

NEWS FROM THE HOME

Number 57 / Summer 2024



We kicked off our “Sweet Summer” with an exciting Travel Scholarship Trip! Since 2006, The Virginia Home has been offering fully accessible dream vacations through our Travel Scholarship Program. Over the years, we’ve crafted cherished memories in a range of popular destinations, including Walt Disney World, Myrtle Beach, Virginia Beach, Washington D.C., Nashville, Dollywood, Sea World, the Bahamas, and more. Each trip typically involves four residents, two Recreation Therapy staff members, an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse), and two CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants), who travel together for four nights and five days. This dedicated team ensures that residents receive the same high-quality care they enjoy at The Home—no small feat!

For this trip, our travelers set off for Sandbridge Beach, a perfect locale for relaxation in a brand-new oceanfront accessible house. The spacious porch allowed residents to comfortably enjoy the ocean breeze, enhancing their beach experience. The beautiful weather and refreshing sea air were rejuvenating for everyone involved.

The trip’s itinerary was filled with activities! A visit to the Virginia Beach Boardwalk provided a picturesque setting for a memorable photo with the King Neptune statue. Dining at Orion’s with its rooftop view offered a special culinary experience, while a beach house cookout brought additional residents and staff down from Richmond to share in the fun.

One of the trip’s highlights was a dolphin sightseeing boat tour with the Virginia Beach Aquarium, where residents marveled at the natural beauty of the ocean and enjoyed watching dolphins frolic in the waves. The simplicity of sitting on the beach with friends and using an accessible wheelchair to dip toes in the water added to the trip’s charm. The company was delightful, and the summertime mocktails were even sweeter!

The dedication of The Virginia Home staff on these trips is unparalleled. Their commitment goes beyond physical care, enriching residents’ lives with meaningful experiences. The excitement for future trips continues to grow as this program provides opportunities for exploration and lasting memories. The Home’s dedication to fostering these experiences highlights our deep understanding of the value of therapeutic activities and genuine connections in enhancing residents’ lives.

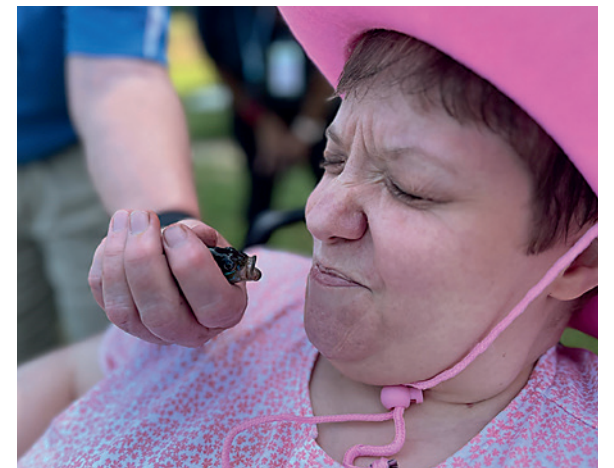
HERE FISHY FISHY ...

Our annual fishing tournament was a REEL blast, with our Byrd Park lakes serving as the perfect backdrop for this friendly competition. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of all departments, the event was such a success that it was hard to determine which lake had the most catches! This tradition always marks the arrival of summer, evoking a sense of joy and anticipation.

For some residents, this might be their first fishing experience, while for others, it’s a chance to relive fond childhood memories. Creating these moments is one of the greatest gifts we can offer, and we’re grateful to share them year-round with our wonderful TVH family.

Recreation Therapy organized the event, with Volunteer Services providing extra help, Physical Therapy ensuring safe transportation to the lakes, and Occupational Therapy offering adaptive equipment like fishing pole holders for wheelchairs. Administration and other staff contributed their expertise and supplies, creating a vibrant atmosphere in Byrd Park. This collaborative effort allowed fifty residents to bait, cast, and reel in their catches, showcasing exceptional teamwork and care.

