

Podium 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Mission

Empowering youth ages 11 - 19 as confident and capable writers and communicators with the skills to succeed in school, career, and in life.

Community Services

- Weekly after-school and summer youth workshops in English and Spanish.
- Quarterly youth publications, regional showcases, and family writing nights.
- Annual teen professional internships, conferences, and workshops.

Dear Podium Community,

You are instrumental to empowering young people through writing and communication skill development. Podium programs provide life-changing opportunities for children and teens to build their confidence, develop critical thinking and interpersonal skills, and to grow as future planners and community leaders. Your commitment to our work has a lasting impact, not only on our youth, but on the future of our entire community. Thank you for your generous support of our mission.

In 2024, we continued to expand our programs, reached more students, and provided them with the resources they need to succeed. I'm most excited to share that two-thirds of our team are made up of alumni of our programs and schools. They lead our programs, communications, events, and are the mentors of our children. That says more about Podium's impact than I ever could. ***Here's the difference your dedication will make in 2025:***

1. Help us serve 1,000 youth in Greater Richmond and the Tri Cities,
2. Expand our regional showcases to Petersburg, and
3. Expand our Teen Professional Conference to Henrico and Hopewell.

The team is proud of the progress we've made and excited about the future. Together, we will make greater strides toward creating a world where every young person can find and use their voice. Elevate youth opportunity and education with Podium by donating securely today at: podiumrva.org/donate or by PayPal to info@podiumrva.org.

Sincerely,



Vicki Yeroian, MSW,
Executive Director



Basic Program Overview: Community Served

Youth programs are at the center of what we do.

This year, Podium served more than 800 youth!

From Sept 2023 - August 2024

18 Weekly Programs

10 Publications

5 Pop-up Programs

3 Regional Showcases

345 Middle Schoolers

471 High Schoolers

816 Youth Served

Who attends Podium programs?

69% African American

14% Latino American

14% 2+ races/ethnicities

3% European American

58% Girls

38% Boys

4% Nonbinary

34% LGBTQIA+

OVER 95%

of all youth served qualify for the free & reduced lunch program at school

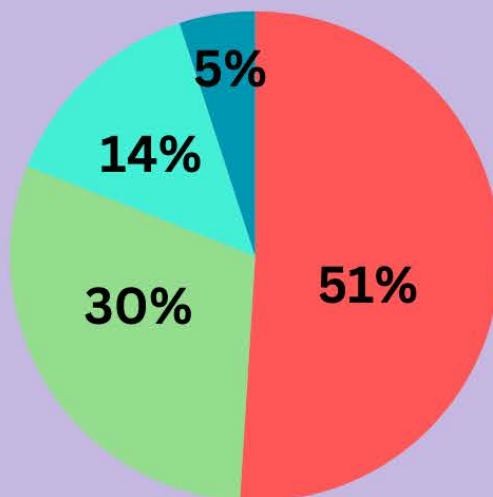
Podium served youth from the following areas:

 Richmond City

 Eastern Henrico County

 Hopewell City

 Petersburg City



"When I am stressed, I can release all of that through my writing."

*-Naomi L.,
Armstrong High School*

"Although I am not the best at it, writing at Podium makes me feel so much better because I can see my improvement."

- Ceajah, Armstrong HS

Basic Program Overview: Outcomes and Offerings

Of participants ages 11 – 14:



passed their reading and writing SOL exams

78%

improved their writing skills

74%

now use writing to process their emotions and to reduce stress

“Writing helps me get my feelings out on paper, especially if I have no one to talk to or if I don't want anyone to know about a certain feeling.”

– Addyson, Boushall MS

Of participants ages 14 – 19:



are on track to graduate on time (within 4 years)

86%

improved their writing and sharing skills

70%

ended the school year with an A or B in their English class

Programs Offered:

For Youth Ages 11 - 14

Prep Your Next Step: Assists 7th and 8th graders preparing for transition to high school.

Surviving the Teenage Years: Where youth discuss and work through challenging adolescent topics with supportive mentors and peers.

Teen Scene: Promotes wellness, self expression, identity, and confidence through focused and fun writing workshops.

For Youth Ages 14 - 19

College and Career Prep: Teens work with mentors to prepare applications for jobs and colleges, practice interviews, and create resumes and cover letters for post-graduation success.

Loving Our Languages: Creates a supportive space for multilingual youth to creatively express and process experiences in both English and Spanish.

Power of the Pen: Promotes youth development through writing and communication workshops with a primary focus on writing as a tool for positive personal expression.

Teen Professional Conference: A multi-day summer program for teen leaders to explore diverse career fields while engaging in professional development and advanced writing workshops.

