



NewsLight

A newsletter for contributors and friends of the Virginia Community Foundation

Your community. Your legacy.

Winter 2015

Vol. 19, No. 1

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NewsLight

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

Board Members

Laura Bachschneider, Chair
 Erik Wedge, Vice Chair
 Holly Lundgren, Secretary
 Bernie Knutson, Treasurer
 Paul Carlson
 Carol Sundquist
 Kerry Waschke Collie
 Andrew Peterson
 Rozella "Rozie" Gams
 Catherine Branville

Professional Staff

Ronda "Rudy" Harvey, Executive Director
 Shelby Paulson, Administrative Assistant

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Questions, comments or donations may be sent to:
 Virginia Community Foundation,
 P.O. Box 559, Virginia, MN 55792
 218-749-8239

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www.virginiafoundation.com

Need Filled by Anonymous Donor

We are pleased to announce the addition of the Lou's Closet Fund to our Virginia Community Foundation family of funds. In early 2014, members of our board, along with a local financial advisor, worked with a donor, *who wishes to remain anonymous*, to create a fund that leaves a legacy in addition to filling a great need in our schools and community. The Lou's Closet Fund was created on December 30, 2014, solely to support and promote services to the students of ISD 706. Although Lou's Closet will be similar in scope to the existing Kids' Closet, it will be funded solely

from the fund. Seventy percent of each contribution will go to the endowment fund and the remaining 30% will be available to meet current needs. School Nurse, Misty Elliott, will take the lead on purchasing the supplies for students, as she is most familiar with what is needed. "This is such a generous gift and couldn't happen at a better time" says Elliot, "we have much need in our schools and this will make it easier to be certain we can fill that need". The fund was opened with a transfer of stock, which was a first for the Virginia Community Foundation.

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Message from the Chair

Every day when I drop my children off at school, I am thankful for the good fortune that I was able to return to my hometown to live and raise my family right here in Virginia. I am blessed to be

surrounded by family and friends who have welcomed my husband and love my children like their own. I love Virginia and am proud to be a part of the Virginia Community Foundation.

Many friends and co-workers have asked me, “What is the Virginia Community Foundation?” The Foundation is our community’s savings account, founded in 1990, to make Virginia a strong and healthy community. All gifts, small and large, allow us to give back. Different funds have been established so your giving can be directed to a fund that is meaningful to you and your family. “Thank You!” to all of our past donors, memorial donors and our first time donors. These gifts allow us to build something for our children and grandchildren.

Every year, our board goes through transition with new members joining us and a few members we must say good-bye to. This year the board welcomes Holly Lundgren, Andy Peterson, Catherine Branville, and Rozella “Rozie” Gams. They are all strong leaders and great people who are very committed to our community. We also honored Keith Harvey, Rudy Harvey and

Brandon Seppala with the much coveted 5th Avenue light standard for eight years of service to the board. We also said farewell to Mike Perala who served us well as last year’s Board Chair. We thank them for their dedication and leadership to the Virginia Community Foundation.

Currently, our board is going through a series of strategic planning sessions and revamping our goals and mission statement. Change is a good thing – it keeps us on our toes and breathes life into our community. Stay tuned for exciting new ideas we have for Virginia – it will involve you!!

We are all so excited to have Rudy Harvey as our new Executive Director! Rudy not only brings eight years of experience as a board member, but her work experience and volunteer work made her the perfect match to lead us to make Virginia the Queen City it is. We are also thrilled that Shelby Paulson has joined us as the Administrative Assistant. Shelby is the perfect complement to Rudy and the pair work wonderfully together. Stop in to see them if you have not yet had the chance. The office had a makeover and the coffee is on.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank our donors, our staff, and the many dedicated volunteers. The Board, Rudy and Shelby are committed to making the Virginia Community Foundation the best it can be. Thank you all!!