After the event, Occupational Therapy used their 3D printer to create unique trophies for categories like biggest fish and best fish kiss. These personalized awards, displayed in residents’ rooms, celebrate their achievements and the joy of the day, highlighting the heartwarming teamwork that made the event a success.



Connie Williams says, “I’ve heard you have to kiss a lot of frogs, but I draw the line at fish.”



LIVING OUT LOUD

Things really heated up around the home when our friends, Good Shot Judy, knocked our socks off at our annual Live Out Loud Fest Concert! We rolled out the red carpet and had our own parking lot party in the Powhatan Street lot. Residents, family members, friends, volunteers, and staff all gathered to enjoy The Mid Atlantic’s No. 1 high octane swing band! The last time they performed for our community was at our resident Great Gatsby Ball in 2019 and we couldn’t wait to get them back, and on a bigger stage too! They created a vibrant atmosphere with their dynamic performance, and the addition of swing dancers this time added an extra layer of entertainment and charm. The band consists of eleven members that bring an energy with their dynamic performance that just can’t be beat. They had everyone swinging and dancing to the music while laughing and smiling with friends and family. It’s clear that this event was a summertime highlight, showcasing the spirit of togetherness and enjoyment that defines life at The Virginia Home.

Brett Cahoon, lead swooner for Good Shot Judy shares a moment with Becky Cauthorn—one of many memories made on a sultry summer night.

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Laura Stewart, Chair

Dear Friends:

I've been volunteering at The Virginia Home for about 15 years, but it wasn't until recently that I learned more about the Resident Council. **Tom Connor**, a cherished resident and long-time president of the council, would often speak at the annual volunteer dinners I attended. He would read a touching poem that made everyone in the room feel valued and appreciated. After Tom's passing, **Al Allen** stepped into the role, and for the past few years, he's spoken about the importance of volunteers to The Home. His heartfelt words have often left many of us in tears. While I knew Tom and Al represented the residents, I hadn't considered the full scope of the council's activities.



Tom Stumm models his "Love Lives Here" t-shirt.

According to the bylaws, the council's purpose is "with malice toward none, with kindness for all; to contribute to the residents' welfare, and to promote harmony and understanding between administration and residents through the exchange of ideas and opinions, since this is our home."

At my first council meeting, I expected a forum for residents to voice questions or concerns. While there were a few questions, I was surprised to learn that the council had recently used some of their funds for a staff appreciation gift raffle—just one of many similar events sponsored by the council throughout the year. I was especially moved to discover that a resident who passed away this spring had left her savings to the council to support their mission.

The council is actively raising funds to continue their work. If you're interested in supporting them, you can purchase a "Love Lives Here" t-shirt or sweatshirt by visiting bonfire.com and searching for "The Virginia Home."

CP University

The Social Services department has launched Cerebral Palsy University (CPU), a program designed to address the lack of information available to adults with Cerebral Palsy (CP) about their condition and its progression with age. CPU provides a monthly forum for residents to discuss CP-related topics and health education, with a list of subjects selected by the residents themselves, ensuring relevance and engagement.



Participants in CP University Brian Angle and Judy Simmons with class leader Mikayla Perkins.

Led by **Mikayla Perkins**, these sessions cover a wide range of topics and include guest speakers from both within and outside TVH. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with many residents becoming regular attendees, eager to learn and share insights. These sessions educate participants about CP specifics and foster a sense of community and empowerment. Residents appreciate learning from each other's experiences and applying new knowledge to their lives.

As we continue to expand our curriculum and invite more guest speakers, CPU remains a vital resource in enhancing the well-being and knowledge of our residents with Cerebral Palsy.



New Partnership

We are excited to announce a new partnership with Deer Oaks—The Behavioral Health Solution. Their comprehensive psychiatry and psychology services are designed to bring specialized, compassionate care directly to those who need it most, ensuring their well-being and improving overall outcomes. Deer Oaks' team of highly skilled professionals—including psychiatrists, advanced nurse practitioners, psychologists, and licensed clinical social workers—work diligently to provide expert psychiatric and psychological care tailored to the unique needs of each resident. They are committed to optimizing medication management and delivering effective interventions for a wide range of psychiatric conditions.

