



MPI®

VIRGINIA
CHAPTER

VA Voice: November 2023

This edition of the VA Voice is generously sponsored by Kalahari Resorts.



**A message from your 2023-2024 MPI-Virginia President,
Martina James**

"As we embrace the season of gratitude, I find myself reflecting on my own journey with MPI Virginia, as well as within the meeting planning community as a whole. I would not be where I am without the leadership and camaraderie I have found among the professionals in this industry and I am beyond thankful for those colleagues, friends, and mentors."

[Read here!](#)

We are pleased to announce the following individuals have received MPI membership scholarships for the upcoming year.

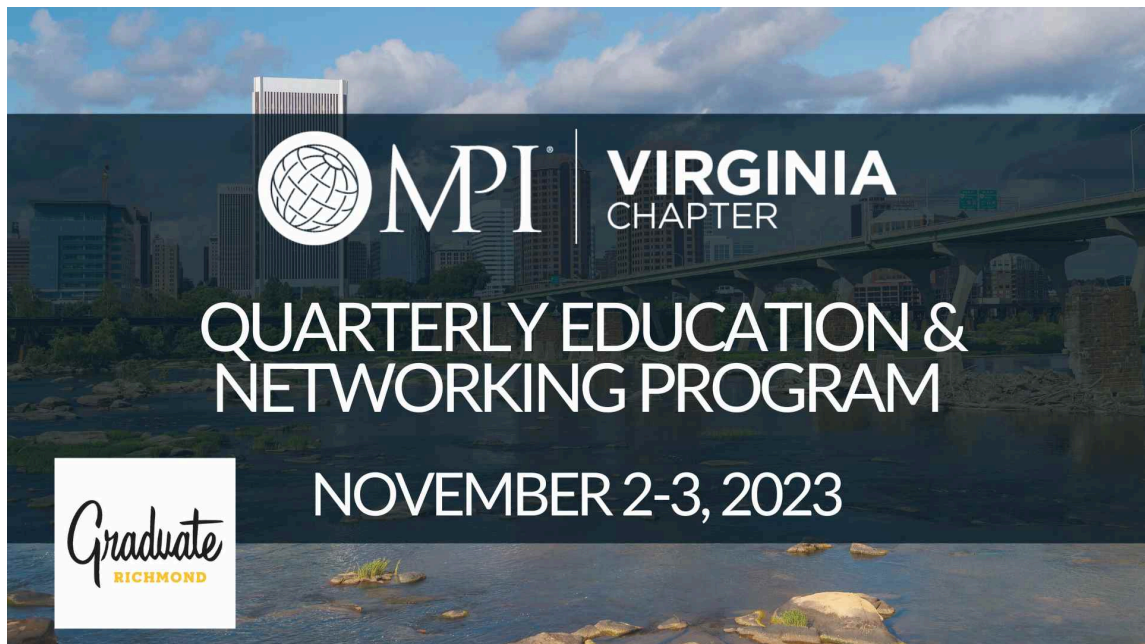
Planner Winner:

Allyn Hodgins, Director of Membership, Virginia Association of Health Plans

Supplier Winner:

Ivy Ribeiro, Director of Sales, Four Points by Sheraton Richmond

Congratulations to our winners!



**Thank you to everyone who made our first
Quarterly Education & Networking Program Possible!**

[The Graduate Richmond](#)

[Taylor Made For You](#)

[Stella's Grocery](#)

[Starbucks Coffee - The Fan, Broad & Strawberry](#)

[DJ Anthony Bryant](#)

[C&G Luxury Candles](#)

[Colonial Williamsburg Resorts](#)

And thank you to our speakers who provided top notch education!

Andréa Lyons, Matt Robinette, Paige Harrar, Kate Franzen, Dan Roberts,
Lindsey Norment, Sarah E. Smith, & Linné Diiorio

Upcoming Events

First Fridays (and Coffee) with MPI Virginia

Friday, December 1st, 2023

8:00am-9:00am

[Brick Road Coffee Company](#)

8055A Shrader Rd, Richmond, VA 23294

Special Edition of Wednesdays with MPI Virginia Happy Hour

Wednesday, December 20th

4:30pm-8:30pm

[C&G Luxury Candles](#)

9200 Stony Point Pkwy #114, Richmond, VA, 23235

[Register for December Happy Hour Here](#)

Registration required

February Quarterly Education & Networking Program

February 6th & 7th

Delta by Marriott Virginia Beach Waterfront

2800 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

[Register for February Quarterly Event Here](#)



November's Featured Member is Shamera Stewart. Shamera is a Senior Consultant of Midtown Events and Operations at CarMax and is a new member of MPI Virginia; only joining in September 2023. Get to know more about Shamera below:

Q: Why did you join MPI Virginia?

A: I'm super excited about building relationships with other meeting professionals. I hope to learn more about this exciting industry, exchange best practices, and make some solid connections along the way.

Q: What do you enjoy the most about the meeting and events industry?

A: Each day brings something new! I thrive on having the freedom to structure my workday independently, and the events industry keeps things fresh week to week, letting my creativity shine.

Q: What advice would you give someone entering the meeting and events industry?

A: While continued education is extremely important, building and nurturing relationships with peers, mentors, and industry professionals is the ultimate key to advancing in your career journey. These relationships can open doors, provide

guidance, and offer support that complements your educational efforts and propels you forward.

Q: How do you define success?

A: To me, success is defined as finding happiness and contentment in my career, enjoying a fulfilling family life, and actively contributing to the betterment of my community.

Q: If you had to eat one meal every day for the rest of your life, what would it be?

A: Fried Shrimp & French Fries

Q: What is your favorite hobby?

