Someone has said, “Show me whom you love, and I will tell you who you are!” The faces found on this front page of the “Transformed!” represent the faces and hearts of a larger contingent of persons who volunteered pouring their hearts into aiding the 2015 Christmas Store shoppers at our three Baptist Community Centers with gathering gifts for their children or grandchildren. Some collected gifts, clothing and bicycles at their church, others made deliveries, some helped with store setup or close down, while still others hosted the shoppers as they made their selections.

In his book Stories From the Heart Max Lucado tells the story entitled “The People With the Roses” which follows.

THE PEOPLE WITH THE ROSES

John Blanchard stood up from the bench, straightened his Army uniform and studied the crowd of people making their way through Grand Central Station. He looked for the girl whose heart he knew, but whose face he didn't, the girl with the rose. His interest in her had begun thirteen months before in a Florida library. Taking a book off the shelf he found himself intrigued, not with the words of the book, but with the notes penciled in the margin. The soft handwriting reflected a thoughtful soul and insightful mind. In the front of the book, he discovered the previous owner’s name, Miss Hollis Maynell.

With time and effort, he located her address. She lived in New York City. He wrote her a letter introducing himself and inviting her to correspond. (Continued on next page.)
The next day he was shipped overseas for service in World War II. During the next year and one month the two grew to know each other through the mail. Each letter was a seed falling on a fertile heart. A romance was budding.

Blanchard requested a photograph, but she refused. She felt that if he really cared, it wouldn't matter what she looked like.

When the day finally came for him to return from Europe, they scheduled their first meeting—7:00 p.m. at the Grand Central Station in New York. "You'll recognize me," she wrote, "by the red rose I'll be wearing on my lapel." So at 7:00 he was in the station looking for a girl whose heart he loved, but whose face he'd never seen.

I'll let Mr. Blanchard tell you what happened...

A young woman was coming toward me, her figure long and slim. Her blond hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears; her eyes were as blue as flowers. Her lips and chin had a gentle firmness, and in her pale green suit she was like springtime come alive. I started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was not wearing a rose. As I moved, a small provocative smile turned her lips, "Going my way, sailor?" she murmured.

Almost uncontrollably I made one more step closer to her, and then I saw Hollis Maynell. She was standing almost directly behind the girl. A woman well past 40, she had graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump, her thick-ankled feet thrust into low-heeled shoes. The girl in the green suit was quickly walking away. I felt as though I was split in two. So keen was my desire to follow her, and yet so deep was my longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned and upheld mine.

And there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible, her gray eyes had a warm and kindly twinkle. I did not hesitate. My fingers gripped the small worn blue leather copy of the book that was to identify me to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even better than love, a friendship for which I had been and must ever be grateful.

I squared my shoulders and saluted and held out the book to the woman, even though while I spoke I felt choked by the bitterness of my disappointment. "I'm Lieutenant John Blanchard, and you must be Miss Maynell. I am so glad you could meet me. May I take you to dinner?" (Continued on next page.)
The woman’s face broadened into a tolerant smile. "I don’t know what this is about, son," she an-
swered, "but the young lady in the green suit who just went by, she begged me to wear this rose
on my coat. And she said if you were to ask me out to dinner, I should go and tell you that she is
waiting for you in the big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of test!”[1] (Max
Lucado, Stories from the Heart (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1996), pp. 123-125)

In this heartwarming story, it isn’t difficult to understand, appreciate and admire Miss Maynell’s wisdom. The true nature of a heart is seen in it’s response to those that most of the world might view as the useless, the unim-
portant, an interruption or the unattractive among us.

John Blanchard, we discover right at the last minute, passed the test!

If how the under-resourced are treated here in Richmond and if the Christmas Stores are the Grand Central Station of Lucado’s story, then I am so thankful that the faces seen on the front page of the “Transformed!” and all of
the others whom they represent have also passed the test with flying colors! You have been generous, compassionate and faithful to provide this year a much more wonderful Christmas for numerous families and their children than they
would have otherwise known!

