**The Cameron Clarion,** The Cameron Foundation’s biannual newsletter, is dedicated to promoting and supporting area nonprofit efforts. Please join us in this issue as we explore the continued growth of several nonprofit organizations and initiatives that are dedicated to increasing the quality of life in our shared neighborhoods and communities. As always, we welcome any comments or questions that you may have and look forward to serving the Tri-Cities and Southside area.

Addition of Pamela Martin Comstock to Board Marks a First for Foundation

When The Cameron Foundation elected Pamela Martin Comstock to the board in 2009, it was a milestone: She is the first non-founding board member to serve the Foundation since its formation in 2003. She also serves on the Foundation’s grants, investment, and finance and audit committees. She filled a position left vacant by Dr. Jerry W. Isbell, who moved to South Carolina earlier in the year. The recent addition of Comstock marks a new time for the Foundation’s growth, as it begins to make regular board rotations for its members during 2010.

continued on page 3 - see Addition

Dr. Marion H. Wilkins Joins Grants Committee

The Cameron Foundation is pleased to announce the recent election of Dr. Marion H. Wilkins as a community member of the board’s grants committee. In her new role with the Foundation, Wilkins will join committee chair Cleveland A. Wright and board members Ann C. Taylor (ex-officio), Pamela M. Comstock, James L. Thacker, Jr., Betty W. Thweatt, Larry C. Tucker, and community member Linda L. Coleman in selecting which of the many deserving organizations in the Foundation’s service area will receive Cameron Foundation funding in future grant cycles.

continued on page 2 - see Committee

“... it is unbelievably rewarding to be ... able to award grants to deserving organizations that can do so much good for the community.”
Committee (cont.)

A resident of Waverly, Wilkins most recently served as superintendent of Surry County Public Schools, while simultaneously holding an adjunct professor position at Virginia State University. During the course of her career, she has held numerous educational roles in central and Southside Virginia. Her credentials include an Ed.D., educational administration; an M.Ed., special education; and a B.S., special education.

A strong believer in volunteerism and community support, Wilkins also participates in numerous volunteer roles. She serves as a board member on the District 19 Community Services Board; as the secretary for the Surry County Lions Club; as a volunteer for the Surry Area Free Clinic; and as a volunteer at the Surry County Cooperative Extension department.

“I am honored to have been selected to serve on the Foundation’s grants committee and to join such an impressive group of respected community leaders,” said Wilkins. “I am looking forward to being part of the Foundation’s efforts to empower organizations to improve the health and quality of life of the people living in our area.”

The Foundation’s February 2010 grant cycle will be the first in which Wilkins will participate.

Technical Assistance Grants Program Updated

The Foundation recently has made several enhancements to its Technical Assistance (TA) grant program, which supports nonprofit organizational development and effectiveness through the provision of professional consulting services. When an organization is awarded a TA grant, it may use the funds to contract with one or more consultants to address its specific needs in content areas that influence its overall ability to carry out its mission. Some examples of these areas include marketing, board development, staff development, financial planning, fundraising, strategic planning, program development and program evaluation. If an organization needs assistance in more than one content area, it may request funding for multiple services.

With the most recent changes now in place, nonprofit organizations are able to request TA funds on a rolling basis, with a maximum possible award of $15,000, and applicants may receive more than one TA grant per year. The newly developed application form is available online at the Foundation’s web site, and all applicants are required to submit a completed pre-assessment form along with their application. The assessment tool is also found on the Foundation’s website. Both documents are located under the “Interactive Forms” section of www.camfound.org.

In order to better understand the impact of Technical Assistance funding on building organizational capacity, the Foundation also has tailored its reporting requirements to this program. Upon completion of its grant-funded activities, the organization will conduct a post-assessment using the same form that it completed during its application. The grantee also will participate in a follow-up interview, via phone or in-person, one year later.

“The Cameron Foundation’s board has shown a longstanding commitment to improving the management and governance capacities of local nonprofit organizations,” noted Vice President for Programs Jill Coleman. “The Technical Assistance grant program always has been a critical tool in the Foundation’s work. These most recent changes are designed to better serve our grantees and our community,” she added.

