of the lifelong impact of child abuse and neglect. Her office, she said, often deals with adults who have turned to a life of crime because abuse as children made them feel worthless.

"If we can intervene early, we can really prevent a lot of the crime that ends up happening in our city," said Morales, who was the keynote speaker.

Intervention and prevention need a strong, community-based approach, she said. Adults must be vigilant in recognizing abuse because children may not ask for help for fear of repercussions by their abusers, she said.

And parents, police, teachers — everyone in the community — must all work to show children that they are cared about and valued, she said. Morales noted that Peggy O'Mara, former editor of "Mothering" magazine, said, "The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice."

"What do we want the children of our community to hear inside their heads?" Morales said. "Do we want them to feel confident inside, do we want them to feel that they can achieve whatever they want to achieve, that they can come back to our city and contribute as members of our community?"

Morales encouraged adults to find ways to be positive role models for children. For example, invite a child to shadow you at your place of employment, as her staff does.

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Impact Statements

\$27,730 / The dollar value of Portsmouth CASA volunteers' efforts on behalf of children in foster care. We can't put a value on their hearts.

97% / The percentage of recommendations made by Portsmouth CASA volunteers accepted by a judge. This is one of the many reasons we're proud of them.

1,888 / The number of hours of community service provided by Portsmouth teens. Typical youth is a 16-year-old male who hopes never to use a broom again.

80 / The number of children and youth who had a CASA volunteer working hard to give them a better future. Every one of them is more likely to find a safe, nurturing and permanent home because he or she has a CASA.

Court Appointed Special Advocates 2015-16

- Nicole Armstrong
- Janice Bowers
- Kathryn Bryant
- Antionette Chambers
- Janice Drewry
- Paula Fillmore
- Jennifer Gallagher
- Elijah Gordon
- Lisa Hall-Whaley
- Mary Hardy
- Michele Harrington
- Jackie Hicks
- Latasha Jackson
- Da'Necia Joyner
- Troy Joyner
- Laniesa Kasperski
- Brenda Littles
- Cynthia McCoy
- Andrea Morgan
- Latoya Parker
- LaKiesha Pierce
- Lynn Piersall
- Aviance Robins
- Tenita Rodgers
- Willie Scott, Jr.
- Cheryll Trower
- Amberlea Villafane
- Diane Wesh
- Shalalia Wesley
- Kathy Wilder
- Isiah Williams
- Jamarius Williams
- Karen Williams
- Karen Wilson
- Rochelle Wolfe

Board members Leah Stith and Lynn Briley welcome Portsmouth Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Elie Bracy, III to The Baron's Pub fundraiser in October 2015. Thanks to our generous donors (and Tyler's famous brisket), the event raised more than \$2,700.



Ronnie Gehring and Ann Kirk-Mendes enjoyed reminiscing at the Capitol in Richmond during the October 2015 celebration of 30 years of Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA, programs in Virginia.

The first CASA program was launched in Roanoke in 1985. Today there are 27 programs scattered across the Commonwealth.

The Honorable Joel Crowe appointed the first Portsmouth CASA volunteer in January 1999. Thanks to you, we have championed children ever since.

Board Profile: For Yvette Watkins-Cherry, Volunteering Fills the Heart



Yvette Watkins-Cherry's love for, and rapport with, children began when she was just a kid herself, spending time around the daycare center her aunt owned.

She majored in early childhood education at Norfolk State University and then taught at the Denbigh Early Childhood Center in Newport News, helping 4-and 5-year-olds in the First Step program get ready for school.

Her career evolved into helping adults as a substance abuse case manager for the Portsmouth Drug Treatment Court Program, where she's worked for 14 years. But she's continued to focus on uplifting children and families as a volunteer and Board member with the Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court.

"It makes me feel good knowing that I'm making a difference in my community," Watkins-Cherry said. "It fills my heart."

In keeping with her love for children, Watkins-Cherry served as president of the Portsmouth chapter of Jack & Jill of America, Inc., an organization of mothers of children ages 2-19 dedicated to nurturing future African-American leaders.

She became involved with FOPJC as a mentor. She spent her lunch breaks with several young girls at Churchland Middle School being a sounding board for them.

When that program ended, she wanted to stay connected with FOPJC because of her strong belief in the mission. So she was delighted to be asked to join the Board by a coworker, Vernon Williams. She served on the Board for six years, holding the positions of vice president and program committee chair.

Watkins-Cherry is originally from Greensboro, N.C., but has made Portsmouth home since 1992. Her husband, Paige D. Cherry, now a Portsmouth City councilman, was stationed at the Army's Fort Monroe in Hampton. They decided to raise their daughter, Phyllysha, now 24, in Portsmouth because Paige had family here.

