VIRGINIA IS FOR LEARNERS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
As August begins, many of us are looking forward to the release of the movie *Downton Abbey*. In the film, Robert Crawley and family are preparing for a visit from King George V and Queen Mary. The movie opens in theaters on September 20, and we will be offering a sneak peek next month. As I write this, details are still being finalized. Visit whro.org/events for more information. I hope you will join us!

This issue of *Dimensions* focuses on our education efforts. The Virginia Department of Education recently launched its Virginia is for Learners initiative, an initiative developed to ensure every public school student is ready to thrive after graduation. The initiative emphasizes real-world skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship—all with the goal of equipping Virginia graduates with the skills and experience they will need to thrive in the workforce of the future.

This type of educational preparation aligns perfectly with how WHRO has been working in the field of education since our very beginning. From Pre-K through high school, we offer resources and services for students, teachers, and parents that emphasize hands-on learning and problem-solving skills. Our work impacts 155,000 educators and over 1.2 million students across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Whether it is presenting online high school courses to students throughout Virginia, or hosting workshops for educators that demonstrate how to use the latest technology in their classrooms, we are dedicated to making learning fun and accessible to everyone in our community. In this issue, you’ll find stories highlighting several of these efforts.

In June, the WHRO family mourned the loss of our dear colleague and friend Annie Gilstrap. Annie joined our education staff in 1993 and has been an instrumental part of the team every year since. Though she may be best known for coordinating the annual Great Computer Challenge, she was an integral part of everything the Education team facilitates, from professional development trainings for local educators to our annual spelling bee. All of us at WHRO will miss Annie, and we thank her for her years of service and the joy she brought to everyone who knew her. Please read more about her and her contributions to WHRO on page 10.

Lastly, I’d like to thank you for your faithful support of all the work we do. Without your generosity, none of it would be possible!

Bert Schmidt
President & Chief Executive Officer
The Virginia Department of Education, local school divisions and key partner organizations are working together on big changes that will connect the future of learning in the Commonwealth with the future of work in a global economy. Virginia is for Learners will connect every student with the knowledge, skills and real-world experience necessary to thrive in the economy of the future.

Training K-12 Students to Go Deeper

Virginia’s new approach to K-12 education is about preparing every student for what comes after graduation. That means combining strong content knowledge with a deeper approach to learning that emphasizes the skills necessary to apply that knowledge successfully. Students should have strong content knowledge as well as the critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration and citizenship skills they need to apply that knowledge successfully.

Preparing Virginia Graduates for What Comes Next

Virginia high school graduation now includes the “Profile of a Virginia Graduate,” which emphasizes the knowledge, skills, attributes and experiences employers and educators identify as critical for future success. For the first time, all Virginia graduates will also leave high school with life-changing, work-based learning experiences that put them on the path for a good career and economic advancement.

Making Student Success the Highest Standard for Every School

Big changes to how Virginia tracks school quality and student achievement will ensure that the Commonwealth maintains high standards while measuring the outcomes that matter most to students and our economy. Virginia’s new Standards of Accreditation and Standards of Learning place increased emphasis on racial and economic equity, recognize schools that demonstrate continuous improvement and increase expectations that schools prepare students to succeed in college or the workforce after graduation.

For more information on Virginia is for Learners, please visit VirginiaisforLearners.Virginia.Gov

WHRO is one of the Partners in the Virginia is for Learners Initiative

Together, the WHRO education and production departments have been creating videos to highlight stories of student activities that illustrate deeper learning. You can view a couple of these videos at the following links:

- Bari”STARS” in the Making – emediava.org/lo/32053
- Sounds Like a Plan – emediava.org/lo/32036

Check out more Deeper Learning videos in eMediaVA™.

The WHRO education department is comprised of hard-working individuals who are dedicated to providing rich learning opportunities. On any given day, you might find this team conducting a STEM camp, promoting reading with the Raising Readers Van program, running the Great Computer Challenge, conducting online workshops, or designing high-quality digital content. In all we do, we work to incorporate the principles of knowledge application.

