

THE FOCUS

PEOPLE • PURPOSE • PROGRESS •

**JUSTIN
JOURNETTE**

NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY

**BREAKING
RECORDS.
BUILDING
LEGACY.**

INSIDE:

**JUNETEENTH
VS.
FOURTH OF JULY**

Understanding America's
Two Freedom Celebrations

SUMMER VIBES

Virginia's Guide to
Festivals, Concerts
& More

WHAT'S GOOD VA

Spotlighting Small Businesses,
Nonprofits, Artists &
Entrepreneurs Across
Our 5 Regions

YOUTH VOICES

AHMAD COSTON
MY JOURNEY IN
PEOPLE FIRST NORFOLK

A story of growth, opportunity
and giving back to my city.

**JUSTIN #2
JOURNETTE**

SR. | OUTFIELD

Justin Journette

makes history at
NSU with record-
breaking performances
that inspire the next
generation.



**PEOPLE FIRST
NORFOLK**

Building Opportunity.
Changing Lives.

**WORK FORWARD
SUMMER UPDATE**

**TOMORROW'S LEADERS
SUMMER ARTS CAMP**

LIBERTY CALL

Veterans Weekend
Coming This November!



★★★★★

Table Of Contents

04

Give Me the Ball

A farewell tribute to Coach Al Holland, by Tom Page — Roanoke lost a legend on July 4th.



10

Juneteenth vs. The Fourth of July

Erica Jenkins asks readers which holiday they celebrated this summer, and why — a reflection on two freedom stories in the same season.



13

Summer Sounds

Precious McCollough covers the festivals bringing music, culture, and community to life — from Philadelphia's Roots Picnic to Norfolk's Cousinz Festival and beyond.



20

People First Norfolk

Community Spotlight on the \$3M USI-administered initiative transforming Tidewater Gardens, Calvert Square, Young Terrace, and more — paired with Ahmad Coston's Youth Voices essay on his own journey through the program.



27

Justin Journette's Final Swing (Cover Story)

The record-breaking senior season, career stats, and MLB Draft outlook for Norfolk State's all-time home run leader — a 36-year record broken and a legacy set.



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Editor Notes

Some issues arrive. This one landed different.

We lost Al Holland on July 4th. Roanoke lost a legend, and I lost a hero I got to call Coach. That one's personal, and it's on page 4 — not because it fits the theme of this issue, but because some things you write no matter what else is on the docket.

Everything else this month kept circling back to the same idea: legacy is built, not given. Justin Journette spent four years turning a walk-on spot into the all-time home run record at Norfolk State — a mark that stood for 36 years before he broke it. That's our cover, and it earned it.

Erica Jenkins took on something harder than a straightforward history lesson: asking readers to actually sit with which holiday meant more to them this summer, Juneteenth or the Fourth, and why. Not a debate. A conversation worth having out loud.

Precious McCollough took us through the festival circuit — from a billionaire showing up to the Roots Picnic to Southwest Virginia's small-town main streets proving they're a festival region in their own right. And Ahmad Coston gave us something we don't get often enough: a young man from Tidewater Park writing, in his own words, what it looks like when a support system actually shows up for you.

Nari'k Page closed us out with the Justice in Business Ecosystem — 24 businesses, five regions, one belief: that access to community and mentorship builds as much as access to capital does.

It's a good month to pay attention.

STAY FOCUSED MY FRIENDS

— Tom Page, Editor-in-Chief

GIVE ME THE BALL

A FAREWELL TO COACH AL HOLLAND

By Tom Page

ROANOKE LOST A LEGEND ON JULY 4,
AND I LOST A HERO I GOT TO CALL COACH.

I was nine years old in 1983, watching from a distance as Al Holland became the ultimate closer — the National League's top reliever that year and a World Series arm for a Philadelphia Phillies team that old-timers still talk about. I didn't know yet that the man authoring that season had grown up on the same Roanoke streets I did. I just knew that when the game was on the line, they gave him the ball, and he got the last out. That's the kind of hero a nine-year-old holds onto.

Al Holland did it his way. He pitched the way he wanted to pitch — heat when it mattered, no second-guessing. He coached the way he wanted to coach — patient, direct, generous with the things that actually mattered. And he came home the way he wanted to come home — not chasing the spotlight, just showing up for the next generation of Roanoke kids who needed someone to believe in them the way he once needed the same.

