

Engage for Change Awards

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

QUEALLY CENTER FOR ADMISSION & CAREER SERVICES
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND



2026 Award Print by Hamilton Glass



**Bonner Center for
Civic Engagement**

Program

WELCOME	Priscila Ramirez, '27, and Olga Rokhlenko, '27
OPENING REMARKS	Joan Saab, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Sylvia Gale, Executive Director, Bonner Center for Civic Engagement
KEYNOTE ADDRESS	Hamilton Glass, Artist
SERVICE FOR CHANGE AWARDS	Presented by Emilia Hodal, Assistant Director of Student Engagement and the Bonner Scholars Program, Bonner Center for Civic Engagement
PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP, COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AND TEACHING AWARDS	Presented by Manuella Meyer, Associate Dean, School of Arts & Sciences
COMMUNITY-ENGAGED TEACHING AND BILL COLEMAN AWARDS	Presented by Sandra Peart, Dean, Jepson School of Leadership Studies
BILL COLEMAN AWARD	Presented by Rob Andrejewski, Director of Sustainability
COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE INSTITUTION AWARDS	Presented by Jamelle Wilson, Dean, School of Professional & Continuing Studies
COMMUNITY EDUCATOR AWARD	Presented by Sasha Hollister, Assistant Director of Community Relationships and Place-Based Engagement, Bonner Center for Civic Engagement
CIVIC COMMITMENT AWARD	Presented by Sylvia Gale

Honorees

SERVICE FOR CHANGE AWARD

This award recognizes individuals or groups who have committed to service and relationship building in the Richmond community as a significant part of his/her/their college experience and whose work has contributed to a community's goals.

Lucas Chuidan, '27

Lucas Chuidan is a senior biochemistry and molecular biology major who is passionate about community health. He serves as a volunteer with UREMS and Goochland Fire & Rescue and works as a program associate with the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement to advise other students interested in volunteering in healthcare and public health. He has also been an active volunteer with the River City Inclusive Gym. In the words of his supervisor, "Lucas is patient, caring, and encouraging and always willing to help. It is because of these qualities that we are able to further our mission to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities through fitness and fun."

Brunnet Makava, '27

Brunnet Makava is a Bonner Scholar and senior biochemistry and molecular biology major with a deep commitment to civic engagement. Throughout her time at Richmond, she has engaged with Sacred Heart Center, Habitat for Humanity, the Welcome Home Foundation, and VCU Engineering. She has also helped local families learn English and planned conversations about immigration across campus with Dr. Seth Michelson. As a nominator shared, "Brunnet is the kind of Bonner who takes ownership of her service. She sees Bonner as an opportunity, not a scholarship requirement . . . You would assume that she spent her whole life preparing to engage with this city, but I don't think she came from Zimbabwe with a thorough understanding of Richmond and its history as a freshman. Instead, she immediately embraced this city and campus."

Pathways to a College Education (PACE) Student Leadership Team

Lucy Lew, Duncan Hall, and Isabella Corona are members of the PACE Leadership Team. PACE introduces the possibility of a college education to Richmond area middle and elementary school students by offering a comprehensive full-day or half-day tour experience at the University of Richmond. As their nominator shared, "Lucy, Duncan, and Isabella have led the PACE program with intention, consistency, and care. This year they helped grow the program to reach over 600 students, all while making sure every student who stepped on this campus felt welcomed and like they belong here. They have built strong teams, created meaningful partnerships, and most importantly, helped young students see college as something that is possible for them."

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

This award honors individuals for their scholarly or other creative activity that serves a public good extending beyond the academic purpose of the work. Public scholarship encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities.

Bedelia Richards **Associate Professor of Sociology**

Bedelia Richards' research explores the intersections of race, immigration, and education, while interrogating the role of educational institutions in reproducing institutionalized racism and classism. She has brought this knowledge into the public creating workshops and consulting with a variety of institutions on how to address racial biases, including deep work with nursing students and institutions of higher education. As a nominator shared, "Bedelia is a true public scholar who has the skill to translate complex sociological theories and ideas into language that is accessible and usable so that the power of these ideas can be used productively to better our communities."

