



December 2022

Working together until Metro Richmond is...

TRANSFORMED

We Gather Together

*God of Creation, you have blessed us with the changing of the seasons.
As we embrace these autumn months,
May the earlier setting of the sun
Remind us to take time to rest.
May the crunch of the leaves beneath our feet
Remind us of the brevity of this earthly life.
May the steam of our breath in the cool air
Remind us that it is you who give us your breath of life.
May the scurrying of the squirrels and the migration of the birds
Remind us that you call us to follow you.
(prayer entitled, Autumn Prayer)*

In early November thirty members of our summer staff met up at Camp Alkulana for a weekend and enjoyed a slow-paced retreat together. It was a rainy weekend that brought us indoors to enjoy puzzles and board games in the camp dining hall or a basketball game in the Big Lodge. We shared life updates about school and work as we sipped coffee and tea. In the evening we did our one order of business—we met to talk about how the summer went and visioned for our next summer together. Then we closed in worship. We read the Autumn Prayer (above), talked about the changes that the fall season brings to our life rhythms, and encouraged each other to take time for rest.

Camp staff retreats always remind me of the joy of coming together in a space that allows us to be authentic—it's a space where you'll equally experience the big belly laughs of unbridled happiness and quiet tears shed when sharing a story of hardship with a dear friend. Alkulana provides a space where young adults can be real with each other. They find family in each other. And God meets them there.

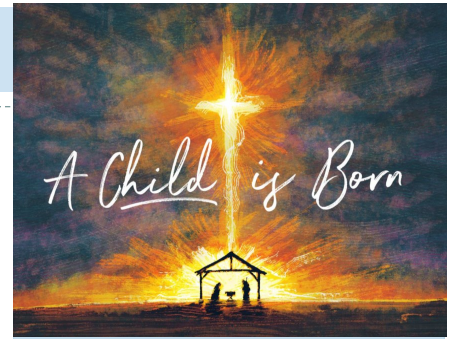
At Camp Alkulana we train our staff that relationships are at the core of our ministry. The life-long memories that we create at camp are all based in the relationships that we build when we live together with our campers for one or two weeks of the summer. We eat meals together, cheer each other during challenging new activities, sing songs together around the fire, and share space in our cabins. We become family in those shared spaces.

Our staff retreat is just one example of how we continue our summer friendships. As summer ends each August, we pivot to continuing relationships with our camp family throughout the year. Over the last several years we've built opportunities for campers and former campers to gather regularly through two



school-year programs, Alkulana RVA (ages 9-13) and the Alkulana Peer Program (ages 14-18). Under the leadership of two Alkulana interns, these Alkulana programs help us to continue friendships from the summer, have fun, build life skills, and be formed into leaders.

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Noteworthy Dates

CVBM Meeting

December 6, 2022 2 pm RCFN

CAST Meeting

December 13, 2022
RCFN Office 6:30 pm

RCFN Office Closed

December 23– January 2, 2023

Christmas Store Sharing Day

Oregon Hill–12/1/22
Church Hill- 12/2/22
South Richmond–12/3/22

MINISTRY OF THE WEEK

December 2022

12/4–Skipwith Baptist
12/11–South Richmond BC
12/18– Stockton Memorial
12/25– Swift Creek Baptist

**OPEN POSITIONS
AVAILABLE IN OUR
FAITH COMMUNITY!
CHECK OUT**

www.richmondbaptist.org

New Year, New Leadership

Thank you for inviting me to serve as the Executive Director Mission Strategist of the River City Faith Network! There are a lot of words in that title and an equal amount of opportunity and excitement for the days ahead in our cooperative mission efforts! As we get to know and collaborate with one another may we hold each other in prayer, build community among our churches, and find common ground in the transforming work of the kingdom in the River City.

I've had opportunity to serve in a variety of ministry positions in the last 25 years including congregational ministry, workplace ministry, church planting, associational and missionary work. Each experience taught me a variety of lessons and developed a number of ministry leadership skills. It is without a doubt that my 15 years serving among our Lakota friends in the Dakotas changed my understanding of mission work and the ways in which the Spirit works in, among and through God's people. These lessons from the prairie are rooted in prayer, community, and flexibility.

Prayer: As missionaries charged with living the gospel and growing as disciples, prayer becomes a non-negotiable practice. In a desolate place like the Dakotas there is a tangible reliance on God in the everyday work of ministry. Praying with and for our River City Network pastors will be a key focus in 2023 as we engage in monthly prayer gatherings via Zoom. We'll celebrate the work God is doing in your congregations. We'll pray about the stress and challenges that come with leading the church following a compounded and complicated season of disruption and unrest in our country. We'll pray for the common ministry we share in the River City and for transformation in the lives of the people who work and worship in this place.

Community: Serving alone is lonely. On the reservation, a simple task we might accomplish here in 5 minutes may take all day or several days out there to complete. More often than not, the ministry requires us to ask for help or invite people to share in the work. The same is true in associational work. As we individually navigate the ministry in our own churches, it is encouraging to know there are folks doing the same in their church. Networking with others provides support, an exchange of ideas and resources, and a peek into what God is doing among us. It is my hope to engage us in conversations that matter regarding our common ministries and mission efforts, while building community and cultural understanding among us.

