THE FOUNTAIN FUND

Fall 2026 Newsletter

RICHMOND



MELISSA VANOVER

Client Partner Spotlight: *Melissa Vanover*

When **Melissa Vanover** was released and began her sobriety journey, the Fountain Fund helped her take the first step. We provided a loan for her very first apartment, giving her a stable foundation after recovery housing and **a place to host her family**.

When she faced car trouble a year later, Richmond Site Director Tom Mundy helped her secure a replacement in just 11 days. That reliable transportation earned her a job promotion and allowed her to pass her previous vehicle down to her daughter and new granddaughter. Today, Melissa has renewed her lease, built a strong credit score, and will graduate with her associate degree this April.

Photo, Left: *Client Partner Melissa Vanover with her beloved 2017 Jeep Desert Hawk*

"[My loan] put me in a position where the opportunities are endless. My life has just completely improved. It's a life that I never thought that I would have." — Melissa Vanover



ABOVE: *Amanda Spiller with Richmond Site Director Tom Mundy.*

FOND FAREWELL TO AMANDA SPILLER

The Fountain Fund offers our deepest gratitude to **Amanda Spiller** as she steps into her next chapter at Simopoulos Law as a Legal Assistant. While completing her degree, Amanda will focus on employment, civil rights, and education law before pursuing law school and plaintiff-side advocacy.

Reflecting on her time with us, Amanda shares that getting to know Client Partners and providing affordable lending was the most rewarding part of her work. Working directly with clients highlighted how crucial meaningful legal guidance is, fueling her passion to advocate for individuals navigating complex systems. We know her future clients will be in great hands!

"I appreciated being part of an organization that recognizes people's potential and provides opportunities for them to move forward without defining them by their past." — Amanda Spiller



KEVIN HILL

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Chesapeake Bank

Through an innovative partnership with Chesapeake Bank, the Fountain Fund is opening doors to mainstream banking for Client Partners while preserving lending capital. Under the leadership of Vice President **Kevin Hill**, an Advisory Board member, Chesapeake purchases vehicle loans underwritten by the Fountain Fund, **restoring capital directly to our revolving fund**.

Beyond freeing up capital, the partnership demystifies traditional banking by pairing financial coaching with Chesapeake's flexible approach. As Kevin notes, the model offers a trusted entry point into the financial system, enabling borrowers to recover after accidents and stay on the road with dignity.

"Most people don't trust banking because they don't understand it... This gives them access to get the lending completed, but at the same time, actually build that relationship with a banker." — Kevin Hill

RICHMOND AT A GLANCE:

Lending across the Richmond area

200+ *LOANS*

$1.2M *TOTAL LENDING*

$600K *RECYCLED CAPITAL*

LEADING REENTRY ADVOCACY IN RICHMOND

Congratulations to Richmond Site Director **Tom Mundy** for being honored as a **Richmond Reentry Champion** at Leviticus Training Center in September! Recognized for his lived experience and community advocacy, Tom leads monthly pre-release sessions, manages local transitional housing, and runs an opioid education nonprofit. Tom also testified before the House of Delegates' Public Safety Committee, urging lawmakers to view economic opportunity as a critical form of violence prevention.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"[The loan] just drastically, drastically changed my life. I can't even express enough gratitude. I don't know where I would be today if it wasn't for the Fountain Fund." — Client Partner

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

OUR MISSION: *The Fountain Fund increases economic opportunities for formerly incarcerated people to improve their lives and remain in their communities.*

LENDING HOPE

Sharing Our Model Nationwide

Across the country, The Fountain Fund is stepping onto regional and national stages to **change the narrative around reentry and fair lending**. In October, Executive Director Erika Viccellio and National Director of Client and Community Engagement Tez Tolbert presented about the Fountain Fund's leadership development program at Stand Together Foundation's national Catalyst convening. Erika also joined site directors Aaron Morin (Boston) and Mike Butler (Philadelphia) at the GreenLight Fund Summit in Oakland to collaborate on community-driven solutions with other grantees from around the country. Building on his work at Prosperity Now's lending forum, Mike Butler was invited to deliver a plenary address at their Atlanta Regional Summit this November. From Richmond Site Director Tom Mundy testifying before the Virginia House of Delegates to staff delivering national summit keynotes, our team is demonstrating that **when you extend resources and opportunity to returning citizens, entire communities prosper**.

That national influence extends directly to media platforms, where our leaders share lived experience to reframe the reentry conversation. On *A Life, Unedited*, host Marc Hunt sat down with Tez Tolbert and Loan Operations Specialist Sankofa Alkebu-Lan to discuss the hidden barriers after incarceration and how the Fountain Fund extends trust and capital. On Charlottesville's Envision Radio, Director of Lending Shantel Hopkins reflected on his personal transformation and how his grandmother's advice to "be his own man" inspires him to **lead with grace** when coaching Client Partners.

Grounded in this deep field experience, our team continues to invest in internal excellence. This summer, Shantel Hopkins and Sankofa Alkebu-Lan attended Credit Builders Alliance's intensive training in Miami on competitive scholarships, earning prestigious **Master Trainer certifications**. Using a **train-the-trainer model**, Shantel and Sankofa are sharing their knowledge with our team and Client Partners to deliver even more powerful financial coaching.



From left, podcast host Marc Hunt, Sankofa Alkebu-Lan, and Tez Tolbert.

"Good people, good organizations do exist. Because all I ever wanted was an opportunity." — Sankofa Alkebu-Lan



Sankofa Alkebu-Lan and Shantel Hopkins in Miami.

"We attended the CBA conference as participants and presenters, and then in the same year became Master Trainers. And now the world is just open." — Shantel Hopkins

WE ARE GROWING!



Brooks Wellmon
NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY

We are thrilled to welcome two new additions to the Fountain Fund team. **Brooks Wellmon** joins as National Director of Philanthropy, building creative funding pipelines that secure sustainable resources for Client Partners nationwide. **Sherman Collins** steps into his role as Loan Specialist after a decade as an East Coast commercial driver, bringing a deep heart for ministry and community service to our lending team. As Sherman shares, "What stands out to me is that the Fountain Fund is mission-driven. They care more about helping people than just a loan." Please join us in giving both Brooks and Sherman a warm welcome!



Sherman Collins
LOAN SPECIALIST

NEW ORLEANS UPDATE

In March 2022, the Fountain Fund launched a partnership with First 72+ in New Orleans, combining holistic reentry services provided by First 72+ with micro-lending to support Client Partners on their financial journeys. Since the partnership began we have provided **more than 100 low-interest loans totaling more than $250,000**. Because of changes in leadership and staffing, we are winding down operations in New Orleans and will not be extending new loans there. We remain deeply committed to supporting our existing New Orleans Client Partners through the remainder of their loan terms, celebrating their ongoing achievements and honoring the lasting impact of our work together.

NATIONWIDE LENDING IMPACT

Since our founding in 2017

$6.5M+ IN LOANS	**1,327** LOANS
1,113 CLIENT PARTNERS	**$3.2M+** RECYCLED INTO THE FUND