

NVFS INSIDER



Monthly Newsletter of Northern Virginia Family Service

Volunteer

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Stories of Resilience



COVID-19
Emergency Response

Stephen and Claude: Friendship in a time of crisis

Stephen Safoschnik and Claude DeHart are roommates at the SERVE shelter. A few weeks ago, the [Washington Post](#) featured their **inspirational story about friendship in a time of crisis**. Their journey at the shelter is only possible because of the generosity of donors and volunteers who dedicate their time, dollars, and heart to the cause. Thank you and stay tuned for an update. We look forward to wishing Stephen and Claude all the best on the next leg of their journey.



Congratulations Christina!

Christina S. received a car through the Vehicles for Change program a few weeks ago and it has been life changing for her. ***"It's given me so much freedom and a huge weight has been lifted. The program is amazing and I know if it helped me, it's helping others as well. Thank you!"*** We're all rooting for you, Christina!

[We want to hear from you!](#) If you've felt inspired by someone's actions, let us know. If you've volunteered recently or gave to a COVID relief fund, tell us why. We will feature a few of the answers we receive on our social media channels and our next edition of the Insider.



Complete Room Make-Over for a Local Foster Family

Back in the fall of 2019, the NVFS Foster Care team was approached by [Elisa Baber of SweetSpace](#), a local interior design company. She wanted to do something special for a family in the area who supported foster care and adoption. Working together, Elisa and the NVFS team screened and selected a local foster family to receive a complete room make-over. Earlier this year (pre-COVID), that dream make-over came true! Thank you Elisa and everyone who donated to this project for transforming this unfinished room into a functional, fun space for the whole family to enjoy!



Reading to Retain: Story Time Goes Virtual

Maybe you've heard about the childrens' books being read by [Michelle Obama on PBS Kids](#) or [Wes Tank rapping Dr. Seuss](#) over Dr. Dre's beats on Youtube? We were particularly inspired by Wes' rendition of Fox in Sox. So we asked volunteers to submit their own read alongs. [These submissions will be shared](#) with the children at the SERVE shelter and with client families around the region. We

will curate the best videos on our Youtube page to share with you all. To participate in our [virtual story time](#), please contact Navara at ncannon@nvfs.org.

Beulah Baptist

...has been volunteering at the SERVE family shelter for more than ten years. Last year, they were nominated (and won) the NVFS Volunteer Award for their amazing contributions to the community. Even now during the pandemic, members of their congregation wanted to

personally serve their monthly meal to the residents of SERVE. Every visit provides a ray of sunshine and piece of normalcy in a very stressful time. With the stricter guidelines in place due to the COVID-19 outbreak, this month the Beulah Baptist team had to deliver their meal instead. While the residents were saddened not to see the familiar faces, the meal serves as a great reminder of the fellowship that cements the foundation of our community.



Updates from the Field: Continuing to Serve

- The **Falls Church Thrift Store will reopen** with limited hours and updated procedures. Beginning the second week of June, the store will be open Thursday and Saturdays from 12 pm - 5 pm. Drop-offs will be accepted June 20th and June 27th from 2 pm - 4 pm. For the updated policies and times, please visit our Thrift Store webpage.
 - Mental health services have resumed and gone virtual! Currently, **more than 200 clients are receiving telemental health counseling** via Doxy.me, a HIPAA compliant telemedicine software.
 - For senior citizens unable to travel to the Hunger Resource Center, **NVFS staff have been driving the extra miles**. Each week, special bags are packed by volunteers on Wednesday mornings. NVFS staff then pick-up and deliver the bags to seniors around the region.
 - With the outbreak of COVID-19, **Inspiring Futures, our workforce development program, shifted operations to a virtual setting over the course of a weekend**. Classes are continuing online and the professional development workshops led by our corporate partners have moved to Zoom. Virtual panel discussions are in the works as well as a future video series. Throughout all of this, the trainees and staff have remained upbeat and focused on the future.
 - With the cancellation of our Road to Independence Gala, the largest source of unrestricted support, now more than ever your community members will need your support through the short-term impacts and long-term recovery of this crisis. **Please consider making a donation today to the Road to Resilience Fund to help your fellow neighbor** now and beyond the COVID-19 crisis.
 - **Thanks to a partnership with Transurban, operator of the 495/95/395 express lanes, NVFS received over \$50,000 for #GivingTuesdayNow**. Thank you Transurban and all the generous donors that participated!
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Volunteer to Help