To learn more about the new process to apply for TA funds, contact Coordinator of Technical Assistance Najmah Thomas at nthomas@camfound.org or call the Foundation’s office at (804) 732-8900.
“We are fortunate, and honored, that Ms. Comstock has agreed to join us on The Cameron Foundation’s board,” said Ann C. Taylor, board chair. “Her leadership in the community speaks volumes about her dedication to enhancing the quality of life for people in the Southside area, and we have seen that she brings that same commitment to the Foundation as a board member.”

Comstock’s first involvement with the Foundation came in 2008 when she served by proxy for Lamese K. Essey as a review committee member for the Cleveland A. Wright Award for Outstanding Community Service. “Participating in the deliberations to select one recipient for that award program really gave me a glimpse into the hard work of those that make up The Cameron Foundation,” she commented, adding, “The experience better prepared me for this new role, one that I hope to serve well.”

A life-long resident of the Tri-Cities area, Comstock was born at Petersburg General Hospital, which later became Southside Regional Medical Center. She grew up in Dinwiddie County and has lived in Colonial Heights for the last 30 years. As treasurer of Gilbert C. Martin Company, she is a second-generation homebuilder. She is a longtime civic leader, currently serving on the boards of John Tyler Community College Foundation and Swift Creek Mill Theatre, as well as the steering committee of the Colonial Heights Boulevard Revitalization program.

**MEET PAMELA MARTIN COMSTOCK**

**What one thing would you like the staff of the nonprofit organizations that the Foundation serves to know about you?**
That I am in awe of all the many and varied organizations that are out there to serve the citizens of our service area and that I appreciate the work they all do to make our community a better place to live.

**What has it been like to join a board as its first non-founding board member?**
Since I started, what has really struck me about all the board members and staff at The Cameron Foundation is that they’ve been so open, transparent and willing to share what they know with me. You couldn’t ask for a nicer group of people.

**Your background is strong in both the for-profit and nonprofit fields, so you bring a diverse perspective to this leadership role. What, if anything, have you observed about foundation practices that stand out?**
Well, so much of the Foundation’s work is by committee. Knowing that the Foundation’s decisions were thoughtfully considered and discussed, and that they represent the collective thinking of the group, gives me a lot of respect for this process.

**What are you most excited about when you think of your new role with the Foundation?**
As someone who has served on a lot of boards over the years and has first-hand experience trying to raise money for many worthwhile programs, it is unbelievably rewarding to be on the other side of the table actually able to award grants to deserving organizations that can do so much good for the community.

**What has been the most challenging in your new role as a Cameron Foundation board member?**
Getting up to speed with my eight fellow board members who have served since the Foundation’s inception seven years ago has been uniquely challenging. Everyone has been more than tolerant with my questions and generous with information though, and for that I would like to express my sincere gratitude.

**What are some of the favorite parts of what you’ve learned so far as a new board member?**
I can think of two different things. First, I didn’t know the details of the grant process, so I’ve really enjoyed going with various staff members on their site visits. It’s such an eye-opener to see how much goes into making a grant! Another favorite part of this experience is all of the education that comes with it. I attend seminars and other types of training to stay on top of what’s best practice in the world of philanthropy, especially as it relates to governance.

**What do you do when you’re not working and volunteering?**
Golfing, reading, spending time at the beach and traveling.

**What was the most memorable book that you’ve read?**
“Outlander,” by Diana Gabaldon. This book has everything — history, mystery, murder, romance, travel — it’s all in there.

**What are you reading right now?**
I’m currently waiting for the next Janet Evanovich book to come out. I read to escape, and her books are so funny, they make you laugh out loud.
Foundation’s New Headquarters to Be Completed Ahead of Schedule

The completion date on the Foundation’s new headquarters in the historic Weddell-McCabe-Chisolm house at 228 South Sycamore Street, in the Poplar Lawn section of Petersburg, is estimated to be completed at the end of May, approximately four months sooner than originally was anticipated. Construction was begun in August 2009 by Monument Construction Company of Richmond, VA, which has relied heavily on local subcontractors for much of the work. Petersburg-based Enteros Design designed the renovation plans for the circa 1840 Greek Revival residence, as well as the 5,000-square-foot addition to the building that will house a conference center. The center will fill an urgent need the Foundation currently has for on-site meetings, seminars and training sessions for the community. Both the renovated residence and conference center addition were approved by the Architectural Review Board and the Historic Petersburg Foundation.

