



Fredericksburg Chapter leader Eunice Haigler spoke to a large crowd of concerned parents and citizens on June 25. The group came together for a rally to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.



The Danville Chapter of Virginia Organizing and Southside CARES hosted a restoration of rights celebration and information session with Secretary of the Commonwealth Kelly Thomasson on June 29. Marty Jackson and Secretary Thomasson posed for a photo after the event.



A team of Virginia Organizing leaders in the Staunton/Augusta/Waynesboro Chapter met with the staff of the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to discuss hospital communications access for the deaf community.

News From the Grassroots

Virginians to March on the Governor's Mansion to Demand Climate Justice

Virginia Organizing will join with more than 60 other groups on July 23 to march on the Governor's mansion to demand climate justice from the administration.

Governor Terry McAuliffe has presented himself as a public official who cares about the environment while standing with Dominion Power against the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan and in support of natural gas pipelines and power plants fueled by fracked gas.

Grassroots people who are suffering from the harmful effects of climate change are no longer willing to stand silently by and wait for weakened changes that benefit corporations and hurt people.

"Virginia Organizing is committed to clean energy to create new jobs and to protect our precious natural resources," said Del McWhorter, Chairperson of Virginia Organizing. "It is time for Governor Terry McAuliffe to take action and for that action to be in the interest of the people of Virginia, not those who represent the big polluters."

"We've sent thousands of petitions, shown up at public events, and invited the Governor to tour our threatened homes, asking him to protect our land, air, and water, and to be a champion of truly clean energy. Our voices have not been heard yet — so we're bringing those voices together right at his doorstep," said Virginia Organizing State Governing Board member Jay Johnson.

Virginia Organizing leaders from all across the state have been working to promote climate justice.

Southwest Virginians fought against hydrofracking to protect their land and water. The local government in Washington County voted to allow fracking, so the leaders began water testing to create a baseline measurement of water quality. The companies have not started fracking in the area.

In South Hampton Roads, leaders have spoken out and shared their personal stories of flooding in the area as a result of sea level rise. While Governor McAuliffe has focused some attention on sea level rise in the area and secured federal funding to address this issue, limited action has been taken to rectify the problems outlined in a review of hurricane preparedness.

Virginia Organizing leaders were featured in a recent documentary about the flooding in the Hampton Roads area called *Facing the Surge* (soon to be released at www.adaptationnow.com).

Johnson understands this crisis is eminent. "I moved out of one of the most flooded cities into one of the most air polluted cities in Virginia and know the harmful effects of environmental damage. I have witnessed sea level rise and know the damage that flooding causes for our communities. I know that we need to act now to prevent more damage and change the course of environmental destruction," she said.

Will you join us on July 23? See box below for registration link.

Important Dates!

July 23: March on the Mansion to promote environmental justice: <http://bit.ly/vaorgmarchonmansion>

September 16-18: Annual Grassroots Gathering: <http://bit.ly/grassrootsgathering2016>

October 22: Virginia Transgender Information and Empowerment Summit: <http://www.equalityvirginia.org/ties/>

Real people. Real change.

Martinsville City Council Passed Resolution in Support of Non-Partisan Redistricting

At the request of the Martinsville/Henry County Chapter of Virginia Organizing, the Martinsville City Council voted to pass a resolution supporting non-partisan redistricting. The resolution states, "Transparent and non-partisan legislative districting is a reform essential to build more trustworthy, accountable, and healthy democracy for our state and nation."

Virginia Organizing Chapter leader Martha Woody, a resident of Martinsville, led the months-long campaign to pass the resolution and sees this resolution as a sign that things can change.

"It is our belief that the current gerrymandered districts in Virginia result in some people's votes counting more than others," Woody said. "In statewide elections last November, every single incumbent won, no matter how much money was spent on any campaign, demonstrating that the lines are drawn in an effort to protect incumbents instead of reflecting what voters want. Virginia Organizing believes it is time for voters to choose their representatives, rather than representatives choosing their voters."

Children for Change

Children for Change is a project of Virginia Organizing that was created for leaders to take responsibility in raising up the next generation to understand their power to work for justice. Young people have inspired the adults to be the best examples of change agents at work. Children range in ages from third grade

through high school — with middle and high school age youth serving as role models, leaders, and mentors in the group.

The young people began with a retreat and were inspired by the children of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's and then created their own list of what they wanted to see accomplished and how they could harness their collective power to contribute to the social justice movement in the local community. All five goals for the first year set by the Children for Change were accomplished!

The Children for Change will take action on July 23 with Virginia Organizing Chapters and other groups at the March on the Mansion. They have also planned an immersion field trip to Open Gate Farm in Charlottesville to learn about sustainable farming to address local community concerns about food deserts.

Children for Change is currently a part of the South Hampton Roads Chapter. If you are interested in starting your own outreach for young people, please connect with your local organizer or call our office at 434-984-4655 ext. 222. It is never too early to learn how to organize.

Take Action!

Do you have friends that dislike predatory lending as much as you do? Ask them to fill out a comment using the link below! Please don't forget to submit your comments to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau on the new proposed rules as well! You can comment at <http://stop paydaypredators.com/VirginiaOrganizing>.

Leader of the Month Odessa Hudson



Odessa Hudson is passionate about voting.

For years, Odessa had her civil rights stripped away because she has a felony conviction

on her record. She read about another returning citizen and Virginia Organizing Board member in her local paper and got in touch with her local organizer to see how she could help. Odessa was one of the 206,000 Virginians who had her rights restored by Governor Terry McAuliffe's April 22 restoration of rights order, but her name was not in the database. Virginia Organizing worked with her and the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office to make sure her rights were restored.

After Odessa registered to vote, she went to work. "I am out here knocking on every door I can to tell people that their rights might be restored and they might be able to vote," said Odessa. "I'm going to work hard to make sure other returning citizens are registered."

Odessa had never heard of Virginia Organizing before reading that article, but she believes in the work.

"We are making real changes," said Odessa. "Virginia Organizing helped me and now that I'm a part of the organization, I want to spread the word and get others active in our community."

Odessa is excited to get involved on other local issues like the school-to-prison pipeline campaign.

Thank you, Odessa, for reaching out to Virginia Organizing and for being willing to work so hard in your community!

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

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Local Chapters and Areas Served

Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro
Charlottesville/Albemarle County
Danville
Eastern Shore
Harrisonburg/Rockingham County
Fredericksburg
Lee County
Lynchburg
Martinsville/Henry County
New River Valley
Roanoke
South Hampton Roads
Washington County
On Campus: UMW, VSU, CNU, UVA, E&H,
U of R, ODU, NSU, RU, TCC, VCU, JMU

www.facebook.com/virginiaorganizing
 @VAOrganizing

News in Brief

- Virginia Organizing is only able to organize in communities because of your support. We do not accept funding from government agencies for our organizing work. Would you consider becoming a sustainer with a monthly donation of \$10, \$25, \$50 or any amount? To become a sustainer, contact Sally Bastian at 434-984-4655 ext. 229 or bastian@virginia-organizing.org.
- Leaders and interns across the state are working to register voters and find returning citizens who were affected by Governor Terry McAuliffe's April 22 restoration of rights order. If you know of any returning citizens that want to register or help register others, please contact your local organizer or call Joe Szakos at 434-984-4655 ext. 222 or email szakos@virginia-organizing.org.
- Henry County became the 21st jurisdiction to ban the box on public job applications!
- This month, folks from Montgomery County came together for the first chapter planning meeting in the area. Members are excited for a local group to start addressing issues in the community!

www.virginia-organizing.org