VBCF commemorated a milestone last year - 25 years of service to Virginians. On October 6, 2016, VBCF hosted an anniversary reception at the Valentine Museum and attendees were recognized by Governor Terry McAuliffe. We were happy to have three of VBCF’s four surviving founding members - Phoebe Antrim, Patti Goodall, and Mary Jo Kahn - in attendance as well as Virginia’s Secretary of Health and Human Resources Bill Hazel, and VA Delegates Lashrecse Aird, Lamont Bagby, and Betsy Carr and many more of our longtime supporters.

VBCF was founded on the belief that breast cancer is more than a pink ribbon. While October is a great time to heighten awareness of this disease, we work every day to eradicate breast cancer through education and advocacy. This year VBCF has extended its reach, traveling from coal country in Grundy to the banks of the Eastern Shore, from Southside Virginia to the US Capitol, and lots of places in between to educate Virginians about breast cancer and advocate for all those affected by this disease. Read on to learn more about our recent accomplishments.

While we wish VBCF’s services were no longer needed, more than 6,600 Virginians continue to be diagnosed with breast cancer each year and almost 1,100 lose their battle annually, so our work continues. Our goal is to put our organization out of business - to create a world where breast cancer doesn’t cut lives short. Until that day comes, VBCF is here to serve Virginians, and we are grateful that your support makes our work possible.
On February 1, 2017, breast cancer advocates from across the state joined VBCF for our State Breast Cancer Advocacy Day. For some, it was their first advocacy experience. Advocacy is an important component of our VBCF mission. Each of us has the power to add our voices in support of the needs of all those affected by breast cancer.

But what does it mean to be an advocate? The basic definition of an advocate is someone who speaks out for a cause in which they believe. If you are reading this, you probably have been touched directly or indirectly by breast cancer. Therefore, you are the perfect candidate to become a breast cancer advocate and bring your unique perspective to the cause.

But how do you become a breast cancer advocate? All you need to get started is a commitment to give your time and energy and a willingness to become educated about breast cancer. Those of you who have received a breast cancer diagnosis already know a lot about breast cancer and have one of the most powerful tools of advocacy, your story.

If you want to become more involved in advocacy with VBCF, here are some things you can do:

- Join us for a state or national advocacy day. (See pages 5-6)
- Sign up for VBCF’s Action Alerts, which are brief email alerts to keep you up to date with the latest breast cancer legislation and provide you with the tools and information you need to take action.
- Join VBCF’s Advocacy Committee and help shape our advocacy actions.
- Volunteer to staff a table at a health fair or join the speaker’s bureau.

I lost my sister to breast cancer in 1989. She was my big sister, my only sister, and like another mother to me. When I was diagnosed in 2007, I thought we had come a long way. While some things have improved, we are still losing too many women and men to breast cancer every year. There are far too many women and men who are living with metastatic disease. For these women and men, treatment never ends. For those of us who have had a breast cancer diagnosis, vigilance never ends. This can only change with our continued advocacy.

I hope some of you will be inspired to join with us and add your voice in support of our mission to eradicate breast cancer. Please visit www.vbcf.org to learn more and get involved.
Board of Directors

VBCF Leadership Updates

A huge thank you to **Meg Rock** for serving as VBCF’s Treasurer from 2015-17! With her leadership, VBCF strengthened our internal controls and policies and improved our long-term sustainability.

And thank you to **Debbie Hayes** for her Board service from 2012-2017 and **Chris Wilson** for his service from 2015-17. We know they will continue to serve as strong community champions for VBCF’s work!

Welcome to Our Newest 2017-19 Board Members!

**Joshua Kelly** of Richmond, VA, an Associate Attorney with Hirschler Fleischer with experience in tax & estate planning, trust & estate administration, and entity formation.

**Laura McCombs** of Richmond, VA, VBCF’s new Board Treasurer, is a breast cancer survivor and a Vice President for Richmond Business Banking at First Citizens Bank.

**Andrea Weisman** of Richmond, VA, a breast cancer survivor and Licensed Clinical Psychologist at Commonwealth Counseling Associates Inc. in Midlothian.

Thank you to **Tito’s Handmade Vodka** for a $10,000 matching gift to VBCF toward online contributions made in October 2016. Many of VA’s ABC stores helped promote this partnership, and this generous donation was made in memory of Donna Kovalcheck, wife of Breakthru Beverage’s Bob Kovalcheck, who lost her battle with breast cancer last year.

Thanks to the Bon Air Junior Women’s Club for their unwavering support of VBCF. They hosted the 6th annual Fall BRAzaar on October 1, 2016 in memory of Denys Musselman.

The Women’s Memorial Golf Tournament held its 30th Annual Women’s Memorial Golf Tournament in September. This event has raised over $500,000 for VBCF over the years. Thank you to Co-Chairs CJ George and Anita Smith as well as everyone involved in making it such a success!
VBCF in the Community

VBCF Staff and Speaker’s Bureau and Outreach Team Volunteers extended our reach in 2016, presenting at local events and offering breast health information at educational and community fairs across the state including Wise County, Grundy, Waynesboro, Newport News, Richmond, Petersburg, South Boston, Saluda, the Eastern Shore, Newport News, Norfolk, and Manassas to name just a few.