Sincerely,
Laura Bachschneider

Friends of the Foundation *Message from the outgoing chair*

Your foundation was extremely active throughout 2014. Our new Board members are carrying forward the rich tradition of past board members and are upholding the vision of the foundation as we focus on continuing to grow the endowment and making a positive impact on our community.

Our student philanthropy initiatives were enriched with the May awarding of the three scholarships we manage, honoring Virginia natives Marvin Skaurud, George Munig, and Garett Plotnik. Congratulations to Taylor

Gunderson, Cole Babiracki, and Aaron Wilcox for the hard work that led to their recognition.

Donations to the foundation continue be strong, and we thank all of you for your support. We’re very pleased to announce the receipt of the final installment from the Marvin Skaurud estate and of a third large donation from Joy Global, one of our valued Virginia business partners. Our focus on community engagement also continued strongly with the 2nd Annual “Redneck Ball – Bucks and Does” event at the Virginia Elks.

A growing and thriving foundation like ours reaches

“moments of truth” in which it’s appropriate to step back, take a look at where we’ve been, and chart where we’d like to go. I want to let you know that we’ve begun that process and have some early accomplishments to show for it. With the assistance of Whitney Crettol Consulting, we’re developing



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Harvey named Full-Time Director

As I write this, it has been exactly eight years and 33 days since I became a part of the Virginia Community Foundation and witnessed first-hand the impact the foundation has made on this community. During my eight years on the Board of Directors, I have been a part of 50+ grants that have made a difference in all areas of our community, watched the endowment grow by two-million dollars, helped hire our past three executive directors, and worked alongside some of the most dedicated, community-minded people that I will ever know. I have also seen the generosity of our donors, and the love that people have for this wonderful town they call HOME. Knowing my board term would end this past December, I wasn't ready to say goodbye nor did I feel my work was done. So, in September, I accepted the position of Executive Director and now, my full-time focus is on raising money for the endowment, and giving

back to this community that everyone loves! The past few months the board and staff have been involved in a Strategic Planning initiative with Whitney Crettol. Now that we are nearing the end of that process, I am so excited to get to work! I want everyone to know we are here, what we do, and how the Virginia Community Foundation can help be a catalyst for growth, improvement, and change. I look forward to speaking to classes, community organizations, and donors on philanthropy and how we can grow our endowment to help the citizens of Virginia, and our community.

– Rudy Harvey



Anonymous Donor

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Stock transfer is a wonderful way to make a donation because everyone wins: the donor receives crucial tax benefits while the Virginia Community Foundation gets much needed funding. It's easy because we handle all the administrative details, enabling the donor to be involved as much or as little as they wish.

If you would like more information regarding the Lou's Closet Fund, or establishing your own memorial gift, please call the Foundation at 218-749-8239 or visit our website: virginiafoundation.com

Friends of Foundation

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a multi-year strategic plan as a framework to guide this and future boards. The first part of that effort was completed with board training and community outreach meetings last fall, and the plan will be finalized in the first quarter of 2015. Also, we've hired a new full-time Executive Director. Former Board member, Ronda "Rudy" Harvey, began a new chapter in her relationship with the foundation as our new E.D. in September. Rudy and new Administrative Assistant, Shelby Paulson, are working tirelessly and professionally to implement the action plans of the board as our foundation continues to grow and to be an integral part of our community.

I've been both honored and humbled to be the chair of this fine organization in 2014, and I invite you to look to a very bright and promising future through support of your Virginia Community Foundation.

Very truly yours,
Mike Perala

Paulson named Administrative Assistant



When I moved to Virginia in 1997, to work for Service Solutions, our office was at 519 Chestnut

Street. Who would have thought that 17 years later, I would take a position with the Virginia Community Foundation, whose office is now at 519 Chestnut Street!

For 15 of those 17 years, I served as the bookkeeper for the foundation and would come in,

once a month, after hours, to process the monthly financial documents. It was fun to watch, from the background, as the foundation grew during those years and how that growth affected my job as the bookkeeper; with the addition of nine designated funds under the foundation umbrella, my job got a little more interesting as I helped keep track of each of those funds!