AL HOLLAND
1952 - 2026

★	BY THE NUMBERS	★
🏆	MLB SEASONS: 10	
🏆	1983 NATIONAL LEAGUE ROLAIDS RELIEF MAN OF THE YEAR	
🏆	25 SAVES (1983)	
🏆	NATIONAL LEAGUE LEADER IN GAMES FINISHED (1983)	
🏆	1983 NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPIONS - PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES	
🏆	PITCHED IN THE 1983 WORLD SERIES	
🏆	NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY	
🏆	LUCY ADDISON HIGH SCHOOL - ROANOKE, VIRGINIA	
🏆	RETURNED HOME TO MENTOR ROANOKE YOUTH	
🏆	FEATURED GUEST ON FOCUSED RADIO (2014)	

“WHEN THE GAME WAS ON THE LINE,
THEY GAVE HIM THE BALL.
And he got the last out.”

COACH. MENTOR. LEGEND.
Forever An Aggie.



1983

After winning the National League pennant and pitching in the World Series, I learned of him from afar. Like so many young baseball fans, I watched as Al Holland became one of the game's most dependable closers. When the game was on the line, they gave him the ball — and he got the last out.



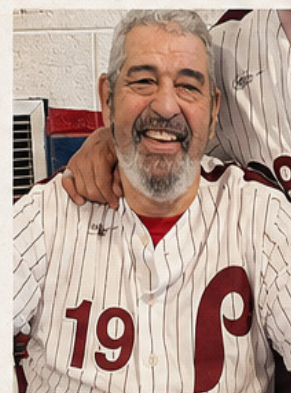
1992

I got something better than a highlight reel. I got to play for him. Coach Holland had come home to Roanoke, and there I was at eighteen, taking instruction from a man who had struck out Eddie Murray to close out a World Series game. He showed me the subtleties nobody else could — the grip, the mindset, the patience of a pitcher who trusts his best pitch. And in a moment I still can't quite believe I lived, he let me step into the box and take batting practice with wooden bats that had belonged to Pete Rose and Mike Schmidt.



2014

Our paths crossed again, this time with a microphone between us. Coach Holland sat down on my radio show and, for maybe the first time in a meaningful way, told his own story to the world through a station based in the hometown that raised him. Roanoke got to hear, in his own words, what it took to go from Lucy Addison High School to North Carolina A&T to a big-league bullpen with the game on the line. It felt right that his hometown got to be the one holding the microphone.



“HE CAME HOME
TO ROANOKE NOT
FOR RECOGNITION,
BUT TO POUR INTO
THE NEXT
GENERATION.”



We are all better for having had him.
REST EASY, COACH.
YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE THE BALL.





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Presented by
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PANELIST

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THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER



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DEIRDRE CHILDRESS HOPKINS

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COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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More options.
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This program is about one thing: putting you in a stronger financial position — whether that's landing a better job, moving up where you are, or building something of your own. **You decide the path.**



You didn't get this because of a flyer. Someone in your corner said your name. That's how we work — we show up for people who are **ready to move**, and we stay long after the program ends.



We're not outside consultants coming in to teach. Our team is already **active in the community** — we live, work, and invest here too.

TWO PATHS. ONE DESTINATION: FINANCIAL STABILITY.

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OR



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& PAID



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TWICE A WEEK — WHERE YOU ALREADY ARE

Sessions rotate through community spaces, local businesses, and training partners — no long commutes, no unfamiliar rooms.



MONTHLY GROUP GATHERINGS

Come together with the full cohort to share wins, troubleshoot barriers, and build a network that actually opens doors.



A PLAN BUILT AROUND YOUR ACTUAL GOALS

Your Individual Development Plan (IDP) is yours — not a template. We build it with you in the first session based on where you want to go.



SUPPORT FOR THE REAL BARRIERS

Transportation, childcare, gear, digital access — if something is getting in the way, we work through it. That's what the program is for.



**SPOTS ARE LIMITED.
YOURS IS HELD —
FOR NOW.**

Reach out to Kiara or
your case manager
to confirm.

**First session is
coming up soon.**

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@NuFocusedVA



Peaches

Meet Peaches & Paris

YOUR SUMMER PET SAFETY GUIDES!

Summer is a wonderful time for fun, sunshine, and adventures—but hot weather can also be dangerous for pets if we're not careful. We're **Peaches** the Frenchie and **Paris** the Persian, and we're here to share our top tips to keep you and your furry best friends safe, cool, and happy all summer long!



Paris



PEACHES' TIPS (FOR DOGS)



HYDRATION IS KEY

Always have fresh, cool water available. I love water breaks during our playtime!

WALK SMART

Walk me early in the morning or later in the evening. The best temperatures for walks are 60°–75°F. When it's over 85°F, keep walks short. At 90°F and above, it's too hot!



