

# NEWS FROM THE HOME

Number 58 / Fall 2024



## Happy Fall Y'all! A season of comfort & connection



Belinda Falconer, celebrating 30 years with TVH, with Larry the Rabbit and Janet Dinkle at the Fall Festival.

As fall arrives with its cool breezes and vibrant colors, there's a special magic in the air at The Virginia Home. It's a time to slow down, cozy up, and create memories—perfect for fostering comfort and connection in our community.

Fresh off our last Travel Scholarship of the summer—a first-time trip to Smith Mountain Lake—we ushered in October with our annual Fall Festival. **Jody Young**, Director of Resident Services, recalls how Fall Festival began as a simple idea—just coffee outdoors and a few games. Today, it has grown into a much-anticipated event with pumpkin decorating, crafts, games, a visit from **Flat Creek Farm's** critters, and music by our own **Jeff Morris** and long-time volunteer

**Susan Greenbaum**. The pumpkin-decorating contest gets more competitive and outrageous with every passing year. This year first place was awarded to Nursing Services, with Occupational Therapy and the Business Office tying for second. **Megan Portelos** organizes the event these days and shares her deepest gratitude to everyone who participated. We truly would not be able to host these larger events for our residents without many volunteer and staff hands sharing the work. This year's event was blessed with perfect weather—though it was quite warm—which allowed residents and volunteers to connect through shared activities and ease into the season without shivering!

We know cooler weather is coming though, and fall invites us to embrace warmth—both physically and emotionally. Cozy sweaters, blankets, and hot cider help everyone feel snug and safe as the temperatures drop. Residents eagerly welcomed the **Junior Board Clothes Closet**, where they chose the perfect fuzzy sweater or jacket, and trading in cotton tees for flannel and fleece. We are so grateful to everyone who contributed gently used clothing and accessories to the Clothes Closet. We'll do this again in the spring, so please keep The Virginia Home in mind as you clean your closets!



Milicent Lynch helps Sarah Goldmann with her fall shopping at the Junior Board's semi-annual Clothes Closet.

Halloween Eve brought even more fun with costume contests and creative seasonal arts and crafts, while volunteers and staff adorned residents with makeup, face painting and tattoos. This year, the theme was that creepy and kooky, mysterious and spooky, and altogether ooky—Addams Family! Residents showed off their best Gomez, Morticia, Wednesday, Lurch, and, of course, Cousin It! The laughter and shrieks of our **Boo House**, where the gymnasium transforms into a spooky haunted house, is an absolute favorite for everyone. The fun continued on Halloween with a staff costume contest! Be sure to visit our Facebook page to see all the gory details!



Johnny Alexander and Briana Belton, our new Pool CNA, got in the spooky spirit for the Halloween Boo House.

### Reflection and Gratitude

As the year winds down, autumn encourages reflection and gratitude. **Our Attitude of Gratitude** program (featured inside this issue) invites residents to share what they're thankful for, fostering a spirit of peace and positive mental health.

Fall is filled with TVH get-togethers, and we are fortunate to have a warm, welcoming space where everyone can reconnect and feel included. Outdoor strolls in Byrd Park become extra special as the leaves turn vivid shades of red, orange, and yellow, offering a beautiful connection to nature, even for those who stay indoors. After a whirlwind (and hot) summer, we welcome these moments of comfort as the cooler months set in.

This fall, our hearts have also been with our southern neighbors affected by hurricanes Helene and Milton. Residents and staff donated to the charities of their choice to support recovery efforts, while residents mailed loving cards of support to rural nursing home residents in North Carolina. Every gesture reminds us of the importance of giving back, especially during this season of generosity.

At The Virginia Home, autumn is more than just a season—it's a time for comfort and connection. As the days grow shorter and the world slows down, we reflect on what truly matters—family, memories, and community. We wish all our friends, family, and supporters a wonderful upcoming holiday season filled with joy and peace.



"What am I grateful for?" Expressions of gratitude by residents and staff are colorfully scattered throughout the building this fall.

## FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### By Laura Stewart, Chair

Dear Friends:

One of my favorite things about The Virginia Home—and a great measure of the health of an organization, in my opinion—is the longevity of the people in the building. I don't mean just our residents, who very often move in as young adults and remain for thirty years or more. In this instance I'm referring to our wonderful staff.

In the year 2024, we have more than ten staff members who are celebrating service anniversaries of 20, 25 or 30 years. These dedicated staff members include a lovely woman in our environmental services department, at least four CNAs, several nurses and three department directors. The Home is so fortunate to have these dedicated employees.

All staff members play a part in supporting the mission of The Home. The job of nursing assistant is so crucial to the well-being of our dear residents—these are the people who see and interact with the residents on a daily basis. Consistency is such a blessing in a job like this one! But anyone who works at The Home becomes a part of the community, whether resident care is a part of the job description, or not. For example, it is heartwarming to see the environmental services staff support and care for our residents as they go about their daily responsibilities. Sometimes that's asking about friends or loved ones, and sometimes that's a smug reminder of whose football team won the day before.

There are employees in the maintenance department who drive residents home on holidays. There are CNAs who come to the **Clothes Closet** because they want to replenish the wardrobe of a resident who might need something new. There are recreational therapists who know how every resident takes his or her coffee (or tea or cocoa or apple juice) without having to ask.

In this season of thankfulness, I'm thankful for our residents, our staff and our Virginia Home community. If you are reading this message, you are a part of that community, and I'm grateful for you too.



Stacy Jones, Director of Recreation Therapy & Community Integration celebrated her 25th year of service in 2024. Stacy is one of three department heads reaching the 25+ mark this year! Pictured here at "Night to Shine" with Trisha Tiller.

## Attitude of Gratitude

The Attitude of Gratitude program was designed to foster a deeper sense of connection among residents at The Virginia Home by encouraging thankfulness all year round. Each session creates space for residents to reflect on personal victories and positive moments they've noticed within The Home or their own communities. The meetings begin by cultivating calm and mindfulness—through meditation, relaxation exercises, and sensory experiences like essential oils and guided imagery. Residents are invited to imagine serene places, whether it's a sunlit flower field, a tranquil beach, or the familiar comfort of their own rooms.

Each week, the program introduces a new topic with a brief reading to inspire reflection. Afterward, residents take turns sharing something from the past week that they are especially grateful for. The variety of responses often serves as a joyful reminder that even in the face of daily frustrations, there is always something to appreciate. This collective act of sharing not only strengthens bonds but also helps residents live more fully with an "attitude of gratitude"—a mindset that enhances their sense of community and well-being.

Sara Jarrett leads the regular meetings for the Attitude of Gratitude program.



## Resident Spotlight

Dylan Milhollin

Dylan, from Lexington, Virginia, moved to The Virginia Home in early 2024 after an unexpected fast-track from a five-year waitlist to just a few months!

At home, with his parents working, he didn't always have the chance to spend time with friends, but he fondly recalls outings with his grandmother for shopping and dining as well as weekend adventures with his parents. While he stays close to mom and dad with regular chats, Dylan has truly spread his wings, finding not only friends but a new family.



We think Dylan is #1, and his caring concern for his fellow residents and positive spirit are just two reasons why!

Dylan quickly became a shining light in our community, radiating kindness and settling in with ease. He's an active participant in every department, having enjoyed events like the 5K, the ball, the Live out Loud concert, and the fall festival. He eagerly attended his first Boo House, and is looking forward to the holidays. As an advocate for residents who need a helping hand, Dylan's positivity touches everyone he meets, embodying the spirit of #TVHfamily.

In Dylan's own words, "I love it here. We really are a family. There are so many fun programs, and I especially enjoy drinking coffee in the Rec café, Jeopardy, Hobby Stop, and Karaoke. The sock hop ball was a blast, and I loved the 5K because my family got to walk with me! I also love reading uplifting Christian stories, listening to pop and country music, and coloring in my adult coloring books. I miss my sweet black lab, Maggie, who's back home with my parents, but I'm so grateful for the friends I've made here. This is my forever home, and I'm thankful every day."



