

SPRIT OF VIRGINIA

Photographic Journal



VOLUME II



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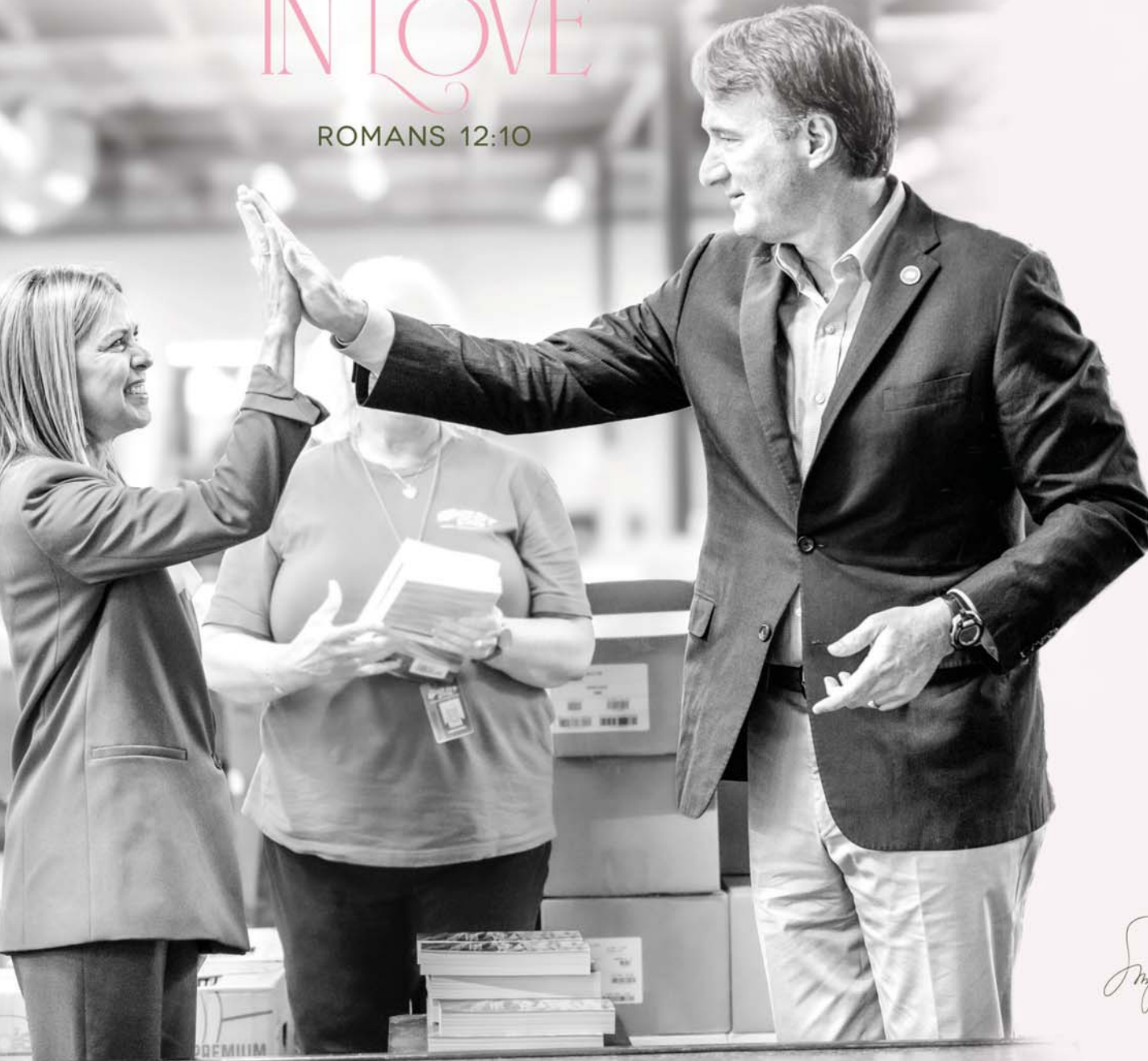
Established in 2022 by First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin on behalf of Governor Glenn Youngkin, the Spirit of Virginia Award salutes persons who are strengthening their communities through catalytic and compassionate elements of:

SPIRIT

Service Oriented, Pioneering, Innovative & Industrious,
Reinvigorating, Imaginative, Transformative