The Deer Oaks team will augment the care provided by our Medical Director, offering comprehensive support, tailored treatment plans and ongoing care to help residents manage their conditions effectively.

Resident Spotlight

DeQuan "Tooney" Baird

DeQuan made The Virginia Home his home this past April, and he's been immersing himself in the vibrant life here ever since. He's embraced his "new forever home," as he calls it, with such enthusiasm that it feels like he's been part of our community forever!



DeQuan is all smiles at a summer social in the TVH gymnasium.

One of five siblings from a close-knit family in South Boston, DeQuan naturally thrives in the company of others. He shares, "I really love living here. The people you get to socialize with are the best. I get to do a lot of things that I wasn't privy to before moving to The Virginia Home." DeQuan stays close to his family and talks to his mother every day, and his family is thrilled to see him so happy in his new home. While he's known to many as DeQuan, he is also affectionately called "Tooney," a nickname his uncle gave him which has stayed with him throughout his life.

Reflecting on his time here so far, DeQuan says, "The Virginia Home offers tremendous opportunities, and I can't wait to see what comes next!" In just a few short months, he went fishing for the first time and even caught his first fish! He has participated in events like the Live Out Loud Fest, engaged in summer sports, attended movies with our Community Integration Department, and enjoyed many daily activities. DeQuan is looking forward to more "firsts," including the Fall Festival, Boo House, holiday events, and more. He concludes, "I love the staff here; they are so nice and helpful. The Virginia Home has brought me so much joy and independence."



Susan Scoven leads the first Improv theater group with Dylan Millhollin, Kaleigh Cravens and Larry Watson.

Improvise This!

At The Virginia Home, we are committed to enriching our residents' lives with innovative programs that engage both their minds and bodies. Reflecting this dedication, our Administrative Assistant, **Susan Scoven**, has introduced a new initiative: improv theater.

A seasoned performer with CSz Richmond Theater, Susan has often shared her passion for improv with residents in conversations. Now, she is leading a small group to bring the spontaneous art form of improv to our community. Improv, known for its on-the-spot creation of scenes, dialogue, and characters, has a rich history and has thrived through various cultural movements. Beyond its entertainment value, improv embodies the "Yes, and..." philosophy, which promotes acceptance and collaboration in both performance and daily interactions. This approach fosters resilience by transforming "failure" into an opportunity for humor and growth. Scientifically, improv is shown to enhance brain function, promote creativity, reduce anxiety, and boost self-confidence.

Residents engage in listening games, word associations, and descriptive challenges, discovering new levels of self-assurance and creative expression. We are excited to expand this program, helping more residents gain confidence and creativity!

WORKING FROM "HOME"

Behind the Scenes

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: OT continues to welcome residents for two adaptive and engaging groups daily. Residents regularly enjoy activities such as "Move and Meditate," "Group TV Games," and "Crafty Crew." In "Creations with Shelley," residents made thank-you gifts for the upcoming staff health fair, including bath bombs and homemade paper notes.

Our new program, "Science with AI," featured resident **Al Allen** demonstrating the exciting science behind steam engines! We also hosted a butterfly release ceremony after caring for butterflies in the spring.

Thanks to a grant from the **Regirer Foundation**, we've distributed assistive technology items like iPads and Pico8 remotes to support residents' leisure and communication. Residents also use a Bluetooth interface to operate iPad games with a switch.

In July, **Virginia Tech** mechanical engineering students visited with an **Obi**, an adapted-eating robot, and created a specialized gripping spoon for residents. This opportunity to explore new technology has fostered promising connections with the Virginia Tech Engineering Department.



Carrington Baker shares a meal with Obi, an adapted-eating robot!

