

UPDATE



For the spirit of the city

2209 EAST GRACE STREET, RICHMOND, VA 23223

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2019

TENDING THE SPIRIT

Space Travel

"For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." - Ephesians 14

It is a sight that only a handful of people have been privileged to see: the sight of Planet Earth from out in space. We have all seen the photos of this planet we call "home" as experienced by astronauts who have spent time out there beyond the biosphere, making trips to the moon and back, circling this globe for days, weeks, and months. In the midst of their many tasks, they have found time to meditate on what they've seen, and their words are as striking as the images of the planet itself.

From Alexei Leonov, a Russian Cosmonaut: "The earth was small, light blue, and so touchingly alone, our home which must be defended like a holy relic." From James Irwin, Apollo Astronaut: "As we got further and further away, [the Earth] diminished in size. Finally, it shrank to the size of a marble, the most beautiful one you can imagine. That beautiful, warm, living object looked so fragile, so delicate...Seeing that has to change a man." And from Yang Liwei, China's First Astronaut: "The scenery was very beautiful. But I did not see the Great Wall."

Ah, the walls! If we imagine ourselves in the vast spaciousness of the universe gazing back at our home, it is only as we telescope closer in that we begin to see the borders, the fences, the walls that separate and divide. The spaciousness and openness disappear and become broken, jagged, crunched up and rough, tiny and awkward.

It seems as if the whole world is busy building walls. The United States is building barriers along its southern borders to prevent illegal immigrants from entering. The Israelis continue to build a wall to separate themselves from the Palestinians. Other walls are invisible—demilitarized zones—designed to keep warring countries apart.

Here in our cities, we can see the walls that keep people

in and walls that keep people out. Gated communities keep people out, if you can afford to live there. Walls topped with barbed wire and searchlights keep people in, away from society in general. Walls — mostly built by people who have power, money, and social status — keep people out, keep people in, keep people in their place.

These are only the physical walls built with brick and mortar, concrete, and wrought iron. They are signs and symbols of invisible walls created by fear, trauma, greed, and pride of all sorts: national, ethnic, tribal, racial, religious and spiritual pride, the walls of hostility that shrink our planet and diminish its spaciousness and our own freedom, wherever we live.

Enter Jesus.

The writer of Ephesians tells us that Jesus breaks down the walls that divide us. Jesus was no stranger to walls during his physical time on Planet Earth. He healed outside the walls, preached outside the walls, and died outside the walls. Most of his teaching seemed to be out in the open spaces: on mountains and plains, by lakes and rivers, out in the countryside where people would flock to hear him and be healed.

I don't think he liked walls very much, although he was known to cross back and forth across the walls and barriers that were in his way. He crossed national and religious bound-

aries with impunity: preaching in the lands of the Gentiles, crossing the border into Samaria, teaching within the walls of the synagogues, where he argued with the scholars and even turned over some tables.

And when he died, it would be on a cross outside the walls of the holy city of Jerusalem, outside the walls of the Temple, outside the room in the Temple called the Most Holy Place, the Holy of Holies, where only the high priest could visit. Here, hidden behind a curtain was the most sacred place in the world, God's throne, the ark of the covenant. But, the Gospels say, as Jesus drew his last breath and his spirit left his body, the curtain that hid the Most Holy Place was rent in two, thoroughly destroyed from top to bottom. It was then that the walls began to come tumbling down. It was like a stone dropped into a body of water, with the ripples spreading out further and further, with no end in sight.

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TENDING THE SPIRIT

The walls are tumbling down now, and today, we have a choice. We can choose to be wall-builders. Or we can choose to be boundary crossers, building bridges over those walls and crossing them over and over again until we wear them down to the ground.

Here at Richmond Hill, we have our own wall, a wall to hold this place of retreat. We transcend that wall when we welcome folks to share a meal at the communion table, then continue the table fellowship in the refectory, at our weekly community dinner. We are then called to go back out into the city, to work and to minister and to build bridges in the city—working with organizations like Initiatives of Change and Coming to the Table, among others. We are called to follow Jesus, to continuously welcome people in through our gate just as we challenge ourselves to transcend the wall with our ministry and our prayers.

