



VIRGINIA CAPACITY

OCCB Newsletter

Must have Internet connection to see videos

Summer/Fall - 2008

What's inside...

- 2 Laney Whitcanack
- 3 Free (and inexpensive)
- 4 Technology on board: My fan, my friend - Surviving the great social network rush
- 6 Communities for Opportunities (CFO) partners share technology-based strategies to engage adult learners
- 7 Seed grantees announced
- 8 A closer look: Communities for Opportunities
- 8 Online resources just for nonprofits
- 9 Broad(band) strides toward stronger rural economies
- 9 Grantee spotlight: Telamon of Gretna
- 10 Connecting to volunteers online
- 11 A beginner's Web speak glossary
- 11 Mark your calendar
- 12 About OCCB

Back to school: The technology issue

Vacation's over. As summer turns to fall and the students go back to school, many of us are settling back into our own routines, aware of just how few work days there really are before Christmas. How can we get it all done?

This issue of *Virginia Capacity* focuses on the online tools that can make short work of some of your organizational time drains while helping you to more effectively achieve your mission. There are a lot resources out there—too many to fit into this issue of the newsletter, so watch for our regular technology column beginning this fall.



Please share *Virginia Capacity* with colleagues and, if you haven't already, subscribe online at www.dhcd.virginia.gov.

Putting technology to work for your community group

Today's Web 2.0 technologies can build online communities, connecting people from all over the world, or they can be put to work strengthening and streamlining communication for groups based in one place—the neighborhood organizing a block party, or residents planning a meeting. For many groups, the worldwide Web is just another way to talk over the back yard fence or post a note on a bulletin board.

Social entrepreneur Laney Whitcanack believes that online tools of technology can be a perfect match for place based community groups—even those driven by solely by volunteer efforts.

"Volunteering takes time," she said in a recent conversation with *Virginia Capacity*, "and technology should save time."

But the reality is that in the past, many have tried to engage neighbors or members of organizations using technology, with varying degrees of success.

Whitcanack first experienced the need for free and friendly organizing technology while initiating The Princess Project, a volunteer-driven nonprofit that has served 9,000 San



Francisco Bay-area high school girls since 2002. The tools available when Whitcanack started were not necessarily accessible, even for volunteers in a techno-centric area that's



Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

www.dhcd.virginia.gov

home to Silicon Valley and the dot-com boom.

"A project like this is no-one's full time job, and any technology that it incorporates needs to be easy and quick to use. Volunteers are busy people."

For technology to work for community groups, the tools used have to support the work that people are doing in the real world.

"The face-to-face communication is critical," says Whitcanack. "You can't strengthen communities without building relationships."

What technology can do really well, according to Whitcanack, is facilitate the preparation for meetings and events.

"It can help get your message out, get people to your events, store accessible organizational documentation for all of your members, and it can add another opportunity for active participation from group members."

Whitcanack co-founded [bigtent.com](#) to provide community groups with a low-cost, accessible, workable communications solution to coordinate and centralize tools for community groups.

"The benefits had to outweigh the time-costs of set up," says Whitcanack.

Now, with a staff of 18, [bigtent.com](#)

About Virginia Capacity's Guest Expert

Laney Whitcanack



Social entrepreneur Laney co-founded [bigtent.com](#), a free online technology to make it

easier for volunteers to organize and participate in real-world communities.

Before co-founding Big Tent, Laney was a program director, facilitator and fellow for the Coro Center for Civic Leadership where she spent several years coaching and training leaders from businesses, government agencies, and community-based organizations across California.

She is also co-founder of The Princess Project, a volunteer-powered non-profit organization that works with thousands of women and girls every year. She holds degrees from U.C.L.A., the Simmons School of Management and Harvard University.



provides an outlet for community groups to communicate, share calendars, create an organizational Web page, post personal profiles, pay dues, RSVP for events, and maintain and access a database of members.

"These groups, we're finding, are sources of under-tapped leadership, especially moms at home, who are caring for families, and engaging around shared interests of childcare and taking the helm of parent-teacher groups."

