



**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.

The only program of this type in the region, Southside Community Partners has expanded services to include:

- New books and online additions to the **Nonprofit Resource Center**, a Foundation Center Cooperating Collection, located in the Hopewell branch of the Appomattox Regional Library;
- Innovative partnerships to provide more expert **Learning & Leadership** training; and
- Enhanced features on **ConnectSouthside.org**, the web-based social and knowledge network that provides 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.

“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.

Community meetings and outreach forums are being planned for the coming months to encourage discussion and idea sharing. Nonprofit, business and government organizations as well as interested citizens are invited to contact Wendy Austin to learn more or to schedule presentations.

Reach Austin at [waustin@arls.org](mailto:waustin@arls.org) or at (804) 458-6329 ext. 2017.

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Funding support for the Appomattox Regional Library System Southside Community Partners is provided by The Cameron Foundation and the John Randolph Foundation  
Southside Community Partners is powered by [ConnectSouthside.org](http://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