“In activities that our staff conducts, whether they are elementary, middle, or high school challenges, students are asked to apply what they know to solve a given problem,” explained Elmer Seward, vice president of education services. “They have to use creativity and critical thinking as they collaborate and communicate to reach a solution. These are hallmarks of deeper learning.”

Throughout this edition, you will learn about a variety of our programs and products. You will see that WHRO not only supports the Virginia is for Learners initiative, but seeks for all individuals to have opportunities where they are challenged to be lifelong learners and develop the 5 C’s (critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication and citizenship).
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<td>Jamie's Quick &amp; Easy Food</td>
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TV listings are subject to change without notice. For the most up-to-date listing, visit whro.org/tvschedule.
Cinema 15: Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid
Saturday, August 3, 8:00 p.m.
Two Western bank and train robbers flee to Bolivia when the law gets too close.

Scramble the Seawolves
Monday, August 5, 9:00 p.m.
The HA(L)-3 Seawolves would become the most decorated Squadron in the Vietnam War, arguably in all of naval aviation history. From meager beginnings, the most effective and offensive Navy squadron, Helicopter Attack Light Squadron Three Seawolves, was established inside the Republic of Vietnam in support of Task Force-116, Operation Gamewarden in 1967. This is their story.

Charlottesville
Tuesday, August 6, 8:00 p.m.
Charlottesville explores the events leading to the tragedies of August 11 and 12, 2017, and grapples with the difficult question of how such acts are possible in modern America. Through firsthand accounts, Charlottesville offers local insight and perspective on the events that garnered national and international attention, prompting us to ask questions about who we are as a people, what we can learn from this experience, and how we can come together as a country.

Family Pictures USA: North Carolina
Monday, August 12, 9:00 p.m.
Discover how this historically rural state built on tobacco and textiles is rapidly changing. Entrepreneurs find a warm welcome in Durham, Native Americans come home to ancestral lands, and families separated by race and class work toward healing.
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ABBA Forever—A Celebration
Saturday, August 17, 8:00 p.m.
Celebrate the supergroup with Neil Sedaka, Donny Osmond, Tim Rice and the band members themselves. Featuring a greatest hits soundtrack including “Dancing Queen” and “Mamma Mia!,” the program includes original interviews and rare archival footage.

Downton Abbey Live!
Sunday, August 18, 9:00 p.m.
Set at the stunning grounds of Highclere Castle, the Downton Abbey Live Open Air Concert is performed by The Chamber Orchestra of London, accompanied by the shows composer, John Lunn, on piano and hosted by actor Jim Carter in character as Mr. Carson.

Woodstock: Three Days That Defined A Generation: American Experience
Tuesday, August 20, 8:00 p.m.
Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the concert that became a touchstone for a generation. The film brings the three-day concert to life through the voices of those who were present at what became the defining moment of the counterculture revolution.

Big Family: The Story of Bluegrass Music
Friday, August 30, 9:00 p.m.
Examine the history of bluegrass music, from its origins to its eventual worldwide popularity, and hear from dozens of musicians who explain the ways bluegrass music transcends generational, cultural and geographic boundaries.
### WEEKDAYS

5-10am | Morning Classics with Dwight Davis

10am-1pm | Mid-Day Classics with Anthony McSpadden

1-4pm | Mid-Day Classics with Rebecca Evans

4-7pm | Afternoon Classics with Wayla Chambo

7-9pm | Performance Today

9pm-Mid. | Evening Classics with Raymond Jones

Mid.-5am | 90.3 Overnight

### SATURDAYS

Mid.-6am | 90.3 Overnight

6-7am | Harmonia

7am-Noon | Car Tunes

Noon-1pm | From the Top

1-4pm | La Scala, Milan: 8/03 Verdi: Attila

Lyric Opera of Chicago:
8/10 Bellini: Norma
8/17 Mozart: The Magic Flute
8/24 Donizetti: Lucia di Lammermoor
8/31 Massenet: Don Quichotte