Every year my heart swells with pride and gratitude for all that each of you does during this intense season of
generosity. I am so proud to be part of this organization — The River City Faith Network of the Richmond Baptist
Association — because the quality of all that you do. And the cheerful heart with which you do it is nothing less than
magnificent! It is Jesus Who laid out another test: (Matthew 25:35-36) “For I was hungry, and you gave Me some-
thing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and
you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.”

Who are those who pass the test? Are they accorded a passing grade because of the number of their de-
grees? ...their advanced scholarship? ...their willingness to go to foreign lands?...their ability to amass audiences and
preach?...their skillful penmanship and the ability to fill volumes with their words?

As important as any these accomplishments might be, Jesus lives in the forgotten, the marginalized, the less
mainstream members of society, the broken, the beaten, the ill. Following the leadership of RCFN Community Mis-
sionaries Glinda Ford, Wesley Garrett and Jennifer Turner, thank you for responding so well to each one in need, and
therefore, to Him!

The table below demonstrates how you have been a blessing through the RCFN Christmas Stores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church Hill Christian Wellness Center</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon Hill Baptist Center</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Richmond Baptist Center</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All items not distributed from the three Baptist Community Centers were taken to the Lighthouse International
church, formerly known as the African Christian Community Church (ACCC). Nothing that you contributed went to
waste. Please receive the gratitude of the Staff and Board of Directors of the RCFN for all that you, your church and
your friends did to contribute to the Christmas Stores and to meet needs in 183 families for 381 children.

With Grateful Rejoicing,

Mike
Welcome to our Staff
Mrs. Danette Moen
Assistant to the Executive Director, Financial Coordinator

At its most recent meeting on Tuesday evening, December 1, 2015, the RCFN Board of Directors received and voted to approve the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to hire Mrs. Danette Moen to serve full-time as the Assistant to the Executive Director and Bookkeeper. Mrs. Moen’s position will include elements from the job descriptions of the former Administrative Coordinator and Administrative Assistant as well as the Financial Coordinator.

Danette has a variety of vocational experiences, including her most recent full-time position was General Registrar for Caroline County, overseeing the voting process for the county of over 28,000 residents. The primary responsibilities were of confidential nature, receiving voter applications, entering the data into VERIS (Virginia Election Registration Information System), working with candidates, checking in their campaign forms, and their Campaign Finance reports, programming the electronic poll books, voting machines, sending the Election results to the State Board website. As a Department Head for Caroline County, Danette was responsible for preparing and implementing the budget.

When she came to the River City Faith Network, she was employed by the Baptist General Association of Virginia as the afternoon receptionist, operating the switchboard, greeting guests and carrying out administrative assignments from the Support Services team.

Danette describes herself as a team player who works hard at learning and doing whatever the position needs to accomplish its tasks. Deadlines, details, and daily organization have long been a part of Danette’s work and home life. She believes in great customer service and having a strong work ethic. She has been a pastor's wife for 36 years. She and her husband Kevin have one daughter, Arielle, a Youth Minister in Virginia.

When you call the River City Faith Network office or stop by, please introduce yourself to Danette, let her know with which church you are affiliated, and how you serve Him through your church and in the Network. Since most of you will not see Danette every day, please re-introduce yourself to her each time you come by.

Mr. Steve Law, our current Financial Coordinator, is working with Danette during the next weeks to ease her transition into the Financial Coordinator role. She will also be taking over her other staff responsibilities during this period so she will be a busy employee but she is a very capable person with a great heart for serving God and His kingdom enthusiastically.

During the interview process, I received the following unsolicited letter of introduction and recommendation. This letter captures some of the fine qualities for which Danette is recognized in the broader Christian community; we are glad to have her join our team. Welcome, Danette!

