

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is the Hampton Roads Community Foundation?

We are a regional community foundation and the largest grantmaker and scholarship provider in southeastern Virginia. We were formed January 1, 2010 from a merger of The Norfolk Foundation and The Virginia Beach Foundation.

## 2. What do we do?

As a permanent endowment we manage more than \$200 million in funds used to improve life in southeastern Virginia. Since our founding in 1950, we have awarded more than \$140 million in grants to nonprofits and scholarships to students. Our goal is to improve life in southeastern Virginia.

## 3. What is a community foundation?

It is a nonprofit organization that typically makes grants in a specific region. There are more than 700 community foundations in the United States – 27 of them in Virginia.

## 4. Why did The Norfolk Foundation and The Virginia Beach Foundation merge?

The two community foundations joined forces to address regional challenges, promote greater community involvement in philanthropy and help donors and nonprofits in the region.

## 5. How did the Foundation get started?

A group of civic leaders amassed donations of \$2,350 in 1950 to create The Norfolk Foundation – the first community foundation in Virginia. Community leaders in Virginia Beach created The Virginia Beach Foundation in 1987. The two foundations merged on January 1, 2010 to form the Hampton Roads Community Foundation.

## 6. What area do you serve?

We award grants and scholarships to nonprofit organizations and students from throughout southeastern Virginia but primarily in Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach as well as the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Our donors also come from throughout the Hampton Roads region.

## 7. How do your funds work?

We are made up of nearly 400 component funds. Each retains the identity and purpose established by the original donor. All of our funds are used exclusively for charitable purposes such as grants to nonprofits or scholarships for students. A percentage of each fund is used each year for grantmaking.

## 8. How are funds invested?

Our assets are permanent funds held and invested for long-term growth. Our board of directors sets the overall investment policy and monitors the performance of funds with help from our investment committee and investment consultant. Each month we post the most recent investment results at [www.hamptonroadscf.org/about/financial](http://www.hamptonroadscf.org/about/financial).

## 9. How do nonprofit organizations receive grants?

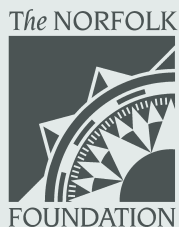
Grants are awarded throughout the year through many different grant programs. Details and application information are available at [www.hamptonroadscf.org/nonprofits/grants](http://www.hamptonroadscf.org/nonprofits/grants)

## 10. How do students apply for scholarships?

Scholarship applications are available online starting December 1 and are due March 1 for most scholarships. Details are at [www.hamptonroadscf.org/scholarships](http://www.hamptonroadscf.org/scholarships).

## 11. Do you accept gifts of all sizes?

Yes. Gifts of any size can be made to existing funds, including our family of Community Funds. Creating a named, permanent fund requires a minimum gift of \$25,000. We welcome current gifts as well as arrangements for future gifts from wills or trusts. For details visit [www.hamptonroadscf.org/donor](http://www.hamptonroadscf.org/donor).



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THE  
VIRGINIA  
BEACH  
FOUNDATION

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Hampton Roads  
Community Foundation



*Teacher Wendi Goodman helps Micah Wall work on his math skills during snack time.*

## Smart Beginnings

### Improving the System to Benefit Young Citizens

When Bonnie Hartsell of Chesapeake chose a pre-school program for her three daughters, Virginia's Star Quality Initiative didn't exist. She relied on her "mom instincts" when she enrolled Bailey, Abbie and Anna in Simonsdale Presbyterian Pre-school in Portsmouth.

But, if Hartsell were selecting an early education center for her girls today, she would have a new tool to use – Virginia's Star Quality Rating System. "I would definitely be asking about the school's rating," Hartsell says. She is delighted that Simonsdale, which her youngest daughter still attends, was among only five centers in Hampton Roads awarded four stars – the highest number given during the initial quality ratings released in 2010.

Simonsdale's high rating by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation followed a year of mentoring in a pilot program administered by Smart Beginnings South Hampton Roads. That program included

a preliminary evaluation from an early education expert, an improvement plan, a mentor, grant funding for equipment and scholarships for teachers to take early education courses.

The result at Simonsdale is a place where 4-year-olds like Anna Hartsell, Bonnie's daughter, and her friend Micah Wall are happily immersed in learning. They spend the day in small groups in well-equipped classrooms interacting with highly trained teachers. If the day's topic is spring, Anna and Micah may sing about speckled frogs and study their life cycles while playing with toy frogs in a tank of water. At snack time they learn self sufficiency and numbers by counting the crackers and cheese they serve themselves with help from teachers. During the day's activities, teachers engage Anna and Micah in open-ended conversation to help them expand their thoughts and master new words.

Currently, 22 South Hampton Roads early education centers have earned quality ratings that range from two to four stars. This year, 56 more area centers are being rated by trained evaluators. The rated centers will then receive improvement plans, mentors, grants for equipment and teacher scholarships to help improve their programs. While the number of rated centers in South Hampton Roads may not sound huge, it is more than in any other part of Virginia and puts Hampton Roads at the forefront of a growing movement to improve early education for all Virginia children.

That movement grew out of an initiative pioneered by the Hampton Roads Community Foundation in 2004. Dismayed by studies that showed that one in five area children arrived at kindergarten



*Teacher Stephanie Mann pretends to be a patient for future physician Samantha Bailey. Mann was helped at ODU by a Foundation scholarship for students who want to be teachers.*

**BELOW:**  
*Simonsdale students work together to make a tower in their classroom.*

unprepared for school, the Foundation’s board and staff explored ways to improve early care and education. Its involvement ranges from convening experts to providing funding and leadership. The Foundation has been a key player during the past six years in making sure that Anna, Micah and all other area preschoolers arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and succeed in life.

Since 2004 the Foundation has provided more than \$7 million in grants to Smart Beginnings South Hampton Roads – primarily through the Batten Educational Achievement Fund, which the Foundation administers. Smart Beginnings piloted the star rating program that has now spread throughout Virginia. It continues to administer the program in the region and provide the grants and scholarships that help early education centers keep improving.

Simonsdale Preschool is already working to raise its rating to five stars. Since receiving its four-star status, Carol Wilson, the preschool’s director, has fielded calls and visits from parents as well as professionals

eager to see an excellent program. Hampton Roads parents are demanding high-quality programs while early education centers strive to become even better.

“The best part is that we are changing the system of early education and helping

children and parents across the region,” says Christine Morris, vice president of initiatives at the Hampton Roads Community Foundation. “We now know what quality programs look like and what it takes to get there.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMANDA LUCIER AND THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

*more info* → [www.smartbeginningsshr.org](http://www.smartbeginningsshr.org)