“The progress we have made and how smoothly the project has moved forward could not have happened without the leadership of Foundation board member Cleve Wright, chair of the new building construction committee,” said Handy L. Lindsey, Jr., president of the Foundation. “It was Cleve’s hard work and dedication that kept the project on track and on budget, which will ultimately result in the Foundation being better positioned, faster than we thought possible, to enhance its services to the community.”

A grand opening of the new headquarters is slated for the end of the summer. The Foundation’s annual grants award ceremony, traditionally held at Petersburg’s Union Station, will now take place in the Foundation’s new conference center starting this year.
Annual Grant Awards Ceremony

The Cameron Foundation’s Fifth Annual Grant Awards Ceremony was held on October 27, 2009. At the Foundation, we believe this occasion is an important way to bring people together from across Southside Virginia to celebrate our combined accomplishments in improving the quality of life for local residents. The Foundation’s board and staff would once again like to express their deep appreciation to all of those who were able to attend last year’s event. Next year’s ceremony will be held on Thursday, October 28, at the Foundation’s new headquarters’ conference center at 228 South Sycamore Street.

Clockwise from top left: A celebratory cake shows the total amount awarded in grants in 2009; Grant awards ceremony attendees; Cameron President Handy L. Lindsey, Jr., Hopewell-Prince George Healthy Families Executive Director, Bernetta Quinn, and Cameron board member Cleveland A. Wright; Grant award recipients gather for a group photo; board chair Ann C. Taylor reflects on the past year.
Former Southside Regional Medical Center
Site Ready for Re-Use

The 23-acre site on South Adams Street in Petersburg, where Southside Regional Medical Center (SRMC) stood for 58 years, has been transformed over the last year to make it a more desirable location for development by a revenue-generating project for the City of Petersburg. As of last September, the building had been completely demolished and the land graded and seeded. All that is left as a reminder of the hospital that once called that site home are the two buildings that house the SRMC School of Nursing and the SRMC Cancer Treatment Center, both of which still stand and operate there. SRMC has the right to use the buildings up until August 2013, after which time the entire site will be available for redevelopment.

The site, which is owned by The Cameron Foundation as part of the 2003 sale of the hospital, is currently being marketed to entities that would benefit from being located in the heart of Petersburg and that would make a positive impact on the surrounding community. The Foundation initially contracted with the Richmond consulting firm Baskervill to generate a variety of site marketing and re-useage proposals. However, the ad hoc committee, formed by the Foundation’s board of directors to oversee demolition and land re-useage, determined that, while the proposals had merit, the current economic environment did not make them feasible for implementation. As a result, the ad hoc committee, chaired by board member Cleveland A. Wright, suspended consideration of those recommendations.

Instead, the committee is now working closely with Virginia’s Gateway Region (VGR), a private, nonprofit organization that facilitates new business opportunities and economic viability for the greater Tri-Cities area, on ways to best market the site for re-use, especially as the economy strengthens. In addition to VGR, the committee also is working closely with the City of Petersburg and with the Crater Planning District Commission to ensure the best use is made of the site.

“The ad hoc committee members and I are confident that the advice and assistance we are currently receiving from our local economic development partners will ultimately result in the development of the site in a manner that will have the maximum positive impact on Petersburg and our neighbors.”

– Cleveland A. Wright
Board Member, The Cameron Foundation
At its June 2009 meeting, The Cameron Foundation’s board approved the creation of the Basic Human Needs Emergency Grant Program for past and current recipients of Cameron Foundation grants. During July and August, staff designed the tools required to effectively implement the new program, which was conceived to help the grantees meet some of the urgent needs of people residing in the Foundation’s service area. The program offers a maximum grant of $10,000 annually per organization. Recipients may use the funds for food, shelter, clothing, health and safety for individuals and families in crisis situations.

The program was officially announced in September, and at the close of 2009, four applicants had been awarded grants totaling $33,400. The recipients included: Colonial Heights Food Pantry, $6,000; Dinwiddie Department of Social Services, $10,000; District 19 Community Services Board, $10,000; and Crater District Area Agency on Aging, $7,400. In its December 2009 meeting, the Foundation’s board approved continuation of the Basic Human Needs Emergency Grant Program through 2010.

Due to the time sensitive nature of this effort, the Foundation set up an online application process with access restricted to those organizations meeting the eligibility requirements described above. With no specific application deadline, proposals are reviewed on an ongoing basis. The Foundation’s review committee evaluates and scores applications for this program according to the following criteria: Urgency of Need, Program Category, Past Performance, Budget Feasibility and Resource Leveraging. Notification typically takes four weeks from the receipt of a completed application.

