

Working together until Metro Richmond is...

TRANSFORMED



The Burgess Family, SaraAnne pictured in center

"We Are All Family"

Two years ago, I was what I like to call an Alkulana Mom. All four of my children had been campers. Since then, they have all been Counselors in Training (CITs), two were Junior Counselors, one a Counselor, and that one was a cook for one session of camp last year. My church holds church-wide retreats on the grounds of Camp Alkulana. Camp Alkulana, the people, and the place hold a very special place in my heart and in my life.

Then, because Beth asked me nicely, I accepted her invitation to serve as the Camper and Family Liaison for Camp Alkulana. I was then, and still am, very excited about this job.

I arrived at work on January 21, 2020. That first day on the job Beth gave me a notebook with a timeline that outlined the work I would have to do each month throughout the year. I began putting together a list of campers to whom I would send postcards letting them know that it is time to register for camp. Camp registration opened, and I started gearing up for the summer. Then March came. COVID-19 arrived, and the world stopped. We did not know if we would even be able to have camp.

It was an uncertain time. Our campers were going to virtual school. Their parents and siblings were home with them. We brainstormed ways we could help our campers and their families. We partnered with a congregation to provide food to any family that was in need.

We could have only focused on what we might not do. We considered what would not happen as usual, and we also asked what opportunities the challenges of the pandemic might present. When it became apparent that we were not going to be able to have our traditional camp sessions we decided to bring Camp Alkulana to Richmond.

Alkulana RVA was born. COVID-19 prevented us from gathering indoors. Instead, camp staff, campers, and counselors gathered outside. We held a mini camp in person on the lawn at the River City Faith Network office. We played games. We did crafts. We shared a meal and, of course, sang around a campfire.

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NOTEWORTHY DATES

RCFN Search Committee

February 3, 2022
2 pm RCFN Offices

CAST Meeting

February 8, 2022

RCFN Offices Closed

February 21, 2022
President's Day

MINISTRY OF THE WEEK

February 2022

2/6– WMU
2/13–Camp Alkulana
2/20– Bethlehem Chamberlayne
2/27– Bon Air Baptist

**2021 Year End Contribution
statements will be sent
shortly. Please be contact us
with any questions.
804-329-1701*101**

**Grant, O Lord, that your
Kingdom may come in this city
of metropolitan Richmond, as
it is in Heaven. Help us to be a
part of its coming; help us to
minister to others in the Spirit,
and to accept your ministry for
ourselves. We pray in Jesus's
name. Hear us, O God.**

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Even though I was an Alkulana Mom, it had escaped my notice that when Camp Alkulana people gather they always have a campfire. No matter how hot the day may be, there is a campfire.

The campfire creates a physical place to gather. The campers, counselors, and staff talk around the campfire. The talk may be serious or silly. You may hear laughter. You might see tears. Silent gaps connect the noisier moments. Of course, the noisiest moments involve singing. Some songs have a spiritual nature. Others are just fun to sing. I have come to understand that the campfire creates a place that centers us. Our campfire is more than just flickering flames.

Beth, our staff, support team members, and I have dreamed that camp would not just be something that happens in the summer. To make that dream a reality, we have continued our Alkulana RVA programming since the summer sessions. Several of our counselors have led this programming. They planned and carried out in-person events for Halloween and Christmas, and they led an online event in November.

Having something that connects campers and their families between the summer sessions in the mountains echoes how the camp got started. Early in the twentieth century, women from some of the local churches started a community ministry center. They called it the House of Happiness. Its director started the ministry that we now know as Camp Alkulana. The ministry of the House of Happiness and the ministry of the camp connected people year-round, here and in the mountains. More than one hundred years later, we still have people who need what our community ministry centers and Camp Alkulana can provide.

Today Camp Alkulana has a position called Camper and Family Liaison, the role in which I serve. We call it Camper and Family Liaison for a reason. Families are as important to us as campers. We want to use the network of churches that are a part of RCFN to help the campers and their families in any way we can. In the past two years we have helped our families with food, Christmas gifts, gifts cards, clothing, and toiletries. We expect we will discover new ways to help in the future as Alkulana RVA develops.

Last year I connected with one camper's family about an Alkulana RVA event. I learned the family home had recently suffered a fire that destroyed it and everything

inside. Right away we were able to get them a gift certificate, food, clothes, and toiletries. I also reached out to other Alkulana Moms who joined together and purchased a gift certificate so that Alkulana Mom could get something just for her. When the day comes that they can return to their house we want to help them furnish it and make it a home again. This is one more step in creating a supportive community for our families.

"Everyone here cares about you," one of our campers said, "We are all family." When the House of Happiness served families who would allow their girls to go to the summer camp, it served families year-round. Our commitment to the families we serve spans the whole year, not just during the summer sessions.

We invite you to be a member of our Camp Alkulana family. We want you to be a part of this developing ministry. Beth and I welcome the opportunity to tell you ways you might join this family. If you have a business or can provide services that could benefit the families of Camp Alkulana, please contact me. I would love to add you to our list of potential resources.

—SaraAnne Burgess

Everyone here cares about you," one of our campers said, "We are all family."



