



## A Community of Veterans within LifeSpire

*In past times, the meaning of community was most often associated with geography – a neighborhood, a church congregation, a local business association. Today, community has been redefined to go beyond physical boundaries to include like-minded people from across the globe. No community is more illustrative of shared values and common interests than our military veterans. Wherever they served, whatever tasks they completed, they all learned something valuable from their experiences and their colleagues. Here are a few of their stories, which we hope will reinforce our gratitude for their service to our country.*

### Learned to Lead in the Navy

**Charles “CB” Johnson** (Lakewood resident) was working for the C&P Telephone Co. when he got his draft notice



Charles “CB” Johnson

a few men that he knew were sent to Boot Camp in Bainbridge Navy Base in Maryland for 6 weeks. He then went to Newport RI

to report to the Richmond Recruiting Office in 1943. There were about 100 Richmond young men there that day, divided into groups for the four branches of the services. CB and

to fire control school, which is the term the Navy uses to describe those who aim the big guns on ships. Due to his high score in math, CB graduated from the school and proved to be a talented operator.

He served on the USS Iowa, beginning as a 1st Class Seaman and moving up the rank to 1st Class Petty Officer. His ship covered the majority of the Pacific and he served through nine battles, including the Marshall Islands.

CB has many stories of his service, some ridiculously hilarious (like the initiation pranks for those seamen crossing the Equator for the first time) to deadly serious. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Sec. of State George C. Marshall, Admiral Earnest King, Commander in Chief of the US Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, and their staff joined the USS Iowa in Norfolk one day to be carried to Cairo Conference,



## Opportunities Created a Fulfilling Life

When **John Bunt** (resident of The Culpeper) enlisted in the Canadian Air Force in 1943, he intended to be a pilot.

Because WWII was nearing the end, however, fewer and fewer pilots were needed, so John had only six months of initial pilot training. He and his fellow trainees were given a choice



**John Bunt**

of either transferring to the Army or becoming an air gunner; John chose the latter. He was posted in England in the Operational Training Unit with his fellows.

In England, he connected with his grandmother, two uncles, and two cousins and enjoyed life in the UK, but again was offered a new choice just after VE Day (Victory in Europe - May 1945) to Canada and be assigned to the Pacific or stay in Europe.

John chose to go home, and it was there that he met his lifelong love, Lila, who was studying in the Ontario College of Teachers. After VJ Day (Victory over Japan - September 1945), John was discharged. He and Lila were married and settled in

where they met with Winston Churchill and the Allies. CB also remembers when the ship was in Japan supporting the Marines, they had 1500 planes over the island and every 30 seconds a plane was shot down. “Good times and bad,” is how CB describes his experience.

CB was discharged from active duty in January 1946, but joined the Naval Reserve in 1947 and was called back again for active duty during the Korean War. He served in Norfolk, then in Seattle, then went back to the Pacific on an aircraft carrier. By the time he left active duty for the last time, he had been promoted to Chief Petty Officer and came home, returning to the phone company as a staff assistant to management. He was promoted to plant manager and supervised 7 plant foremen, 105 installation and repair technicians, and 2 women in the office. He gives credit to the Navy for teaching him how to be a good supervisor. That training helped him lead a plant in a difficult part of the city. “Treat people fair and they will be fair to you,” says CB.

London, Ontario - together for 72 years before she passed away earlier this year.

John took advantage of an education program offered by Veterans Affairs Canada and received his BA at the University of Western Ontario. After graduating, he served in the Canadian Foreign Service State Department. He enjoyed his work and specialized in industry trade and commerce. He and Lila had two sons and moved to a different post about every four years. They were posted in Chicago, Seattle, Detroit, San Francisco, Ottawa, Philadelphia, and Washington DC, among others. By the time they moved into The Culpeper, it was their 23rd home!

Reflecting on what he took away from his early military service, John says he liked the camaraderie best. He made friendships that continued for years. The educational training that the military provided was also superior – the instructors were mostly former school teachers, so he got a good education in the military.



Virginia Senator Reeves Presents Flag to Culpeper Veterans

## An Honor to Represent and Serve our Country

Former VBH Trustee and resident of The Culpeper, **Curtis Brooking**'s military experience and service began with ROTC at Virginia Tech. From there he was posted to Fort Jackson, South Carolina and to Fort Gordon, Georgia for advanced training with the U.S. Army Signal Corps.