Dylan with friend Mary Nolte. Mary can no longer see, and Dylan is often at her side, helping her to navigate her way through The Home and various activities.

## Ceca Award

Susie Ragland takes great pride in her abilities as a CNA and a member of the restorative nursing program. A valued member of The Virginia Home team for more than eleven years, Susie is known for

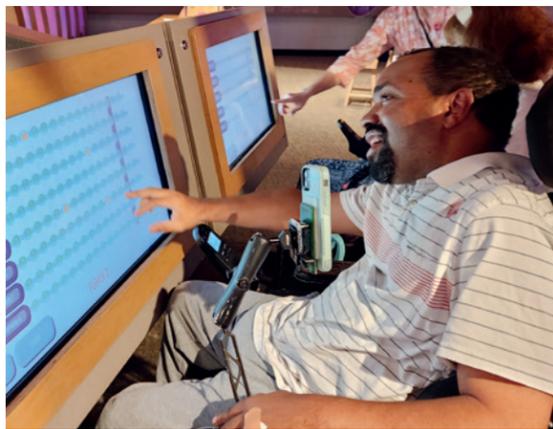


going above and beyond in her duties to ensure that every resident she works with feels loved and inspired to live their life to the fullest. A veritable ball of energy, Susie's smile and passion for taking care of people sets a high bar to emulate for all our associates. "Susie is an awesome friend and colleague—she has an infectious laugh and positive personality, which is an asset in our culture of caring and doing the absolute best we can to serve our residents, families, and visitors," states **William Coleman**. Recently recognized by her peers with a Ceca (**Celebrating Caregivers**) Award, Susie is a model for consistency in service excellence and growth in building the heart of The Home—our family atmosphere. It is with great appreciation and thankfulness that we recognize Susie for her service as we continue to elevate our care model and culture compassion for this community.

## WORKING FROM "HOME" Behind the Scenes

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY:** In September, residents enjoyed using a new switch-adapted Nerf gun for a game at the **Move It Groove It Arcade**. In August, Thalhimer's volunteers joined us, bringing prizes and enthusiastically engaging with residents. At the **Fall Festival**, OT hosted a table where residents made crafts and played a pumpkin ball toss game. **Avery Kirby**, our Fieldwork OT Intern, has been warmly welcomed by residents, bringing fresh ideas to the team. OT staffers **Shelley Jewell** and **Shenna Urquhart** attended the Closing the Gap conference in Minnesota, gathering new insights to share. Residents made lavender and eucalyptus mint bath bombs with thank-you notes in **Creations with Shelley** to give to staff at the annual health fair. For Halloween, we had glow-in-the-dark nail polish for the Boo House! Whew—we've been busy! Residents also continue to enjoy groups like **Fine Motor Fun**, **Move and Meditate**, and mystery games from **Big Fish**.

**PHYSICAL THERAPY:** The TVH-Paralympics wrapped up summer with residents earning points for eight global teams by attending PT sessions. At the closing ceremony, residents representing Team Ireland took Gold, Greece Silver, and China Bronze. In another adventure, residents visited the **Science Museum of Virginia's Body Works** exhibit, exploring the anatomy of happiness and learning about the impact of aging, disease, and laughter on health. They saw firsthand the intricate details of muscles, bones, nerves, and blood vessels, making the experience both educational and eye-opening.



Carlos Savage at the Science Museum of Virginia's exhibit: **Body Works: The Anatomy of Happiness**. Carlos is playing with an exhibit that creates music—you touch the dots on the screen to compose a melody of different instruments and beats.