Through these events and help from our many local volunteers in areas including but not limited to Suffolk, Charlottesville, Staunton, Lynchburg, Christiansburg, Accomac, Portsmouth, Farmville, Alexandria, Herndon, Chatham, Franklin, Lawrenceville, Woodbridge, Emporia, Boykins, and Gate City, VBCF distributed almost 75,000 free Pink Ribbon Breast Health Basics Brochures, along with other educational materials.

Thank you again to our volunteers who help us to serve Virginians all year long. If you are interested in becoming a part of our team of volunteers, please visit www.vbcf.org/GetInvolved. If you belong to a group that is interested in having a speaker or hosting a health fair and want VBCF to be there, visit www.vbcf.org/speakers-bureau-request-form or contact Erin at erin@vbcf.org or (804) 285-1200 ext. 202.

2016 NonProfit & Library Grants

VBCF awarded a total of $5,685 to community organizations and libraries through our grant programs in 2016. VBCF funded Richmond Guardian Angels, Reach Out for Life, Hadassah Richmond, Central Virginia Health Services, and a Southside coalition lead by VCU Massey Cancer Research and the Resource Center of Lawrenceville and Danville. In one morning, volunteers with Richmond Guardian Angels were able to reach 900 households in the Creighton and Mosby Court neighborhoods. Reach Out for Life was able to serve 6,500 people with their newly updated educational brochures, and the Southside coalition offered an extremely productive conference that was broadcast across the region, reaching almost 200 healthcare students and professionals and leaving the group eager to work on a similar program in the future.

Our library grant program funded the Massanutten Regional Library System to increase their bilingual resources, and Portsmouth Public Library, Suffolk Public Library, and the Eastern Shore Public Library System for updated breast health resources. In October, Education Manager Erin Steigleder also gave educational presentations at three of the four libraries on the Eastern Shore.
Advocacy Action

State Advocacy Day Summary

VBCF hosted the 2017 State Breast Cancer Advocacy Day on February 1st. Breast cancer survivors, loved ones, and advocates from across the Commonwealth gathered at the General Assembly for a reception and to meet individually with their Delegate and/or Senator. Over 30 legislators attended the reception and/or met with constituents in their offices. Virginia’s Secretary of Health and Human Resources Bill Hazel, MD also spoke to advocates about current health policies in Virginia. VBCF thanks all who attended!

VBCF supported the following issues during the 2017 Session:

HB 1755 (Davis) and SB 1408 (DeSteph) to establish an online process for health care providers to request overrides for step therapy protocols for patients for whom the insurer-mandated drug is clinically determined to cause adverse health events or be ineffective, as well as those who have already met step therapy requirements and ensures that providers are notified in writing if their request is denied.

HB 1675 (Bulova and Filler-Corn) and SB 974 (Lucas) to require the Virginia Department of Health to make information about and resources on palliative care available to the public on its website.

VBCF also monitored a number of bills including proton radiation therapy insurance coverage and environmental issues related to coal ash, bioengineered foods, drinking water, and fracking chemical disposal.

Protecting Access to Health Care

As changes to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA or ObamaCare) are pursued by Congress and the President, VBCF supports efforts among our state legislators to determine the impact that proposed health policy changes at the federal level will have on Virginia. The ACA has provided health care insurance to over 400,000 Virginians, many for the first time in their lives. In addition, it improved Virginians’ health, especially those affected by breast cancer by eliminating the ability to deny coverage due to pre-existing conditions, prohibiting cost differences for coverage based on gender, ending annual or lifetime coverage limits that caused a sudden termination of care, and allowing for those covered to receive annual cancer screenings regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

VBCF advocates that these policy improvements should be maintained moving forward.
2016 Sherry Kohlenberg Award Winner

Congratulations to Dr. Todd Adams, Radiation Oncologist with VCU Health at Stony Point in Richmond, the recipient of VBCF’s 2016 Sherry Kohlenberg Healthcare Service Award. Dr. Adams honors Sherry’s memory in going above and beyond what is normally expected of a competent, caring professional working with Virginians affected by breast cancer. Learn more about this award and Dr. Adams at www.vbcf.org/sharon-h-kohlenberg-healthcare-service-award.

Volunteer Opportunity!

Each year, VBCF distributes almost 75,000 free Breast Health Basics brochures to educate Virginians about breast cancer. Each brochure has a pink ribbon attached which can be worn for awareness. We depend on volunteers to help us attach the pink ribbons to the brochures. This is a great project for a volunteer group! It can be done in VBCF’s Richmond office or at an off-site location in the Metro Richmond area. Please contact jennie@vbcf.org or 800-345-8223 ext. 204 if you are interested in volunteering.