Curtis Brooking

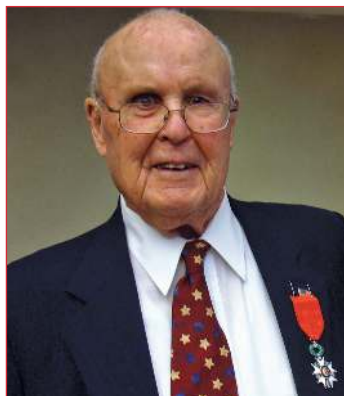
When his training was completed, Curtis was assigned to the U.S. Army European Communications Headquarters in Orleans, France.

It was in Orleans that Curtis met Odile ("Dee"), a local young lady, on a blind date. A year later, Curtis asked her to become his wife and they began planning for a fall wedding. However, these plans changed drastically when, less than a month following their engagement, Curtis received orders to return stateside to Fort Gordon. Thanks to Curtis' commanding officer, who arranged for the orders to be amended to a July date, the couple was able to get through enough red tape to pull together a wedding in early June. Curtis and Odile were actually married twice in one day: first in a civil

ceremony at Orleans City Hall as required by French law and several hours later at the military chapel on base.

Following a brief honeymoon on the French Riviera, Curtis left for Fort Gordon to serve as an instructor in the Signal Corps advanced communications training school. Dee had to remain in France for over two months to get immigration paperwork finalized. One can only imagine Dee leaving her home, crossing the Atlantic on the USS United States, and trusting as the ship sailed by the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor that Curtis would be there to greet her... and he was! Fifty-eight years later, Curtis and Dee are amazed and grateful to the Lord for the way His plans prevailed in their lives.

When asked how his military service affected his life, Curtis clearly felt that it gave him a greater sense of loyalty to our great country and an appreciation for the amazing freedoms that we often take for granted. "It was an honor to represent and serve our country," he adds. "I also appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to experience other cultures and customs."



Former Glebe Resident Joe Johnson

## Making a Difference

**Vince Skrinak** (resident at The Culpeper) knew from the time he was twelve years old that he wanted to join the Navy. He grew up in the Pennsylvania Mountains and attended Penn State on an NROTC scholarship. After graduating with an engineering degree,



Vince Skrinak

he began his 23-year Navy career on a destroyer escort in the Antarctic. He was on the USS Brough, a part of Operation Deep Freeze projects, which stemmed from a collaborative effort among 40 nations to conduct earth science studies in the remote North and South Poles. Deep Freeze I created a permanent research station, and Deep Freeze II (Vince's assignment) provided supplies and maintenance support for the Navy operations there.

Vince spent two years on sea duty then began his shore duty in the Civil Engineer Corps. The CEC officers are professional engineers and architects, acquisitions specialists and Seabee Combat Warfare Officers who are responsible for the Navy's shore facilities.

Vince married his college sweetheart, Peggy, whom he met at Penn State, after he completed his duty post in Antarctica. Their first post was Hawaii, so they joke that they had a three-year honeymoon in the Islands! Subsequent posts included Dam Neck, VA, with the Royal Canadian Navy, Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA, Vietnam, and back to Virginia in Little Creek and Norfolk. In Vietnam, Vince served in the largest Navy public works organization in the world (nearly 7,000) at the Naval Support Activity (NSA) in Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam, located about 80 miles south of the demilitarized zone. Upon return to the US, Vince was the Commanding Officer of the Amphibious Construction Battalion TWO in Little Creek, VA.

His final post was in Washington, DC. Throughout his career, he specialized in finding solutions for energy and natural resources projects and ideas proposed by Navy scientists. He retired from the Navy as a Captain and joined TRW, which was then a support contractor of the Navy, specializing in shale oil and nuclear waste disposal among other things. He retired from his second career as a civilian in 1995.

Vince loved his Navy career and never regretted his decision to join. Working in a large organization with so many people working toward the same objective was rewarding. He said that it was fantastic to have the resources to do something major and make a real difference.