Now, I look forward to seeing "first-hand" how the foundation impacts Virginia. I enjoy being part of an organization that strives to bring out the best in this community.

– Shelby Paulson

Foundation Welcomes New Leadership & Bids Farewell To Long Time Members

New leadership positions with the Virginia Community Foundation have been filled by Andrew Peterson, Catherine Branville, Rozella “Rozie” Gams, and Holly Lundgren. These new board members bring a wealth of knowledge and leadership expertise from their current positions within the community. Each member shares the common goal of raising money for our endowment and giving back to our community.



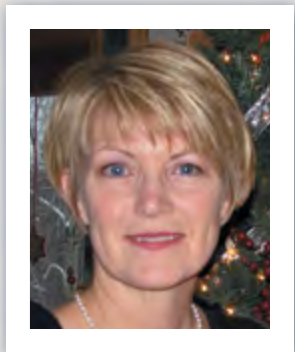
Andrew Peterson



Catherine Branville



Rozella “Rozie” Gams

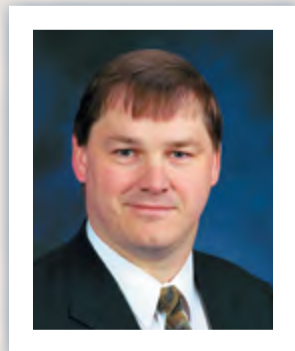


Holly Lundgren

Twenty-eight years of dedicated service to the foundation came to an end as Brandon Seppala, Keith Harvey, Ronda “Rudy” Harvey and Mike Perala completed their terms with the foundation board. Brandon was elected to the board in 2006, and Keith & Rudy joined one year later. Mike was elected to the board in 2010 and completed his four year term earlier in October. All held leadership positions on the board and through their years of commitment have led the foundation through a great decade of transition. Rudy continues with the foundation as the new Executive Director.



Brandon Seppala



Keith Harvey



Ronda “Rudy” Harvey



Mike Perala

Strategic Plan – A New Focus

2015 is going to be a year of transition and change for the Virginia Community Foundation. The year began with new office staff, an office Spacelift, and the board working with Independent Consultant-Whitney Crettol to guide us through developing a plan for the foundation’s future. Our ten-

member board was given the task of identifying community needs and then strategically determining which of those needs to focus on over the next five years. The board invited local leaders to participate in two community focus group sessions which involved identifying those needs. We are now looking at the

results and working collaboratively to define a clear vision of what needs to be done to achieve our new goals. “It has been a year of transition for the foundation and we are all ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work to grow the endowment and give back to our community”, said Harvey.

This article appeared in the June 28, 2014 edition of the Mesabi Daily News and was written by reporter Angie Riebe.

VIRGINIA — The images are honorable and traditional; vividly colorful; and remarkably eye-catching.

And so, once again, the Virginia Mural Committee has added to the celebration of heritage and community in the city with the seventh piece of paneled art that adorn the Queen City's downtown area.

The seventh mural of the series, which depicts the rich history, accomplishments and contemporary life of the Ojibwe (Anishinabe), was unveiled this past June on the Virginia Department of Public Utilities building, across the street from the high school.

And that is most appropriate because the committee hopes the 109-foot long, 9-foot high mural "will enhance educational opportunities in the school district," said committee member Carol Sundquist.

The theme "is rich in history and provides an opportunity to tell that story in a positive and artistic manner, while representing diverse ethnic and cultural traditions through art," she wrote in a letter requesting donations for the project.

The center section depicts a male and female in traditional Ojibwe regalia. Historical symbols, figures and beadwork are meshed between with painted scenes that tell the story of a variety of traditions and customs of the Anishinabe people.

"We have worked closely with a diverse group of individuals within the Ojibwe tribe to ensure the authenticity of our theme as it relates to our local Ojibwe community and to maximize the diverse content and beauty of the mural," according to Sundquist.