Be Devoted To One Another
IN LOVE

ROMANS 12:10



Two years into Glenn's governorship, we find ourselves continually awed and motivated by the ever-present Spirit of Virginians. This Spirit runs deep and is found in every corner of our Commonwealth. The Spirit of Virginia Award, highlighted in this photographic tribute journal, was established to recognize persons and organizations exemplifying goodwill, compassion, and selfless achievements. We hope that these 2023 winners inspire you and prompt reflection, kindness, and giving. Biblical scripture (Romans 12:10) reminds us, "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves." It is through this lens that we highlight the good deeds of caring Virginians across our Commonwealth.

With Gratitude and Blessings,

Ernaun Gough *Glenn Young*

2023 AWARD RECIPIENTS



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SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY
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HOUSING CORPORATION

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BUILDING VIABLE, THRIVING & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation (SCDHC) is a Richmond, metro area community development corporation focused on cultivating housing and financial self-sufficiency for the underserved and predominantly women-led households. It is Central Virginia's oldest, historically Black-led community development corporation. With more than 30 years of service, SCDHC's mission is to build viable, thriving, and sustainable communities through affordable housing and wrap-around support services.

SCDHC has built homes in over a dozen neighborhoods and developments throughout the Richmond area, totaling over 750 units of affordable housing with 450 as single-family affordable homes. In 2022, the organization served nearly 800 clients through housing counseling and educational services, including foreclosure prevention, rent relief, and workforce development tools.

FEBRUARY 2023
Richmond, VA



“
The ache for home lives in all of us.

”
—Maya Angelou—







“

In 1988 we started with a need, a handful of community leaders, and an idea to rebuild our community. Today, it's a reality and the movement continues to change lives in underserved communities by creating new affordable homes for purchase and for rent. As we focus on wealth building and providing wrap-around services, we address financial barriers to enable our residents to have access to quality housing.

”

—Dianna Bowser, President and CEO—

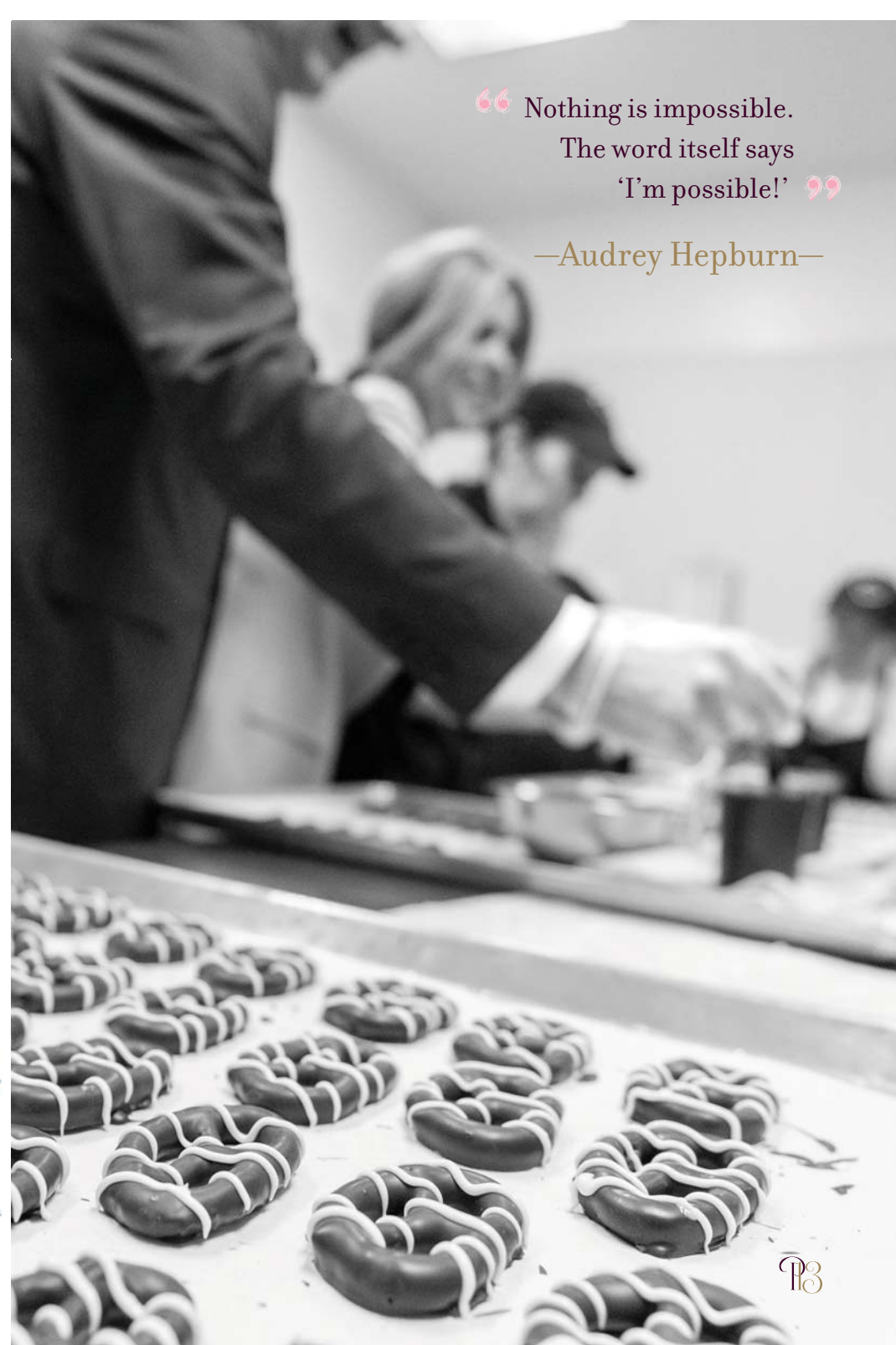
CREATING MEANINGFUL & EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates is a business enterprise of non-profit **Every1 Can Work** and provides permanent employment opportunities for young adults living with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

At Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates, employees with intellectual disabilities develop essential workforce readiness skills that serve them beyond their time at the shop and into their broader lives and careers. They work alongside volunteers and culinary specialists to produce delicious chocolates as well as other food products and services.

Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates first opened in 2013 with three employees. Now in its 10th year of business, the store employs 23 workers with intellectual disabilities and serves as a model enterprise across the United States and even to other nations on how to most effectively empower workers with disabilities.

APRIL 2023
Fairfax, VA



“ Nothing is impossible.
The word itself says
‘I’m possible!’ ”

—Audrey Hepburn—





“

This recognition has brought wonderful attention to our mission, and we hope that our example guides others to follow the path and find new and creative ways to employ deserving Virginians. Our participants love being part of a group with common goals and spirit...their smiles and near-perfect attendance records tell this important story.

”

— Ellen Graham —

Co-Founder of Every1 Can Work and
owner of Cameron's Coffee and Chocolates

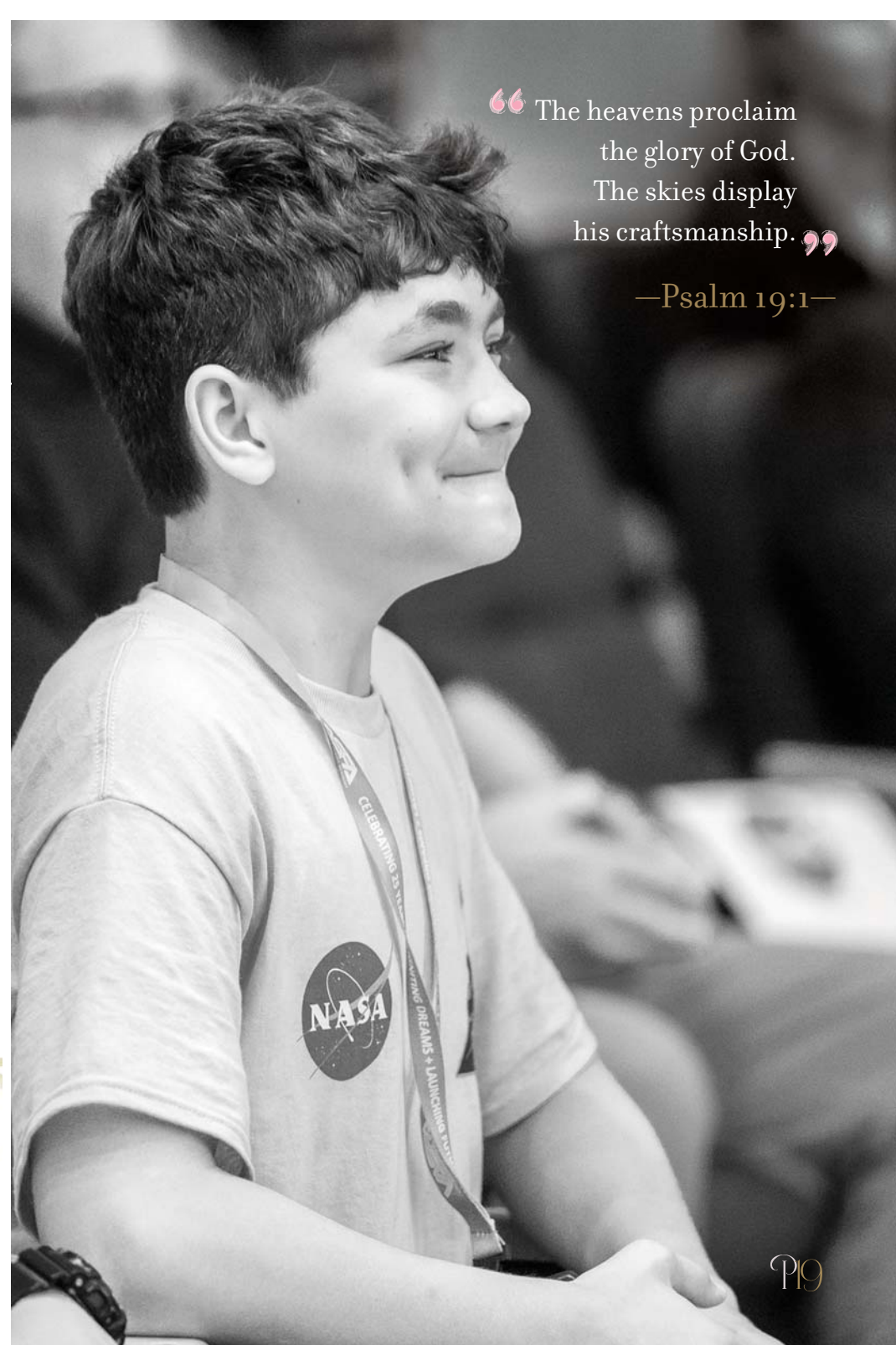
ENCOURAGING SPACEFLIGHT AND EXPLORATION AMONG STUDENTS

