

# *the* Harvest Foundation



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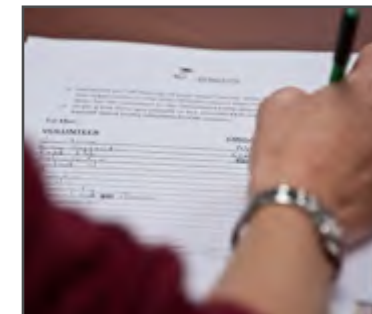
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# BEST IN SHOW

TheatreWorks brings performance art to life with local talent, teamwork, and a brand new Blackbox theatre



Early this December, just as the real chill of winter falls on Martinsville, a familiar cast of characters will gather in Uptown's Blackbox theatre: Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, The Ghost of Christmas Past, and Marley's Ghost to be specific. Each of them will be played by locals Jason Lagasse, Jamie Donovan, Marion Johnson, and Anthony Mills. The performance of the Dickensian classic *A Christmas Carol* will mark the eighth event put on by TheatreWorks Community Players in their new state-of-the-art facility.

Founded in 2004, TheatreWorks has revived the theatre culture of Henry County bit by bit over the last six years. "There was an active community theatre group in Martinsville in the fifties and sixties but not since then," says TheatreWorks Immediate Past Chair Andy Parker. "And we decided that if we were going to start a theatre program, we were going to do it right." The first production was the quirky musical "Little Shop of Horrors", put on by a group that included professional set and costume designers, an entirely local cast, and director Corbin Campbell, the beloved theatre teacher at Magna Vista High School. "It was a huge hit and for the next four years we did one big summer musical each year," Parker remembers.

Soon though, TheatreWorks musicals began to sell out completely, indicating a clear need to expand the program to keep up with demand. The first growth spurt came in 2008 when the Harvest Foundation funded a capacity building and planning grant, and again in 2009, when the group received a grant that increased their reach in the community tenfold. "The 2008 capacity building grant from The Harvest Foundation was vital to TheatreWorks' development because it helped us strengthen our Board, and created fundraising and sustainability plans," says Parker. "That put us in a great position, so that when we were awarded a second grant by The Harvest Foundation in 2009, we were better prepared to hit the ground running with our programming." Parker added "suddenly we had the funding to produce four shows a year, remodel 44 Franklin Street as a Blackbox theatre, offer classes and camps for children and adults, and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy." And they did it all with overwhelming community support, including the generosity of Mervin and Virginia King, who acquired 44 Franklin Street for its cutting-edge makeover into a Blackbox theatre. "It could not have happened without so many people coming together," says Parker. "The sold-out shows and the amazing response to our fundraising events demonstrate a real belief in what we are trying to do."

And the fruits of the community's labor, the year-old Blackbox theatre, is a study in efficiency. Unlike a standard auditorium, the Blackbox accommodates everything needed for a large scale production in a small-scale package: high-tech lighting and sound systems, storage for elaborate costumes and sets, and an intimate, flexible stage. It also provides rehearsal space for the wide array of classes offered to children and adults through TheatreWorks.

In 2010 alone, three thousand people attended TheatreWorks productions and forty signed up for camps and workshops. But the real value that the newly expanded TheatreWorks program brings is a reinvigorated sense of confidence in the cultural offerings in Martinsville and Henry County. "TheatreWorks has given people who may never have had the opportunity, a chance to see a live production," veteran performer Roslyn Simmons says. "It's so promising to see what the people in this community can do. The residents of Martinsville and Henry County have so much to be proud of." 🌟



# HIGHER LEARNING

Duke University teams up with the Harvest Foundation, the New College Institute, and the Danville Regional Foundation to bring their world-class Nonprofit Management program to Virginia.

Learning to Lead:  
the Duke Nonprofit Management  
Program comes to Virginia

**B**arbara Parker, the Director of Programs at Piedmont Arts Association in Martinsville—and a thirteen year veteran of the institution—is proof that learning is a lifelong process. Parker was one of the first community leaders to enroll in the Duke Nonprofit Management Program sponsored by the Harvest Foundation—a curriculum made available to anyone in the area for a fraction of the normal cost. “Professional development opportunities that benefit seasoned employees are sometimes difficult to find,” Parker says. “This is an excellent program and I believe that it will help every non-profit leader, regardless of their area of expertise.”

Bringing the esteemed, twenty-year-old program to Virginia also marks a significant milestone in its growth, since coursework was previously only available on the campus of Duke University and at five satellite locations in North and South Carolina. “The program has become a leader in addressing important issues as they emerge in rapidly changing times,” says Director of the Duke Nonprofit Program Nancy J. Love, “Our training integrates Duke’s commitment to academic excellence with the practical wisdom of the instructors and the realistic work experience of the participants. And our partnership with the Harvest Foundation marks a new era in our development and expansion.”