As boundaries are being crossed, bridges are being built, walls are coming down, what will you do? Will you choose to build walls or bridges? The challenges are great: there are many walls still in place, and some in our country who will continue to build more walls, if allowed to do so.

But the stone has been dropped into the water, the ripples of reconciliation continue to spread outward, and, to mix metaphors, the rocket has been launched into a more open, expansive, inclusive, and wholesome space. From that space of healing and wholeness, we can see God's Creation, Planet Earth, our home, included in all of its original beauty and glory. Can you see it? I can.

May it be so. Amen.

— Rev. Victoria Bethel

Adapted from a sermon preached at Richmond Hill by Rev. Victoria Bethel on August 20, 2019. For two years, Victoria was an Urban Service Corps Intern at Richmond Hill. On October 8, she begins her new call as pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newark, Delaware.

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REVIVE RICHMOND

Inside / Outside

I first came to Richmond Hill, like so many of us, during a period of transition. I needed space to think, to pray, to find guidance in community, to hear the still small voice of God. Richmond Hill gave me that place of peace, walled off from the noise and hustle and bustle of the city.

And yet, what inspires me so at Richmond Hill is our work out in the city. Armstrong Leadership Program and the Micah Initiative, our work with organizations like Initiatives of Change and RVA Rapid Transit on city justice issues, are all essential parts of our mission of healing this metropolitan city.

At Richmond Hill, we live in this generative tension. We are simultaneously called to be a place of retreat and a place of action. Our mission to offer healing for the city requires both work within our spirits and out in our city. We live inside and outside our walls.

Our wall itself holds this tension. It serves us well, maintaining Richmond Hill as a place set apart for retreat. But it also can send a message of exclusion, a challenge to the radical welcome we strive to live out in our ministry.

This is a tension we've grappled with since the influx of graffiti on our back wall about a year ago. As stewards of a historic monastery, we are called to take care of our historic structures, wall included. But as community members and Christians, we are called to think about how to engage with folks outside our walls, both those painting graffiti and those angered by it.

So, we've been prayerful about our next steps. We've partnered with the Church Hill Association who have generously raised \$5,000 to help us address the wall. We also sat down with Hamilton Glass, a prominent Richmond muralist, to think more deeply about how we might engage the issue more holistically. We're now thinking about how to make the area outside our walls more hospitable, and how to invite more people into the process of envisioning a welcoming place for all.

Over the next few months, we'll be pulling together a working group of local community groups and businesses from the surrounding neighborhoods to think together about how to do just that, to envision the space outside our walls as a place of community and hospitality that people from all walks of life can enjoy together.

Lindsey Franklin
Interim Associate Pastor

Pray for Public, Non-profit, and Religious Social Service Work and Ministries in Metropolitan Richmond.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. (Matthew 25:35-36 NRSV)

October 6, 2019. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all in need of social services, all social service departments and caseworkers; for partnerships between the church and other institutions serving the needy.

October 13, 2019. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all in need of mental health services, all mental health workers, counselors, and treatment facilities.

October 20, 2019. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all who suffer from addiction, dependency or co-dependency of any sort; for twelve-step programs, recovery programs, therapists, and addiction counselors; for advocates who provide a voice for the rights of persons whose voices are not heard.

October 27, 2019. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For emergency shelters, women's shelters, clinics, and feeding programs; for recreation programs, youth programs, juvenile counseling, and young people's shelters.

October 2019

Pray for the Persons in Financial Need in Metropolitan Richmond.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19 NRSV)

November 3, 2019. We pray for persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For the unemployed and underemployed, for suitable work, living wages, and fair benefits for all workers in this metropolitan city; and for sufficient employment to make healthy family life possible.