Established in 1998, **Virginia Space Flight Academy (VASFA)** is an educational nonprofit partnered with NASA's Wallops Island Flight Facility that encourages space flight and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) studies through a combination of year-round classroom programming and summer camps.

VASFA's camps and programs aim to spark interest and expand opportunities for students interested in learning about space flight and exploration. Strengthened through partnerships with national players in the space industry, VASFA holds a Space Act agreement with NASA that allows campers behind-the-scenes access to NASA's flight facilities on Virginia's Wallops Island.

Having served over 6,000 students since its founding, VASFA celebrates its 25th year in operation in 2023. VASFA camp operations and educational offerings continue to grow and draw students from all over the Commonwealth and across the country.

JULY 2023
Wallops Island, VA



“The heavens proclaim
the glory of God.
The skies display
his craftsmanship.”

—Psalm 19:1—





“

The Virginia Space Flight Academy's dedication to advancing STEM education, especially for girls and women, empowers Virginia's students. It breaks down gender stereotypes and inspires young minds. The Academy embodies Virginia's public service spirit, shaping a bright future for all young space enthusiasts and impacting their career trajectory

through unique STEM learning opportunities and mentorship. The First Lady's Spirit of Virginia Award elevates the Academy, further nurturing future innovators across the Commonwealth."

