



# NewsLight

A newsletter for contributors and friends of the Virginia Community Foundation  
Spring/Summer 2009

Vol. 14, No. 1

Your community. Your legacy.

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## NewsLight

NewsLight is the official semi-annual publication of the Virginia Community Foundation.

### Board Members

- Donna Leese, Chair
- Brandon Seppala, Vice Chair
- Nancee Norri, 2nd Vice Chair
- Brenda Suihkonen, Secretary
- Keith Harvey, Treasurer
- Micheal Appelwick
- Chris Bialke
- Paul Carlson
- Brittany Chopp
- Rudy Harvey
- John Kohlhase
- Robert Prittinen
- Dr. Ken Sussman

Linda Niskanen, Executive Director  
Deb Luoma, Administrative Assistant

Questions, comments or donations may be sent to:

Virginia Community Foundation,  
P.O. Box 559, Virginia, MN 55792  
218-749-8239



[www.virginiafoundation.com](http://www.virginiafoundation.com)

## Personal Board Donations Increase Grant Impact

Board members of the Virginia Community Foundation were so moved by stories of the growing needs at the Family Investment Center that they decided to add their personal donations of goods to a recently approved Foundation grant. The Virginia Community Foundation approved a programming grant of \$1,860 to the Family Investment Center and added the donation of a used computer system.

“Our board members wanted to show their personal support by bringing items from home to further the impact of the Foundation grant,” said Board Chair, Donna Leese. The Foundation

board members and staff brought in sets of dishes and boxes of kitchenware,

*The support from the Virginia Community Foundation is tremendous and will help so many struggling families.*

— Robin Mayry

along with 18 blankets and bedding. Included were six new handmade quilts

*continued on bottom of page 3*





# Message from the Chair

Being generous and giving to charitable causes is an American tradition. The good work done by the Virginia Community Foundation is accomplished with funds that are donated by the generosity of those living in or connected to this community. Never before have we seen

a greater need as our community faces an uncertain economy. Income from donations, investment earnings, and foundation grants are all affected.

By continuing to donate to the Foundation, you are actually making Virginia a better place to live, a community you can be proud of. Never underestimate what your donations, large or small, can add up to. Improving our community can also attract more economic development, which in turn could lead to more jobs. So if at all possible, please don't stop giving.

We also encourage people to think about making a donation to the Virginia Community Foundation instead of giving traditional gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, births, retirements, memorials, graduations, holidays, etc... in the name of the person you wish to acknowledge. Haven't you ever been more excited about giving someone a special gift rather than receiving one? Giving is a great way to feel good about ourselves. With the recent death of my father, my family felt honored that so many friends gave a memorial gift in his name.

The gifts the Foundation receives now will help our community today, as well as benefit future generations. You can make a donation by mail, phone or online. Include the person who is the recipient and the name and address of a family member who will receive an acknowledgement card

along with your personal information. Remember these gifts are also tax deductible.

Be assured the Virginia Community Foundation continues to work at increasing our network of supporters by broadening our donor base as well as appealing to new contributors during these difficult times.

The Virginia Community Foundation also welcomes new board members, Dr. Ken Sussman and Paul Carlson. With your support, the Foundation board will continue its commitment to grow the endowment during this economic downturn for the betterment of our community.

As my term as Chair is nearing an end, I feel honored to be a part of such a wonderful and caring organization that has done so much for this community. The generosity and willingness to make a difference by so many in our community is remarkable. Brandon Seppala will be assuming the Chair position beginning in July.

## Help the Foundation Go Green!

In order to reduce overhead and environmental impact while enhancing the immediacy and effectiveness of our communications, the Virginia Community Foundation will begin a transition from paper to digital communications. You may have already noticed that there is no list of donors included with this issue of NewsLight. We understand that the lists are important to many donors, but rather than publish our donors in each newsletter, we will post a current list of

*continued on bottom of page 5*



To view donor lists online, please go to:  
[www.virginiafoundation.com/donors](http://www.virginiafoundation.com/donors)

## Get on the Ball!

### Support Virginia's second mural celebrating Marty Biondich

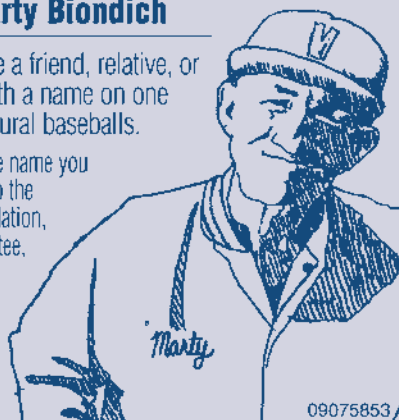


Commemorate a friend, relative, or yourself with a name on one of the mural baseballs.