## Lifetime Connection to the Marines

**Jim Barrett** (Lakewood resident) attended Richmond Professional Institute (now VCU) studying Engineering Technology.

While in college he joined the Marine Corps Reserve in 1966 and served with the 8th Battery, 3rd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division providing



**Jim Barrett**

artillery fire support to infantry units. His engineering studies made him a good fit for artillery, where he served as the gunner on a 105 mm howitzer. In 1970, he was moved to Hotel Battery in the same battalion.

About 20 years ago, Jim met a fellow Marine at an Air Force band concert, who invited him to join the Marine Corps League. Shortly afterward, he met another Marine who invited him to attend the Houston-Holicky-Sitter Veteran's Luncheon Group (HHS). He joined the League and luncheon group and has been involved with both groups ever since.

He served two terms as Commandant of the James M. Slay Detachment #329 of the Marine Corps League and one term as Commandant for the Department of Virginia Marine Corps League. The League is a national veterans' organization that focuses on service work as well as providing a social network for active and retired Marines.

One of the things Jim loves best about the Marine Corps is the bond between members that remains long after active duty service. The camaraderie is extraordinary, which is one of the reasons that the League continues to exist and grow. The League now holds its regular business meetings at Lakewood, so periodically 60+ Marines "invade" the campus. Jim is hopeful that the HHS Luncheon Group, named after the founders (one of which is a Medal of Honor Recipient) of 40-years ago, will begin meeting at Lakewood once construction is complete. They meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and most of them are of the "right" age for Lakewood residency.

When asked what he took away from his service, Jim says it gave him maturity, self-discipline, and showed him how to effectively delegate and get along with people of diverse backgrounds. All of these things aided him in his professional career at the Virginia Department of Transportation. Jim believes that everyone should serve the country in their young life. The country, and our society, would be better off for it.

## God Had a Hand in His Service

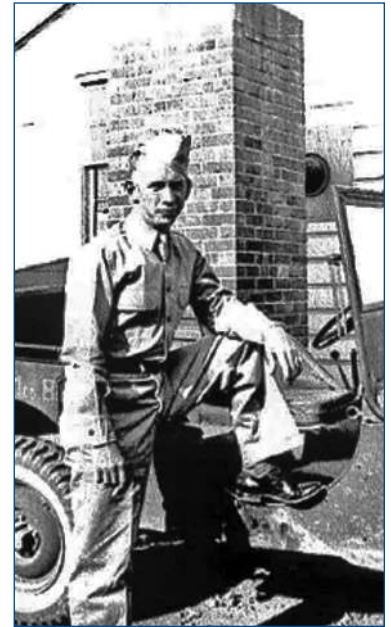
**Jim Mallory** (resident at The Culpeper) served a little over four years - 34 months of them overseas - in the 1st Armored

Division, 47th Armored Medical Battalion of the US Army. He

was classified as a Medic and had two basic jobs, the first being an ambulance driver.

Later, when the Army found that he had vehicle mechanical

experience, he was assigned to drive and maintain the support truck that served the battalion.



**Jim Mallory**

He received his medic and basic training in Northern Ireland. They went to England in June 1942 then went on to Oran, North Africa, where he stayed until the Africa Campaign was over. The campaign's primary aim was to control the Suez Canal, which was a vital lifeline for Britain and the valuable oil reserves of the Middle East, both critical to the success of the allies.

At the end of the campaign, he was sent to Morocco for a brief rest and relaxation, then to Naples, Italy, where they could see the glow of Vesuvius at night. Their next

campaign was the invasion of Anzio, Italy on the Mediterranean Sea in 1944. The goal was to cut off the enemy troops and to push through Rome to thwart the Fascist Italian agenda in the War.

Jim says that God had a hand in his life because he was one of the lucky ones to come home. He was sent back to the US to Fort Meade, Maryland on a 30-day furlough. His furlough was up on May 9th, 1945 but the war ended on May 8, so he was discharged on May 12. Following his service, he worked for Capital Transit Company, then for the DC city government as a motor vehicle inspector then to work the Federal Government as a General Services Administration purchasing agent. He and his wife Evelyn, who have been married since 1945, moved to Warrenton in 1970 to work for the Army Security Agency until his retirement.

When asked what experiences and skills that stayed with him after his service, he says that he was taught to follow orders and whatever he was asked to do he did it well, not halfway. That followed him throughout the course of his life.



