



Colonial Williamsburg News

INFORMATION ABOUT COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS
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Endowment enables employees to pursue educational opportunities

The Douglas D. and James S. Watkinson Educational Endowment at Colonial Williamsburg supports the Education, Research and Historical Interpretation (ERHI) division Professional Development grants. The gift provides front-line staff the opportunity to pursue continuing education that will enhance the guest experience.

"In 2008, my late wife Douglas and I established this endowment to underwrite training and enrichment for Foundation staff," said James Watkinson, a senior member of the Colonial Williamsburg Board of Trustees. "The endowment encourages staff to apply for grants that will help them travel, conduct research and attend conferences that will further their professional development as living history scholars."

This year, 15 employees in the ERHI division will benefit from these generous grants.

Through the Watkinson Educational Endowment, these staff members will bring greater knowledge and improved skills to their areas of interest. Continuing education can include, but is not limited to, seminars and conferences, courses, lectures, programs, research projects, presentations related to current or planned programming, exhibits, and interpretive sites and museums. Travel expenses include tuition costs, museum, or park admission, performance admission, meals and other reimbursable expenses.

"Jim Watkinson's decades of support reveal his unfailing commitment to educational outreach at Colonial Williamsburg. Ongoing scholarship is a critical component of our educational mission," said Colonial

Williamsburg President and CEO **Mitchell B. Reiss**. "The support of the Douglas D. and James S. Watkinson Educational Endowment helps us provide our devoted staff with professional development opportunities beyond those available here in Williamsburg. We are fortunate that the individuals representing the Foundation are committed to this pursuit—and that supporters like James Watkinson help them make it a reality."

In 1955 Watkinson joined Morton G. Thalhimer Inc., the commercial real estate firm whose founder was a member of the Colonial Williamsburg board.

In 1960, Watkinson acted as a consultant on real estate issues for the Foundation over a number of years. His official leadership role with Colonial Williamsburg began in 1984 when he joined the Board of Directors of the Colonial Williamsburg Hotel Properties Inc. He and his wife Douglas joined the Raleigh Tavern Society in 1985. Currently, Watkinson serves as a member of the President's Council, Raleigh Tavern Society and Goodwin Society.

In addition to Professional Development grants, Watkinson created a second endowment in support of the Teacher Institute, the Douglas D. and James S. Watkinson Endowment Fund for Educational Outreach.

Professional Development grants are available to regular, non-exempt, non-supervisory staff members with direct interpretive contact with guests. Eligible employees may apply for grants of up to \$1,000 for professional development activities.

Want to know more? See page 2 for the winners of the spring grants.

Funhouse Fest



Photos by Bruce Hornsby/Virginia Arts Festival

(Photo top) Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Bruce Hornsby gathered musical friends for Funhouse Fest on June 24 – 26 on the lawn of the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Nine acts performed on the stage in front of the Art Museums. (Photo below) Hornsby performed with Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder on Friday, June 24. The festival was curated by Hornsby and united musicians known for their genre-bending proclivities. Bruce curated the event as part of the Virginia Arts Festival and Festival Williamsburg. Many of these artists have collaborated with, performed with or opened for him over his 30-plus-year career.



Wellness Revolution goes to Great Hopes



Photo by Amy Goldschmidt

During Wellness Day on June 3, employees had the opportunity to learn 18th-century farming techniques and get a workout. Historic farmer **Ed Schultz** and **Rachel West**, communication and insights strategist and Great Hopes volunteer, assisted with a plowing competition and got a work out in at the same time. **Sarah Nervey** of archives and records was one of the employees who joined in. For more information on winners of the Plowing Contest and Wellness Day, see page 3.

Official Merchants Square locations to be distinguished by stickers, buttons, signage

By Joe Straw
Public Relations Manager

On June 3, more than 40 shops, restaurants and entertainment venues comprising the Merchants Square Association in Williamsburg's Historic District were clearly identified as official Colonial Williamsburg Merchants Square locations that support the Foundation's mission of historic preservation and education.

The new program, offered exclusively to Merchants Square Association members, provided logo stickers for participating businesses to place in shop entrances, buttons for employees to wear and signage for cash registers informing patrons that their purchases support Colonial Williamsburg.