There are many free online tools for organizations to consider, similar to [bigtent.com](#), but whatever online tool is used, Whitcanack notes that successful community groups have three common traits: an organized leadership team, the ability to push information out to members, and opportunities for all group members to engage in the conversation and participate in the group.

Technology tools abound to help these three areas.

"When it's done successfully," says Whitcanack, "electronic tools can help grow group membership exponentially, and in engage new leaders in creating stronger communities."

Free (and inexpensive) - technology tools

E-mail

Most people use e-mail now, but many groups employ it on a less formal basis. However, when group leaders take the time to consider and share how they will use e-mail as a tool to communicate, it becomes much more powerful. When sending an e-mail to a group, Whitcanack recommends using the subject line to concisely tell the group what you need - putting the critical information up front in the body of the message. Include the action you need and a deadline from the recipient, "Please read by noon on Friday." Also, include a quick set of established group rules in the text of the e-mail as a steady emphasis on your group's e-mail policy or norms.

Online meeting scheduler, [timebridge.com](#)

This online technology, named one of PC World's 2008 "101 Fantastic Freebies," uses technology to identify meeting times that work within the members' self-entered availabilities.

E-newsletter, [constantcontact.com](#)

There's a 60-day free trial for this e-newsletter system. After that, groups pay according to the number of newsletters sent out. Compared to the cost of paper printing and postage for newsletters, this is an easy and relatively inexpensive way to get your word out.

Survey, [surveymonkey.com](#)

Need to get feedback from your group? Try the free online, basic version of this tool that works well for evaluation and gathering input. Whitcanack says to remember that how you ask the questions often determines the quality of responses. "Put your time into designing the survey rather than preparing mailings!"

Public Web site, [Google Page Creator](#)

Any community group can, and more than likely should, have a public Web presence today, even if it just lets the public know how to reach you. Whitcanack stresses that this is public information. "Make sure you remember your members' privacy when posting information on a public site."



Blog, [blogger.com](#)

Blogs (Web logs) are terrific way to personalize the work a group is doing while getting your message out in a way that invites discussion. Whitcanack recommends making frequent, engaging posts, and using a blog to connect the work that your group is doing with best practices around the country and world. "Most visitors expect a blog to be from a person, so put it out from the group's president or assigned communications chair." Blogger is Google's free online tool, and your blog can be easily linked to your public page.

Invitations, [evite.com](#)

Evite is a user-friendly tool that allows users to tailor an attractive electronic invitation, send it to e-mail lists, send reminders, and track RSVPs. Whitcanack recommends using some of the more interactive tools to get keep people focused on event calendars. "Try encouraging members to post and share photos of past events."

Forums, [Bigtent.com](#)

Create a community knowledge base by allowing members to post questions, tips, announcements and responses. Whitcanack stresses the importance of enforcing group norms. "If established norms aren't adhered to, and the forum is not monitored, it's possible for the forum to stand in as a platform for only one portion of the group."

Group management, [Bigtent.com](#)

A tool like [bigtent.com](#) allows groups to centralize all of the group management functions, integrating them into an established procedure. Whitcanack adds that a critical point for any organization is when a new member joins or engages with the group. "Using one system has real benefits in coordinating the process—it can be a real time saver."

Technology on board: Keeping your directors connected online

Much of the work of effective boards happens outside of the monthly-to-quarterly meetings - committees engage in important policy discussions, task forces track progress on short-term efforts... The most successful meetings depend on the prior preparation of all members - there's a lot of communication to coordinate.

Increasingly, nonprofit boards such as that of 'Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia Artisans' Network, are turning to technology to keep board members connected and to organize their efforts.

"Round the Mountain's committee structure is large," said Executive Director Diana Blackburn. "The committees do important work. With only two staff members to support them, we have to make it as self-organizing as possible."

To meet the needs of their board committees, and their 21-person board spanning 19 counties, 'Round the Mountain has developed a password-protected, online portion of their Web site where agendas, minutes, and other documentation can be downloaded.