Moving with the Spirit: If you have ever been on a mission trip you know the importance of flexibility. What we plan to do doesn't always go as we intended. The beauty of this is that the Spirit always engages us in ways that better suit God's plan and allows us to learn something new about ourselves and the way God works in the world. Remaining flexible, relying on the leadership of the Spirit helps us serve in unity with one another.

In the three weeks serving among you, I've found JOY in celebrating River Road's 75th anniversary; LOVE found in the call to ministry God placed on the lives of the RCFN staff; FAITH in the prayers of our WMU/ BWA women as they prayed for the needs around the world; and HOPE in the campers and interns I met at the Camp Alkulana golf tournament.

I am ever grateful for your generosity in giving toward our mission centers, camp, and ongoing administrative work of the River City Faith Network. Thank you for all the ways you engage and support the kingdom work of transforming Richmond for Christ.

I look forward to getting to know you in the New Year. May your time with family and friends in the Advent and Christmas seasons be one of hope and joy!

- Maria Lynn, Executive Director Mission Strategist



Pictured above: Dr. Herbert Ponder, BGAV President and his wife, Lora, at the BGAV Annual Meeting



Continued from page 1

On October 29, the RCFN and Alkulana community gathered together at the Belmont Golf Course. Bill Rusher, Camp Alkulana Support Team (CAST) chairperson, has led our golf tournament for nearly twenty years. This year, he had a new vision—what if our tournament event better reflected our mission at Camp Alkulana? What if it included families and children having fun together and exploring new-to-them activities? What if our churches rallied around them and supported that day of fun? It was a bold revisioning of an already successful fundraising event.

So this year, in addition to golfers representing five RCFN churches playing in a captain's choice tournament, youth from our churches joined Alkulana campers and former counselors on an 18-hole putting green. Everyone shared a meal together afterwards. Members of the Richmond community stepped up to sponsor the event, covering all of our costs and raising additional money for Camp Alkulana. This is what it looks like when community comes together!

This is what we dream of creating through Camp Alkulana each summer. This is the family God calls us to be.

Our Baptist centers are calling us together in a similar way this time of year as we rally to provide Thanksgiving meals and Christmas gifts for our families across Richmond. This year, thanks to your generosity, we will be able to include Alkulana campers in these holiday efforts. Our counselors have written cards to campers and their families and are eager to help deliver meals and gifts. This is how we come together as family.

As you are gathering together with friends and family members this holiday season, make time for rest. Make time for sharing in the fruits of good relationships—both laughter and tears. Celebrate the power of coming together on behalf of those who need your love. And find God among you as you gather.

-Beth Wright, Camp Alkulana Director



Left: Carol & Bob Turner, Volunteers from Derbyshire Baptist. Below: The Clarke Family participates as a family from Derbyshire. Right: The Clingenpeel family competes from RRCB.



END OF THE YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

NEW INFORMATION FOR 2022

December 31, 2022

ALL CASH, CHECKS AND ONLINE DONATIONS MUST NOW BE COMPLETED OR POSTMARKED WITH 12/31/22 FOR PROCESSING FOR FY 2022. ALL DAFS OR FUND TRANSFERS, PLEASE ALLOW 4-5 DAYS TO PROCESS AHEAD OF 12/31/22. CALL 804-329-1701 EXT; 101 WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

Dear WMU ladies, churches with missions teams and anyone who is helping serve our centers and camp.

So many of you are small churches who work very hard to fulfill your assignments and I want to thank you for the effort you do to have enough money and workers to do this work.

Thank you from your WMU RCFN and the directors of our centers and camp. May God continue to bless you.



Love, Mary Palmer
RCFN WMU Director

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Electronic Service Requested

*Working together until
Metro Richmond is...*

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December 2022



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City FAITH
NETWORK
Richmond Baptist Association

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2023 RCFN Calendar Highlights

**www.RichmondBaptist.org for the latest
information**

January 2023

1/10/23—CAST Meeting

1/16/23—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—Closed

1/24/23—OHST Meeting

1/24/23—RCFN Board Meeting

1/28/23—SRBC Support Team Meeting

February 2023

2/7/23—CAST Meeting

2/13/23—Camper Registration Opens

2/20/23—Presidents Day—Closed

March 2022

3/7/23—CAST Meeting

3/28/22—RCFN Board Meeting

RCFN Cares and Concern Corner

Congratulations to:

- Rev. Dr. Herbert Ponder of Mt. Tabor on his election as the new BGAV President
- Rev. Cecil Chambers on his retirement from Skipwith Baptist Church
- Rev. Dorryce Ann Rudd on the call to serve as Interim Pastor at Woodland Heights

Condolences to:

Kathy Craddock and the Jahnke Road congregation in the death of her husband and pastor, Rev. Chuck Craddock.