Writing Mentorship Project: High school upperclassmen participate in a 6-week intensive summer internship to expand their project management skills, confidence, and professional experience.

Community Engagement Events

Holding one event per quarter, Podium brings awareness and community connection to its mission while raising funds for its operations and services. In 2024, Podium's events raised over \$22,000.

Flash Fiction Competition Leap Year Edition!

Hosted on February 29th with 3 sponsors, 9 competitors, and 10 viewers



Fore Everyone Golf Classic!

Hosted on April 27th in partnership with the VA State Bar Young Lawyers Conference



This new golf event supported a wide range of professionals of varying golf skills by prioritizing accessibility. By eliminating entry fees for new golfers and encouraging diverse participation, Fore Everyone pioneers inclusion within the game of golf.

• **Event Impact:**
\$6,140 raised

Bingo Night at Barrio Taqueria!
Hosted on June 26th with 45+ competitors



An exciting evening of friendly competition with prizes, drinks, and tacos! Folks competed to win prizes from some of our favorite local spots - the Richmond Kickers, Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, Flying Squirrels, The Children's Museum, and more!

• **Event impact:**
\$2,809



Murder Mystery Dinner Theater Show 3000!
Hosted on November 15th with 1 sponsor and 80+ guests



Sponsored by the Feel Better Lounge, solo sleuths and private eye parties helped crack the case of The Murder in the Grotto! With Santa found dead, Detective Inspector I.B. Clueless banned everyone from leaving the Regent Hotel until the murderer was revealed!

• **Event impact:**
\$11,617



Sponsored by Design to Learn Consulting, Prosperity Financial Services, and Impact Makers, this was Podium's 3rd annual flash fiction Zoom night. Competitors put their written skills to the test in just one hour to win prizes and recordings of their stories!

• **Event impact:**
\$1,478



Community Partners & Donor List

Podium's work is made possible because of the incredible generosity the people, companies, and foundations listed below. Because of this critical community support, Podium provides consistent, trustworthy programs at public schools and community centers for youth year after year.

Literary Leaders

\$20,000+

City of Richmond
Nondepartmental Fund
Cameron Foundation
Community Foundation for a
Greater Richmond
Henrico Education Foundation
REB Foundation
Richmond City School Board

Foundational Friends

\$250 - \$1,499

2229, LTD (Barrio)
Aaron Brenner
Bianca Guerrero
BloomEd Group LLC
Bryon Yeroian
Design to Learn Consulting
Family Holdings, Jim & Bobbie
Ukrop
George Wells
George Wythe High School
Gwyneth Hagan
HCCW
Hunt Whitacre
Impact Makers
Jeff Yeroian
Jeff Olson
Jill Olson
John Jay Schwartz
Kate Rivara
Kerry Whitacre
Kristin Blalock
Laura Service

Pals of Podium

\$1 - \$249

Abstract Title Services
Adam Shropshire
Alex Rosenfield
Allison Snyder
Andrea Bade
Anna Jane Johnson
Annie Goldman
Arlene Barry
Armani Hall
Audra Russell
Blair Cousins
Brittany Flippen
Brittany Horkan
Buddy Dean
Carley Blankenship
Chante Holt
Charmeya McMurray
Chloe Sullivan
Chris Wheless
Chuck & Dianne
Woodworth
Cody Spillane
Corrine Vigen
Cory Mosley
Dalana Fell
Daniel Sellergren
Dawne Gulla Brooks
Dean McKnight
Deborah Hawkins
Deirdre Condit
Demetrius Frazier
Denise Yeroian
Devon Jones
DL White
Dyvonnie Aikens
Ed Murphy
Elizabeth Langley
Eric Vento

Erika Misseri
Giovanni Turner
Heather Wilder
Iryna Dolynuk
Jacqueline Hall
Jean Tillery
Jennifer Adams
Jenny Belling
Jerry Mize
Jess Ellett
Jessica Fritzen
Jill Hailey
Joan Bryant
Blankenship
Joanne Roset
Jonnie O'Neal
Karen Roby
Karylyn Browne
Kate Barnes
Kavin Jackson
Kayleigh Crandell
Kevin Claven
Kim Eley
Kristen Blevins
Kristi Vaughan
KWE Publishing
Lainey Raynes
Lauren Bryn
Lauren Gerardi
Leanne Petroziello
Lindsay Chapman
Lisa Caperton
Liz Engle
Lorin Hoisington
Margaret Furr
Margaret Sulzbach
Marquita Mayo
Martha Campbell