To participate, send \$50 with the name you wish included (printed) to the Virginia Community Foundation, Attention Mural Committee, P.O. Box 559, Virginia, MN 55792

Deadline to order baseballs is May 29th

Questions? Call Marietta at 218-741-1226



09075853

# Building Blue Pride

*Thank you for your support of Virginia High School activities!*

*“We’ll cheer for our dear old high school,*

*Mighty boys and girls in blue. Ever our loyalty,*

*To our school we will be true....”*

Thanks to strong community support, the Blue Pride Fund, a designated fund of the Virginia Community Foundation, has granted over \$30,000 to support and enhance extra-curricular activities at VHS. This year, our fundraising efforts focused on the Blue Pride Raffle and Dance which was held on a cold winter night in January. The event celebrated home victories for the boys’ basketball and hockey teams.



## Blue Pride Fund GRANTS AWARDED IN 2008:

- **\$1200 for boys and girls tennis for Dartfish computer software**  
*This technology allows coaches to analyze player strokes.*
- **\$1200 for boys and girls golf for Dartfish computer software**  
*This technology allows coaches to analyze player golf swings.*
- **\$1200 for backboards for the old gym**  
*These gyms are heavily used for junior high basketball games, practices and tournaments.*

## Blue Pride Fund GRANTS AWARDED IN 2009:

- **\$679 for football for a tackling mat**
- **\$360 to the swimming and diving program for two swim lane lines**
- **\$1500 for two wireless scoreboards in the Roosevelt Gym for basketball and volleyball**

*continued from front page*

## Helping Virginia Families

donated by Trinity Lutheran Church quilters.

Robin Mayry, volunteer president of the Family Investment Center said, “The support from the Virginia Community Foundation is tremendous and will help so many struggling families in Virginia.”

For further grant news, please see Grants in Action on page 5.



# Building Resources for the Arts

P&H Mining Equipment, through the Joy Global Foundation, recently donated \$10,000 to the Virginia Community Foundation to establish a challenge gift for a new Fund for the Arts.

Gifts from individuals and groups will be matched by P&H Mining Equipment and used exclusively to support the arts in the greater Virginia community.

P&H Mining Equipment Manager, Jon Anderson, said, "The gift through Joy Global



Foundation (the parent company's philanthropic arm) is a direct reflection on the dedication and high-quality service provided by our local staff." He continued, "We are proud to support the Virginia Community Foundation's mission to build a better community

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*We are on a mission  
to build a better  
community.*

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by providing additional resources for the arts."

The Virginia Community Foundation is proud to have P&H Mining Equipment as a new partner

in providing permanent resources for Virginia. Donna Leese, Board Chair, said, "With the challenge gift, donors will get a 100% return on their donations to the Fund for the Arts, and that is exceptional."

Donations can be made payable to the Virginia Community Foundation with instructions that the gift be directed to the Fund for the Arts. Donations of all sizes are encouraged and can be mailed to the Virginia Community Foundation at PO Box 559 in Virginia or delivered to the office at 519 Chestnut Street.

If you have questions, please contact the Foundation at 749-8239 or by e-mail to [director@virginiafoundation.com](mailto:director@virginiafoundation.com)



**The Virginia Community Foundation invited representatives from local arts organizations to the Foundation office to announce the new Fund for the Arts.**

**Seated: Deb Luoma, Linda Niskanen, Nancee Norri, Kristi Sutton, Barbara Baldrice, Donna Haapala. Standing: Larry Rasen, John Tourville, Mike Appelwick, Charlie Baribeau, Char Luoma, Jon Anderson, Bob Baldrice, Dr. Russell Bergum.**

# Community Grants in Action

In addition to the grant to the Family Investment Center mentioned on the front page, funds were awarded to Generation W for the purchase of DJ Equipment. Expanding on their entrepreneurial spirit, Generation W (a student-run newspaper) now offers DJ services at dances for Virginia and other local schools. A \$2500 Virginia Community Foundation grant was awarded to complete equipment purchases.