4-6pm | Intermezzo

6-8pm | Performance Today

8-11pm | This Just In with Raymond Jones

11pm-Mid. | Harmonia

### SUNDAYS

Mid.-7am | 90.3 Overnight

7am-Noon | Your Musical Brunch - 8:30 - BirdNotes

Noon-1pm | With Heart and Voice

1-3pm | Performance Today

3-4pm | From the Parlor with Dwight Davis

4-7pm | Afternoon Classics with Raymond Jones

7-8pm | Classical Guitar Alive!

8-10pm | Pipedeams

10pm-Mid. | Evening Classics with Raymond Jones

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whro.org/radio
## WHRO Matinée

All your favorite PBS programs every weekday afternoon starting at 3:30 p.m. on WHRO TV15

See what’s on at whro.org/matinee

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<td>PBS Previews: Country Music</td>
<td>Woodstock: Three Days That Defined a Generation</td>
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<td>Aug 26-30</td>
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Funny hats, crazy games, silly glasses, unbelievable work ethic, endless supplies of energy and a contagious laugh—those are what come to mind for many of us when we think about our friend and coworker Annie Gilstrap. Annie, WHRO’s educational technology manager, lost her three-year battle with metastatic breast cancer on June 9.

An accomplished educator, musician and treasured colleague, Annie spread joy to everyone she encountered. The halls of WHRO are too quiet without her laugh, and we will forever miss her.

Annie joined the WHRO staff in 1993 as a part-time employee and moved to a full-time position in 1995. She even met her husband, Jason, on the job during the nine years that he worked at WHRO as a web application engineer. Though she is perhaps best known for her work facilitating the Great Computer Challenge annually for the last 24 years, she was instrumental in many different areas of WHRO Education. Whenever there was a need for educational technology, Annie was there to fill it. From events like the annual Virginian-Pilot Spelling Bee to teacher workshops, she was the go-to resource for anyone needing help using the latest technology.

“She had such an enthusiasm for new technology,” said Wendy Hazel, Annie’s coworker. “She was always pushing to stay on the cutting edge and use the latest technological tools.”

She also had a passion to extend that knowledge to others. Each year, Annie conducted numerous professional development sessions for local educators and led hands-on trainings about eMediaVA, demonstrating to teachers how its many digital learning assets could bring interactivity to their classrooms.

“She loved going out to the schools and working with teachers,” Wendy said. “She believed in the ‘teach the teacher’ model.”

Annie also loved working with local students. A few of her favorite workshops to present included sessions on learning to code using ScratchJr, a PBS Kids app; digital storytelling; and Fun Fridays—a day-long session in which students toured WHRO’s facilities and learned about careers in video production.

“I have worked with Annie for over 20 years,” said Angela Franklin, a WHRO Education staff member. “She was not only my supervisor, but a friend. Her compassion and drive was contagious. We pushed each other to do more. I will truly miss her.”

She also pushed colleagues outside of the office. From inviting coworkers to join her in half-marathon and 5K races, to starting an exercise group after work, Annie encouraged everyone she met to fully and actively embrace life and good health. “She’d send us encouraging messages when she’d send her weekly invites to see who was in for the week,” explained Sherby Wilks, WHRO human...
resources officer and a member of the exercise group. “If she could get one person to work out with her, she kept it going.”

Whatever the task, team members knew Annie would bring a huge amount of dedication and energy to it. She was committed to excellence, even if it meant slipping a little beyond a project deadline to add another photo to a presentation or another learning activity to a workshop.

“Annie would always go above and beyond,” explained coworker Laura Dresen, “even if it meant getting materials to us a little late, but that was Annie. Whatever event it was, Annie always wanted to make sure it was fun.”