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Virtual Volunteer Opportunities

- 1) **DIY Protective Face Masks** - In an effort to preserve commercial face masks for medical facilities, we're asking for home-made face masks for our staff who continue to deliver services to local families and for guests staying at our family shelter. Contact [C'Asha Faltz](#) for questions.
- 2) **Virtual Story Time** - Help younger children meet the recommended 15-20 minutes of daily reading by sharing a recording of you (or your family) reading a book out loud. The best videos will be posted to the NVFS YouTube Channel for children in our early childhood programs. Contact [Navara Cannon](#) for questions.
- 3) **Movement Matters** - Stay-at-home orders are tricky for energetic young bodies. You can help keep them moving. Experienced yoga instructors, dance teachers, personal trainers, and preschool and PE teachers are encouraged to record and submit kid-friendly activity videos to keep children moving throughout the day. The best videos will be posted to our YouTube Channel. Contact [Navara Cannon](#) for questions.
- 4) **Homemade Summer Camp Kits** - You can help make summer special for children staying at the SERVE family shelter by creating summer camp in a bag! Assemble daily activity kits for children 5-12 years old. Contact [Julie Martinez](#) for questions.
- 5) Social Media Ambassador - Follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Twitter](#). Then repost or retweet our messages to your network of followers.

Gratitude is the Attitude

Every day we are grateful for each and every one of you. Because it is you, the volunteer, the donor, the avid social media maven, who powers the work we do. It's the dollars, the words of encouragement, the questions of "what else can I do?" that is filling the hearts and minds of every family we come across. Like a spark, you're igniting hope for them and for us too. In that spirit, we'd like to share an excerpt from NVFS staffer Melissa P.'s weekly gratitude email.



Like almost everyone, I've been at the mercy of crime, grief, and pain. But no matter the crisis, we have a choice. We can choose which attitude to take, and that alone is worthy of some gratitude.

Beyond that, many people find blessings of all sorts hidden in experiences that, on the surface, seem starkly horrible. They say that cancer woke them up to truly living, or they say that losing everything in a fire helped them choose more authentic priorities. Some people dedicate their energy to helping those who have suffered as they once suffered, thereby transforming their own crisis into a blessing for others.

Throughout history, cultures around the world have told folk tales that not only entertain, but also teach values while offering lessons on growing through difficulty. The next time crisis looms chances are you will stumble, get up, cry, laugh, protest, and argue. But you may also be aware just how grateful you are to be here and living life with all it has to offer.

We don't bother to give thanks for many aspects of our lives, from the face in the mirror each morning to the minor frustrations of the day. Look at your mistakes, your doubts, and your crises to see the richness that lies waiting to be discovered. We'll be doing the same.



If you're able, please consider the following ways to help your neighbor in need.

- Purchase these high need items from our regular [Amazon Wish List](#) for a family in need.
- [Donate online](#) or send a check to 10455 White Granite Drive, Suite 100, Oakton, VA, 22124.
- Purchase these high need shelf-stable items from our [Amazon Food Wish List](#): canned beans, cereal, boxed mac and cheese, pasta sauce, canned soups, rice, baked beans, kidney beans, pasta noodles. Items will be shipped directly to the Hunger Resource Center in Manassas.

Upcoming Events

May 25: Memorial Day - NVFS offices will be closed

Did you enjoy this edition of the Insider? Have a suggestion? [Email us and let us know what you liked or didn't like](#). We love hearing from our readers and are continually striving to provide relevant content.



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