Air Force Color Guard at The Chesapeake

## Learning to Shift into Neutral

Former VBH Trustee and resident at The Culpeper **Guy Mattox** entered Virginia Tech in 1949, when about two thirds of the student body were military and the other third mostly veterans from WWII, all attending on the GI Bill.

Guy's goal was to become a commissioned officer in the Army. In June 1953, he received



Guy Mattox

his commission and was posted to Fort Benning, GA, lovingly referred to as "Benning School for Boys." After the Infantry School, he was assigned to train replacement troops for those coming home from Korea.

A Company Commander in his regiment was relieved for inefficiency, so Guy – still a Second Lieutenant – was assigned to replace him and shape up the company. Guy was inexperienced and scared and had no idea how to run a company. He quickly learned that success depended on paying close attention to his Sergeants. One of them advised him, "Lieutenant, this Army

is going to kill you unless you shift into neutral and let them shove you around!”

With the Korean War over, infantry units began to deactivate. Guy’s regiment closed out in May 1955. Since Guy had only six months left on his tour term, the Army wouldn’t give him a change of station. He found summer work with the Signal Corps Reserve and fall with the comptroller’s office – an infantry officer with an engineering degree working in fields for which he was not qualified.

After leaving active duty, Guy found an Army Reserve billet in the Blue Ridge Division. He finished the Seminary in 1959 and changed his commission to Army Chaplain. During the Berlin Airlift In 1960, he was invited to return to active duty to

be posted to Europe with reserve units, but turned down the assignment. He continued to take correspondence courses with the Army Chaplain School until his reserve commitment ended in June 1961. He served as Pastor of Oakland Baptist Church for more than 41 years!

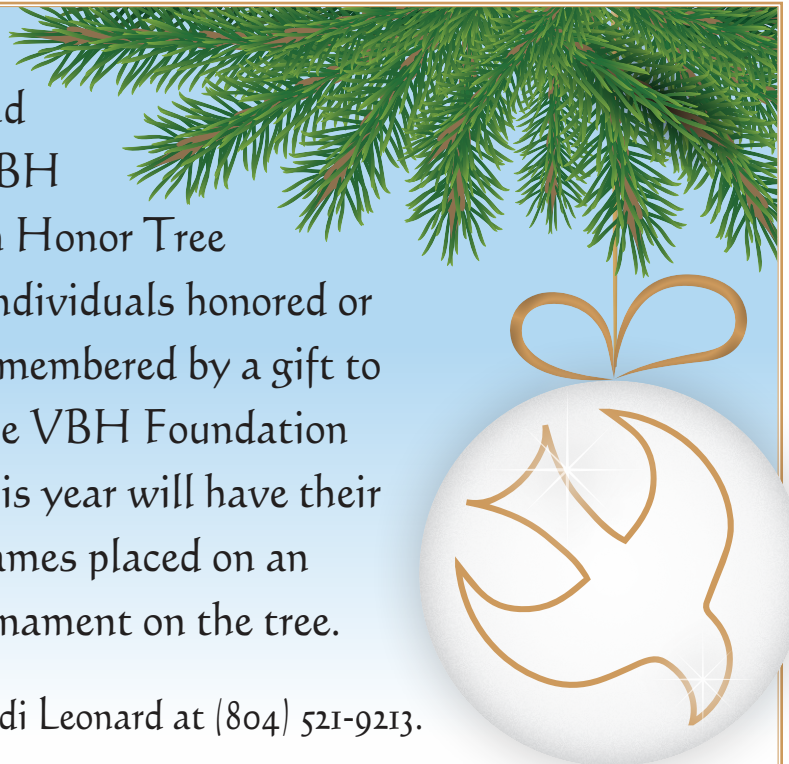
During his four years in a military college, active duty, and reserve duty, Guy was accustomed to getting things done. Working with diverse people, he learned how to build a team, which was very helpful when he had to create a team with church volunteers. He is grateful that the Army put him in command positions and that he learned how much can be accomplished when people work together. And he is especially grateful to have earned two graduate degrees on the GI Bill.

The holiday season is just around the corner. As a reminder, the VBH Foundation will be sponsoring an Honor Tree in each of our communities. All individuals honored or



remembered by a gift to the VBH Foundation this year will have their names placed on an ornament on the tree.

For more information, please contact Jodi Leonard at (804) 521-9213.