She also helped bring a lot of fun to the staff. Annie loved a good party and typically supplied many of the games for WHRO’s annual end-of-summer picnic. In recent years this included her collection of burlap sacks and hopper balls for races. She said that she brought them for children of staff to use, but Annie was the first in line to race and quickly recruited coworkers to join her.

As friends and family gathered at her house near the end of her illness, Annie remarked that the collection of visitors was “the best party for the worst reason,” and in celebration of the full and generous life she lived, WHRO spent a Saturday afternoon remembering her just that way—with a Music-Dance-Potluck Party at the station. The event was filled with family, friends, current and former staff members, an array of silly hats, and of course, a lot of music.

An accomplished musician, Annie played the flute since the 4th grade and enjoyed being a part of several bands through the years. She played with ODU’s Catholic Campus Ministry, Leigheas, Refuge Choir, and Just Us. She also performed many shows with Hurrah Players and even talked one coworker into taking acting lessons with her. Many of her bandmates honored her with their music at the station’s memorial event, some even composing original music just for her.

“It still has not sunk in yet that she is gone, that I will not see her,” Laura said. “I just can’t stop seeing her big beautiful eyes and hearing her loud contagious laugh.”

It’s the way all of us feel. Yet we are so thankful for the many years that Annie shared her laugh as well as her hard work and sweet spirit with us. She will forever live in our hearts.

By Belinda Elliott
Managing Editor, Dimensions
Belinda.Elliott@whro.org
Pack your bags, get your passport and get ready to go! In the new online World Geography course, WHRO Education has provided students with a way to explore the world without leaving their hometown. This newly released course puts students in the role of intern for a cutting-edge digital media company called GEOTREX and allows them to explore content aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning in fun and exciting ways.

The course includes the study of major physical features and the unique cultural characteristics of each region, and the factors that influence standard of living. Students examine concrete examples of how geography influences daily life by studying international conflicts and environmental challenges. Activities included in the course involve understanding basic features of each region’s culture and developing a competence in map and globe skills. Throughout each module, they are presented with media-rich lessons, engaging interactivities, varied assignments and real-world authentic assessments. Many of the course assignments involve deeper learning by providing students with the opportunity to learn and practice real-world skills.

Along with a new design and updated content, WHRO has added other features to the World Geography course to make it more accessible to all learners with various learning styles. In addition to printable versions of interactivities, the course now contains closed captioning and ADA compliant transcripts. Course interactivities can be navigated without a mouse using a keyboard, and essential text, buttons and images contained within interactivities have descriptive ALT tags to provide an equitable learning experience.

WHRO Education online courses are created by the organization and then distributed to its 20 owner-member school divisions, as well as licensed to other school divisions throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. To date, WHRO Education has produced 26 online courses, as well as an Internet Safety module. To learn more about WHRO’s online courses, visit whroeducation.org/contact

Meet Project Manager
Dr. Suzanne Unger Freeman

Dr. Freeman first joined WHRO in 2014 as an instructional designer working on workplace readiness modules. She was promoted to project manager shortly after. As a project manager for WHRO Education online courses, Dr. Freeman sets course timelines, secures resources for instructional designers, and oversees every aspect of course development. She also gets to work with educators who serve as subject matter experts during the course creation and review phases of an online course project.

“The best part of my job is developing curriculum resources and assignments that intertwine student education with service-learning opportunities,” says Dr. Freeman. With a background as a classroom teacher and curriculum and instruction scholar, she is passionate about empowering youth to become positive change makers in their local and global communities.

When asked about the impact of online learning, Dr. Freeman is looking forward to the future. She believes that online learning can provide diverse students with opportunities to succeed both during their school career and beyond by helping students develop aptitudes in the 5 C’s.
Parents, grandparents and children laughed and learned together over the last few months as they explored coding, engineering and science through WHRO Education’s Family Fun Nights. Under this new initiative, WHRO partnered with St. Helena Elementary School, the Horace C. Downing Branch of the Norfolk Public Library, and the Berkley Community Center to bring families and children together to maximize learning.