The artist, Sue Martinsen, who



lives near Iron River, Wis., also did mural No. 6, "Cruisin' the Main," which is displayed on the exterior west side of Chestnut Collision Center at 105 Chestnut St.

The other murals that captivate Virginia residents and visitors to the city are:

- The initial mural, completed in the summer of 2008 on the corner of Chestnut Street and Second Avenue, which depicts the Koski brothers, who bequeathed their entire estate worth more than \$1 million to the Virginia Community Foundation.

- Mural No. 2, created in 2009 and located on the building housing the Foundation office at 519 Chestnut St., which features the much-loved downtown icon Marty Biondich, who liked to sweep the streets and was fondly known by everyone in town.

- No. 3, the "Veterans Mural," located on a building across from Bailey's Lake, which includes the larger-than-life-size images of area veterans.

- No. 4, the "Canelakes Candy Mural," completed in 2011, near Subway and not far from the longtime candy store, which celebrates the 100 years of the business.

- No. 5, "Marching Blues: The Virginia Marching Band Through Time," on the Arrow Auto Supply building at 411 First St. N., which contains the likenesses of VHS band members through the years.

- No. 6, "Cruisin' the Main," which features classic cars against a backdrop of Virginia downtown storefronts — both historical and current — including current-day Northern State Bank, Rocket Liquors, and Canelakes Candy; and those from the past: Steve's Hamburgers, Bill's Pizza Pancake House, Brown Drug, and the Maco Theater.

And No. 8 is on the way. It will have "a sports/athletic theme," and be painted by Kelly Meredith, a colleague of Martinsen, who kicked off the artwork series with the "Hartley and Wesley Koski Mural."



Connect With Us On Facebook

Connect with us at www.facebook.com/virginiafoundation for news updates, events, photos and discussion boards, and please share our link to your Facebook page to spread the word to friends and family.

Donor Plaques Available for New Sports Mural

When the eighth mural goes up in spring 2015, it will put the committee on schedule to meet its stated goal in 2008, to have 12 murals installed in 12 years. Although the athletic figures and busts have been sold for this mural there are still plaques available to get individual or team names on the mural. Plaques can be purchased in amounts of \$50, \$100, \$150, and \$200 by calling the Virginia Community Foundation office at 218-749-8239.

The Virginia Mural Committee is under the umbrella of the Virginia Community Foundation.



Foundation Named in Skubic Legacy

A very beautiful person, both inside and out. Vicki Lee Skubic was 63 years young when God took her to heaven on October 15, 2014.

In 41 years of marriage, Vicki and Mike were blessed with three healthy boys who have all developed into strong, handsome men. Once the boys became her nucleus, Vicki devoted herself to teaching Ryan, Jeff and Mark all the positive values and life lessons that shaped them into the great role models they are today. Vicki was a true believer that love and a person's structure were learned and formed at home and she never veered from that belief. She kept all four of her 'men' on the "straight & narrow."

Vicki and Mike were also involved as a family. They were sure to attend all school and sports functions the boys were involved in, and that did not stop until all three boys graduated from college. There were many family trips and vacations along the way, too.

Vicki and her family battled her cancer for four years and, through it all, Vicki expressed a positive and

healthy attitude that was admired by all. Whenever she felt well enough to be out in public, her exuberant smile always went with her. Her strength and courage throughout her battle set the bar very high for the rest of us. Vicki fought her illness with grace, poise and dignity. She was the kind of person who was very easy to like, and even easier to love.

Vicki's family chose the Virginia Community Foundation as one of the vessels to funnel donations and bequests in Vicki's name primarily because they wanted those gifts to stay in our local area and be of benefit to the people who surrounded her. It was also chosen because of Mike's past affiliation with the foundation. The other logical choice was Care Partners, our local cancer charity, whose donations also stay in our area.