## Ensuring Our Faith-Based Approach to Resident Services

LifeSpire was founded by Dr. John T. Edwards, then Pastor of Culpeper Baptist Church. Faith was at the core of our mission in 1949 and remains today as a top priority for resident life in our communities. Empowering Choices in Purposeful Living is LifeSpire's mission, and faith remains at the heart of everything we do. As the mission arm of the LifeSpire family, the Foundation will always keep benevolence as our top priority to ensure that no resident will ever be asked to leave their LifeSpire home.

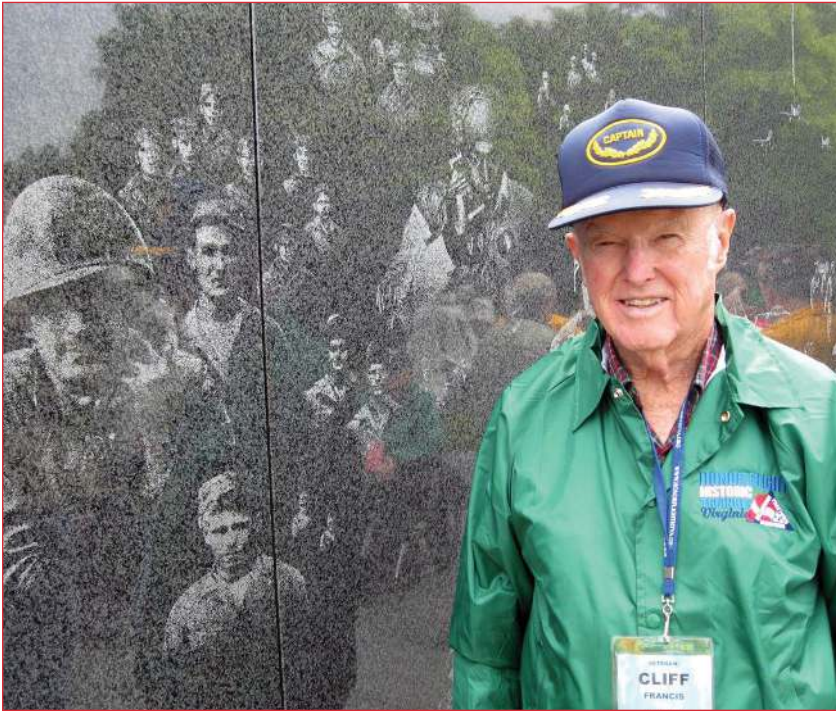
Recently, the Foundation expanded its mission to include funding for scholarships and tuition reimbursements for employees who desire to further their education. Staff, residents, and families have given generously to the Employee Education Fund, which awarded \$15,500 during 2019 to grateful recipients.

The Foundation is now embarking on a new area of philanthropy to support Spiritual Life in our communities. Spiritual practice helps senior adults overcome depression and fight disease, boosting personal wellness, growth, and longevity. A personal connection to faith helps make happier and healthier adults. In communities like ours, faith is also one of the primary ways of connecting residents to each other. Our chaplains are in our campuses, leading



worship services and programs to support spiritual growth, and providing pastoral care for residents in crisis or transition. They are also available for employees who may need support during a stressful time in their lives. They are visible and accessible to everyone in our extended family. The **Spiritual Life Fund** will provide support for chaplains, chaplain interns, and the costs for programs and materials that benefit the faith-based programs for residents and families.

Gifts made to the **Foundation for the Benevolent Funds, Employee Education Fund**, and the new **Spiritual Life Fund** will be applied according to the donor's intent. The Foundation's new website includes a new page of information about the Spiritual Life Fund. Questions or comments can be addressed to the Foundation by email at [jleonard@vbh.org](mailto:jleonard@vbh.org) or calling Jodi Leonard, Director of Development (804) 521-9213.

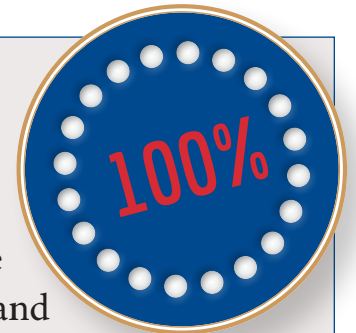


Former Chesapeake Resident Cliff Francis



Lakewood Resident Jim Trent

## What Percentage of My Gifts Support My Chosen Fund?



Donors often ask what percentage of their gifts is spent on administration and what percentage actually goes to help their chosen beneficiaries.