CAMP ALKULANA

2022 Summer Camp Dates

Older Boys Session: June 27-July 5

Younger Boys Session: July 9-16

Older Girls Session: July 23-July 31

Younger Girls Session: August 4-11

**Registration will open
on February 14, 2022.**

**Please go to Camp
Alkulana's website for more
information about the
upcoming summer camp
opportunities at
www.alkulana.org**

...and God Sent Jo Ellen

When I received a call about Mike Robinson's plans to retire and asking if I would consider serving as Interim Executive Director, I had never heard of Jo Ellen Schneider. I had known Danette Moen who had formerly served as the office administrator for River City Faith Network.

I worked with administrative professionals for forty years. I have considered those with whom I worked valuable members of any ministry team on which I served or connected across those years. Having an able, committed ministry assistant makes the work of ministry much easier and more efficient.

The Bible says that the Spirit prays for us, even when we do not know how to pray or what to pray (Romans 8:26-27). I would say the Spirit prayed for River City Faith Network and all connected with it before I arrived and that God answered that prayer by sending Jo Ellen Schneider.

Jo Ellen serves as the Executive Assistant in the River City Faith Network office. That describes where she does most of her work. She actually serves all RCFN's ministries, leaders, and congregations. She holds a very responsible position. Her duties vary widely. I expect few people fully realize how God has provided for all connected with RCFN through Jo Ellen.

The role of Executive Assistant involves administrative and technical skills. The person who fills that role uses words and numbers and electronic media. That person relates to staff and volunteers and anyone else who contacts the office. The RCFN Executive Assistant must have many talents, a well-developed skill set, and excellent interpersonal skills.

God sent Jo Ellen to serve in RCFN, and she came with many talents, a well-developed skill set, excellent interpersonal skills, and a wealth of experience. Before her husband David's job brought them to Richmond, Jo Ellen had led her own non-profit. She managed its operation,

supervised its staff, and connected to donors and volunteers. Prior to that, her experience included customer service, marketing, and connecting to potential college students and their families.

She did not work in an setting exactly like ours, but she brought everything I could imagine we would want, including her personal faith in Christ. I believe God had her prepared and had her waiting when Mike Robinson asked one of our RCFN church members for help in locating someone to serve as RCFN's Executive Assistant. God sent Jo Ellen as an answer to a prayer, a prayer greater than any of us might have dared to pray.

I should not be surprised by God's goodness, but I often find myself in awe of blessings beyond what I might have thought to ask. I also find myself in awe of how God makes connections that did not exist or that I did not know existed. RCFN had a need for both an Executive Assistant and Interim Executive Director. I would need an able administrative professional beside me to fulfill the duties of Interim Executive Director. Looking to the future, RCFN's next executive will benefit from having an able, experienced Executive Assistant when that next leader arrives.

Administrative Professionals Day is set for Wednesday, April 27. Our calendars remind us to let them know how much they mean and how much their work means to all of us. We do not have to wait until then to let them know. I want Jo Ellen and you to know she fills an important role in the ministries of RCFN, including my work here.

I expect you know someone else who fills an important role like that. You do not have to let them know you appreciate them just once a year. This week you can let them know you thank God for sending them to serve. Before you let them know, read Romans 8:26-27 and thank God for sending an answer to prayer greater than you could dare to ask.

—Steve Allsbrook

2022 IRS MILEAGE RATES

- 58.5 cents per mile driven for business use
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

[HTTPS://WWW.IRS.GOV](https://www.irs.gov) FOR MORE INFO



MINISTRY OF THE WEEK 2022

MINISTRY OF THE WEEK HELPS
ALL OF THE ASSOCIATION
SUPPORT OUR CHURCHES AND
MINISTRIES THROUGH PRAYER.
BE SURE TO FOLLOW US ON
FACEBOOK AND SEE THE
WEBSITE FOR WHEN YOUR
MINISTRY WILL BE FEATURED.

THANK YOU!

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Phone: 804-329-1701
office@rbaonline.org
www.richmond baptist.org

Electronic Service Requested

*Working together until
Metro Richmond is...*

TRANSFORMED
February 2022



THE **River**
City FAITH
NETWORK
Richmond Baptist Association

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID

RICHMOND, VA.

Permit No. 3022



Richmond to Race April 2-3, 2022

**Raceway Ministries will need more volunteers
this year. We are looking for help with Guest
Services, Chaplains and more for the Saturday
and Sunday of the race.**

**Please email Charles Ward at
abcdward73@yahoo.com with
your name, phone# and email address
to volunteer and to get the most
up to date information.**

RCFN Calendar Highlights

www.RichmondBaptist.org for the latest updates

February 2022

- 2/3/22– RCFN Search Committee Meeting
- 2/8/22–CAST Meeting
- 2/14/22–Camper Registration Opens
- 2/19/22- Church Hill Support Team Meeting
- 2/21/22–Presidents Day–RCFN Office Closed

March 2022

- 3/3/22– RCFN Search Committee Meeting
- 3/8/22–CAST Meeting
- 3/17/22–Document Review Group
- 3/22/22– RCFN Board Meeting