RECREATION THERAPY/COMMUNITY

INTEGRATION: This summer, residents and staff made a memorable trip to Sandbridge Beach (cover). Residents trained for the Special Olympics, bringing home gold, bronze, and silver medals. Our days were filled with fishing, pontoon boat rides on the James River, and a **Nationals Baseball** game outing. We hosted summer sports: bowling in June, kickball in July, and baseball in August. Cultural experiences included a trip to see **Tina Turner the Musical** and welcoming our new Music Therapist, **Amanda Romano**. Our Community Integration program thrived with camp transports, **Flying Squirrels** games, movie nights, dining excursions, **VMFA** trips, and bowling outings. We also welcomed our new driver, **George Ingram Jr.**

Looking ahead, we anticipate the **Life Rolls On Adaptive Surfing** event in August and a travel trip in September for more unforgettable moments.



Bruce Abbott and his sister Ginny Little enjoyed a break from the sweltering July weather on a pontoon ride on the James River through our partnership with Beyond Boundaries where "Adventure is for Everyone!"

SOCIAL SERVICES We're wrapping up camp season, with residents attending **Camp Bruce McCoy**, **Camp Easter Seals**, and **SOAR 365's Camp Baker**. We support residents by providing emotional support, completing Medicaid renewals, coordinating advance care planning meetings, and assisting with online shopping. We engage with residents through our weekly MS Support Group, monthly Residents' Rights Group, and CP University. This fall, we will assist residents with voting and look forward to the Family Council meeting in October.



Liz Avalos, our new Dental Clinic Coordinator (I) and Kim Card, part-time speech language pathologist with Brenda Mizelle, Director of Speech Therapy.

SPEECH THERAPY: Our Speech Therapy Department continues to operate smoothly, offering monthly sessions in our Ear Irrigation clinic, significantly improving residents' hearing and quality of life. This summer, we welcomed two new team members: **Kim Card**, a part-time speech language pathologist, and **Elizabeth (Liz) Avalos**, our new Dental Clinic Coordinator. Kim, who has a graduate degree from the University of Virginia, has extensive experience with both adults and children. Liz, a bilingual dental assistant with Salvadorian heritage, specializes in restorative and surgical dental care. We are thrilled to have them both join our team.



Jim Crowe, along with family and friends at the Gelati Celesti "Spirit Night" fundraiser for The Home last summer.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES: This summer we hosted **Hampton House Sip & Shop**; **The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart** held a collection drive for toiletries, household items, and summer supplies; **The Windsor Farms Garden Club** spruced up our garden; **Chef Rosa** prepared special vegetarian meals; and we welcomed our summer intern, **Olivia Simpson**. **Orchard House Middle School** helped with games, and we enjoyed music from classical harpists, the **Rose River Ramblers**, and the **Forever Young Choir**. Activities included bowling with **Redeemer Anglican Church**; fishing with **Hourigan Construction**; **BINGO** with **Cushman & WakeField | Thalhimier**; interactive dancing with **Yvette**; kickball with **McKesson**; and many **Caring Canine Puppy Parades**; **Gelati Celesti** held a "Spirit Night," donating 20% of sales to TVH; and our **Junior Board's Ice Cream Socials** have made our summer extra sweet!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Sara Joy-Hogg

"It is good people who make good places."

—Anna Sewell

For some people volunteering is a requirement, but for others it is a calling! Earlier this year, Sara joined the TVH family through our partnership with **Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing**. She has become a regular around The Home, helping with shopping, movie nights, and most importantly assisting with manicures! On Thursdays, she is deep in the nail polish fumes as there is always a long line of residents who specifically request her. They are always joking around, chatting about family, Jazz, or weekend plans. You can tell that Sara is just as enamored with our residents as they are with her. Sara has a sweet disposition, is ambitious, reliable, and very personable. We are so proud of her hard work and know she will be a great nurse one day soon but until then, we will continue to enjoy her company each week!