***At the VBH Foundation, 100% of all gifts benefit the funds of the donor's choosing.***

“How can that be?” you might ask. Doesn't it cost money to run the Foundation's fundraising program? Well, yes, of course it does. However, LifeSpire operations revenue pays all of the Foundation's operating expenses – salaries and benefits, printing and

mailing costs, software subscriptions, events, and supplies – everything that makes our fundraising activities possible.

That means that your gifts are only used for the cause you select – whether it's benevolence or employee education or capital projects. You can be assured that the costs of things like our donor stewardship events, mailings, and new resident welcome gifts are not taking anything from the funds that you care about. Of course, you can always contact the Foundation: 804-521-9213 or [jleonard@vbh.org](mailto:jleonard@vbh.org) if you have questions about any Foundation matters.

## Giving is Good For You!

Harvard Business School professor Michael Norton and colleagues studied the effects of giving on emotional health. They found that happiness was greater in giving to others than spending money on oneself. Sonja Lyibomirsky, psychology professor at the University of California, asked people in a study to perform five acts of kindness for six weeks, netting similar results.

In a 2006 National Institutes of Health study, Jorge Moll and colleagues found that giving to charities activates social connection, pleasure, and trust areas in the brain with the effect of a warm glow. According to scientists, this is because altruism releases endorphins and oxytocin, the feel good hormones.

In addition to feeling good, generosity leads to better health in the sick and elderly according to Stephen Post, preventative medicine professor at Stony Brook University and author of *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*. A 1999 study by Doug Oman, University of California, found that seniors benefit from volunteering by living longer. A study conducted in 2006 by Rachel Piferi (Johns Hopkins University) and Kathleen Lawler (University of Tennessee) found that helping others reduces stress and lowers blood pressure.

In addition to better emotional and physical health, giving offers social connection, which has been proven to add significant quality of life and health. Helping others

makes us feel closer to them and creates a sense of community that is life sustaining.

Gratitude isn't just one way – gratitude for gifts received - giving and helping others can create feelings of gratitude in the giver. Gratitude is an integral part of our spiritual lives. Being grateful for our own blessings creates the desire to share them with others, connecting to them in a profound way.

Lastly, giving creates a ripple effect of generosity through our community. One person's giving often inspires others to give later. A study by James Fowler (University of California) found that altruism is spread exponentially by degree. Each person can influence dozens of others – whether or not they have ever met.

This Christmas, don't forget gifts of time and money to the causes you care deeply about. You'll find that whether your gifts are small or large, the true meaning of Christmas comes alive through your generosity.

We thank you for your gifts to support the work of the VBH Foundation during 2019 and wish you and yours a blessed Christmas.





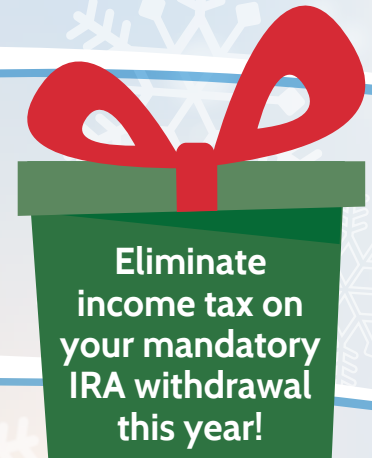
# Time to Check Your End-of-Year List!

Honor a loved one on your holiday gift list by making a gift to the VBH Foundation. We'll send a card notifying the recipient, and you'll get that warm-fuzzy feeling of helping a senior in need – a lot better than a fruitcake!



You can make an even bigger impact with your gift by joining the Monthly Giving Circle! A commitment to giving every month helps to sustain available funding for seniors in need, while also helping to lower our costs, as you will not receive future solicitations.

Make a gift to the VBH Foundation directly from your IRA and take advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover, which Congress passed into law late 2015. This gift will also count towards the donor's required minimum distribution (RMD).



Gifts can be made using the enclosed envelope, or with a credit card through our secure online form at [lifespireliving.org/give](http://lifespireliving.org/give). Please contact the Foundation office at 804-521-9213 for information or assistance.



Faithfully supporting LifeSpire's benevolent mission

[lifespireliving.org/give](http://lifespireliving.org/give)

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