Gus Dulaney-Dewald, '27

Gus Dulaney-Dewald, geography and Latin American, Latino & Iberian Studies major, has created multiple suites of maps for Native Tribal partners in Virginia, including a map showing Tidewater Sea Level Rise's impact on tribal lands that has served as a model for other student work. As a Civic Fellow, he interned with the Nansemond Indian Nation and contributed maps of demography, resilience, and property ownership for the Nansemond Tribal Council. Gus has attended or shared maps at over ten Virginia powwows since his arrival on campus. In the words of a nominator, "Gus embodies public scholarship by creating research products tailored to the request of the native tribes of Virginia. His thoughtful demeanor, work ethic, and cartographic skills make him an ideal social cartographer."

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

This award recognizes a University faculty member whose scholarly and/or other creative activity emerges from a mutually beneficial partnership with a community and creates new knowledge that contributes to positive social change.

Janelle Peifer **Associate Professor of Psychology**

Janelle Peifer has pursued community-engaged scholarly work throughout her career. Since 2018, she has partnered on multiple research studies, workforce development, and evaluation projects with the Atlanta Birthing Center. She has connected her students with Goochland Cares in Richmond and with several public health organizations in New Zealand to explore the relationships between the social determinants of health and mental health. Through this comparative lens, she has brought forth key issues, challenges, and opportunities for community-engaged research. She also co-led a Faculty Learning Community on Participatory Action Research. In the words of a nominator, "Janelle is an outstanding community-engaged scholar whose work exemplifies how engaging with the public leads to rigorous and meaningful research. She navigates the complexities of community-engaged work with grace and empathy, while staying true to the rigorous standards of her discipline."

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED TEACHING AWARD

This award recognizes faculty members who have consistently demonstrated excellence in community-engaged teaching at the University of Richmond. Community-engaged teaching is undertaken in collaboration with community partners in order to further the learning of all involved and build the capacity of students and community members in order to effect positive change.

David Giancaspro **Associate Professor of Spanish**

David Giancaspro focuses his teaching and research on heritage bilingualism and is deeply committed to community-based learning. For example, his Spanish for Heritage Speakers classes have engaged regularly at Broad Rock Elementary School in Richmond's Southside and reflected about their experiences in the classroom. As a nominator shared, "Over the years, David has developed well-crafted scholarly, pedagogical, and community-oriented activities that have benefited our students, the Department of Latin American, Latino & Iberian Studies, the University, and the broader community."

Kerrissa MacPherson **Adjunct Instructor of Health Studies and Senior Program Manager of Community Impact,** **Bon Secours Richmond**

Jepson School of Leadership Studies alumna Kerrissa MacPherson works to improve health outcomes and advance health equity across diverse populations and uses health data to drive strategy. She teaches Health Disparities: Nonprofit Community Healthcare, and her students interact with numerous community health leaders and explore Richmond's history through study trips. As her nominator shared, "Kerrissa is an asset to UR and an alum who helps current students advance their learning, development, and connections to Richmond."

Lauren Henley **Assistant Professor of Leadership Studies**

Lauren Henley is a historian who investigates how age, race, gender, and religion contribute to perceptions of criminality in the South and West and who has demonstrated her commitment to community-based learning through many of her courses in the Jepson School of Leadership Studies. As a member of the Richmond Cemetery Collaboratory, her classes document and support African American history and culture via the region's cemeteries. She has also served as a board member for the Woodland Restoration Foundation for the last several years. In the words of a nominator, "Lauren had clearly instilled in her students the importance of listening to community partners in order to produce work that would actually be helpful to them."

BILL COLEMAN AWARD

Mr. William "Bill" Coleman was the shuttle driver for Spiders serving in the community from 2012-2021 and a beloved colleague whose spirit and dedication advanced student engagement at the University of Richmond. This award recognizes members of the University's staff who are dedicated to supporting meaningful engagement with our local and global communities.

Linda Trent

Administrative Coordinator, Jepson School of Leadership Studies

Linda Trent supports the Justice and Civil Society course in preparing and organizing the community-based learning sites, the basis for the pedagogy in the course and integral to its success. She also brings her thoughtful experience and perspective to the Transportation Working Group to enhance community engagement more broadly at the University. As her nominator shared, "It is difficult to imagine our Justice & Civil Society classes or other community-based learning (CBL) classes working so effectively if it were not for Linda's unrelenting contributions to the process. Thinking about the average number of sections of Justice and Civil Society offered each semester in her nine years at Jepson, Linda has worked with minimally 900 students in terms of their CBL requirement and that is without considering other CBL components she has supported for other classes." Another nominator shared, "Having had the pleasure to work with Bill Coleman for years, it is equally an honor to work every day with Linda who, like Bill, works tirelessly to get our students engaged with the city and surrounding communities."