Soon students in grades 4 – 12 will be able to view the expanded Video Information System in the Virginia school cafeteria. Grant funds from the Virginia Community Foundation will be used for the second phase of this modern communication system. Students update a daily slide show with academic announcements, athletic game results, award and club notices, and weather related announcements. The news is broadcast throughout the day

on receivers throughout the school. The flow of positive information builds school spirit. With one of the first receivers located directly outside of his office, Kerry Bidle, athletic director, knows first-hand that many students seek out the information. Each morning, groups of students stop to catch the latest news and walk away with more Blue Pride.



*continued from page 2*

## *Help the Foundation Go Green*

our donors on our web site. The printed donor list will be included in the winter issue of NewsLight only.

Depending on donors' feedback, we hope to ultimately replace the printed donor lists with the online posts altogether. This simple change would save the Foundation hundreds of dollars each issue for paper, printing and mailing costs.

This is just a first step in our long-term goal of replacing many of our

mailed materials with web-based communications. To help us fulfill our goal and ensure continued timely communications, we ask that you send us an e-mail with your current e-mail address to: [director@virginiafoundation.com](mailto:director@virginiafoundation.com) or visit our web site at [www.virginiafoundation.com](http://www.virginiafoundation.com) in the near future to sign up for our e-news updates which are planned to begin by the fall of 2009.

It is our hope that our transition to

digital communication will enhance, not hinder, communications with our supporters. For those of you who do not have access to the internet or e-mail, we will make every effort to continue keeping you up to date through the use of mailed materials. Our ultimate goal is to reduce our costs, leaving more money for grants, and we're confident that's a goal you will all support.

# *Farewell to Long-time Leadership & Hello to New Board Members*

New leadership positions with the Virginia Community Foundation have been filled by Paul Carlson and Dr. Kenneth Sussman. Paul Carlson, Assistant Executive Director of AEOA, recently joined the board. Paul's broad knowledge brings non-profit expertise and community understanding to the Foundation. After 30 years as a pediatrician, Dr. Sussman is committed to

staying active by serving the community as a Foundation board member. The community is fortunate to be Dr. Sussman's new patient.

Twenty-nine years of dedicated service to the Foundation came to an end as Deanne Butorac, Erik Peterson and Loy Gotham completed terms with the Foundation. Deanne Butorac, who was elected in 1996, was

a board member during the transition to an independent foundation. Her term was extended to ensure continuity and board experience. Erik Peterson was elected to the board in 1999 and was joined by Loy Gotham one year later. Deanne, Erik and Loy all held various leadership positions on the board through their years of commitment to our community.



**Paul Carlson**



**Dr. Sussman**



**Loy Gotham**



**Erik Peterson**



**Deanne Butorac**

## **IRA Giving Provides Tax Benefits**

New laws allow individuals to give a portion of their individual retirement accounts (IRAs) to charity, tax-free. The legislation was enacted for 2008 and extended through 2009.

People age 70 1/2 and older can transfer up to \$100,000 of IRA assets to public charities, including the Virginia Community Foundation, without triggering federal income taxes today or estate taxes in the future.

For those who were adversely affected by the economic downturn, the Worker, Retiree and Employer Recovery Act of 2008 suspended the minimum distributions from IRAs.

IRAs continue to be a great source of support for individuals and charities. Check with your tax advisor to see how you can take advantage of the new laws and help your favorite charity at the same time.