### RECREATION THERAPY/COMMUNITY

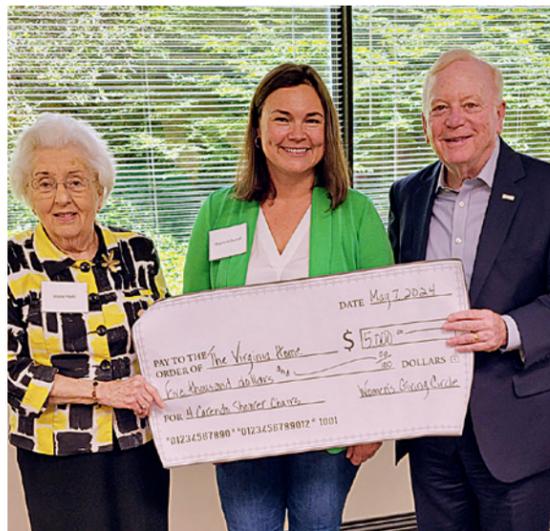
**INTEGRATION:** In late September, TVH travelers enjoyed an unforgettable week of lake life at **Smith Mountain Lake**. Highlights included a stay in a beautiful, accessible lakefront home, a cozy campfire singalong with s'mores by the firepit, a relaxing pontoon boat ride, a visit to the **Dam Museum**, and a special dinner with a live cooking show by a personal Hibachi chef. We are pleased to welcome **Briana Belton**, CNA, as our new pool nurse. Briana, who has been part of our Nursing Department since 2014, brings a wealth of experience to her new role. This season's outings were filled with fun and variety, including trips to the movies, shopping excursions, dining out, and special events like the **Richmond Metro Zoo**, **Gelati Celesti's TVH Spirit Night**, and **Dachtoberfest** at the **Richmond Raceway Complex**.

**SOCIAL SERVICES:** On October 18, we hosted our first-ever mock polling place for residents, mirroring a typical voting experience. More than 50% of our residents vote, mainly absentee, so staff and volunteers, trained by social workers, assisted residents in completing ballots and answering voting questions. Before polling day, **Chaplain Mike** led a research session on Richmond Mayoral candidates during his "Chat with the Chaplain" group. Volunteers noted how well-informed residents were, and everyone enjoyed the experience.

**SPEECH THERAPY:** November is **Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month**. According to the World Health Organization, roughly 50 million people worldwide live with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia. Exercising our brains is just as important as exercising our bodies. The Speech Therapy Department not only works with residents independently to facilitate cognition, but also holds a weekly Jeopardy! group to enhance memory and word retrieval skills. Starting January 2025, a new cognitive workout group will also begin—stay tuned!

**VOLUNTEER SERVICES:** This Fall has been nonstop excitement at The Virginia Home and our days have been filled with a variety of activities and visits. We've enjoyed our **Bridge Club**, a flute performance by **Tom May**, and interactive dance parties with **Yvette and Nadia**. The **Hanover Concert Band** treated us to a front porch performance, while **Bev** led us in Tai Chi sessions. **Redeemer Anglican Church** joined us for a Rummikub tournament, and our new favorite program, **Fiction to Film with Finley**, has quickly become a resident favorite.

We also welcomed more **Bon Secours** nursing students, toured our **Women's Giving Circle of the Catholic Community Foundation**, and thanked them in person for granting funds to purchase a new **Carendo Shower Chair**. Fall Festival was made even more enjoyable by friends from **Spider Management**, **The Federal Reserve Bank**, **Forever Girlfriends**, and a host of dedicated volunteers. Thanks to our **Junior Board**, residents also had a great time at the Fall Clothes Closet event—shopping was truly a hit!



Louise Hartz and Stephanie Stumpf of the **Women's Giving Circle of the Catholic Community Foundation** present a gift to Mickey Dowdy, VP for Advancement.

Special thanks to **Monkees of Richmond** for hosting a fundraiser and partnering with us on a beautiful birthday tribute to Taylor Bernard. We also joined the **Halloween Trunk-or-Treat Disabilities Fair** at **MobilityWorks**, giving out treats to all the festive visitors. We look forward to sharing more moments with friends and family at our upcoming holiday celebrations!