"We are proud of the nearly 90-year relationship between Colonial Williamsburg and the many businesses that have been instrumental in the success of Merchants

Square, which has earned a reputation as the shopping, dining and lifestyle center of Williamsburg," said **Jeffrey Duncan**, Colonial Williamsburg director of property planning, resources and insurance. "This new official designation recognizes that key relationship and reminds our shoppers and visitors of the important role they play in supporting this special place."

Situated at the west end of Duke of Gloucester Street, Merchants Square is among the first planned shopping districts in America. The "retail village" was conceived by Colonial Williamsburg founders John D. Rockefeller Jr. and the Rev. W.A.R. Goodwin to complement the 18th-century Historic Area to the east.

For a complete list of official Merchants Square locations or for more information, visit www.merchantsquare.org or call 855-296-6627.





ERHI employees explore opportunities through continuing education



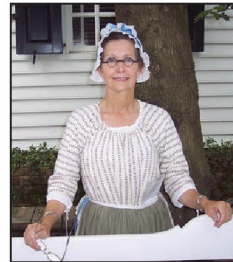
Austin Fitzhugh



Deirdre M. Jones



Kenneth Tappan



Laurie Wehle



Kody Grant

Professional Development Award winners in the Education, Research and Historical Interpretation Division for spring have been announced. Fifteen employees will explore opportunities within their areas of expertise.

Actor-interpreter **Austin Fitzhugh** will study at the New Hampshire Institute of Art for a 10-day residency to obtain a master's degree in fine arts in script and screenwriting in July. One of the instructors teaches a class in performing in non-conventional spaces and explains how to attract the attention of an audience. "We have these types of spaces on Duke of Gloucester Street at the Charlton Stage," he said.

Austin also can bring ideas for scripts and present them to professional playwrights. "I can ask how to engage the audience," he said.

He portrays lawyer Henry Tazewell, David Miller, son of Jane Vobe, and Robert Munford, one of the first playwrights in America.

Actor-interpreter **Deirdre M. Jones** will be attending the International Center for Traditional Childbearing's (ICTC) Doula Training, and visiting the monument for the African Burial Ground and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. She will also be attending KanKouran's 33rd Annual Dance and Drum Conference (Diamono).

In "Secrets of the Midwives," Deirdre portrays Clarinda, a young woman who is assisting the midwife with the births. "I have been interested in knowing more about motherhood since many of the women I portray are mothers," she said.

Deirdre learned about the New York's African Burial Ground a few years ago when doing research. "I wanted to know more about where black people were buried in the 18th century and burial practices of the enslaved," she said. "I began investigating burial practices among the local black population."

While in New York she will observe how the site is remembering the enslaved, and she will conduct research at the Schomburg.

KanKouran's Diamono will take place Labor Day weekend, and Deirdre is looking forward to attending African dancing and drumming classes during that conference and attending the concert while in the nation's capitol.

Deirdre portrays Agnes from the Randolph House; Kate from the Raleigh Tavern; Pheby from the Governor's Palace; Fanny in the Coffehouse; and Clarinda in "Secrets of the Midwives."

Kenneth Tappan, apprentice in the masonry trades, will attend a three-day flat wall plastering workshop at Eastfield Village in New York. "Since I began my apprenticeship in 2011, I have wanted the opportunity to plaster."

The training will be helpful for 18th- and 21st-century projects. "The workshop will give me the opportunity to learn historic plaster methods and modern plaster methods," he said.

Historic interpreter **Laurie Wehle** travels to the Great Dismal Swamp in Suffolk, Va., this summer to explore its connection to the Underground Railroad. A community of maroons or slaves lived in the Great Dismal Swamp from 1675 to the mid-1800s. Recently archaeological evidence has been uncovered to support the presence of maroon colonies. "I want to experience the environment they lived in and gain insight into the courage to live in that hostile environment."

George Washington was part of 12 leading Virginians who established the Dismal Swamp Company in 1763 to "tame" the wetlands. "It is believed that the shingle business wouldn't have succeeded without the contributions of maroon communities," Laurie said.

Actor-interpreter **Kody Grant** will visit the Cherokee History and Cultural Institution in Cherokee, N.C., this summer. "It's a weeklong workshop on archaeological excavations, material culture and cultural geography," he said.