For more information on this grant program, visit www.camfound.org, click on “grants,” and then “how to apply”; contact Senior Program Officer Najmah Thomas at nthomas@camfound.org; or call the Foundation at (804) 732-8900.
In August 2007, The Cameron Foundation made a five-year commitment totaling $1.8 million to Petersburg City Public Schools to support the implementation of the Algebra Project (AP), a national mathematics literacy program for grades K through 12. Founded by Civil Rights activist and educator Robert Parris Moses in the 1980s, the Algebra Project’s efforts have helped tens of thousands of students nationwide successfully achieve the skills necessary to succeed in high-school level college preparatory math courses.

Almost three years into the project, AP leaders are celebrating great successes, while simultaneously gearing up for the second half of the work yet to be accomplished.

Arguably the project’s greatest success to date is the strong role it has played in improving Petersburg City Public Schools’ accreditation standings. Three years ago when the project kicked off, only one of the district’s nine schools was accredited. Today, four of the district’s remaining consolidated schools are accredited, and those that are not have made notable strides.

Though the AP cannot take full credit for this accreditation success, the schools have reported that since the first year the AP was started in Petersburg City Public Schools, Standards of Learning pass rates in grades 3 through 12 have increased from 49.69 percent in 2006-2007 to 73 percent in 2008-2009.

This noteworthy improvement can be attributed in large part to the development of a design team composed of a cross section of the community, school district, city government and institutes of higher learning, as well as a significant increase in participation of Petersburg City Public Schools teachers in two-week AP institutes and Saturday workshops. This design team meets on a regular basis and develops strategies and suggestions for the implementation of support for the district. The professional development teacher programs are led by
professional mathematics teacher trainers and are designed to strengthen and broaden pedagogical skills and deepen mathematical content knowledge.

In 2007, 29 teachers attended the AP summer institute. That number increased to 68 in 2008 and to 73 in 2009. In order to meet greater teacher demand for the institutes, an AP fall institute was added in 2009. These summer institutes have been named in honor of the late Oliver W. Hill, Sr., one of the original attorneys in the 1954 landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the father of Dr. Oliver Hill, Jr., chairman of the Department of Psychology at Virginia State University (VSU).

Perhaps one of the most successful efforts outside the classroom work has been the community support work in creating venues, facilitating dialogue and building bridges between the community, parents, local businesses, community service organizations, VSU and the school district. The nearby university now provides three graduate credit hours for qualified teachers who participate in the summer and fall institutes, as well as provides Petersburg City Public Schools students and teachers a variety of educational services and programs never before available to them. More importantly, VSU has engaged faculty across disciplines in an emerging K-16 model development aimed at building a base of support for high levels of achievement among all district students. Additionally, training programs are now offered for members of the community on how to develop groups to engage in dialogs regarding issues that affect students and community support for student learning.

In order to sustain the AP program once the five-year period is completed, several Petersburg City Public Schools teachers and VSU faculty are preparing themselves to become professional mathematical development leaders in order to increase the school district’s capacity to have its own teacher leaders and coaches who can train and support new teachers as they come on board in the district.

“The tremendous academic successes – particularly in mathematics – that Petersburg City Public Schools is experiencing is the result of much hard work on the part of many partnering organizations, teachers and administrators. The Algebra Project is proud to be a part of these successes and will continue to strive over the next two funding years to improve the quality of mathematics education district wide and to put in place the structure to sustain this quality far into the future.”

– Gwen Price
Algebra Project Local Coordinator
All workshops require a standard $20 registration fee unless noted otherwise. Workshops are held at the Appomattox Regional Library, 209 E. Cawson St., Hopewell, VA 23860.

Register and pay online for any of these professional training sessions. For more information and to sign up, visit www.ConnectSouthside.org/NPTrainings.

To learn about other resources tailored to the needs of your nonprofit organization, also visit the Southside Community Partners’ Nonprofit Resource Center, located in the Appomattox Regional Library. Make appointments with the Center’s coordinator online at www.ConnectSouthside.org or by calling (804) 458-6329.