Joseph Day

Natural Areas Steward, Office for Sustainability

Haley Herrmann

Sustainability Communications & Engagement Specialist, Office for Sustainability

Joseph Day and Haley Herrmann are leading a volunteer program that has turned the University's Eco-Corridor into a genuine point of connection between campus and community. Joseph leads the volunteer events, guiding participants through tree planting, invasive species removal, Orchard & Food Forest maintenance, and Farmette harvesting. Haley leads the promotional effort and organizes the logistics. The program regularly draws not just students but community members and even alumni, extending the volunteer program's reach well beyond campus. In the words of a nominator, "Though we might think about community engagement happening off campus, you can see a great example of it on the Eco-Corridor most Fridays . . . Joseph can grow anything, including community. He has a green thumb and a big heart. Haley puts others first. She is not one who seeks the spotlight, but she shines that light brilliantly on others."

COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE AWARDS

This award honors a collaborative community-based partnership between campus and community stakeholders. This award is given to an individual or group who recognizes the importance of authentic relationships and genuine collaboration to affect change.

Laura Fitrer, Senior Program Manager of Professional Education, SPCS

Tom Parfitt, Director of Professional Education, SPCS

Misty Woodward, Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, Sheltering Arms Institute

Kelly Merrick, Vice President of Philanthropy, Sheltering Arms Institute

Laura Fitrer, Tom Parfitt, Misty Woodward, and Kelly Merrick have worked collaboratively to strengthen clinical nurse leadership capacity in Richmond. Developed in partnership between Sheltering Arms Institute and the School of Professional & Continuing Studies, the Leadership for Post-Acute Care program addresses leadership development needs specific to rehabilitation nursing as part of a broader clinical workforce development strategy. The program builds pride and ownership in the rehabilitation nursing specialty while fostering collaboration between nursing and therapy teams. In the words of a nominator, the program “has helped participants gain confidence, expand their leadership capabilities, and translate learning into meaningful improvements within their teams.”

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INSTITUTION AWARD

This award recognizes a faculty or staff member whose community-engaged teaching, scholarship, and/or service have made a significant contribution to the University of Richmond, furthering opportunities for faculty engagement, community collaboration, and the learning and thriving of our students.

George Hiller
Adjunct Professor of Liberal Arts

George Hiller has taught international trade, economics, and trade law courses in the Robins School of Business, School of Law, and School of Professional & Continuing Studies, mentored countless Civic Fellows and other engaged students, and made meaningful connections between many Richmond organizations and the University of Richmond. The partnerships have become staples for UR students, providing countless opportunities for civic learning and action. In the words of a nominator, “He champions higher education, student success, and the importance of students and future leaders’ understanding of international business education and cultural sensitivity training. He is totally devoted to the success of the University of Richmond – to its students and its future.”

COMMUNITY EDUCATOR AWARD

This award honors an individual or organization in the Richmond community who has transformed students, faculty, and/or staff through the sharing of their knowledge and expertise.

Tom Anderson
Executive Director, IT4Causes

Tom Anderson is a longtime partner of the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement and the University of Richmond. IT4Causes's staff, volunteers, and interns work together to deploy standardized information technology tools to create reliable, durable, and highly affordable business solutions for nonprofit clients. Through the years, Tom has shown a commitment to supporting the professional development of numerous Bonner Scholars and University of Richmond interns. As a nominator shared, "There is one thing we can be sure of: our students will always have great things to say about Tom and IT4Causes. Tom creates community with his students, provides opportunities for their growth, and takes their learning seriously."

CIVIC COMMITMENT AWARD

Civic commitment is defined as developing one's commitment to and effectiveness in participation in public processes. This award honors an individual who demonstrates civic commitment and inspires it in other learners, enhancing their positive impact on the world around them.

Heather Russell
Associate Professor of Mathematics

Heather Russell inspires and motivates her students on campus and is committed to broadening representation in STEM fields. As part of this commitment, she created a math club with a focus on providing consistent tutoring to youth in the Richmond region. As her student nominator shared, "She is both an excellent teacher and committed to engaging in the Richmond community. She collaborated with students to create a math club with a focus on providing consistent tutoring to kids in an effort to develop a love of learning and math."

The Bonner Center for Civic Engagement is grateful to all of tonight's presenters, University Catering, Events and Support Services, and WCDE 90.1 for helping to make the 2026 Engage for Change Awards so special.