Each evening began with dinner before all the participants dove into the night’s educational activities. In a session on coding, children and adults learned how to code using the PBS Kids ScratchJr app. Families chose characters, animated them, and recorded sounds or dialogue to create a story. At the end of the four sessions, each family presented their story to the group.

In another session, the children and adults learned about engineering as they worked together to create a rover to explore space. The activity gave them hands-on experience with critical skills like planning a design, collecting data, testing their creation and making improvements. Along the way, students also learned about teamwork while parents gained confidence in helping their children grasp critical concepts – something many of them said they plan to continue at home.

“I can use simple household items to make fun experiments,” said Jasmin Samuel, one of the parents who attended the sessions. She said she had been searching for ideas to help her boys learn about science and math.

“As a parent, these family learning nights have helped me think beyond the box,” added Tawarrrna Wynne.

Stewart Howard attended with his grandkids and said the family project brought them closer and extended their learning beyond the classroom. “It has given me other things that I should be doing to help educate my grandkids a little more and actually participating to let them know I’m interested to learn just like they are,” he explained.

The program is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Ready to Learn Initiative for work with families of preschool and elementary school children. Other work under the grant has included spring break camps and professional development for educators. See more photos and videos from Family Fun Nights at whro.org/familyfun

By Belinda Elliott
Managing Editor, Dimensions
Belinda.Elliott@whro.org
The start of the school year is always a great time to research new ideas and resources to improve student learning. While the growing list of available education technology can be overwhelming, Virginia educators can count on eMediaVASM to provide innovative digital tools that spark creativity and enliven content. WHRO Education staff sat down with one Virginia educator to learn how she uses eMediaVA to strengthen critical thinking, creativity and communication for her school’s students and staff.

Megan Morsey is a veteran educator in Newport News, who currently serves as a library media specialist at Woodside High School. “eMediaVA provides many opportunities for teaching digital literacy and enhancing students’ communication and critical thinking abilities, all of which are important 21st century skills.” According to Ms. Morsey, “One of the greatest aspects of digital media like eMediaVA is the accessibility. Students no longer have to be sitting in the classroom with the teacher to learn course content. eMediaVA also allows teachers to tailor lessons and instruction to individual students, by making it easy to change parts of lessons based on students’ skills or strengths.”

Ms. Morsey offers professional development sessions for Woodside’s content teams every year on how eMediaVA can be used to enhance their course material, and before becoming a librarian, she used eMediaVA in her earth science classroom. “While I was teaching earth science, the eMediaVA resources were very useful. I would often insert the short, informative video clips into my lessons. In addition, I found the pre-made lesson plans to be especially helpful when I was a new teacher. I now share with my fellow educators that eMediaVA is a great place to get quality content to enhance your curriculum.”

To learn more about eMediaVA, visit eMediaVA.org or email Lindsey Horner at Lindsey.Horner@whro.org

The Profile of a Virginia Graduate embodies a new standard of expectations, collectively known as the 5 C’s. By providing educational experiences that cultivate skills in critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration and citizenship, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) strives to develop individuals who are well-prepared for the world after graduation. The Makey Makey Invention Literacy Workshop, hosted by WHRO in April, provided an environment for educators to learn about the Makey Makey invention kit, an amazing resource to help develop some of these skills in their students.

The invention kit includes an instruction sheet, a circuit board, a USB cable, alligator clips and connector wires. While working in pairs or small groups, students use their kit, and any object in their environment that conducts electricity, to create a functioning computer keyboard. Keyboards have been created using objects you would not consider useful in this scenario, including slices of pizza, bananas and even plants.