# Educational Fund Inspires Future Authors

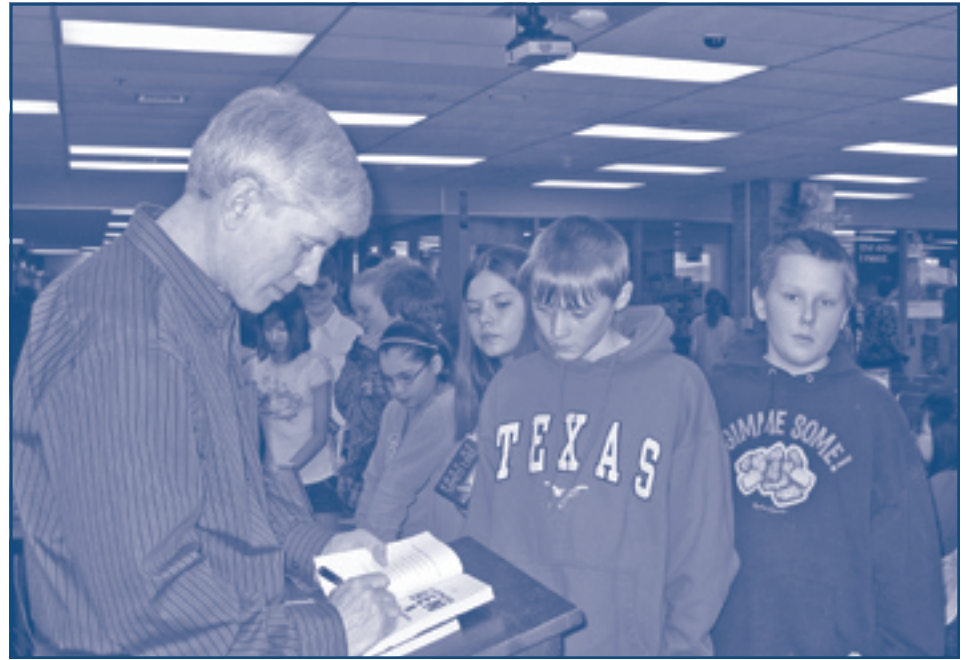
The Virginia Educational Fund awarded its first grant to Roosevelt Elementary School to host national award-winning author, Bill Durbin, on March 2nd, as a part of Read Across America Day. Mr. Durbin has written many books, primarily historical novels set in northern Minnesota. He joined 5th and 6th graders and shared colorful stories discovered during research.

Someday we may be reading books by Roosevelt sixth-grader, Peter Nelson, who thought William Durbin's visit to his school was fantastic! Peter wrote, "William Durbin's visit was awesome! He is my favorite author, so getting to meet him was very cool. He had an amazing presentation and was encouraging. He gave us great tips on how to become good writers."

As a part of the Virginia Community Foundation, the Educational Fund is dedicated to building educational

resources for Virginia Public Schools. Seventy percent of every gift to the Virginia Educational Fund becomes a

part of a permanent endowment, while the remaining 30 percent is available for grants such as Mr. Durbin's visit.



To view donor lists online, please go to:  
[www.virginiafoundation.com/donors](http://www.virginiafoundation.com/donors)

*Your community. Your legacy.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby pledge a sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 payable annually *or* as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Charge my MasterCard or Visa:  
 # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_\_

*Gifts in all amounts are appreciated.*

**Direct my gift as follows: (circle one)**

*Foundation's General Unrestricted Endowment*

*Downtown Revitalization Non-endowed Fund*

*Virginia's Non-endowed Mural Fund*

*Blue Pride Fund*

*Virginia Public Library Fund*

*Virginia Educational Fund*

*Mesabi Range Youth for Christ Fund*

*Fund for the Arts*

My gift is in memory / honor of:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



*Your community. Your legacy.*

**Make checks payable to:**  
**Virginia Community Foundation**  
 519 Chestnut Street  
 PO Box 559  
 Virginia, MN 55792  
 (218) 749-8239  
[www.virginiafoundation.com](http://www.virginiafoundation.com)

# Stock Market Impacts Foundation Endowment

It was about a year ago when people on the range were boasting about the promising economic news for the area. Mesabi Nugget, Polymet and Essar Steel were expected to make significant investments into the region and the local taconite mines were producing at high rates. The local economy was clipping along at a nice pace when the world and national economies were hit by a serious recession. And of course this recession has made its way into our local economy and slowed things down a bit.

Unfortunately no one is immune to an economic downturn including the Virginia Community Foundation. A significant decline in the stock market has had a tremendous impact on the Foundation's endowment fund. Like many foundations around the country,

the Virginia Community Foundation experienced a substantial reduction in the value of its endowment fund. And of course this results in fewer dollars available to reinvest into the community.

What makes this most unfortunate is that it comes at a time when needs are the greatest. The Foundation board is well aware of this and is doing everything it can to mitigate the effects of the losses to the endowment and to minimize the impact to our community.

The Foundation board developed an investment policy several years ago that establishes guidelines that require a diversified portfolio aimed at balancing risk and return. The policy insures that our portfolio manager, Wells Fargo, invests in a wide ranging mix of equity funds, bonds and fixed

income investments. The policy is geared for the long term and, of course, long term investments require faith, confidence and stability. We must remember that the Virginia Community Foundation endowment is a "permanent endowment." The investment policy of the board is designed to protect and preserve that money through both the good times and the bad times. The Foundation board has set high expectations for the performance of the portfolio and monitors that performance through its Finance Committee.

Although this is a difficult time for many, it is as critical a time as ever to continue the great work that we do and strive to grow the Virginia Community Foundation.

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Virginia Community Foundation



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