Vicki was an amazing mother, remarkable wife, and a loving, true friend to all who were fortunate to know her. She will be dearly missed, never forgotten, and forever loved.

Even Vicki would be surprised by the number of people she touched.

Hundreds of "Thank You" cards have been mailed out by the family, and thousands of dollars have been collected in Vicki's memory... a fitting tribute to her legacy. What a woman!!



The Virginia Community Foundation would like to thank the Skubic family for naming them as a recipient of bequests. To date, the foundation has received \$5,510 in Vicki's memory.

The foundation is grateful to all who have selected us to receive bequests and gifts in memory of their loved one. After a gift is received, an acknowledgement is sent to both the donor and the recipient family. It is one way to ensure your loved ones legacy lives on long after they are gone.

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Virginia Foundation Grants Awarded in 2014-2015

**\$5000 – Mesabi Family
YMCA: Replace water
heater to keep building
operational**

**\$5000 – Virginia Community
& Lakes: Silver Lake Trail
Interconnection**

**\$5000 – Friends of the
Library: Olcott Park
restroom updated to
handicap accessibly
guidelines**

**\$500 – Range Respite:
Update phone system for
efficiency and outreach**

**\$500 – Virginia Youth
Baseball: Update jerseys for
team uniforms**

**\$5000 – ISD 706 Choir
Department: New choir
robes for growing number of
participants**

**\$1000 - ISD 706 Music
Department: Frontline
uniforms for the flag team**

Virginia Education Fund Grants Awarded in 2014-2015

**\$1000 – ISD 706: Rohian
yearbook advertising**

**\$1000 – ISD 706: Senior
Class All-Night Graduation
Party**

**\$1500 – ISD 706 Parkview:
New IXL program for
students**

**\$1300 – ISD 706 Parkview:
Laminator for class learning
materials**

**\$700 – ISD 706 Music
Department: Frontline
uniforms for the flag team**

**\$5000 – ISD 706 Choir
Department: New choir
robes for growing number of
participants**

**\$9000 – ISD 706: Goodman
Auditorium update**

**\$9000 – ISD 706 Music
Department: Disney
Workshop Experience**

Blue Pride Fund Grants Awarded in 2014-2015

**\$560 – ISD 706 Hockey:
Locker room updated**

**\$1900 – ISD 706 Baseball:
new aluminum dug-out
benches for Ewen's Field**

**\$1070 – ISD 706 Basketball:
New basketball goals**

**\$2500 – ISD 706 Wrestling:
New wrestling mats**

Scholarships awarded in 2014

**\$500 – Garrett Plotnik
Memorial Scholarship Fund:
Aaron Wilcox**

**\$500 – George Munig
Economic Scholarship Fund:
Cole Babiracki**

**\$500 – Mesabi Range Youth
for Christ Scholarship Fund:
Hunter Goebel**

**\$5000 – Skaurud Memorial
Scholarship Fund: Taylor
Gunderson**



View Donor Lists Online

In order to reduce our mailing and production costs, the foundation will no longer print donor lists in Newslight. To view donor lists, please go to:

www.virginiafoundation.com/donors

If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact the Foundation and request a print out of the donor list from the website. We will be happy to mail the list to you. This change will save the foundation hundreds of dollars each year, allowing more resources available for grants.



Virginia Community Foundation
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Yes! I want to give something back to Virginia!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone(s) _____

Gift Amount \$ _____

- Enclosed is my check, made payable to the Virginia Community Foundation
- Please charge my credit card, using the following credit card information:

Name on the Card _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

3-Digit Code _____

Funds will be applied to the foundation's endowment, unless specified below.

- Blue Pride
- Mesabi Range Youth for Christ
- Parks, Lakes and Recreation
- Virginia Education
- Fund for the Arts
- Plotnik Scholarship
- Virginia Public Library
- Munig Scholarship
- Downtown Revitalization
- Mural
- Lou's Closet

Please return your completed form to: Virginia Community Foundation, PO Box 559, Virginia, MN 55792