In addition to self-designed systems, free Web-based technologies can be incorporated into board organizational strategies. In an ongoing strategic planning effort, Giles County Housing and Development Corporation is using [Google Docs](#) to share and jointly edit documents.

While free tools can be used to support committee work and board communications, some larger nonprofits are turning to specialized vendors who are tailoring subscription-based products specifically for corporate boards.

In addition to providing online communication, calendar management, and board book tools tailored specifically for nonprofit boards, [BoardEffect.com](#) partners with BoardSource to provide 240 prepackaged sample nonprofit policies from the Nonprofit Policy Sampler as part of their product. BoardEffect also provides training, consultation services, and data migration for their customers.

Diligent's Boardbooks.com product isn't tailored specifically for nonprofit groups, but emphasizes usability with a friendly screen design that actually looks like a book.

Users flip pages, communicate, and vote through a secure interface.

[BoardVantage.com](#) has a client list that includes large corporations and foundations. The tool offers board members access to live board presentations and a secure, closed-loop e-mail system to keep members engaged, even when their travel schedules preclude meeting attendance.

Every board has its own culture and stands at its own unique stage in adopting technological responses to the challenges of delivering materials, calendaring meetings, and communicating outside of meetings. Any move toward supplemental online communication may be an experiment for your organization, and it may be best to start off in small (and free or inexpensive) ways at first. See how well your board members collaborate online, and go from there.

While electronic communication is an available option, many board discussions, especially those around controversial topics and changes in policy, are not appropriate for e-mail or voting. If a board wants to use e-mail to vote on an issue, it is recommended that the e-mail voting option be provided for in the



bylaws or communications policy. Tips on online board communications, including a sample electronic communications policy, are available at the ever-growing Free Management Library's [Free Complete Toolkit for Boards](#).

For all organizations, the use of any form of technology should be accompanied by communication and training, and the establishment of protocol to ensure smooth

implementation. Strategies might include phased a implementation that includes a menu of communication options and a schedule for full implementation, a hands-on training session, and one-on-one tutorials.

While the set-up process might seem time-intensive at first, effective training will pay off in the long run.

My fan, my friend - Surviving the great social network rush

Nonprofit organizations, local governments, and civic clubs are among the 'friends' you can link to through social networking sites. Just like your 14-year old nephew, local organizations are posting their own videos on YouTube.

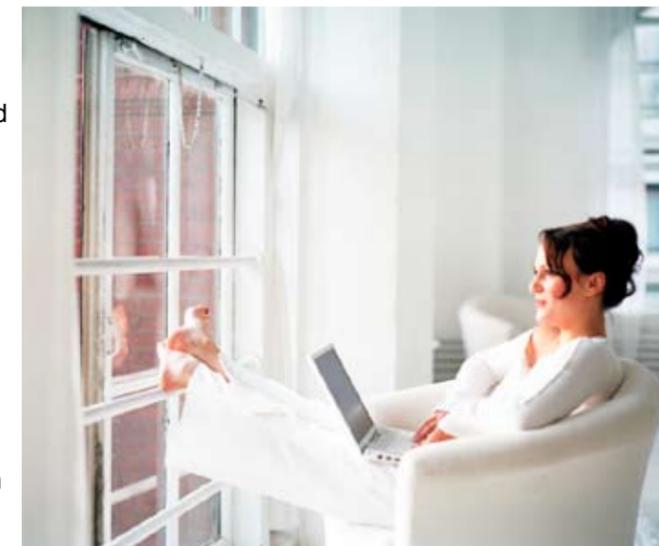
"Linking an online profile for our Block Party in the 'Burg event to Facebook's online advertising was a cost effective tool for our targeted outreach," said Morehouse. "During the marketing campaign, it increased website hits tenfold."

They are using these sites to have friends, and friends of friends, carry their messages for them. "Participate in an event. Donate money. Spread the word. Become our buzz agent in the comfort of your own home."