While she came off the FOPJC Board in June after two three-year terms, she intends to remain active in the organization. She's already recruited two new Board members.

"I believe in keeping families together," Watkins-Cherry said. "If children make a mistake, correct them and help them make changes. It's a sad situation these children are in. You have to help them."

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Financial Support

The Board of Directors acknowledges the following individuals, corporations, foundations and government entities for their generous support of our important work with youth and families. Your gifts are changing lives in Portsmouth. *Thank you.*

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

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Edward Misle

In memory of Barbara Fincke
Christine Fincke

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In honor of Mary Simms & Tina Hill
Hank & Janice Bowers

In honor of Susan M. Fincke
Sonja Barisic
John Couchell
Jo Ann Hofheimer

Statement of Financial Position

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Assets

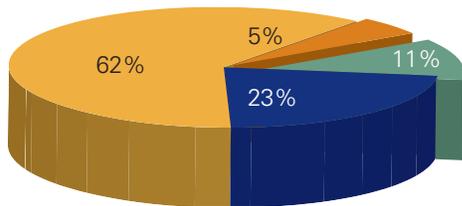
Cash/Cash Equivalents	\$ 58,518
Property/Equipment	\$ 1,628
Total Assets	\$ 60,146

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities.....	\$ -5,622
Net Assets	\$ 65,769
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 60,146

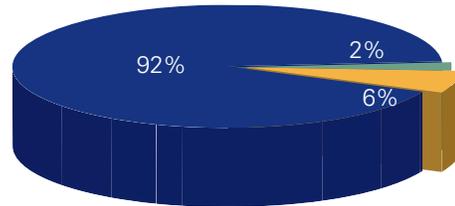
Every donation, no matter the size, is invested in a better future for Portsmouth children.

Revenue



Government [62%]	\$ 100,638
Foundations [23%].....	\$ 37,170
Donations and Special Events [11%].....	\$ 17,541
Corporations [5%]	\$ 7,579
Total [100%]	\$ 162,928

Expenses

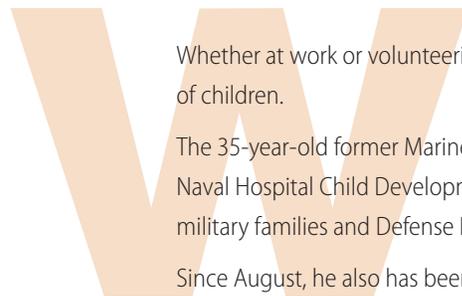


Programs [92%]	\$ 145,985
Management and General [6%].....	\$ 9,699
Fundraising [2%].....	\$ 2,442
Total [100%]	\$ 158,126

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.”

— Margaret Mead, cultural anthropologist

CASA Profile: Volunteer Focuses on Children's Best Interests



Whether at work or volunteering, Stacey Hill is dedicated to improving the lives of children.

The 35-year-old former Marine defies stereotypes in his fulltime job at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital Child Development Center. Stacey cares for children in the 24/7 program for military families and Defense Department civilians.

Since August, he also has been a Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA. The program is offered by Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court and is one of more than 900 CASA programs nationwide working to recruit, screen and train volunteers to advocate for children in foster care.

At FOPJC, our goal is to provide a CASA volunteer to every child who comes through Portsmouth's foster care system to help ensure they grow up in safe, permanent and loving homes. Your support makes this possible.

Stacey, like all CASA volunteers, visits children who were abused or neglected and then placed in foster care. He also visits with parents, grandparents and other family members, as well as teachers, doing his best to get to know the adults in the children's lives.

"You are involved with everyone who has some type of impact in the kid's life," he said. "It motivates you to do whatever you can and make sure that everybody is on the same page" to make sure the child's needs are met.

"A child could be in foster care as long as three or four years," he said. Often, a CASA is the only consistent adult on the case from beginning to end.

"If you start at an early age instilling core values, you can make a whole lot of difference," he said.

Stacey has found that helping children as a CASA volunteer also is helping him finish a degree in criminal justice, with a minor in human services. CASA "gave me a sense of belonging, a sense of drive, a sense of passion," said Stacey. Armed with his degree from American Military University in December, he will pursue a career in juvenile justice.

"If you start at an early age instilling core values, you can make a whole lot of difference."

Party Previews Pinwheels for Prevention

Board President Judi Luffman kicked off Child Abuse Prevention Month in April by hosting an after-work gathering of old and new friends. Guests mingled in the conference room and spilled out onto the sidewalk at Board member Bart Tuthill's law office. Luffman shared a heart-felt message on the need to convert words into action on behalf of Portsmouth children. Guests stepped up to the challenge pledging more than \$2,500. Doing good feels good.



Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky shares insights with executive director Susan Fincke and treasurer Terry Parker.

Board member DeForest Mapp reminisces with retired educator Ernest Everett.



Attorney Steven Washington, Board president Judi Luffman and LCDR Jim Cullen chat about "kids today."

CASA Volunteers Take Time for the Children

Imagine being 6 years old. Now imagine adults come to your house with a police officer. They gather a few of your belongings and then they take you to the home of a stranger. You sleep in an unfamiliar bed and eat different food. Everyone is nice but you still feel alone and frightened.

A few days later, you meet another stranger. He is a Court Appointed Special Advocate or CASA for short. He explains that he has been asked by a judge to be your advocate. His job is to gather the facts about you and your family and help the judge decide what is best for you. He wants you to be safe and nurtured, to find a permanent home and to be happy. You like your CASA. He helps you feel better about your future.

Behind every Portsmouth CASA is a host of people who will never meet that frightened child but who care just as deeply about him or her. Your donation to FOPJC helps ensure that every Portsmouth child in foster care has a CASA. On behalf of that 6-year old, thank you.

After Community Service, Teen Looks Toward Bright Future



“What brought you to us was a negative, but at the completion of the program, you have a lot of positive outcomes...”

Tamar Sweat is working toward graduating early from high school. He dreams about playing college sports and earning an engineering degree. Without your support, the 15-year-old Churchland High School sophomore might be in jail right now because of some “dumb decisions.”

He’d never been in trouble before, said his grandmother, Gail Sweat, who is raising Tamar and his three siblings.

“He’s not a bad kid,” she said.

Tamar’s offenses were serious enough to earn him a two-year jail sentence. A judge gave him two years on probation and 100 hours of community service. Those hours were coordinated by the Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court.

Tony Armistead, FOPJC’s community service program coordinator averages 24 cases per month. Most involve minor offenses, such as curfew and traffic violations. For many teens, it is their first brush with the law, he said.

Tony meets with the child and parents or guardians to go over the regulations and assign a work site. FOPJC works with community partners, including the city’s parks and recreation department, churches and local nonprofit organizations to provide work sites.

“What brought you to us was a negative, but at the completion of the program, you have a lot of positive outcomes, such as the opportunity to give back to the community,” he tells the young people.

Tamar completed most of his required 100 hours over the summer. He handed out child abuse prevention fliers, picked up trash at a city park and volunteered at the library, among other tasks.

Tamar also participated in Smart Transitions offered by the Together We Can Foundation. He attended weekly sessions designed to help teens develop short- and long- term goals. They work on employment skills, develop a resume and have a portrait taken by a professional photographer, Tony said.

Tamar’s probation is supervised, requiring him to meet regularly with a juvenile probation officer. He returns to court on April 7, 2017 – a date he has memorized. If Tamar stays out of trouble, the judge could allow him to serve the final year of his probation without supervision.

Tamar knows he is lucky. Lucky that he can hang out at the mall and go to movies, that he can take part in basketball, track and his favorite sport, football.

Gail said she is proud of Tamar for taking responsibility and approaching his community service with a positive attitude.

“Hopefully he learned from his mistakes and he can move forward,” she said.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. A blue pinwheel, the campaign's symbol, represents the innocence and potential of every child. When a community invests in safe and healthy children, it invests in its own social and economic future.



Board members Bruce LaLonde and Diane Pomeroy Griffin were among the enthusiastic crowd at the Pinwheel Garden Dedication Ceremony.

The annual event draws many local officials including Portsmouth Fire Chief Dwayne Bonnette, who knows the importance of keeping children and families safe.



Invest in Your Community While You Shop



Join the **Kroger Community Rewards Program**. It's easy. Link your Kroger Plus Card to Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court. Our number is 81348. When you shop at Kroger, you're helping Portsmouth children and teens.



Shopping on Amazon? Be sure to use **Amazon Smile** and designate Friends of the Portsmouth Juvenile Court. A portion of the money you spend comes back to your community to build better futures.

Graphic Design: CT Design Group; Photography: RocketBike and Tyrone Aikins; Copywriting: Sonja Barisic and Susan Fincke

"If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales."

— Albert Einstein, theoretical physicist

You Can Create Brighter Futures for Portsmouth Kids

Research shows that caring adults in a child's life make all the difference. When you contribute to FOPJC, your tax-deductible donation helps us recruit, screen, and train compassionate adults eager to be of service in our community. Please do your part and make a donation today. A monthly recurring donation will increase the impact of your gift. You can donate online at www.fopjc.org or use the envelope provided. Thank you.

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1345 Court Street / Portsmouth, VA 23705
Phone: (757) 397-2799 / Fax: (757) 397-2994
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