”

— Kim Check —

Executive Director, Virginia Space Flight Academy

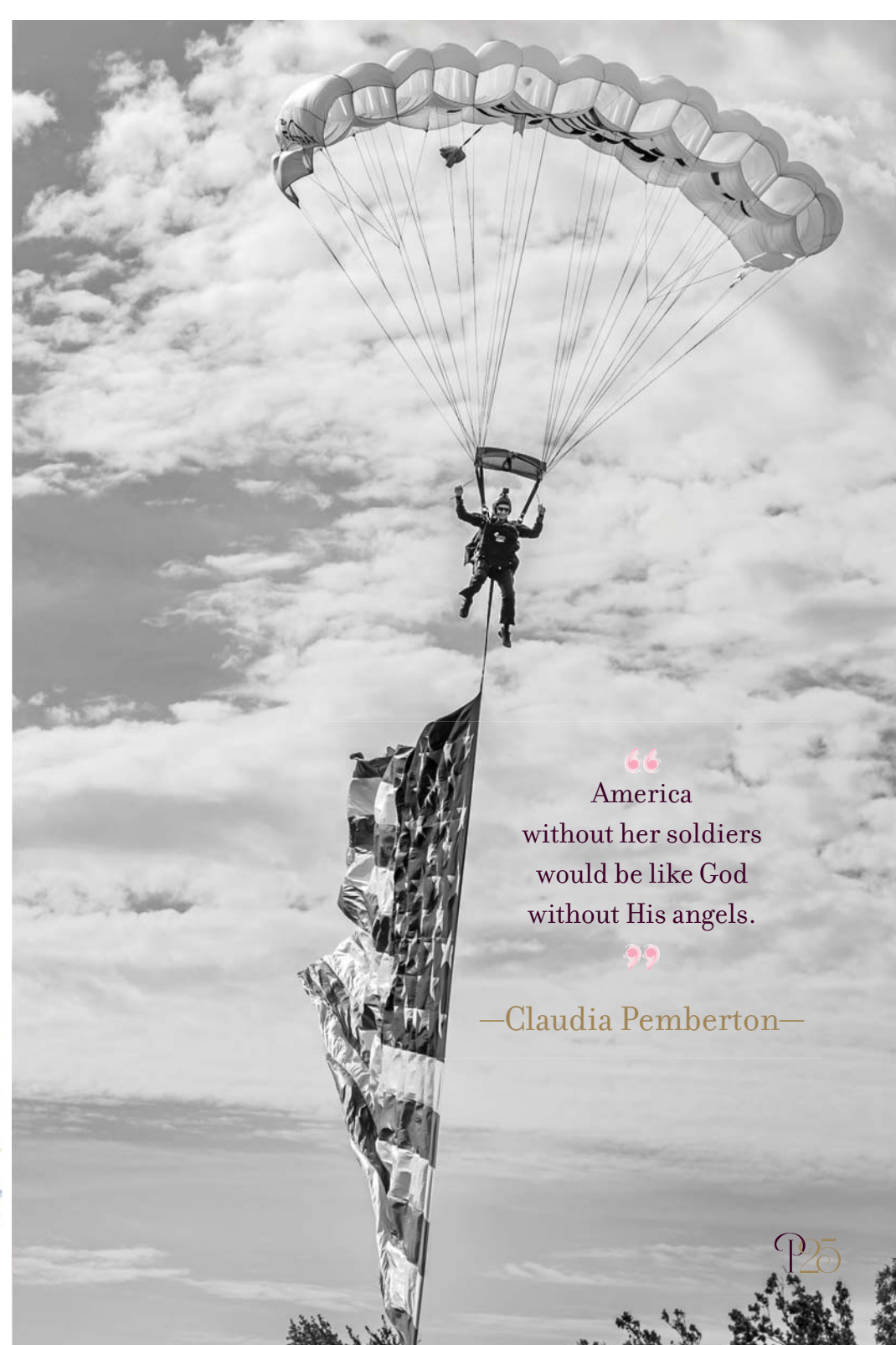
SUPPORTING OUR NATION'S HEROES IN THE AFTERMATH OF TRAUMA

Boulder Crest Foundation is a nonprofit retreat facility that serves veterans, first responders, and their families. The Foundation provides evidence-backed practices to encourage Posttraumatic Growth programming and restoration while conducting invaluable research. Since opening its doors in 2013, Boulder Crest has served 3,500 Virginians and an estimated 100,000 persons across America at no cost to participants.

With 37 beautiful acres in Northern Virginia complete with a labyrinth, garden, horse therapy, sport facilities, communal areas and more, as well as a second facility in Southwest Arizona, Boulder Crest provides a place for individuals to find peace, draw strength, and interact with others with similar experiences. Boulder Crest Foundation is setting the standard for productive and effective ways to help our Nation's heroes and their families.

