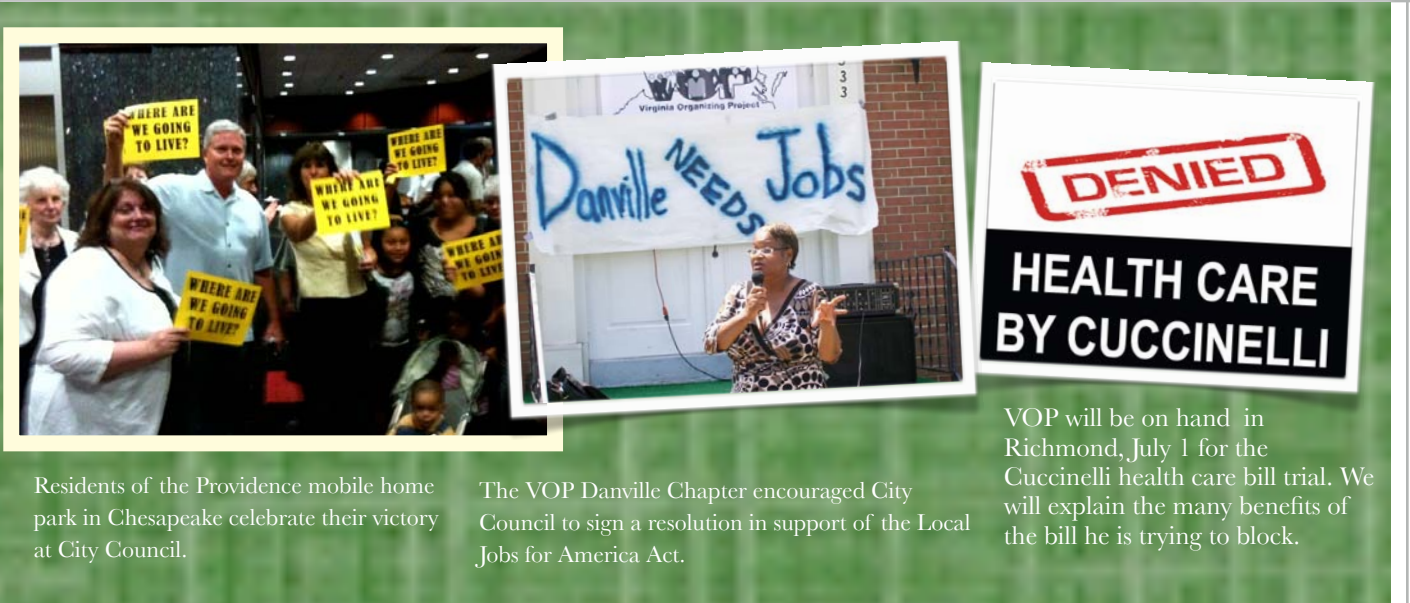




Virginia Organizing Project

JUNE 2010

ISSUE FIVE



Residents of the Providence mobile home park in Chesapeake celebrate their victory at City Council.

The VOP Danville Chapter encouraged City Council to sign a resolution in support of the Local Jobs for America Act.

VOP will be on hand in Richmond, July 1 for the Cuccinelli health care bill trial. We will explain the many benefits of the bill he is trying to block.

News From the Grassroots

46 Strong and Counting!

By: Michele Mattioli
VOP Special Projects Coordinator

Recently Pat Lloyd, one of VOP's dedicated weekly volunteers, had a surprise realization, "VOP is the umbrella organization for 46 groups! We should let more people know!"

Having 46 groups, small and large, enter into a Joint Plan of Work with VOP gives each group more time and resources to work on their social justice and environmental missions. As programs of VOP, these groups receive bookkeeping, payroll, insurance and auditing services. There are also efficiencies of scale, e.g., paying for one financial audit for all the groups.

By working cooperatively with a Joint Plan of Work, no one group is isolated and we can borrow and share power to be more effective.