November 10, 2019. We pray for persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For the homeless and the hungry, for the provision of safe, affordable housing and low cost nutritious food, for the personal safety, dignity, and well being of those who are unable to work.

November 17, 2019. We pray for persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For healthy marriages; for constructive, safe, and caring households for the bringing up and nurturing of children and caring for the elderly.

November 24, 2019. We pray for persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For the inclusion of all (regardless of race, age, or residency) in the economic health of Metropolitan Richmond; for effective, affordable, regional public transportation to support job access.

November 2019

Leading from the Front

There were over twenty Armstrong Leadership participants who attended a two-day overnight retreat at Richmond Hill before the 2019-2020 school year began. This year's theme for the Leadership in Action Summer Institute for the Armstrong Leadership Program (ALP) is: *Leading from the Front*, opening reflection was by **Rev. Joel Blunk**, Co-Pastoral Director of Richmond Hill. The institute was facilitated by the leaders **Yvette Davis Rajput** and **Marvin Roane**.



"The purpose of the Institute is aimed to support, develop and encourage urban youth to think critically about what makes for highly effective leaders in school and community." The students visited the "Determined" exhibit at the **Virginia Museum of History and Culture**, which highlights the challenges and victories African-Americans have faced over the past 400 years in the United States. This was followed by a conversation with **Kiran Bhagat** representing the *Community Healing Network* to facilitated an Emotional Emancipation circle. The activity was a "Defy the Lie" orientation. ALP students identified stereotypes and false narratives and/or assumptions that dominate mainstream media, and replaced them with constructive, affirming values that are closer to their lived reality. Later, **Ms. Joannalyn Jordan** from *Great Aspirations Scholarship Program (GRASP)* informed ALP about potential scholarship availability and other critical resources for life after graduation.

The next day, **Pam Smith**, Richmond Hill's newest resident and MICAH coordinator, led a Kingian Non-violence Workshop. This activity outlined effective models of conflict resolution at high schools in Chicago. The students engaged in critical reflection and discussion on ideas of what tactics might be effective at Armstrong High School.

The retreat culminated in a fun trip to the Gnome & Raven Escape Room in Stony Point where the youth had to work as a team in order to achieve their goal of unlocking clues after elections for new officers for the upcoming year. Kudos to all the leaders for a very successful retreat!

Devon Clapp, a Virginia Commonwealth University social work student, returns as an intern assisting with case management, mentoring and mapping services for our students, and is joined by **Anthony Gaboton Jr.**, Richmond Hill's Urban Service Corps member. Special thanks to **Antwonda Mealey**, Class of 2014 for your enduring support and presence during the retreat.

We firmly believe ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE with God's grace and mercy

*In gratitude,
Yvette and Marvin*

If you are interested in participating in the Armstrong Leadership Program, please contact

Yvette Davis Rajput, Director at work: 804-783-7903, ext. 13, or cell 804-314-2622, or yrajput@richmondhillva.org

Marvin Roane, Assistant Director, 804-484-0736, or alp@richmondhillva.org

Like Us on Facebook @ArmstrongLeadership

Richmond Hill Studies in

Retreats Classes Groups Schools Retreats Classes

RETREATS

INDIVIDUAL RETREATS

Richmond Hill offers individual retreats for persons who desire rest and time to seek God. Retreats may be taken in 24-hr increments between Tue. 4 p.m. – Sun. 4 p.m. In addition, more formal contemplative retreats are offered periodically on weekends for individuals who wish to be a part of a facilitated retreat rhythm. Spiritual guidance is available for any individual retreat.

*Recommended donations: Basic \$80 per 24 hrs. / Guided \$100 per 24 hrs.
Contact DeBorah Cannady, 804-783-7903 or dcannady@richmondhillva.org*

FIRST FRIDAY RETREATS

First Friday of Each Month | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

A day for quiet reflection and spiritual renewal. Structure and guidance will be provided for those who want it as well as the option for one-on-one spiritual direction, or you can simply spend the day in silence—your choice.