SEPTEMBER 2023

Bluemont, VA



“
America
without her soldiers
would be like God
without His angels.

—Claudia Pemberton—





“

Approximately 140 Americans die by suicide every day. About 22 of these are active duty military and military veterans. This year alone, more first responders will die by suicide than in the line of their very dangerous duties. This is exactly why Boulder Crest exists. Boulder Crest Virginia is the nation's first privately funded wellness center for combat veterans and first responders and we are very proud to be an asset to the Commonwealth.

”

— Sarah Fehrer —

Executive Vice President of Boulder Crest

PRIORITIZING CONSERVATION AND SPORTSMANSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH

The **Wildlife Foundation of Virginia (WFV)** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving land, providing public access and outdoor recreational opportunities, and strengthening the commitment of the Commonwealth to conservation and sportsmanship.

Founded in 1997, WFV inspires a passion for outdoor recreation in the form of hunting, fishing, and exploring nature. WFV has been integral in acquiring and preserving nearly 14,000 acres of Virginia's land. To cater to Wounded Warriors, veterans, and mobility-impaired individuals, the nonprofit built wheelchair-accessible blinds and offers a four-wheel utility vehicle for transport.

WFV also specializes in hunts and workshops designed for younger generations to help spark a love of nature, while teaching care of the world around them. In 2014 the foundation launched a grant program that provides funding to schools, agencies, and nonprofits that connect youth to nature. This grant program has benefited more than 69,000 youth across the Commonwealth.

OCTOBER 2023
Chesapeake, VA



“
I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.

”
—Anne Frank—





“

Virginia's remarkable natural resources are both awe-inspiring and humbling. It is a privilege to help conserve, in perpetuity, the land and waters that evoke so much passion amongst the citizens of the Commonwealth.

What a legacy for future generations!

”

— Jenny West —

Executive Director of the Wildlife Foundation of Virginia



REBUILDING HOPE AND HOMES AFTER DEVASTATION

God's Pit Crew is a faith-based disaster response team of over 1,100 volunteers who respond in times of tragedy. Motivated by the devastating Oklahoma City tornadoes of 1999, Danville residents Randy and Terri Johnson began a mission to serve countless communities throughout Virginia, across the nation, and abroad that have been affected by disaster.

Today, God's Pit Crew has expanded to a national, volunteer-backed operation combating humanitarian crises caused by hurricanes, wild-fires, and other destructive events. In 2022, the organization distributed over 3.4 million pounds of food, water, and essential products to individuals and families across the United States, as well as over 30,000 survival kits colloquially known as "Blessing Buckets." God's Pit Crew volunteers are also dedicated to building new homes for wounded veterans, widows, natural disaster victims, children's homes, and families in need — erecting hope out of the ashes.

NOVEMBER 2023
Danville, VA



“When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them.
Always be eager to practice hospitality.”

—Romans 12:13—



#MORETHAN





“

The many helping hands that play a part in the ministry of God's Pit Crew help provide hope, healing, and restoration to people in great need during times of disaster. Our ministry is blessed to be able to care for individuals around the world from our Virginia-based headquarters, while carrying the spirit of the Commonwealth alongside us wherever we respond.

”

— Randy & Terri Johnson —
President & Co-founders, God's Pit Crew



I encourage you to fill these pages with reflections from your heart. We hope that these Spirit of Virginia Award recipients inspire you and serve as a reminder of the benevolent Virginian spirit inside each of us and the tremendous power we have to make a difference in the lives of others.

“

FAITH
By Itself ISN'T ENOUGH

Unless It PRODUCES

GOOD
DEEDS

It Is Dead & Useless.

”

JAMES 2:17

“

I can shake off everything as I write;
my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn.”

—Anne Frank—

“ A blank piece of paper is God's way
of telling us how hard it is to be God. ”

— Sidney Sheldon —

IN GRATITUDE

The Spirit of Virginia Awards and the reflections they inspire are the fruit of a creative collaboration by special and talented, Virginia women. This Journal is intended to honor them and to bless all Virginia's Women+girls (W+g).

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Director, Civic Engagement,
Spirit of Virginia
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