But how effective are social networking sites at building goodwill? How much time should you, as a nonprofit organization, dedicate to posting on them? For each nonprofit, the answers are different, and they depend on a number of issues, including your mission, who you are trying to reach, and most importantly, how well these online tools have been integrated into your community relations plan.

In addition to maintaining their own blog, [Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance](#) incorporates several social networking sites into their outreach strategy.

In attracting the community's college-age population, Promotions Manager Alexis Morehouse said that a Facebook presence has become an important tool.



Every day, the internet presents similar exciting opportunities for connecting with others—both those aligned with your mission and those unfamiliar with it. But remember, your outreach efforts should be a part of your overarching strategy. And in the spirit of thoughtful deliberation, Virginia Capacity presents a few tips for thinking about your engagement in social networking sites.

1) Slow down. Spend time getting a sense of the online environment of different sites such as [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#), and specific

nonprofit based sites such as [idealist.org](#) and [change.org](#). Study how other nonprofits are using them. Take notes from organizations both similar and dissimilar to you. Monitor some online discussions about their use and read up on best practices. Don't feel like you're falling behind just because you haven't joined them, but don't be intimidated by them either.

2) What's the right tool for your group? Spend time on each of the online social networking sites. There may be a particular reason to choose one over an-

other. For instance, The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail has a presence on MySpace.com because of the ability it provides in hosting music downloads, and the following it has among music lovers.

Consider factors such as how easily the tool can be incorporated into your existing Web site with the use of widgets and links. Identify how active local users are. Ask volunteers, staff and board members which tool they and their friends are currently using.

3) Who controls the message?

It's great to have legions of volunteer spokespeople. That's the hope most groups hold in setting up an organizational Facebook profile. By encouraging other users to become fans of your group and post their own content on your Facebook profile, your organization has the potential to be seen as an authentic organization of the people. On the flip side, you lose a bit of control over your message and who delivers it.

4) What is the quality control procedure?

Once you've researched, try experimenting. Someone in your organization should be responsible for quality control to ensure that your presence looks good and accurately represents your organization. Monitor posts for valuable feedback—both positive and negative.

Downtown Harrisonburg Renaissance recommends enlisting some interns who are already using the sites. And remember, if you choose not to continue your postings once you've created an online presence on any of these tools, it's better to remove it than to leave outdated material posted.

Communities for Opportunities (CFO) partners share technology-based strategies to engage adult learners

In Virginia's [Race to GED](#), no two students reach the finish line in quite the same way.

Each adult student has the typical challenges that can prevent regular class attendance, including childcare



Online social networking tools can deliver targeted messages such as word about this 2007 pizza eating contest that brought college-age men and women to a Downtown Harrisonburg Renaissance event.

5) When is a friend really a friend?

Before 'pushing' your message out to people in an unsolicited manner, try letting them come to you. It may not matter how many friends you have on your page if they only tagged you because you tagged them.

A smaller number of active and committed supporters who understand your mission might be better agents for your effort than anonymous masses of 'friends.' Perhaps the question for your organization's public relations committee to consider might be, 'what part can these tools play in transitioning that active committed few into an active committed mass?'

demands and conflicting work schedules. In rural areas, these can be accentuated by transportation barriers, and often great distances students must travel.

Technology, two educational centers are demonstrating, is an important tool in overcoming these challenges.

Race to GED [link: <http://www.vaged.vcu.edu>], Governor Mark Warner's 2003 strategy to support and encourage adult Virginians without a high school diploma in tackling the battery of General Educational Development (GED) tests, acknowledges the need to provide students with a variety of ways to study, prepare and learn.

The strategy includes the Community for Opportunities (CFO) program, a partnership between the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

(DHCD) and Virginia's Department of Education, in which competitive grants are available to adult education providers and partners. The grants provide the institutions with an opportunity to improve workforce and economic development strategies through innovative educational efforts responsive to the needs of Virginia's workers.

The creation of the CFO network of seven grantees at nine locations throughout Virginia presents an opportunity to share best practices and transfer models developed by the grant.