A: Watching and following my beloved Philadelphia Eagles. Fly, Eagles, Fly!

Thank you Shamera for letting us get to know more about you!

If you would like to be featured in one of our upcoming editions of The VA VOICE, please complete our [Member Spotlight Questionnaire](#).



Call for Donations for MPI Virginia's next Fundraiser!

We are looking for fun silent auction donation items to offer to our membership including getaways, gift baskets, hotel night stays, event tickets, etc! Looking to showcase your property or service?! Donate now and get your logo and company in front of our planners and suppliers at the February 6-7, 2024 Quarterly Education, Networking, and Silent Auction event at the Delta by Marriott at Virginia Beach.

To donate to our upcoming silent auction, please reach out to Megan Hazzard at HAZO29@henrico.us for a silent auction form.



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

for Board of Directors & Committee roles.



Get Involved with YOUR MPI VA Chapter

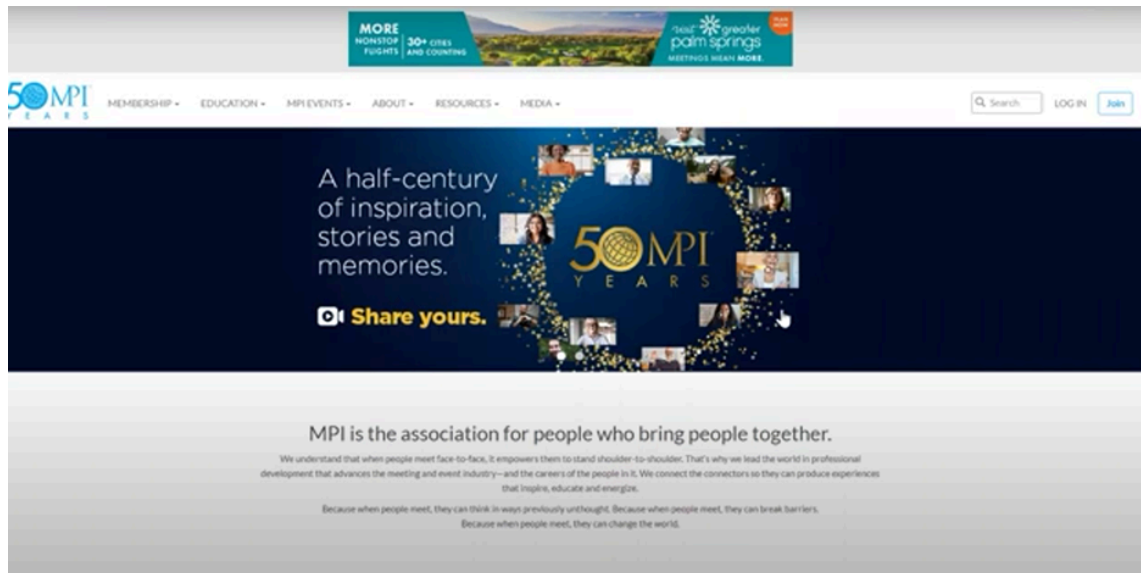
We are looking for volunteers to join committees and the MPI Virginia board! Time to get involved and get all the benefits out of your membership! Please reach out to Megan Hazzard at Hazo29@henrico.us if you are interested in learning more about how to get involved with YOUR chapter.

We have openings in Membership, Finance, Communications, and Education so wherever your interest in the meeting profession lies, we would love to have you!

Update your MPI Member Profile Today!

It is essential that our members have fully-completed and up-to-date information on their member profile page so we can make their membership tailor-made to their needs. Please take a look at your current profile and make any necessary changes, today. It only takes a couple of minutes!

Check out this video for step-by-step instructions on how to edit your profile.



Happy November Membership Anniversaries!

Victoria Matthews, City of Fredericksburg, 17 Years

Artonda Cheeseman, CMP, MTA, Virginia Housing, 16 Years

Lisa Meriweather, City of Danville, 9 Years

Lori Leib, CMP, Hampton Convention & Visitors Bureau, 8 Years

Veronica Thompson, CMP, VIBEvents Group, 8 Years

Kristy Archer Geiger, CMP, CMM, Eventive Thinking, 7 Years

Steve Tewksbury, CMP, The College of William & Mary, 4 Years

Wendy Baten, Caesar's Virginia, 1 Year

Kim Carragher, Marriott Richmond Downtown, 1 Year

Linda Self, Booz Allen Hamilton, 1 Year

Dwight Driskill, Cedar Fair, 1 Year

Welcome New Members!

Sarah Douglas- ASM Richmond

Sabrina Johnson- IIHS

Featured News

10 Ways to up Your Event Planning Game

Fall always sparks a renewed sense of energy in me. The transition from the slower summer pace combined with the realization that there are only a few months left in the year lights a fire in me. But this year, that feeling of urgency is even stronger. The pandemic brought immense challenges, but it also acted as a catalyst for reevaluating our events. But our window of opportunity is closing. As 2024 approaches, we are settling into reduced travel and training budgets, formalized hybrid work schedules, and shifted priorities for how we spend our time. Our events are competing with easy online offerings, [new expectations from younger generations](#) regarding engagement and personalized experiences, and tougher requirements for ROI. We are finally entering a new era of events, but we are bringing the same old models with us and expecting them to deliver new results.



[Read More](#)

Thank You to our Sponsors!





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The VA Voice Newsletter is your monthly source for member news, events, and industry updates. It's produced for members and non-members alike. Have a colleague or prospective member who could benefit from receiving the VA Voice? Email Claire to have them added to our distribution list.

claire@themanagementoffice.com.

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