Are you looking for something fun to do? Join Sara and the wonderful OT Department each week for **NAILS!** Our residents love getting a fresh new color or just a classic topcoat. They have fun listening to music, catching up with friends, and just being silly. If you are interested, please contact our Volunteer Services Department and join us on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Amanda Romano

We are delighted to introduce our new Music Therapist, Amanda Romano! She and her husband recently bought a new home in Midlothian, Virginia, where they live with their pet bunny, Bean.

Amanda earned her Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy from Elizabethtown College, specializing in piano, and continued her studies with a Master of Music in Music Therapy from Slippery Rock University. Her extensive resume includes work in hospice care and continuing care retirement communities, where she has engaged with residents across assisted living, skilled nursing, memory care, and rehabilitation settings.

Skilled in piano, guitar, ukulele, and voice, Amanda particularly enjoys building relationships with residents and collaborating on musical projects to help them reach their personal music goals. She is currently working with a resident to bring his dream of being a deejay to life, with a debut set for our next monthly social.

A fan of indie rock, Amanda recently attended a Hozier concert, one of her favorite musicians. Her passion for music therapy combines her musical talents with a deep desire to make a meaningful impact on others. We are thrilled to have her on our team!!

Summer 2024

EVERY WEEKDAY

9:00 am Rec Cafe
6 pm RT Program (varies — Games, Karaoke, Trivia Night, Movie Night, etc.)

BEAUTY SALON

10 am – 5 pm Wednesday for cuts, color, beard trims
9 am – 4 pm Friday for hair styling

MONDAY

10:30 am Move & Meditate in OT
10:30 am Speech Jeopardy Club
2 pm Ican Ipad Group in OT
2 pm BAM
2 pm Move It, Groove It Arcade (last Mondays)
3 pm Attitude of Gratitude
3 pm Caring Canines (4th Monday)
6 pm Karaoke

TUESDAY

10:30 am MS Support Group
10:30 am Fine Motor Fun in OT
11 am Bible Study with Mollie
1:30 pm Hobby Stop
1:30 Fiction into Film with Finley
2 pm Group TV Games in OT
3 pm Soul Food
4 pm Prayers for the World
6 pm Games

WEDNESDAY

10:30 am Move & Meditate in OT
11 am Chat with the Chaplain
2 pm Menu Selection
2 pm Yoga & Meditation
2 pm Nail Care & Manicures in OT
3 pm President's Forum (last Wed/monthly)
3 pm BINGO!
3:30 pm Resident Council (1st Wed/monthly)
6 pm Wii

THURSDAY

10:00 am Crafty Crew with OT
1:30 pm Hobby Stop
2 pm Manicures in OT
2 pm Menu Selection
2 pm Bridge Club
6 pm Trivia Night



Kelsey Weeks with an important summertime message!

FRIDAY

10:15 am Creations with Shelly in OT
11:15 am Cerebral Palsy University (2nd Fridays)
2 pm WWE or Board Games in OT (alt. Fridays)
2 pm Free Friday
2 pm TV Talk or Calm Coloring in OT
3 pm Music with Amanda
3 pm Calm Coloring in OT

SATURDAY

9:30 am Rec Cafe
2 pm Games or Volunteer Programs

SUNDAY

11 am Swan Lake Bible Study
3 pm TVH Worship Service

SPECIAL EVENTS

Adventure Seekers Pontoon Boat Trip
Life Rolls on Adaptive Surfing
Smith Mountain Lake Travel Trip
10/4 Fall Fest
10/10 Junior Board Clothes Closet
10/30 Family Council / The Boo House
11/2 *Shucked* — The Musical

Please visit our website & Facebook for dates!

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The Virginia Home is a loving, lifetime residential care facility for people with physical disabilities. Since its founding in 1894, it has been committed to service with honor, dedication and compassion for the 130 Virginians who live here at our home on the lake at Byrd Park.

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BOO!

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, October 30th, for the return of a Virginia Home favorite — The BOO House! The event will be held in our gymnasium at 6:00 p.m., immediately following our Family Council meeting.

Find out about more fall events:
thevirginiahome.org/events/other-events/

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