In 2007 Danielle Robinson, program director for the [Middle Peninsula Regional Adult Learning Program](#), did just that, sharing her successes of the online Fast Track distance learning program implementation with other grantees at a DHCD CFO gathering held in Lynchburg.

Among those networking was fellow CFO grantee representative Shelia Harper, of [Southside Virginia Community College \(SVCC\)](#).

"While we were engaged in distance learning with our traditional students, it wasn't something at the time that we thought we were quite ready to implement with students preparing for their GED," said Harper. "But after talking with Danielle, we saw that we would be able to quickly integrate online preparation into the suite of services we provide adult learners."

Now, a year later, SVCC has used distance learning to help eight students balance their roles as parent, worker, community member and student. In addition to preparing for the test, students are enhancing their computer and GED calculator skills as well as their writing and test-taking abilities.

Back on the Middle Peninsula, 104 learners across the six-county region have used distance learning tools to prepare for their GED over the last three program years. While distance learning on the Middle Peninsula actually began in 2001 with funding from a Community Development Block Grant, [a funding shortfall in subsequent years prevented them from providing the resource.

Since starting back up in the 2005 - 2006 program year, 35 learners have successfully attained their GED.

"We've found that the internet tools are best used along with periodic face-to-face contact that includes activities like workshops on basic workplace skills," said Robinson.

"It's just one piece of a coordinated effort that includes classroom activities and options as well."

The program on the Middle Peninsula also gained from the experience of others.

"Rebecca Scott came all the way down here from Wise County to help us select material and set up data collection procedures to ensure program assessment at the end of the year," said Robinson. "We continue to learn best from each other."

Moving forward, the programs are planning to build on their successes. One plan includes implementing additional marketing efforts and continuing collaboration with identified stakeholders, in strategic efforts to improve opportunities for lifelong learning and employment in their communities.

Seed grantees announced

Program will help organizations better serve their communities -

The Office of Community Capacity Building (OCCB) welcomes eight nonprofit organizations from across the commonwealth as participants in the Seed capacity building program for the coming fiscal year.

The financial awards of up to \$20,000 will be used by selected organizations for operating support and capacity building. In addition, they will receive training and technical assistance in strategic planning, board and staff development, financial management, fund development, marketing and communications, and information systems.

Eight agencies engaged in community development activities were chosen based on a competitive application process to take part in the program, which is funded by an appropriation from the Virginia General Assembly:

Central Virginia Housing Coalition, Fredericksburg
Community Touch, Inc., Bealeton
Patrick Henry Community College Foundation, Martinsville
Robert Russa Moton Museum, Farmville
Staunton Creative Community Fund, Inc., Staunton
Chesnut Creek School of the Arts, Galax
Teen Venture, Richlands
District One Community Action Group, Cape Charles

A closer look: Communities for Opportunities



As an investment in the nexus between workforce development, local economic strength and educational opportunities for adult learners, Communities for Opportunities (CFO) is a natural partner in the Race to GED effort.

But the program has its own long history as a comprehensive approach to bettering the economic position of Virginia communities.

With beginnings in the Robb administration of the early 1980's, CFO was a recommendation of the Lacy Commission's study on the future of Southwest Virginia—a social, educational and economic blueprint developed for the region.

By the middle of that decade, funding had become available for the creation of a key component of the study's recommendations: the development of a comprehensive industrial development park that bundled job creation with marketing efforts, educational programs and workforce projects.

The 100-acre site in Lebanon, Virginia was completed for approximately \$8 million, and Reynolds Metal Company signed on as the park's first occupant.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) coordinated the initial efforts for the region under the Job Training Personnel Act (JTPA), and Adult Basic Education money provided the first-generation of CFO funding—the Seed Program based at Mountain Empire Community College.

Throughout the next few years, the CFO partnership with the Virginia Department of Education [link: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/>] has grown and flourished. Having expanded beyond Southwest Virginia, it continues to provide communities with flexible funds with which they can develop their own creative, regional approaches to workforce preparation, improving educational access for adult learners and strengthening their local economies.