November 17, 2015

Dear Mike:

Please accept this note of introduction on behalf of Danette H. Moen, I think to be a possible candidate for an administrative position at River City Faith Network. It has been my privilege to have worked with Danette and also have known her husband, Kevin, for thirty years. Since January 19, 2015, Danette has represented the BGAV in the main office complex on Emerywood Parkway in the highly visible administrative position as the Central Receptionist. She has that intangible talent to put people at ease and that helps them to feel comfortable.

She brings keen insight and management skills which are very visible in how she relates to and with diverse people groups, whether cultural, social, gender, or age. With her Baptist heritage, she has the wisdom to maneuver through the theological “mine fields” and bring people safely home and not offend anyone. Because of this wisdom she knows what divides and what can strengthen and unify the greater Baptist Family. Her depth of experience provides the practicum of being sensitive to mission but tempered with the reality of the task at hand. She works so well as a team member but possesses the skill set to also work independently, remain on task, and can complete her work in a timely manner. She has a great work ethic, receptivity to learning and taking direction and yet, is a wonderful leader. If you secure her you will find her to be not just a great co-worker but even a better friend. My prayers are with you as you seek God’s leadership in securing the next staff member at River City Faith Network. If you need to confirm or talk with me further, feel free to contact me at either number or email. Happy Thanksgiving!

Warm regards,
The Rev. Terry M. Sharpe, Western Hanover Church
Pray for RCFN Churches
Seeking a Pastor!

Chamberlayne Disciples for Christ
Gayton River Road
Westhampton

Here is what’s NEW for Create for Christ 2016

New Theme: In 90 seconds or less, create a video showing why missions matters.

New Timeline: We are announcing our winners more than a month earlier so you can plan your mission trip accordingly.

New Flexibility: You don’t need a trip planned when you enter the Create for Christ contest. Of course, planning ahead of time will help you determine your financial need, but it is not required. And you MUST use the $2000 grant for a mission trip in 2016.

New Focus: Go Local. Can’t afford an international trip or a road trip to North Dakota? Use this grant to serve those in your community, partnering with a non-profit, or create a project of your own.

The voting for Create for Christ will begin on February 22 and end on March 23. Remember, the earlier you submit your video, the earlier you can start getting votes!

Need more information? Join us for free lunch and an information session on Tuesday, January 19 from 12 to 1pm at First Baptist Church

Questions? Visit createforchrist.com, or contact Josh Karrer at jkarrer@entrustfcu.org
Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) is hosting an informational luncheon January 14 from 11am-1pm for ministers interested in pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree. Come hear more about the program and dialogue with current students and the Dean. Please register on the web site at btsr.edu.

Events that you will want to attend in 2016!

January 23, 2016 the Teaching Excellence Colleague Forum will be held on the campus of Virginia Union University. Featured speaker: Leah Gunning Francis, Eden Seminary Presenting from her book: Ferguson & Faith

February 12-13, 2016 – Vacation Bible School Curriculum Fair at The Resource Center (Thurs. preview 1-4pm, Fri. 1-5pm, Sat. 10am-2pm) partnering with Cokesbury for special discounts

For current resource needs, contact staff: Phone: 804-358-8306 Email: info@resourcingchurches.com Search collection on the website – www.resourcingchurches.com

Visit: Tuesday – Friday, noon – 6pm, 4th Floor of Kingsley Hall (just beyond Wilder Library), Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Virginia Union University, 1500 N. Lombardy St. 23220

MINISTERING WITHOUT WALLS
a new ministry of the Church Hill Christian Wellness Center

The center’s new ministry, “Ministering Without Walls,” is the Church Hill Christian Wellness Center’s first collaborative project with the greater Church Hill community to distribute fifteen Thanksgiving Boxes. To the right is a list of the items that were included in the boxes and the cost. The following partners joined the Church Hill Christian Wellness Center in this distribution by supplying donations to purchase the Thanksgiving food boxes:
• Great Hope Baptist Church
• St. John’s United Holy Church
• Bethlehem (Fairmount) Baptist Church’s Tuesday Night Women Class
• Leigh Street Baptist Community Missionary, Rev. Glinda Ford, personally approved each family taking into account family size, income (including food stamps), and rent. Hopefully, we will come together to do other projects for the communities in the New Year.
November 2015 RCFN Budget Report:
November Budget Amount: $42,709
November Budget Receipts: $23,339
November Budget Expenses: $42,611

