



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Announcing: Southside Community Partners

A new name for the merged programs:

Southside Virginia Nonprofit Resource Center, Focus INC and ConnectSouthside

*New Name, New Ideas, New Programs and Services –
Same Commitment to Strengthening Our Nonprofit Community*

Hopewell, VA -- Following significant planning, research and collaboration and a vote by the program's Advisory Council, the Appomattox Regional Library System is pleased to announce **Southside Community Partners**, as the new name for its nonprofit resource program.

This new identity aligns the group with a unified mission: Building a strong Southside community through developing and strengthening the nonprofit sector.

More than 600 nonprofit and community-based organizations are currently part of the Southside Community Partners network. These organizations work across the Southside region to provide afterschool programs for disadvantaged children, job training, food distribution, health services and more to thousands of families and individuals in need. The good work of these organizations generates significant positive impact on the economy of the region through jobs, spending and tax revenues.

“As a local nonprofit program ourselves, we have deep knowledge of the sector and of our community. Our new name and unified operations enhances the ability of Southside Community Partners to connect and strengthen community-based organization staff, volunteers, business professionals, and funders -- in essence, our community building partners,” says Wendy Austin, director of the newly-named program.

“Like public libraries, successful nonprofits infuse vibrancy into our community,” adds Scott Firestine, Director of the Appomattox Regional Library System. “The library is committed to its collaboration with Southside Community Partners to help maximize the nonprofit community's work to build a strong and thriving region for us all.”

The program brings together new expert resources, partnerships and staff to better meet identified community needs. A new focus for Southside Community Partners is to facilitate collaborative engagement -- to bring together groups and individuals with emerging community project ideas to share and leverage their resources. Southside Community Partners will work with emerging organizations and well-established institutions to build their operations and programs to better enable sustainable, positive change in the Southside region.

Collaboration starts with connecting, networking and knowledge exchange -- the core of Southside Community Partners services. We have incorporated new workshops and expert instructors into our **Learning & Leadership** training program to deliver high-impact approaches for increasing organizational effectiveness. Topics include fundraising, board fundamentals, volunteer coordination, marketing for nonprofits and others.

Through **ConnectSouthside.org**, the web-based social and knowledge network, we provide free, one-stop, online access to all of the Southside Community Partners resources as well as the means for connecting the local nonprofit community to each other for collaboration and information exchange.

Southside Community Partners **Nonprofit Resource Center** located in the main Hopewell branch of the Appomattox Regional Library (ARLS), is the only one of its kind in the region. The Center is a *Foundation Center* cooperating collection providing free on-site access to the *Foundation Center Directory Online* as well as the Grants Connection *Directory of Virginia Foundations Online*. We have expanded our online and print resources to include:

- *BoardSource*^R special section for building and supporting effective nonprofit boards;
- *Guidestar Grant Explorer* and *Guidestar* nonprofit compensation research; and
- *Independent Sector* reports and data.

Our resources are made even more accessible with the help of our highly skilled staff and advisors. The library has added a new Reference Librarian-Nonprofit Collection Specialist who is available to provide individual assistance in successful use of Resource Center tools and materials. Chuck Koutnik, Resource Center Consulting Coordinator, continues to provide expert individual and group instruction on successful processes for researching funders as well as coaching on implementation of nonprofit management and governance resources. Rebecca Eisenman, Coordinator for ConnectSouthside and Learning & Leadership and Vera Pakizer, Research Assistant, both offer extensive communication and program advice and assistance.

“The support of our funders, the input from the community and the exceptional leadership of our Advisory Council and the ARLS Board of Trustees have been key to this successful merger and the continuing development of Southside Community Partners,” states Austin. “The success of Southside Community Partners will bring opportunities for connecting and learning that will empower community leaders to undertake and sustain work that assures a vibrant and strong Southside community.”

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Southside Community Partners is powered by ConnectSouthside.org, a partner affiliate of the ConnectNetwork.

Southside Community Partners serves the cities of Colonial Heights, Hopewell and Petersburg and
the counties of Dinwiddie, Prince George, Sussex, Surry and southern Chesterfield