HOT PAVEMENT ALERT

If the pavement is too hot for your hand, it's too hot for my paws. Grass and shade are safest!



GROOMING MATTERS

I should visit the groomer every 4–8 weeks, depending on my coat. Regular brushing helps keep me cool and comfy!



NEVER LEAVE ME IN THE CAR

Cars heat up super fast—even in just a few minutes, it can be deadly.



KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Heavy panting, drooling, vomiting, bright red gums, weakness, or confusion can mean heatstroke. Get me to a cool place and call a vet right away!



PARIS' TIPS (FOR CATS)

FRESH WATER, PLEASE!

I need fresh, cool water all day long. Water fountains are purr-fect!



STAY COOL & SHADY

If I go outside, I need shade and a cool place to rest. Indoors, I like to stay on tile or in front of a fan—not in the sun.



BRUSH ME OFTEN

My long fur can get hot and matted. Brush me regularly, and I'll feel so much better. I may need a professional grooming every 6–8 weeks in summer.



TOO HOT TO HANDLE

When it's above 85°F, even cats can overheat. Watch for signs like rapid breathing, drooling, hiding, or weakness.



WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

Panting, drooling, vomiting, weakness, or acting unusual means I need help. Cool me down and call the vet!



TIPS FOR ALL PET PARENTS



Ideal temperatures for pets are 60°–75°F.

Over 85°F = take precautions. Over 90°F = stay indoors!



Always provide plenty of fresh, cool water.

Ice cubes can be a fun and refreshing treat!



Provide shade and cool rest areas outdoors.

Limit playtime during peak heat hours.



Love, attention and safety go a long way.

A happy pet is a safe pet!



Summer should be fun for everyone—including us!

With love, care, water, and lots of snuggles, we can all enjoy a safe and happy summer.

Love, Peaches & Paris

JUNETEENTH VS. THE FOURTH OF JULY

Which Did You Celebrate—And Why?

By Erica Jenkins

The cookouts are done. The fireworks have faded. The flags are folded back up until next year. But a question is still lingering in the air after these past few weeks — and it's worth asking out loud:

Which holiday did you celebrate this summer? And why that one?

Not as a challenge. As a conversation.

“ONE HOLIDAY IS THE PROMISE. THE OTHER IS THE PROOF OF HOW LONG IT TOOK TO KEEP IT.”

Juneteenth celebrations continue to grow across the nation as communities gather to honor freedom, history, and resilience.

Independence Day remains one of America's most widely celebrated holidays, bringing families and communities together each summer.

TWO HOLIDAYS, ONE SUMMER

The Fourth of July arrived with the fanfare it always does — familiar, flag-draped, woven into the fabric of American summer since childhood.

Juneteenth, now a federal holiday since 2021, is still finding its footing in the national celebration, though it has been a living tradition in Black communities for over 150 years.

For some of us, both days were on the calendar. For others, one felt more personal than the other. And for others still, the question of which to celebrate — or how to celebrate either one — brought up feelings that a plate of ribs and a cold drink couldn't quite settle.

WHAT EACH DAY IS REALLY SAYING

July 4, 1776 is the day the Continental Congress declared independence from Britain, planting the flag on the idea that “all men are created equal.” It's America's founding aspiration — and like most aspirations, it described what this country wanted to become more than what it actually was at the time.

June 19, 1865 is the day that aspiration finally reached the last enslaved Americans — in Galveston, Texas — who learned the war was over and that they were free. More than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Months after the Confederacy surrendered. Freedom arrived late, and Juneteenth marks the moment that delay finally ended.

One holiday is the promise.
The other is the proof of how long it took to keep it.

SO WHICH DID YOU CELEBRATE?

Maybe you celebrated both — a Juneteenth cookout followed by Fourth of July fireworks, each meaningful in its own way, held in the same heart without contradiction.

Maybe one felt more like yours. Maybe you spent either day quietly, not quite feeling the festive energy the culture tries to put on you.

Whatever your answer, it tells a story. About who you are, where you come from, what freedom means to you personally — and what you believe this country still owes to the people who built it.

There's no wrong answer here. But there is something powerful about actually sitting with the question instead of just reaching for the nearest sparkler or the nearest plate.

THE REAL CONVERSATION STARTS NOW

Holidays come and go. The calendar moves on. But the history those dates carry doesn't clock out after the long weekend. Juneteenth and the Fourth of July aren't rivals — they're two chapters of the same unfinished book, one written in aspiration and one written in the long, costly work of fulfilling that aspiration for people the first chapter overlooked.

Celebrating both isn't contradiction. It's completion.