He will tour the museum and view the collections. The trip also includes seeing the outdoor drama, "Unto These Hills."

Sites interpreter **Georgia Ayscue** will visit the Cherokee Museum and the Oconalofee Village in Cherokee, N.C., July 6 - 8. "This 18th-century Native American interpretive site is part of our Virginia history story," she said. "I'm interested in seeing the interpretation going on there and getting some new ideas I can share with my colleagues. I'm really grateful for the opportunity to do so."

She will also view the play, "Unto These Hills." "We're trying new ideas at Colonial Williamsburg now," she said. "It will be interesting to see what kind of crowd and ticket response this outdoor drama receives during July Fourth weekend."

She will bring the idea of having Colonial Williamsburg to consider a version of the outdoor drama, "The Common Glory," for a special fundraiser possibly at the Charlton stage. "Some of our interpreters who work here were part of the original outdoor drama and the nostalgia would bring local/regional keen interest plus relevant revolutionary themes still fits in with today's programming," she said.

Georgia is currently doing an internship at the Wig Shop.

Historic interpreter **Elaine Moore** travels to Philadelphia in September to visit the American Philosophical Society Museum to research 18th-century natural philosophy or science. "There's a lot of science going on throughout the Historic Area, but we don't emphasize it enough," she said.

She works at the Wythe and Gedy Houses. "Family program interpreters test young guests on scientific experiments," she said.

Elaine would also like to visit the Franklin Institute, Independence Hall and the Please Touch Museum where children are invited to touch the artifacts.

Actor-interpreter **Jamar Jones** will attend the four-day Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) conference in Richmond, Va., this fall. "This year's conference will explore what it meant to be black throughout specific periods of history and how events of the past continue to resonate today," he said.

Jamar portrays several characters in the Historic Area including John Ashby Jr., a free black man who enlists in the Continental Army (Sixth VA Regiment), Mingo, an enslaved carpenter from the Powell House, and Johnny from "Faith, Hope, and Love."

Historic interpreter **Edwin D. Cooke III** will attend the Omohundro Institute Conference in Mt. Vernon, Va., Oct. 6 - 9. "This is the fifth program the institute has held on the trans-Atlantic slave trade," he said. "This will be the third one for me."

He attended the 1998 program at the College of William and Mary and the 2013 program in Barbados. "This time we are going to be able to focus on the impact of the slave trade on Virginia, Maryland and the Chesapeake," he said.

Edwin gives tours at the Randolph, Wythe and Gedy Houses.

Actor-interpreter **Robert Weathers** will take horseback riding lessons at Drinkwater Equestrian in Lightfoot. "I portray a number of characters who not only are good riders but many of them have their own stables, care for their horses and know something about animal husbandry," he said.

Robert portrays Theodorick Bland Jr., who commanded one of the First Continental Dragoons, and Gen. Henry Knox, who served in the Continental Army. These characters appear in Revolutionary City programs.

Character interpreter **Emily Doherty** will take a four-day trip to New York to visit the New-York Historical Society to research an 18th-century murder case that involved

See **Continuing Education**, page 3



Georgia Ayscue



Elaine Moore



Jamar Jones



Edwin D. Cooke III



Robert Weathers



Emily Doherty



Sarah Andrews



Bryan Austin



Whitney Thornberry Austin



Michael Empson



Let's start a Wellness Revolution!



1.



2.

Photos by Penna Rogers

Wellness Day on June 3 brought opportunities for Colonial Williamsburg employees. The Foundation's Wellness Team announced that the Foundation partnered with American Family Fitness and R.F. Wilkinson YMCA to provide Colonial Williamsburg employees with discounted enrollment and monthly fees. The two fitness centers attended Wellness Day to answer questions and offer classes. Employees had the opportunity to complete biometric screenings. Employees who took advantage of this service checked one of the three items off the list to save \$650 or \$25 each pay period on healthcare premiums reduction in 2017. For more information, visit the Intranet or contact *Amy Goldschmidt* at 7026. At Great Hopes, a Plowing Contest was conducted in the morning. Winners in the Novice Category were: *Mandi Dirksen*, Development; *Rick Todd*, Information Technology; *Josh Galli*, Great Hopes junior interpreter; *Andrew Hauser*, Groups interpreter; *Mike Lapping*, Information Technology; and *Amy Goldschmidt*, Human Resources. Winners in the Experienced Category were: apprentice carpenter *Matt Sanburys*, Benjamin Walker, Great Hopes junior interpreter; and *Rachel West*, communication and insights strategist and Great Hopes volunteer. Plowing is considered to be the 18th-century equivalent to a treadmill combined with a rowing machine. (1) *Chris Beitzell* took advantage of screenings available at the Wellness Fair. (2) *Sandy Harris* spoke to *Burke Humphrey*, an occupational health therapist in security, safety and transportation, about CPR. (3) The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg gave massages. (4) Tropical Smoothie Cafe handed out samples of smoothies.