The groups range from a handful of folks with a \$200 annual budget to a multi-million dollar group with over 60 employees. VOP program groups work on transportation, alternatives to the death penalty, camping for disabled kids, forest protection, public housing, gay rights, green chemistry, obesity, youth empowerment, environmental health and much more. To learn more, go to VOP's website: <http://www.virginia-organizing.org/content/program-groups>

A View From the Fifth Row at the Chesapeake City Council Meeting

By Jim Romeo, VOP Leader

On June 15, VOP members, ally organizations and friends went to bat for the residents of a mobile home park in Chesapeake, Virginia. The residents of this park face eviction if the owner has his way. Thanks to a collective organized effort by the Virginia Organizing Project, the City Council was put at checkmate. The Council voted unanimously to deny the zoning application. For now the residents stay right where they are with a roof over their head.

It felt good to win one for a change!

VOP's 15th Anniversary is August 7th!



Celebrate with us in Richmond on Saturday, August 7, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Linwood Holton Elementary School

Real People, Real Problems, Real Solutions

Door by Door

By: Lauren Groetch
VOP Intern

Here at the Charlottesville office, summer interns have been busy with a multi-faceted civic engagement project. We're going door-to-door, attending community events, and setting up in high-traffic locations to talk to people in our communities about voting and jobs. We are working to register hundreds of new voters and are sending Senators Webb and Warner photo petitions of community members who want their elected officials to take steps to lower unemployment. In these photos, people hold signs that express the need for jobs for their community, their family and themselves. The goal of this project is to garner our senators' support for the Local Jobs for America Act, which would put over one million Americans back to work restoring local infrastructure.

In this difficult economic climate,

people are increasingly inwardly focused; politics is often the last thing on the minds of those who are struggling just to keep their families housed and fed. But when they hear about a bill in Washington that could change their everyday lives, people are excited to make phone calls and take pictures, and they're encouraging their friends to do the same!



15th Anniversary Art Contest

VOP is holding an art contest to celebrate its 15th anniversary. We want to know what you would do, with the help of your friends, family and community to make Virginia a better place.

The contest is open to kids ages 5-18 and first prize is a Flip Cam. Please see our website for more details and to download the registration form.

VOP Leader of the Month:

Sister Beth Davies



For years Sister Beth Davies has been working on issues that affect her community through her order,

Congregation de Notre Dame, the drug rehabilitation center she runs, and through many community groups. Beth's first local campaigns concerned strip mining and mountaintop removal, which are still huge problems in the community. She worked with groups and residents to hold the mining companies accountable.

Drug abuse has been a problem in the community for years and Beth runs a drug rehabilitation center to help those affected get their lives back. She worked with VOP to successfully bring drug courts to Southwest counties. The drug courts will also reduce the need to put non-violent drug offenders in prison and represent a hard-fought victory for the community.

Beth is encouraged despite the uphill battles that define such difficult issues. She is happy to have VOP in her community and feels that the organization strengthens local efforts by bringing people together.

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING PROJECT

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Local Chapters (call or visit the website for more information)

Charlottesville
Danville
Martinsville
Fredericksburg
Northern Virginia
Newport News/Hampton Roads
South Hampton Roads
Williamsburg
Shenandoah Valley
Washington County & Lee County
Petersburg
Richmond

On Campus: W&M, UMW, VSU,
UVA, E&H, U of R

- VOP is taking on the state's regressive and inadequate tax and budget structure with our new campaign, Balance Virginia. Stay tuned for updates and our statewide campaign kick off events.
- VOP will join the Sierra Club and other groups for Hands Across the Sand in Virginia Beach on June 26 @11:00 a.m.
- VOP was involved in the Mayfield Civic Association meeting with CSX regarding rail cars carrying hazardous waste parked in residential areas of Fredericksburg.
- VOP is doing voter registration drives in Hopewell and Richmond.
- The Social Justice Bowl in Charlottesville will be October 22. Contact Sally @ 434-984-4655 x229 for sponsorships and more information.
- VOP Danville presented a resolution for the Local Jobs for America Act at the June 15 City Council meeting.

www.virginia-organizing.org