Bruce Abbott participated in the mock voting booth hosted by the Social Services Department.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Team Thalhimer!

*"Every small, unselfish action nudges the world into a better path. An accumulation of small acts can change the world." – Robin Hobb*

Thalhimer exemplifies what it means to give back, both through the personal contributions of their associates and their commitment as a corporate leader. Their company-wide initiative, **Thalhimer Gives**, empowers associates to make a difference through financial contributions, donating essential supplies, and giving their time to local organizations in each of their markets.

The Virginia Home has had the honor of partnering with Thalhimer's Richmond location through the Thalhimer Gives program. Over the past few months, Thalhimer associates have not only become cherished friends but have also had a tangible impact on our community. They've hosted BINGO games, helped with our Move It, Groove It Arcade, refreshed our library, beautified our memorial site, and organized a collection drive for books, toiletries, crafts, clothes, and game prizes. And, in an unexpected act of generosity, they surprised us with a wonderful financial donation. Their support has truly made a difference in the lives of our residents, leaving an impact that words alone can't capture.



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### EVS

**Environmental Services Week (EVS Week)** was recognized September 8–14, 2024. Their work is essential for maintaining the safety and well-being of everyone in the facility. EVS play a vital role at The Virginia Home by maintaining a clean, safe, and welcoming environment. EVS workers help prevent infection by thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting resident rooms, medical equipment, and common areas. Their efforts protect residents, staff, and visitors from harmful pathogens, contributing to a safer facility.

From laundering and folding residents' clothing and quickly addressing cleanliness requests to adding the extra touch to resident rooms, our EVS staff are working hard behind the scenes! They also help extend the lifespan of medical equipment through regular cleaning, reducing replacement costs. Utilizing specialized equipment like HEPA-filter vacuums and aerosol disinfectants, they ensure a clean environment while minimizing the use of harsh chemicals.

The EVS team is headed up by **Mark Conyard**, who just celebrated his 25th Anniversary with The Home. Mark is a dual-director, also overseeing the Maintenance Department. He leads an exceptional team, and it shows in their care and professionalism.

Join us in recognizing the hard work of our Environmental Services Department for the health and safety of everyone at The Virginia Home.



The last Travel Scholarship Trip of the summer to Smith Mountain Lake was a Girl's Getaway! Residents Connie Williams, Pia Scott, Judy Simmons and Cynthia Carter enjoyed a fun-filled stay at a beautiful house on the lake. A pontoon ride, manicures, music by the campfire, games, a personal outdoor Hibachi dinner, made for the perfect end to the summer.

## Fall and Winter 2024

### SPECIAL EVENTS

10/30	Family Council / The Boo House	12/6	Staff & Resident Lip Sync Battle
11/2	Shucked — The Musical	12/8	Friendship Circle Fashion Show at VA Rep Theatre Ballroom
11/15	Thanksgiving Social	12/11	Junior Board Cupcake Party
11/22	Jack's "Murder Under the Big Top" play	12/24	Christmas Eve Open House
11/27	Thanksgiving Worship Service		

Please visit [thevirginiahome.org/residents/calendar](http://thevirginiahome.org/residents/calendar) for our weekly calendar!

## Annual Giving

### It's a Dream Come True!

We hope you enjoyed reading about Jack Bohannon in our Annual Giving appeal mailed last month. Jack's journey, and that of every resident at The Virginia Home, shows how powerful unrestricted giving can be. Your generosity doesn't just meet basic needs; it fuels creativity, empowers passions, and transforms lives. Because of you, our residents can pursue their dreams, explore new interests, and shape lives of purpose and fulfillment, no matter the challenges they face. Together, we are not only building a home but creating a community where dreams take flight and goals become possible for all who live here. Thank you for being such an essential part of The Virginia Home family. With your continued support, there are no limits to the lives we can help shape and the futures we can build together.



Make your donation online by scanning the code or by visiting [thevirginiahome.org/get-involved/donate](http://thevirginiahome.org/get-involved/donate)

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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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