National Advocacy Day: Tuesday, May 23

Join VBCF for our annual trip to the U.S. Capitol to meet with Virginia’s Members of Congress. VBCF offers transportation and organizes visits for breast cancer survivors and advocates to travel to Washington, DC to participate in the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) Day on Capitol Hill. NBCC’s 2017 Legislative Priorities are:

- $150 million for the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program for FY2018
- Guaranteed Access to Quality Care for All
- Ensuring the Participation of Educated Patient Advocates in All Levels of Health Care Decisions

Please visit www.vbcf.org/advocate/national-lobby-day to register.

Educational Event: April 20 in Petersburg

The VBCF Education and Events committee is co-hosting “More Than a Pink Ribbon” an educational event at Pathways, located at 1200 W. Washington St. in Petersburg, from 6-8pm on April 20th. The event will include speakers on breast cancer and breast health, as well as food and refreshments. Register at www.vbcf.org/conferences.

Alert!

We recently received notice that telemarketers are calling Virginians to request donations on behalf of VBCF. VBCF DOES NOT solicit funds by telephone nor do we employ third-party telemarketers. Learn about our Privacy Policy at www.vbcf.org/vbcf-privacy-policy.
Is a Breast Cancer Clinical Trial Right for You?

By Jacqueline Ford-Condelli, VBCF Board Secretary and 2015 Karin Noss Scholarship Recipient

Twenty percent of people living with cancer are eligible to participate in clinical trials, but only three percent actually participate. Clinical trials evaluate how well new medical approaches work. It is research conducted with the participation of volunteers to evaluate a new medical treatment, drug or device. The purpose of breast cancer clinical trials is to find new and improved methods in treating the disease and make it possible to apply the latest advances in patient care.

Participation in clinical trials is important as it provides the ability to assess new medical knowledge. Trials expand options for treatment, especially for those patients where the standard of care is not working. Clinical trials help contribute to scientific knowledge and the acceleration of research. They also help future patients even if there is no personal benefit to the participant. There is a particular need for minorities to participate in clinical trials. Currently, minority populations account for fewer than 10% of patients enrolled in clinical trials, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. As a result, much of the work that has been done cannot be applied to minorities because they are not represented in the data. There is a need for more minorities in clinical trials to ensure that the discoveries, treatments, interventions, and prevention strategies are relevant to these populations.

Breast cancer clinical trials enroll patients with certain conditions and symptoms. Thorough screening and testing are completed to confirm eligibility. Participation in a clinical trial may prove to be beneficial to the patient, and it may result in the patient receiving a treatment that is more effective than what they currently receive before it becomes available to the wider public. Another advantage: treatment costs may be less for patients participating in a clinical trial as doctor’s visits and tests related to the trial are paid for by the company or agency sponsoring the research. Overall, participation in clinical trials provides researchers with information they need to develop new treatment methods to benefit those diagnosed with breast cancer in the future.

Participation may have some disadvantages. Not all risks and side effects are known at the beginning of a clinical trial. Patients are informed of known side effects before the trial begins and are informed of any new side effects as discovered during the trial. Many breast cancer trials combine new treatments with a current, standard treatment and compare the effectiveness to the current treatment alone. There is no guarantee a patient won’t experience a complication, but risk is reduced as much as possible. Clinical trials are overseen by an investigational board, and participants may withdraw from a study at any time if they or their doctor feels it is in their best interest to do so.

There has been considerable advancement in research and clinical trials over time. In recent years, “basket clinical trials” have been introduced as a new design for precision medicine. Patients who all have a specific tumor mutation, but with varying tumor types, are enrolled into the study and put into individual study arms, or “baskets” by tumor type. Still very new, the results from the first study were published in 2015. The focus of these studies are to shut down specific genetic mutations found in tumors regardless of where the cancer originated and study the effects of new treatment on the participants who share the same type of cancer rather than tumor location. These trials involve targeted therapies that appear to be more effective than generic chemotherapy and are associated with fewer and milder side effects.

Clinical trials are essential for advancing care and finding better treatments for breast cancer. Information generated from being involved in clinical trials helps others and advances knowledge for future improvements in patient care. Choosing to participate is a personal decision. It is important to gather all of the facts and discuss every aspect with your doctor in order to make an informed decision. There are a number of websites available that provide additional information about breast cancer clinical trials. For additional information, visit www.vbcf.org/about-breast-cancer/clinical-trials.
Want to Go Green?

Save paper and trees by receiving our newsletter via e-mail. Visit www.vbcf.org/go-green to sign up!

Support VBCF!

Give online at www.vbcf.org/donate.

It’s fast, easy & secure!

Or, fill out form(s) and return with your check to VBCF.

☐ Please contact me about becoming a VBCF Volunteer.

☐ Please send me information on planned giving.

A contribution of $ ____________ is enclosed.

In Memory Of: ____________________________________________

or In Honor Of: __________________________________________

(If you would like an acknowledgement card sent, please include name and address of recipient.)

Name: ___________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________

City: ________________________ State: _______ Zip Code: __________

Phone: ________________________ Fax: ________________________ e-mail: ________________________

Spring 2017

This newsletter, published by the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, focuses on breast cancer issues and the activities of VBCF supporters. If you have any comments, please call 800-345-VBCF or write to: Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, 5004 Monument Avenue, Suite 102, Henrico, VA 23230.