



## March 2021

*"For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it.  
If only we're brave enough to be it." - Amanda Gorman*

Visit our Website



### New & Good: Co-Presidency

Circles RVA's Board of Directors as individuals, and as a unified group, inspire and empower Richmonders to move from surviving to thriving economically. The Circles model aims to break the cycle of poverty by focusing on building working relationships between people with different backgrounds. In a similar fashion, Circles RVA is introducing a new Leadership structure that pairs complementary skills and networks to best guide the organization.

Meet our first-ever Co-Presidents: Valena A. Dixon and Dick Ritsch.

Valena is an award-winning communications and public administration executive who has created and led innovative and unprecedented campaigns and programs for diverse industries and organizations in the areas of education, cable television, affordable housing, community development, and economic and employment opportunities. Valena served as an Ally with Circles' first cohort and volunteers with other organizations such as Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of VA. She serves on the Board of KLM Scholarship Foundation and is also a member of the Richmond Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Dick is a founding member of Circles RVA and has been committed to community outreach for over 20 years through roles at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Dick's experience as a business lawyer for start-up organizations has been put to good use with Circles RVA. He was an Ally to one of our first Circle Leaders and intends to volunteer as an Ally to another future Leader.

Want to know more about our Board? Click [here](#) for a full list of Directors.

### Appreciations: Inspiring Equity

Last month, in honor of Black History Month, we used social media to share about Black history makers who inspire us from the past or



present, inside our community or beyond. Responses, like those below, are uplifting and worth re-sharing:

"What inspires me is the legacy of community service and volunteerism that has been demonstrated throughout generations of my family. From my grandparents raised in the segregated south who ensured their family members and others were registered to vote; to my parents who volunteered at local schools... they instilled in me the vision and desire to serve others." - Valena



"Calandra Trotter stands out because of the support she has given to me... Calandra is not only a good career role model but also a very good person to learn from in all aspects of my life... Calandra has given the Resident Council resources and tools to use to make our Council better and to be successful leaders in our community." - Charlene

"I'm inspired by Tressie McMillan Cottom and her genius brain (seriously, she's an official genius). Her writings challenge me to think in ways I never have thought before!"- Helen

The inspiration doesn't need to end here. Who influences you to make an ongoing commitment to equity? Share your thoughts in the hopes that you can inspire and motivate in your own "circles."

'ADVOCACY' is our **Big View** theme for 2021. We will explore types of advocacy and how to become civically engaged as individuals and a community. We look forward to engaging Big View discussions all year long.

**Our 2020 Annual Report**, which reflects on Circles RVA's growth and impact over the past year, is now available on our [website](#). We are excited to share such a positive and uplifting report.

In a recent article Circles RVA graduate Darshee shared her accomplishments through the Circles process with strength and transparency. [Click](#) to read her transformation **story on the Phil VA.**

### Upcoming Events

MAR 2	MAR 9	MAR 16	MAR 23	MAR 30
<b>Match Night</b> Cohort 5 Reveal  Goal Work in Matched Circles  <b>** ALL PROGRAMMING IS VIRTUAL.**</b>	<b>Resource Teams</b> Re-Introduction to Resource Teams and Circles Process	<b>Cohort 5</b> S.M.A.R.T. Goals  <b>Cohorts 2, 3 &amp; 4</b> Jobs & Education Check-In	<b>Cohort 5</b> S.M.A.R.T. Goals  <b>Cohorts 2, 3 &amp; 4</b> Jobs & Education Check-In	<b>Big View</b> Women's History Month Panel

Do you have a suggestion for future programming that would be meaningful to our Circle Leaders? [Share](#) your ideas with us!

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