Mary Burruss
Mary Reeves
Michael Plumb
Michelle Edmonds
MKM Law PLLC
Nevin Kight
Noah Clough
Pam Booker
Patricia Elliott
Paulena Marashaj
Pettus LeCompte
Phyl Demertriou
Rachel Cunningham
Resilient Nation
Retha Valderas
River City Consulting
Robert Nebergall
Russell Nash
Ruth Twiggs
Sadie Hasenfus
Sandy Kades
Santa Sorenson
Sara Johnson-Ward
Sarah Fox
Sebastian Brown
Sherie Carnegie
Sofia Malin
Sydney Kline
Sydnie X.
Tabitha Martinez
Thad Williamson
Theresa Alnutt
Theresa Hammond
Thurston Moore
Tom Ligon
Veronica Reid
Village Bank
Wilton Construction
Yvette Appleby

Our Cornerstones

\$10,000 - \$19,999

Dill Family Foundation
Dominion Energy Charitable
Foundation
Richmond Memorial Health
Foundation
Virginia Humanities

Lorraine Blackwell
Lucille Lindamood
Metro Richmond Boys & Girls
Clubs
Mike Mackey
Paula Harris
Prosperity Financial Services
Randy & Burgel Harritan
RBI Services
Rebeca Ortega
Sarah Pentecost
Sidney Thompson
The Change Decision
Vicki Yeroian

Monumental Supporters

\$4,000 - \$9,999

City of Hopewell
Virginia State Bar
Feel Better RVA LLC
Herndon Foundation
National Book Foundation

Pillars of Success

\$1,500 - \$3,999

NextUp RVA
CyberGrants
Logophile, LLC
Partnership for the Future

Community Partners

Podium hosts weekly after-school and summer programs, where youth can depend on their mentors from sixth grade through their high school graduations. Podium is grateful for the partnerships with the organizations listed below:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond
- Henrico Education Foundation
- Hebron VA
- Higher Achievement
- Hopewell City Public Schools, The Well
- Next Up RVA
- Partnership for the Future
- Richmond Public Schools - 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Street Smartz

Finances, Expenses, and In-Kind Support

Podium ended 2024 with 100% of annual expenses raised and a 10-month cash operation reserve.

In-Kind Donations, 2024 total est. value: **\$12,000**

2024 Expense Breakout

41%	Staffing	6%	Administrative costs
27%	Youth programs & publications	3%	Events
22%	Pedestal Fund	1%	Marketing

Volunteer Hours

Podium could not reach as many youth in Greater Richmond and the Tri Cities without the dedicated support of volunteers to help with programs, communications, and in our events.

33 total volunteers **14** program mentors, **4** admin, **2** communications, & **13** professional conference guest speakers

500 program hours **1635** office hours

2135 total volunteer hours, or more than **89** days!

2024 Total Est. Value: more than **\$42,700**



“Writing helps me escape my reality and is a positive coping skill that I really enjoy. I use writing to express my emotions, show creativity, and to express myself in ways that I struggle to do verbally. Writing also helps me let go of negative emotions and remember important details.”

Paytience, John Rolfe MS

Leadership: Board of Directors, Young Professionals Board, & Staff



Board of Directors

Executive Leadership

Chair, Armani Hall

Vice Chair, Kerry Whitacre

Treasurer & Secretary, Paula Harris



Directors

- Aaron Brenner
- Benjamin Shute
- Brittany Flippen
- Demetrius Frazier
- Dre'mon Miller **Podium Alum*
- Gwyneth Hagan
- Kim Eley
- Lorraine Blackwell
- Saa'dia Douglas
- Shirtiera Lynch-Johnson

Young Professionals Board

Executive Leadership

Chair, Jillian Olson

Vice Chair, Kayleigh Crandell

Events Chair, Sarah Pentecost



Membership

- Anna Jane Johnson
- Dean McKnight
- Erika Misseri
- Lorin Hoisington
- Phyl Demetriou
- Sofia Malin
- Tristan Wynn **Podium Alum*

Staff Team

Executive Director: Vicki Yeroian, MSW

Communication & Events Director (Jan. – June): Erin Mills **Podium Alum*

Communication & Events Director (July – current): Kevin Jackson **Podium Alum*

Programs Director (Jan. – Aug.): Candace Weather

Programs Director (Sept. – current): Charmeya McMurray **Podium Alum*

Journal 15 Designer & Illustrator: Destiny Hall-Harper **Podium Alum*

Program Lead (23-24 School Year): Atticus Johnson **Podium Alum*

Program Lead (23-24 School Year & Summer): Jean Anderson

Program Lead (Fall 2024): Angel Tobias

Program Lead (24-25 School Year): Cindy Montejo **Podium Alum*

Program Lead (24-25 School Year): Da'Quon Stith **Podium Alum*

"Writing helps me when I really want to tell people how I feel, but I do not want to say it aloud."

- Carmen, Highland Springs HS