Suggested Donation: \$20 (includes Lunch) Facilitator: Mimi Weaver, spiritual director and life coach. She can be reached at www.GraceMoves.com

Contact Mary Lewis at Richmond Hill to register 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org
Please register in advance. Space is limited.

LISTENING TO THE SILENCE

Second Tuesday of Each Month | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Arrive at Richmond Hill at 8:45 to begin this spiritual experience. Lunch and chapel are included. Bring your Bible and your journal but leave the cell phone in the car.

Suggested Donation: \$20 (includes Lunch) Facilitator: Rita Ricks, spiritual director

Contact Mary Lewis at Richmond Hill to register 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org
Please register in advance. Space is limited.

GROUPS

CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

Tuesdays, 4:15 - 5:00 p.m.

Olivia Brown, Facilitator

Tuesdays, 7:30 - 8:45 p.m.

Jerry Deans, Facilitator

Centering prayer is an ancient prayer method designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer by preparing us to cooperate with this gift. Each group is open to newcomers regardless of experience.

Contact: David Vinson at 804-783-7903 or facilities@richmondhillva.org

DROP-IN GRIEF GROUP

Monthly, 4th Fridays, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Sandy Gramling, Ph.D., Facilitator

Share experiences and obtain support in a flexible group format from others who are experiencing a loss. Discussion and reflection on the impact of loss, coping, meaning-making, etc. follows the brief presentation.

*Preregistration is helpful but not required.
Contact Mary Lewis at 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org to register.*



Join us for Fall 2019

Opening Retreat
Oct. 11-12
Fri. 4 pm – Sat. 4 pm

KOINONIA

Day Seminar
Nov. 16
Sat. 9 am – 4 pm

Are you called to be a Reconciler?

Join the KOINONIA School of Race and Justice, and equip yourself in three ways: to engage in transformative and self-reflective work around race; to engage in constructive dialogue regarding issues of race and justice; and to engage in the larger community to promote social justice.

Cost: \$110. To register, visit our web site, or call (804) 783-7903 or email retreats@richmondhillva.org.

C L E R G Y C O N V O C A T I O N 2 0 1 9



In the changing religious landscape of the 21st century, how can the broader church meet the needs of the next generation? Clergy Convocation 2019 at Richmond Hill is your invitation to join the conversation.

Hear insights from a wide range of experience—from parish ministry to social justice work, to the academy.

- **Rev. Melanie Jones** (*Moderator and Keynote*) Director of the Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership, Instructor of Theology Ethics and Culture, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- **Allan-Charles Chipman** Faith Rooted Organizer & Strategist, Initiatives of Change USA
- **Rev. Jamie Lynn Haskins** Chaplain for Spiritual Life, University of Richmond
- **Rev. Andrew Terry** Priest, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Executive Director, RE:work RICHMOND

Join this important conversation as we seek common ground toward healing and reconciliation for our city.

Free and open to all (non-clergy are welcome!) *Noon Prayers and community lunch will follow for those able to stay.*

Sign up now! www.richmondhillva.org/clergy-convocation-2019/

WORSHIP SERVICES

DAILY PRAYERS

Morning 7:00 - 7:15 a.m.

Noon 12:00 - 12:15 p.m.

Evening 6:00 - 6:15 p.m.

COMMUNITY WORSHIP

Every Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

The community celebrates Holy Communion. Services are led by ministers of various denominations according to their traditions. We invite you to join us afterwards for dinner in the refectory.

PRAYING WITH THE SONGS OF TAIZÉ

First Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Jim Bennett, Leader

Taizé worship is contemplative and meditative in character, using short songs, repeated again and again in a candlelit chapel. The songs express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the heart. The hope is this reality will gradually penetrate one's whole being; thus the meditative singing becomes a way of listening to God. Our practice of Taizé includes singing, prayer for Metropolitan Richmond, and a period of silence. Jim Bennett, a skilled musician, leads this time of worship with a variety of guest musicians and instruments.