The Center is open during the same hours as the library, Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., and closed on Sundays.
Fresh Air for Executives Program Returns

For the fifth consecutive year, the Virginia Network of Nonprofit Organizations (VANNO), in partnership with The Cameron Foundation, has brought to the greater Tri-Cities area national nonprofit leadership expertise through its Fresh Air for Executive Directors program. Fresh Air provides the opportunity for executives to network, share and learn together in ways that strengthen their leadership skills and essential executive competencies.

The first day of the two-day program took place on January 29 at The Cameron Foundation’s offices. The second part of the series will be conducted at the same location on March 19. The program includes both instructional and interactive exercises and case studies, along with assigned readings and pre-session activities.

This year’s Fresh Air for Executive Directors program includes THREE CORE COMPONENTS:

• Participation in a 360° online leadership development survey with in-class interpretation of individual results and preparation of individual leadership action plans to implement in participants’ own nonprofit organizations.

• A lively dialogue about the board-executive partnership and participants’ roles in building their own organizations’ board of directors—led by Richard Moyers, program director of the nonprofit sector fund of the Meyer Foundation, Washington, DC, and author of The Nonprofit Chief Executive’s Ten Basic Responsibilities.

• A practical, hands-on session led by Mary Agee, president and CEO of Northern Virginia Family Service, about the importance of advocacy and the value of working collaboratively with other nonprofits and the community.

For those qualifying nonprofit leaders who were interested in attending the program but felt prevented from doing so due to financial constraints, The Cameron Foundation created a scholarship program with maximum awards totaling 50 percent of the $149 program registration fee. To learn more about next year’s Fresh Air for Executive Directors program or about associated scholarship opportunities, contact Senior Program Officer Najmah Thomas at nthomas@camfound.org or call the Foundation at (804) 732-8900.
Calendar of Events

**Information Workshops**

The Foundation hosts information workshops for organizations to learn about The Cameron Foundation, its mission and grant submission procedures. Onsite workshops are offered at the Foundation’s headquarters at 24 West Old Street in Old Towne Petersburg and are conducted by the Foundation’s program officers, Valerie Liggins, Risha Stebbins and Najmah Thomas. The sessions begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. and run for approximately two hours. Organizations are encouraged to have a representative attend one of these workshops to find out more about the Foundation’s priorities and the application process. Existing grantees or organizations currently under review for grant consideration do not need to attend information workshops.

To inquire about the onsite workshops, interested organizations should call the Foundation’s offices. Because space is limited, participation will be on a first-come, first-served basis. To reserve a space at an onsite workshop or to request a copy of the Foundation’s guidelines and application materials, you may email or call Dianna Lester, administrative associate, at dlester@camfound.org or (804) 732-8900. (Email is preferred.) Please provide the following information when you make your reservation: organization, your name and position in the organization, phone number, date of workshop you would like to attend and email (if available).

**The Next Onsite Session Dates Are:**

- Thursday, March 18
- Thursday, March 25
- Thursday, April 1

More onsite sessions will be scheduled as needed, so please sign up with Dianna Lester to receive notification of new information workshop dates as they are added.

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**Rural Outreach Information Sessions**

The Foundation periodically schedules offsite information sessions to accommodate nonprofit organizations that may be located in the outlying areas of the Foundation’s service region. For further information or to reserve a space at one of the Rural Outreach Information Sessions, please email Najmah Thomas at nthomas@camfound.org or call her at (804) 732-8900. Please note, in the event that registration for a Rural Outreach Session does not reach a minimum of five individuals, that workshop will be postponed.

The next rural outreach information sessions are:

- **Sussex**
  - Thursday, March 18
  - 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
  - Wakefield Foundation, 100 Wilson Avenue, Wakefield, VA 23888

- **Dinwiddie**
  - Tuesday, March 23
  - 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
  - Eastside Community Enhancement Center, 7301 Boydton Plank Road, Petersburg, VA 23803

- **Prince George**
  - Wednesday, March 24
  - 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
  - Human Services Building Conference Room (large), 6450 Administration Drive, Prince George, VA 23875

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**Grant Proposal Deadlines**

- **Grand Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadlines:**
  - September 1, January 2, May 1 of each calendar year

- **Grant Proposal Deadlines (Requested by the Foundation After an LOI Has Been Reviewed):**
  - October 15, February 15 and June 15

If approved, proposals submitted in October are awarded in February; proposals submitted in February are awarded in June; and proposals submitted in June are awarded in October.