3.



4.

Continuing education

Continued from page 2

a free person and enslaved person convicted of the same crime. "We know the case involved Catherine Peppers, who was a servant, and a man named Harry, who was a slave. They were executed for killing their master, Jeremiah Skidmore."

Peppers presents an interesting puzzle to solve. "I don't know if she were free, a convict servant or an indentured servant."

Emily believes there will be more information on the case in New York. "I think the New-York Historical Society will have more background on the case and the events that took place," she said.

The connection to the 18th-century capital of Virginia is the case was tried in Williamsburg. "It's a wonderful example of how the justice system worked in 18th-century Virginia."

Some recipients have already made their trips. *Sarah Andrews* of school and groups attended the Close up Foundation Professional Development Program in Washington, D.C., May 29 – June 5. The foundation worked with middle schools and high schools from across the country. Middle school classes learned citizenship. The high school students are studying how they can actively participate in their government and

meet with their congressmen when they visit Capitol Hill.

The Close Up Foundation focuses on experiential learning. For instance, classes might go to the National Mall and learn about the people behind the monuments.

"They also had a mock Congress," Sarah said. "The students talked about current issues, such as gun control and immigration, and debated them."

Bryan Austin and Whitney Thornberry Austin recently visited another 18th-century city, Philadelphia. They were able to compare and contrast how each town interprets its history. "Philadelphia's government is significantly different from colonial Virginia's," Whitney said.

They visited Independence Hall and Congress Hall. "We got to go to a special evening program where we went into Independence Hall at night," Whitney said.

The couple visited Elfreth's Alley. "They're a collection of preserved 18th-century townhouses," Bryan said.

"They are preserved by individuals and privately maintained," Whitney added.

As a result, the interpretation varies from house to house. For instance, Whitney said

one resident had an early 19th-century shoe that was discovered in a wall. She asked Whitney and Bryan if they wanted to handle the shoe. Whitney said, "I wanted to take it away—I could only imagine the heart attack that would have given our curators."

Bryan is a Nation Builder who portrays James Madison. Whitney is an historic sites interpreter.

Actor-interpreter **Michael Empson** attended a weeklong workshop on the Michael Chekhov acting technique at Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio. "Konstantin Stanislavski, with the Moscow Art Theatre, was responsible for developing some of the most influential western acting techniques," he said. "Michael Chekhov was his prized student. The two things that set Chekhov apart from his mentor were his emphasis on the body before mind and imagination over personal experience."

Michael portrays three different characters in the Revolutionary City – George Nicholas, son of Robert Carter Nicholas and the first attorney general in Kentucky; physician John Galt; and merchant John Hadley North.

"The techniques are very effective for

creating very specific characters," he said.

Regular, non-exempt, non-supervisory staff members with direct interpretive contact with guests are eligible to apply for grants up to \$1,000 for professional development activities including seminars, conferences, courses, programs, research projects and presentations related to current or planned programming, exhibits or interpretive sites. Awards may be used for, but are not limited to, travel, tuition expenses, museum admission, meals and general expenses.

Applications for the award will be accepted again in October. A selection committee of representatives from qualified departments will select award recipients. Current committee members are: **Mary Carter**, chair, **Cathy Hellier**, **Susan Gilliam**, **Stewart Pittman**, **Karen Watson** and **Jason Whitehead**.

Want to know more? Employees from the education, research and historical interpretation division can review the Frequently Asked Questions and download an application on the Intranet at <http://intranet/historical/RHI/index.htm>. Applications should be submitted to **Brenda Leek** through interoffice mail at BHS or bleek@cwv.org.