For more information on the CFO program, contact Winfred Brown at (804) 371-7076.

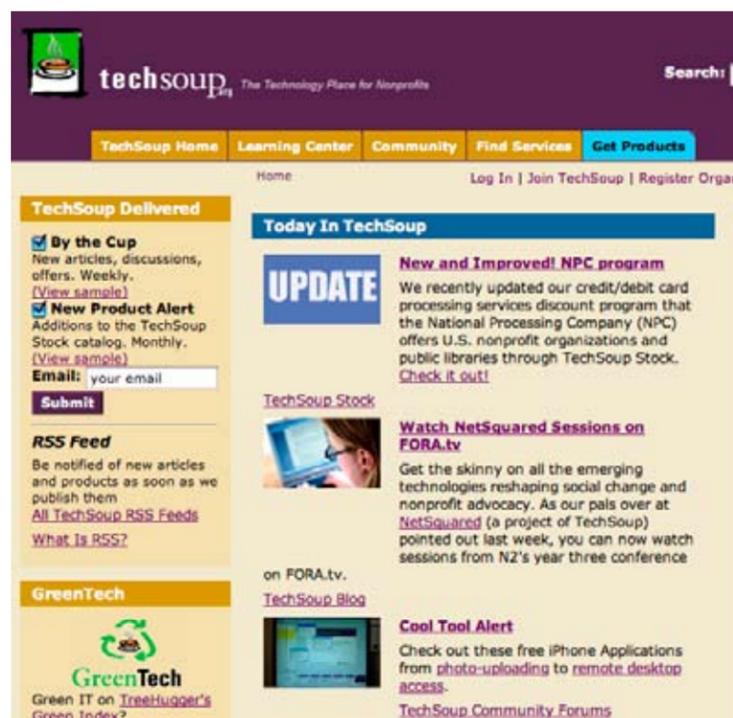
Online resources just for nonprofits

Nonprofit corporations have many of the same technology needs as for-profit companies. And while they may not have the same budgets, there are some specific tools out there to help nonprofit groups overcome the technology barrier.

For a good overview of everything technology, try techsoup.org. In addition to informative articles, the resources and support provided by this arm of CompuMentor includes techsoup stock, an online store featuring specially donated and discounted software and tools available to eligible nonprofits for a fraction of their retail cost.

Idealware.org offers candid reviews and information on nonprofit software, online seminars, and useful articles on technology topics.

The Nonprofit Technology Network, or nten.org, is a membership based organization that provides those working in nonprofit technology opportunities for networking, learning, and updates on the latest changes in the field. Both individual and organizational memberships are available, with organizational dues scaled based on the size of organizational budget.



Broad(band) strides toward stronger rural economies

Throughout this edition, Virginia Capacity points to the importance of the internet as a communications and outreach tool for nonprofit and community organizations. However, not all access to fast, digital communication is equal, and many organizations still work at dial-up speeds.

The U.S currently ranks only 17th worldwide in broadband penetration (oecd.org), and in rural areas where it's more difficult—or not yet possible—to tap into broadband communications, communities are at a distinct disadvantage.

For purposes of community sustainability, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) considers the access standard to be a minimum speed of 100 megabits per second. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines broadband as a fraction of that—only 200 kilobits per second. However, at 200 kilobits per second, DHCD has found this speed to be unrealistic for businesses competing in today's global economy.

Meeting the 100 megabits per second standard requires infrastructure in the form of cable, digital subscriber lines (DSL), or wireless, satellite, or fiber optic networks. And by 2015, the FCC predicts that the traffic demands on these networks will be 50 times what it is today.

Beginning in 2000, DHCD began working with non-entitlement communities on initiatives to expand broadband's reach. The pilot project in Haysi, Virginia, established a small fiber-optic network. To complete the project, community leaders tapped sources administered by DHCD's Project Management Office (PMO) including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and Virginia Rural Broadband Planning Initiative (VRBPI) funds.

