

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

CLIENT PARTNER SPOTLIGHT – SHERRY BURNETT

There's a painting of a vibrant tiger hanging on the wall behind **Sherry Burnett** when our interview gets underway. The tiger – a symbol of strength, bravery and independence - will reveal itself as an apt animal for the courageous life she is now living.

Sherry is a straight talker, and she openly admits that the months following incarceration were hard but transformative. Her journey towards a brighter future began when she devoted herself to recovery and took important steps to regain custody of her teenage son.

To make that dream a reality, she would need a stable place to call home as well as a deposit and first month's rent. That's where The Fountain Fund stepped in, providing her with a \$1,600 loan. These funds made it possible for her to secure her very first apartment.

She glows in the retelling, "Getting my own place was huge. It gave me all types of confidence. It gave me a different type of self-worth."

This foundation set the stage for Sherry and her son to reunite. "I just remember the first time that I brought Dezmond to see the apartment... he was so excited. It was the beginning of a completely different type of happiness. A type of happiness that I'd never known." Having a loving place to call home also resulted in a huge boost to her own emotional well-being as well as to her son's academic success.

Months later, when her used car's transmission failed, Sherry found herself in need once again. The Fountain Fund granted her a second loan of \$800 for repairs. She is proud to report that she has since repaid both loans, her credit score is rising, and the sense of accomplishment and gratitude she feels is immense. Her new husband, also a Client Partner, is feeling the elevation of a Fountain Fund auto loan, too!

Words of advice she would give to others? "Be willing to ask for help." She chuckles, "People can't help you with what you need unless you tell them!" She continues, "And stay in a grateful mind. Focus on what is right and keep positive people around you."



Sherry is embracing her new life and is grateful to see her family flourishing.

IMPACT 100 RICHMOND SELECTS THE FOUNTAIN FUND AT THE 2025 BIG GIVE!

The Fountain Fund recently had the privilege of participating in **2025 Big Give**, an annual event organized by **Impact 100 Richmond**. This volunteer-driven women's philanthropy group selects finalists through an intensive vetting process which begins with a competitive grant cycle, followed by engaging site visits and culminating with an exciting night where five nonprofits compete – Shark Tank style! Since 2009, they have contributed over \$2 million to 37 nonprofits, supporting projects that create transformative change within the Richmond community.



Impact 100 Richmond volunteer Rainey Niklawski celebrates our big win with John Carrington, Lorenzo Collins, Tom Mundy and Erika Viccellio.

Tom Mundy, Richmond Site Director, boldly represented our agency. His speech – which accentuated the powerful impact of our mission from his own lived-experience – was moving and profound. The evening's highlight came when audience members voted for the nonprofit they believed deserved this year's \$100,000 grant—and The Fountain Fund was the winner!

"The Fountain Fund invests holistically in improving the lives of the formerly incarcerated individuals, and keeping voices of those folks centered in their work," shares Rainey Niklawski. Thank you, Impact 100 Richmond. We are honored and elated by your belief in our mission.

RICHMOND LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD MAKES US STRONGER

We're thrilled to announce the official launch of our **Richmond LAB!** This dynamic group will help us tackle important programmatic and strategic decisions. Their unique perspectives – from Client Partner, to social activist, to philanthropist, to banker, to entrepreneur, to nonprofit leader, to finance expert - will prove invaluable as we grow. Their wisdom will guide us as we shape the future of financial stabilization for returning citizens in Richmond.



Tom Mundy, Chris Little, Kerry Day, Rodney Boshier, Leah Fremouw, Zenobia Bey and John Carrington. Not pictured: Kevin Hill.

LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER AT THE GLOBAL HOMEBOY NETWORK GATHERING



Homeboy Dre Comers with team members Tom Mundy (far left), Martize Tolbert (far right) and supporter Chris Little (right center).

In late summer, a generous donor sponsored two Fountain Fund team members' attendance at the **2025 Global Homeboy Network Gathering**. This annual conference brings together organizations from across the United States and around the globe to share knowledge and explore ways that elements of the Homeboy Industries model might strengthen their own agency's impact.

Event attendees traveled from 7 nations, 37 states and 101 cities! An engaging array of breakout sessions and compelling speakers offered vital reminders of the power of empathy in our shared work to address social inequity and injustice.

Homeboy Industries is the largest gang rehabilitation and reentry program in the world.



THE FOUNTAIN FUND CELEBRATES \$5M MILESTONE

We are proud to report that our agency recently surpassed the \$5 million mark in lending!

We believe that everyone we help stand strong is one less person caught in the cycle of a broken system. That's REAL recidivism prevention.

RICHMOND FACTS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

100% "Report achieving their self-determined goals."

100% "Have hope for the future."

97% "Have an improved understanding of credit."

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

- "Gave me the confidence to trust in my ability to be the Man I was called to be. Which led to me be a pillar in my family and community."
- "When I needed help the most, they were there for me. I am very blessed."
- "I was able to boost my credit score to find better housing for my family..."

GROWING STRONG

We're excited to welcome **Amanda Spiller, Administrative Assistant & Outreach Specialist**, to our Richmond team!

TOTAL LENDING

As of October 31, 2025, Richmond's total lending included 161 loans valued at nearly \$947,844!



CONTACT US



TOM MUNDY, RICHMOND SITE DIRECTOR

Shockoe Centre
11 South 12th Street, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23219
804.214.7151
tmundy@fountainfund.org

EXAMPLES OF LOANS:

- Business Equipment
- Housing
- Obtain a Driver's License
- Vehicle Repair & Purchase
- Tuition

OTHER SERVICES: Financial education, housing referrals, and links to other services.



Courageous things are happening. Learn more!