WHRO Educational Technology Specialist Angela Franklin had the opportunity to participate in the workshop and commented about how much fun she and other Virginia educators had experimenting with the Makey Makey kits. “We had a lot of fun brainstorming and testing out our ideas. If our keyboards didn’t work out the way we planned, we would reflect and collaborate with one another on how to improve them. We had a great time!”

The kit is an amazing tool to help students develop many of the 5 C’s. Students think critically and creatively about how to use their kit, and the objects in their environment, to create something new. They take risks as they work to bring their ideas to life, and work together to learn from any failures along the way to creating their keyboards. They collaborate and communicate with their teammates and build a community of creative, critical thinkers.

By Lindsey Horner
Manager of eMediaVA
Lindsey.Horner@whro.org

By Cryshel Whitehead
Project Manager
Cryshel.Whitehead@whro.org
Rise to the Challenge

Eric Nestor, a technology teacher at Oscar Smith High School, has been bringing students to compete in the Great Computer Challenge (GCC) since 1997. “I have seen students put in a lot more effort in the classroom in preparation for the competition,” said Nester. “Many of the parents never stop thanking me for getting their child involved. It is a great life lesson for them whether they win or lose.”

The Great Computer Challenge is a joint project of WHRO, the Consortium for Interactive Instruction and Old Dominion University that provides students an opportunity to foster teamwork, experience a college environment and recognize student achievement. The students start preparing for the competition months in advance with sample problems and previous winning solutions. However, they do not receive their GCC problem until the morning of the competition and must complete their solution to the problem within a strict time frame.

“The first year I took students to the Great Computer Challenge I was curious and had just started teaching a digital art class,” said Cathy Hilton. Each year since then, Woodside High School in Newport News has sent more teams led by Hilton. After attending the GCC for a couple of years, Hilton proposed that the school add digital media courses, which she believes has put them on the cutting edge of career development exposure in the digital arts related areas.

The GCC is a competition; however, the goal of WHRO and ODU staff members and numerous volunteers is to create a fun-filled and stress-free environment. “The GCC crew does such an amazing job every year to provide our students with a great opportunity. It is so well run and never disappointing,” said Nester. “The GCC provides me with a great educational tool and motivator to use with my students. Any teacher who is not having their students participate is really missing out.”

To find out more about the Great Computer Challenge, please visit education.whro.org/gcc To volunteer to help at the Great Computer Challenge, go to education.whro.org/gccvolunteer

By Laura Dresen
Administrative Assistant
Laura.Dresen@whro.org

WHRO GIFTS OF HONOR

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Doug Chenault
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“The Group” consisting of:
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  Faye Weatherly
  Toni Horton
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  Shirley Mays
  Undine Longo

In Memory of Annie Gilstrap
Anonymous
Charlotte DiNonno
Sarah Gildea

In Honor of Kirkland Kelley
Sally Kitchin

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What Floats Your Boat?

What determines how fast toy cars roll? What makes boats float? Local students explored these questions and more during a recent STEM camp held at the Berkley Community Center in Norfolk. The camp was created through a grant provided by the Ready to Learn Community Collaborative for Early Learning & Media Initiative, with the goal of getting children to think and act like engineers and scientists.

Students in grades Kindergarten–5 used their critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration skills as they participated in hands-on activities led by WHRO education specialists Portia Hightower and Kelsi Ponton. To learn about design and buoyancy, students created boats. To explore friction, they rolled toy cars down different types of surfaces. They also examined how accidents can lead to new discoveries by painting with marbles, learned about stability by creating towers out of paper cups, and experimented with shadows using puppets and a projector.

“Being able to inspire the creativity and critical thinking was rewarding,” said Ponton. “The kids had a great time at the camp; they created shadow puppets and experimented with the puppets the rest of the day.”

Students were sent home each day with a letter explaining the daily activity to encourage at-home conversations. “I hope the families will continue to learn together,” said Hightower. “It was so nice to see the students having fun while learning.”

By Laura Dresen
Administrative Assistant
Laura.Dresen@whro.org
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