Today, Haysi's fiber-optic network supports 26 businesses and the community is partnering with the Dickenson County Wireless Integrated Network (dcwin.org) to continue expanding.

Based on lessons learned during pilot projects, DHCD developed a planning initiative to foster strong, competitive communities throughout the Commonwealth by preparing them to build, use, and capitalize on telecommunications infrastructure. To date, PMO has overseen 37 broadband

planning efforts and 12 implementation projects, totaling nearly \$6 million.

While the current VRBPI funds have been expended, communities can continue to engage CDBG funds in support of broadband goals. Communities can do this via planning projects designed to assess the need for broadband services and, if demand is sufficient, to determine the type of infrastructure necessary for a community network.

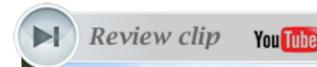
For more details on the broadband initiatives at DHCD, contact Chris Thompson at (804) 371-7056.

Grantee spotlight: Telamon of Gretna

In February, nonprofit Telamon Corporation Housing Services' Gretna office broke ground on a six-home development in Pittsylvania County. The 1,060 square foot homes are being financed for low- to moderate-income homebuyers.

While the groundbreaking was a milestone for the nonprofit community housing development organization, an even more important event overshadowed it a mere five months later.

On June 30, 2008, Telamon Gretna and their first owner of the newly constructed homes were honored by USDA Rural Development with an event naming Ms. Cindy Martin as Virginia's 2008 Homeowner of the Year.



Ms. Martin took advantage of opportunities provided by a number of Virginia and Federal homeownership tools, including the Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) program, in which qualifying participants can earn a 2:1 savings match of up to \$4,000 to buy a home, start a business, or prepare for a child's education.

Additionally, Martin participated in Telamon's homeownership education programs to prepare her for a very big step: this home represents not only the first home she has owned, but the first home she has ever had outside of public housing.

On site for the celebration were Congressman Virgil Goode, USDA Rural Development Virginia State Director Ellen M. Davis, and DHCD Director Bill Shelton, as well as community members, and staff and board members of Telamon Gretna.

Telamon Grenta is currently participating in OCCB's Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) funded in part through a grant from USDA Rural Development.

Connecting to volunteers online

An important time-tested resource for many nonprofit organizations is a volunteer force, one that's active, committed, and reliable. Yet both volunteer identification and management require energy and resources on the part of the organization. No volunteer program runs itself.

Enter the internet—and a Web 2.0 model of volunteerism. Just as monster.com engages both employers and job hunters in a skills and need match, entire organizations have developed—even at the local level—to help do the same for volunteers and nonprofit organizations.

And some are taking it a step further by providing a resource to coordinate and manage volunteers as well.

Hands on Greater Richmond began coordinating volunteer efforts in 2005 as Activate Richmond, and in 2007 became part of the national Hands On network. At handsongr.org, potential volunteers can register, view a calendar of



2008 Virginia Homeowner of the Year Cindy Martin (second from right), will soon move her family into a home of their own

flexible, one-time opportunities, and become a Hands On Greater Richmond volunteer.

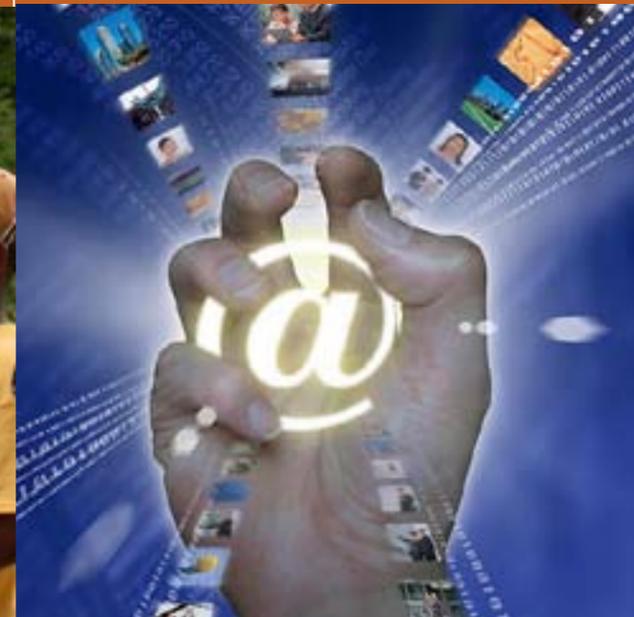
For those who give at the office, Hands On can play a role as well. Working with corporate citizens, the organization engages companies of all sizes in developing company volunteerism programs, and then helps with implementation.