YTD Budget Amount: $475,799
YTD Budget Receipts: $384,822
YTD Budget Expenses: $478,737

*********

2015 Camp Alkulana Offering - Week of Prayer
As of November 30, 2016
Offering Goal: $148,335
YTD Receipts: $106,552

2015 Financial Books Closing
We will be closing the 2015 Financial Books on Friday, January 15, 2016. Any contributions that you desire to be included in 2015 need to be sent in and postmarked by December 31, 2015.

Thank you so much!

Next

RFCN Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday
January 26, 2016
7:00 PM
Richmond Baptist Building
3111 Moss Side Avenue, 23222

January 2016 Calendar

Friday, January 1
HAPPY NEW YEAR, RCFN Ministries Closed

Monday, January 4
HAPPY NEW YEAR, RCFN Ministries Closed

Tuesday, January 5
9:00 AM
Raceway Core Team Meeting, Small Conference Room

Tuesday, January 5
6:00 PM
OHST Meeting, Oregon Hill Baptist Center

Tuesday, January 6
2:00 PM
Personnel Committee Meeting, SCR

Monday, January 11
10:00 AM
CVBM L-16 Leadership Development Conference Planning Team Meeting, SCR

Monday, January 11
10:00 AM
RCFN Staff Meeting, LCR

Tuesday, January 18
MARTIN LUTHER KING’S BIRTHDAY
RCFN Ministries Closed

Tuesday, January 19
10:00 Endowment Committee Meeting, SCR

Monday, January 25
12:00 noon
RCFN Ministries Support Group Meeting
Richmond Baptist Building, SCR

Tuesday, January 26
7:00 PM
Board of Directors Meeting
Richmond Baptist Building, LCR
TRANSFORMED! is published monthly by the River City Faith Network of the Richmond Baptist Association, 3111 Moss Side Avenue, Richmond, VA, 23222 804-329-1701.

Contact The RCFN Office via email or snail mail at the addresses listed above:
- To submit an article—must be received by the 7th of each month.
- To be added to or deleted from the mailing list.
- To submit a change of address in a timely manner so that the Network will not incur postage due costs for undeliverable newsletters.

Making a Delivery to the RCFN/RBA Office?
Please call before you plan to arrive to make sure that someone will be at the office. There are times during the day when everyone may be away, so it will save time and gas to call ahead. The RCFN Office is open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Thursday.

The River City Faith Network of the RBA Offices will be closed January 1 and 4, 2016 for the NEW YEAR’S HOLIDAY!
Happy New Year!!

HELP THE RCFN SAVE RETURN POSTAGE COSTS
Give us your Change of Address!

If you are on our newsletter mailing list and will be moving—please let the RCFN Office know your Change of Address in advance! You will be helping us to direct $0.49 “postage due” to more important missions efforts. Thanks!!

Needed:
Completed 2015 Annual Church Profiles (ACP)!

ACP Contact Persons for all RCFN churches should have already received the 2015 Annual Church Profile (ACP) survey forms in the mail in mid-September. The survey provides much needed information that is vital to the ministries of the River City Faith Network.

The deadline for returning them has passed but if you have not completed your ACP, please do so as soon as possible. If you have questions, contact Mike Robinson at the RCFN Office at 329-1701 ext. 102 or at office@rbaonline.org.

Keep in mind that the ACP surveys will be used to determine the Levels of Affiliation for River City Faith Network churches for 2016. Your information is very important for our entire Network!

Thank you for your assistance in completing and returning the ACP’s quickly!