The program requires 50 classroom hours, with a certificate in Nonprofit Management awarded upon completion. Courses such as Next Generation Governance, Writing a Non-Profit Business Plan, and Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers are offered. An Intensive Track option, which allowed participants to earn their certificate over the course of eight days, was also made available in 2010. “This program helps participants deal with common issues that they haven’t necessarily had training on, such as strategic planning, working with volunteers, governance and board/staff relations,” says Leanna Blevins, Associate Director of the New College Institute. “Non-profit leaders come from a variety of backgrounds, so this program is designed to help them get to the next level of managing and leading.”

Since the fall of 2009, over one hundred participants have enrolled in Duke Nonprofit Management Program courses. The Harvest Foundation, the New College Institute, and the Danville Regional Foundation hope to expand their efforts, by continuing to offer classes at both the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville and the New College Institute. “The Duke Nonprofit Management Program is especially relevant now, as resources are diminishing and needs are becoming increasingly greater,” says Program Officer Angela Logan. The folks who have earned their Nonprofit Management certificate agree. “I think the most important point made in the coursework is that just meaning well is not enough in a non-profit,” says Parker. “There is so much need but sustainable funding, accountability, and mission compliance are fundamental to success.” 🌟

# Rising to the Top

MARC Workshop's Mobile Employment Services nurtures career development in Martinsville and Henry County



At precisely eight in the morning, every single day of the work week, twenty-year-old John Whalen arrives at 6650 A.L. Philpott Highway and spends the rest of the day making Martinsville and Henry County a more beautiful, welcoming place to live. Whalen is an employee of MARC Workshop-Mobile Employment Services, a new, Harvest Foundation-funded program that hires disabled adults to work in the community providing services such as landscape maintenance, moving assistance, document shredding, and more. Whether you are a business or a private individual, you can employ a mobile work crew.

Like many of the candidates who have been introduced to Mobile Employment Services, Whalen arrived just out of high school with a learning disability, very little job training, and no driver's license. "When he came to us, he was very shy and not very talkative," says Mobile Employment Coordinator Mica Conner. "Today, he's working full time, earning wages, trained on using mowers, weed-eaters, and all other equipment and has far exceeded any of his coworkers." Donna Martin, a rehabilitation counselor with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, who has worked with Whalen since high school and referred him to the program, has also seen a remarkable change. "Now that he's able to work with his hands, he's excelling for the first time in his life," Martin says. "He's one of the outstanding workers in this setting and I think it's doing wonderful things for his confidence to be the best at something."

But Whalen isn't the only success the Mobile Employment Services is celebrating this year. In the twelve months since the Harvest Foundation awarded a three-year grant, the program has put twenty-six individuals to work, earning minimum wage. "The main goal of Mobile Employment Services is to create jobs for individuals with disabilities that might not be provided opportunities otherwise," says David Draper, Executive Director of MARC Workshop. "And our focus is on the number of students exiting local schools who are in need of vocational and employability training."

Mobile Employment Services adds yet another layer to the mission of MARC Workshop, but in contrast to their main program, the benefit of Mobile Employment Services is that it allows employees to work in a real-world environment with non-disabled adults. "We have used MARC Workshop for years for work adjustment training," Martin says. "And now, with Mobile Employment Services, we are getting much more out of it because the folks are working out in the community. It's invaluable for improving self esteem."

Self-esteem certainly ran high on October 21st, 2010, when Whalen stood in front of a crowd of supporters at Bassett Country Club to accept an award for outstanding service from the Martinsville Area Disabilities Employment Network. As the crowd applauded him, the smile on Whalen's face confirmed that the program is indeed making a difference, one employee at a time. 🌟

# What's Happening

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- Plans are underway for scheduling courses for the Duke Nonprofit Management Program. Please check The Harvest Foundation's homepage in early January for more information!
- MARC Workshop – Mobile Employment Services Consignment Shop (6650 A.L. Philpott Highway) is now open for business: Tuesday - Friday, 10 am - 6 pm; Saturday, 10 am - 2 pm; or by appointment. Call 632-2225 if you have items to sell on consignment or items to donate.
- The United Way's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites will be opening beginning February 1 at four community locations: Grace Network, Southside Community Action Partnership, Stanleytown United Methodist Church and the Liberty Fair Mall. Please contact The United Way at 276-403-5976 for more information or to schedule an appointment.
- Beginning in January, Smart Beginnings of MHC will be offering My Child and Me and Parenting Classes at the Starting Place, located inside the Liberty Fair Mall. Please contact them at 276- 276.666.8901 for more information.

