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Cultivating the Imagination

Walking into Mrs. White's pre-K classroom, you may find children running excitedly under a large and colorful parachute at the center of the room. Or, you may witness those same children jumping one after another into a beanbag. Before assuming that you have interrupted play-time, use your imagination. See what the children see. Do you see squirrels, rabbits and foxes scampering beneath a canopy of trees? Do you see birds landing in their nests?

On this day, visiting artists David Janeski of Theatre IV and Will Walker of the Latin Ballet of Virginia are teaching the students about animal shelters by allowing them to transform themselves into characters from the popular children's book, *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. Classroom teachers read the book aloud, encouraging the children to identify and name the woodland animals who find shelter in a little boy's lost mitten. The artists help to reinforce the lesson by bringing the story to life through music and movement.



As part of the Bright Lights Education initiative at Richmond CenterStage, David and Will use arts-based strategies to create a language-rich environment in which these young children can develop the social and academic skills they need to be successful in learning and life. The learning is further reinforced as their parents are shown new techniques for nurturing vocabulary and literacy development at home. In fact, many parents attended the class trip to Maymont Nature Center, where the children concluded their unit on animals.

The Bright Lights Education initiative provides a spectrum of educational opportunities for students at various grade levels. For example, 7th graders have the opportunity to perform on a stage to develop skills in presentation and public speaking through storytelling, while 11th graders use theater strategy and jazz music to learn about the Civil Rights Movement. Most importantly, the curriculum is developed in collaboration with teachers from six participating school districts and artists from nine local arts organizations, ranging from Elegba Folklore Society to Richmond Shakespeare Theatre.

Richmond CenterStage is a leader and convener in providing equitable access to arts in education. With support from TCF's community grants program, the Bright Lights Initiative will continue to use its collaborative approach to help address regional challenges, enhance student achievement and promote teacher development.

A Catalyst for the Arts

A community reflects its identity, history, character and beliefs through its arts and culture. The arts improve academic performance among young people, contribute to urban revitalization and bring people together across cultural and socio-economic boundaries. The Community Foundation believes that philanthropy plays an important role in preserving and expanding community enrichment opportunities for our region. In 2010, our donor advised and community grant programs invested a total of \$3.5 million in this category alone. If you are interested in learning more about this issue or want to identify organizations you may wish to support, please visit www.tcfrichmond.org/arts.



a catalyst for change



This year, our publications will focus on The Community Foundation's role as a catalyst for change. A catalyst is an agent that initiates and facilitates change without undergoing change itself. This view of philanthropy is not just about getting personally involved, but getting others involved as well. It is not just about giving money away, but solving a problem. It means building alliances, pooling resources, stimulating cross-sector collaboration and creating shared solutions.

TCF Matters, a new quarterly publication, will feature stories that will highlight passionate donors who are working in partnership with TCF to create change through their philanthropy and local nonprofits that use our support to transform lives across our region.

Please also stay tuned for our 2010 Annual Report, which will be mailed in mid-June. Once available, it can be found on our website at www.tcfrichmond.org/10report.

Be a Catalyst

- Give** Support your favorite charities and learn about new ones on GiveRichmond. www.giverichmond.org
- Volunteer** View a calendar of service opportunities through HandsOn Greater Richmond. www.handsonva.org
- Participate** Learn about 50+ local arts and cultural organizations at the Cultsha Xpo. Saturday, June 25th, 10 am–5 pm, Science Museum of Virginia. www.richmondcultureworks.org



Art Makes the Soul Sing

Beverly Perdue fondly remembers one of her father's favorite borrowed quotes, "Find your bliss and follow it." Frank Perdue found happiness in his career, giving everything he had to build his family farm into one of the nation's largest and best-known chicken producing companies. Knowing the joy that came from doing what he loved, Frank encouraged his children to find their own passions. Over the years, Bev discovered a love of art that would help shape her life.

Bev is now a distinguished watercolor and oil artist, receiving many national and international awards. However, she did not always see this as her future. As a child, Bev adopted art as a hobby and enjoyed drawing at her home on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. She took art classes in college, but earned a degree to become a physical education teacher specializing in modern dance. It was not until she had children of her own that she began to paint. She took more classes and loved the mentorship of being around other creative people. "I found the door to art and my soul sang," says Bev.

Along the way, Bev found art to be a guidebook for life. "Picking up a paint brush is a lesson in decision-making," she says. "Art is intuitive and you have to trust yourself." It is also a lesson in competition. "Art brings with it many critics. You have to deal with rejection, learn from it and move on."

Bev has used art to teach her own children critical thinking skills. After participating in an art workshop, she would ask them to select three favorites from her "plein air" (on location) paintings and explain their choices. "Raising children is like painting a canvas. You start with brush strokes and then let them add color and dimension to reflect their own experiences." In tougher times, Bev found art to be an important, and sometimes therapeutic, means of self-expression. "If you are open to the emotion of your art form—whether painting, writing, dancing or acting—it validates what you are feeling."

Like her father before her, Bev wants others to experience the same joy she has gained from pursuing her passion. Through the Franklin P. Perdue Fund at The Community Foundation, Bev supports the arts while her children give back to the causes they hold dear. Bev is particularly drawn to smaller arts organizations like Art 180. "Exposing young people to art allows them to find their unique talent by building on what is already there. It is a powerful discovery that can open a world of possibilities."

Bev is married to Ed Jennings and lives in Midlothian. She has three children and three granddaughters, all of whom live in Richmond.

Photos courtesy of Art 180.



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SPOTLIGHT: John Sherman, TCF Board Chairman

Q: What makes Richmond unique?

A: What I like about Richmond is the combination of county and urban setting. The people are the friendliest, most generous people I have met. It is a pro-business atmosphere, and I like the leadership that I see in the counties, city and throughout the nonprofits.

Q: How does philanthropy ensure a healthy and vibrant community?

A: What I find about Richmond is that time, talent and treasure—all three come into play. I am blown away by the executive directors of the nonprofits who have been in their jobs for literally decades, and who do it for love, not money. So, philanthropy is the art by which we raise the resources to help these incredibly dedicated people execute their jobs.

Q: What is your vision as Chairman of The Community Foundation?

A: What I hope in the next two years is for The Community Foundation to explore ways it can be transformative on a resource basis, much like The Healing Place, and it can be a convener of ideas and people to transform the community.

Q: To whom is TCF accountable?

A: TCF is accountable to the community. The census shows we have roughly a million people in the SMA (statistical metropolitan area), and we're all in this together.

Q: What role do you see TCF playing in our region 10, 20... even 50 years from now?

A: I think it's incumbent [upon us] to make our institutions better, to continue fostering discussions and racial relations, to improve our education and health-care delivery, and just make this a destination city where people want to live, work and play for generations to come.

Q: Do you have any additional thoughts about TCF?

A: It's an honor to be part of The Community Foundation. The board is passionate, and I have not seen a board member yet who is not sad to see their nine years come to an end... The Community Foundation has just been a real privilege.

To learn more about TCF board and staff members, visit: www.tcfichmond.org.



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