On the other side of the equation, nonprofit groups can fill out online forms to send out calls for volunteers and calendar their events.

Currently Hands On Greater Richmond has volunteer opportunities with more than 45 organizations, and it has enlisted more than 850 volunteers since beginning its efforts. It is a member of the Partnership for Nonprofit Excellence, which houses Connect Richmond and similar sites for the Southside and the Rappahannock areas.

Volunteer links and resources

- connectrichmond.org
- connectrappahannock.org
- connectsouthside.org
- handsongr.org
- Volunteermatch.org
- vaservice.org
- volunteerhr.org
- 1-800-volunteer.org



The technology column in the winter 2009 issue of Virginia Capacity will focus on online fund development. Be a part of it.

Share your success stories, lessons learned, and secret fears of tapping into online dollars. Contact Doug Jackson at (276) 780-3244.

A beginner's Web speak glossary

blog: A Web log. An ancillary Web tool that allows for frequent posts, often in a conversational tone, featuring links to other Web content

broadband: High-speed Internet access. The FCC defines broadband service as data transmission speeds exceeding 200 kilobits per second (Kbps) in one direction.

online social network: Interactive online groups connecting users through their common interests

search engine optimization (SEO): The art/science/craft of increasing the rank of placement in the internet searches of potential stakeholders, donors, and clients or customers

software as a service (SaaS): Web-based software available for use through an ongoing subscription

web 2.0: The interactive state of the Web today. Web sites actively engage users as online software users, content providers, and more—not just as viewers.

wiki: A content management system that allows for the sharing of knowledge and collaborative development of content.

Mark your calendar

September 10-11

VA-1 Tourism Conference
Hotel Roanoke; Roanoke
www.vatc.org

September 17-18

Virginia Main Street Essentials Training
The Grand Ballroom, Marion
www.dhcd.virginia.gov/mainstreet

September 22 - 23

2008 Rural Summit
Kirkley Hotel and Conference Center; Lynchburg
www.cfrv.org

November 12 - 14

Virginia Governor's Housing Conference
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center; Hampton
www.virginiagovernorshousingconference.com

Affordable Rental Housing Training

Abingdon: October 28 - 29, 2008
Richmond: December 3 - 4, 2008
www.vacdc.org

Central Virginia Housing Coalition marks 20 years

This August, the Fredericksburg-based Central Virginia Housing Coalition marked the 20th anniversary of addressing the housing needs of low- to moderate-income individuals and families. Founded in 1988, the non-profit organization serves the City of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania, Stafford, King George, and Caroline Counties. More than 100 people gathered at an August 21 luncheon to celebrate the group's progress from an all-volunteer effort to a fully staffed organization offering counseling services, rental programs and educational resources throughout the region.

To subscribe to Virginia Capacity, e-mail:
office-occb@dhcd.virginia.gov

OCCCB

About OCCB

The Office of Community Capacity Building (OCCB) serves as a catalyst for improving Virginia's community development partners' effectiveness to achieve their mission.

This is accomplished by providing capacity building services in five key areas:

- Organizational Development and Growth
- Organizational Management
- Resource Development
- Program Development
- Community Relations and Accountability

The goal of OCCB is to help develop sustainable organizations that improve the quality of life in the communities they serve. OCCB offers a variety of programs and services, primarily to nonprofit organizations and local governments located in non-entitlement communities throughout Virginia, to assist with increasing capacity. Intensive technical assistance and training is provided to strengthen and improve an organization's performance.