SOAKING PRAYER SERVICE

1st Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. and 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

DeBorah Cannady, Leader

Those struggling with illness have benefitted from being "soaked in prayer" over periods of time. Prayer ministers are available to pray with those desiring emotional, spiritual, or physical healing. Participants are invited to find a comfortable place, sit, relax, and receive prayer. Participants may also come and go during the service.

GENERATIONAL HEALING SERVICE

5th Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Rev. Dr. Paula O. Parker, Leader

Once a quarter, Richmond Hill offers a service for Generational Healing. This is an opportunity to invite God's healing into your family, including generations that have gone before, as well as generations that will come after you. Participants are encouraged to bring the blessings as well as the pains and traumas of their ancestry written on a piece of paper (not to be shared). However, careful preparation of your personal genogram will help you pray more specifically for your family members.

MEN'S CIRCLE: PRACTICING THE WAY OF COUNCIL

2nd Thursdays at 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Rev. Joel Blunk, Leader

Men of all ages and stages of life are invited to participate in this monthly gathering at Richmond Hill to practice The Way of Council, an ancient spiritual practice of storytelling and deep conversation. The process is simple. Plenty of silence creates spaciousness for meaning—both spoken and unspoken—to be offered and received. We hold the space with intention. The time is closed with a prayer, a group gesture or a few moments more of silence.

COMMUNITY NEWS

THANK YOU!
***\$47,455 helps us fill a lot of seats**

*This final total includes online gifts, offline checks, and matching funds.



The Amazing Praise: An Amazing Success!

What a terrific 48-hours we enjoyed during the Amazing Praise, held September 24-26!

THANK YOU to all who participated in our fun by donating in support of Richmond Hill's fall program schedule, as we seek to bring God's healing to metropolitan Richmond.

Our final total of over \$47,000 was made possible by nearly \$20,000 in online gifts, \$6,000 in offline checks/cash, and about \$21,000 in special matching funds. In other words, many generous hearts were at work to make this possible.

We invite your continued engagement with our work and hope you'll join us for daily prayer, a walk in the garden, a meal, or just a conversation. Let this place bless you, as you have blessed us!

While the Amazing Praise is in its fourth year, this was Richmond Hill's inaugural participation and we feel so blessed!



Preparing Ourselves for Christmas

Come join us at Richmond Hill for this 24-hour retreat to prepare ourselves for Christ's coming this Christmas. We will have readings from the lectionary, words of spiritual guides of our time, contemplative prayer and generous periods for reflection as we join the Richmond Hill community in their Benedictine rhythm of life.

Facilitators: Deborah Streicker, Cheryl Blackwell

Suggested donation: \$110 per person

Contact: Mary Lewis at 783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org



Everyone wrestles with issues of forgiveness — whether giving or receiving it. This retreat offers you two coaches in your corner who have personally and professionally turned their *wrestling* into *dancing*! We will draw from the wells of experience, psychology, and theology to enhance your ability to forgive and receive life-changing insights into navigating challenging relationships. New mental, emotional, and social tools will facilitate turning your *wrestling* into *dancing*.

Additionally you can expect:

- Life and research-tested steps
- How to repair ruptured relationships
- Steps to rebuild a more positive past for yourself
- How to detoxify relationships and regain intimacy
- To overcome the negativity of anger and disappointment
- Biblical examples of broken relationships with insights into forgiveness

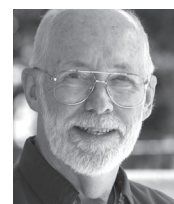
Register today!

Cost: \$225. (Scholarships & CEUs available)

Register: Online, or call Mary Lewis at 804-783-7903, or email retreats@richmondhillva.org



Paige Lanier Chargois, D.Min. is an ordained Baptist minister who ecumenically has served 12 different denominations, this wider community, the causes of peace, and racial reconciliation across America and in many foreign countries. Hurts, hurdles, challenges and disappointments led her to devise a four-session Bible Study 15 years ago on forgiveness of self, others, family, and God.



Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Ph.D. was honored in 2015 by VCU with the title of "Commonwealth Professor" having served as a professor of psychology for 40 years, authored 37 books

on psychology plus countless professional articles. A world-class expert on the subject, he has staffed conferences on each continent except Antarctica and was invited to South Africa to share his forgiveness research with the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" in 1996. He was a visiting fellow at Cambridge University.



2209 East Grace Street
Richmond, Virginia 23223
(804) 783-7903
www.richmondhillva.org

COMMUNITY DINNERS

6:30 pm each Tuesday

Donation: \$7-10

Come join us for a meal!

COMMUNITY LUNCHES

12:30 pm each Thursday

Donation: \$5-7

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October / November 2019



Metro Richmond at Prayer

In October: *Pray for Public, Non-profit, and Religious Social Service Work and Ministries in Metropolitan Richmond.*

...and in November: *Pray for the Persons in Financial Need in Metropolitan Richmond.*

RICHMOND HILL MISSION STATEMENT

Richmond Hill is an ecumenical Christian fellowship and intentional residential community who serve as stewards of an urban retreat center within the setting of a historic monastery. Our Mission is to seek God's healing of Metropolitan Richmond through prayer, hospitality, racial reconciliation and spiritual development.

RICHMOND HILL'S DAILY CYCLE OF PRAYER

Pray for Metropolitan Richmond Every Day: For the healing of metropolitan Richmond; for the sick and those in our hearts; for the welfare of all our residents; for the establishment of God's order in our community.

MONDAYS: Our residents who live in the City of Richmond, the Mayor, Manager, City Council, and School Board. Non-profit organizations and their ministries. All schools: students, teachers, and staff. Day care centers. All who suffer from addiction, dependency, and co-dependency. The Council, residents, and staff of Richmond Hill.

TUESDAYS: Our residents who live in Hanover County, the Board of Supervisors, School Board, and Manager. The print and broadcast media. The churches of metropolitan Richmond: members and clergy. All who live in poverty. All who suffer from mental illness.

WEDNESDAYS: The Governor of Virginia, the General Assembly, and all who work in State Government. All who work in businesses which provide services to others. All who work in construction. Hospitals and nursing homes: patients, residents, and staff; all who provide health care. Victims of violent crime; all who commit violent crime. All senior residents.

THURSDAYS: Our residents who live in Ashland, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg, the town and city Councils and Managers. All who work in banks and finance; all making financial decisions for greater Richmond. Prisons and jails of metropolitan Richmond: prisoners and staff. All who are unemployed or underemployed. All public servants.

FRIDAYS: Our residents who live in Henrico County, the Supervisors, School Board, and County Manager. All who work in the manufacturing industry in metropolitan Richmond. The police, fire, and rescue workers. The courts. All

young people. All who hurt, need inner healing, or are unable to love.

SATURDAYS: Our residents who live in Chesterfield County, the Supervisors, School Board, and County Manager. All who work in retail trade in metropolitan Richmond, and those who own our businesses. Counselors and spiritual directors. The Sisters of the Visitation of Monte Maria. All victims of abuse; all perpetrators of abuse.

SUNDAYS: Our residents who live in the Counties of Charles City, Goochland, Powhatan, and New Kent, the Supervisors, School Boards, and Managers. An end to racism and racial prejudice. All places of prayer or worship: churches, mosques, and synagogues. Universities, colleges, and technical schools. All who seek God.

We pray daily at Richmond Hill for persons or situations for which our prayers are requested. Call us at 804-783-7903.

Share your comments, or sign up to receive our monthly printed UPDATE newsletter here: rubble@richmondhillva.org
If you would like to subscribe to eUPDATE, our email newsletter, go here: www.richmondhillva.org/subscribe/

You can find us, like us, share us: **facebook:** RichmondHillVa **twitter:** RichmondHillVa2 **instagram:** richmondhillva