“Tell someone your answer. Ask them theirs. That conversation might be the most American thing you do all summer.”

A TIMELINE OF FREEDOM



1776
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



1863
EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION



1865
JUNETEENTH FREEDOM REACHES ALL



2021
JUNETEENTH BECOMES A FEDERAL HOLIDAY





Congratulations
ON

10
YEARS

OF IMPACT, PURPOSE
AND HEART.

Here's to many more!

CULTURE | HISTORY | COMMUNITY

SUMMER SOUNDS

FESTIVALS BRINGING
MUSIC, CULTURE &
COMMUNITY TO LIFE

*By Precious McCollough,
WEBe Coordinator*

Summer has a way
of telling the truth
about a place.

Not the postcard version —
the real one. Who shows up.
What they celebrate. How far
they've come. When the music
starts and the crowd fills in,
you find out quickly what a
community is actually made of.

From Philadelphia's cultural
crown jewel to the streets of
Southwest Virginia, this summer's
festival season is offering more
than entertainment. It's offering
a mirror.

“ Summer has a
way of telling
the truth about
a place.

THE ROOTS PICNIC
PHILADELPHIA

ROOTS
PICNIC
24

ROOTS PICNIC:

WHEN A BILLIONAIRE CAME TO THE FUNCTION



There are concerts, and then there are events. The Roots Picnic — created and hosted by The Roots — is firmly the latter.

This year, the conversation wasn't just about the music. It was about who walked onto that stage.

Jay-Z's appearance became the moment everyone talked about — and for good reason. He represented what it looks like when Black artistry becomes a billion-dollar portfolio.

"I'm not a businessman, I'm a business, man." That line wasn't braggadocio — it was a blueprint.

Standing on the Roots Picnic stage, he wasn't just performing. He was a living answer to a question Black creatives have been asking for generations: what happens when you refuse to just be the talent?

The Roots Picnic has always been a statement about Black excellence on its own terms — and this year, that statement arrived in a suit worth more than most record deals.

For music lovers willing to make the trip north, the Roots Picnic continues to offer something rare — the feeling of being inside history while it's still being made.

WHY ROOTS MATTERS

MUSIC
Celebrating the roots of hip-hop and the power of live sound.

CULTURE
Amplifying Black artistry across generations.

COMMUNITY
Creating space for connection, unity and purpose.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Showcasing the power of ownership and building legacy.

BEYOND MUSIC: THE JAY-Z ENTERPRISE

ROC
NATION

Roc Nation

TIDAL

TIDAL

Armand de
Brignac

Armand de Brignac

D'USSE

D'USSE

- Roc Nation Sports
- Art Collection
- Media & Entertainment

COUSINZ FESTIVAL:

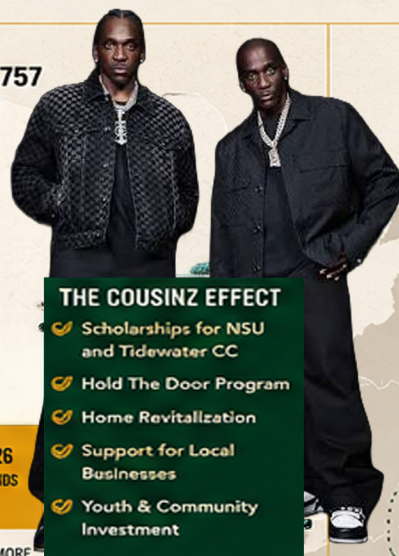
A FULL CIRCLE MOMENT FOR THE 757

Pusha T (Terrence Thornton) and Fam-Lay (Nathaniel Johnson) co-founded Cousinz Festival to bring something authentic, powerful, and unapologetically from home.

The Clipse put the 757 on the rap map in the early 2000s. Now, they've created a festival that gives back to the community that shaped them.

Cousinz Festival grew out of Norfolk's R&B Block Party and has sold out its first two years at Norfolk Scope Grounds.

It's more than a concert — it's a movement rooted in impact.



THE COUSINZ EFFECT

- ✓ Scholarships for NSU and Tidewater CC
- ✓ Hold The Door Program
- ✓ Home Revitalization
- ✓ Support for Local Businesses
- ✓ Youth & Community Investment

★ PHILADELPHIA
ROOTS PICNIC

★ NORFOLK
COUSINZ
FESTIVAL

★ ROANOKE
R&B FESTIVAL

2026
COUSINZ FESTIVAL

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NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

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From soulful jazz sets to R&B, funk, and so much more, this festival is a celebration of heritage, creativity, and the power of music to unite us all.



EXPERIENCE THE RHYTHM



LIVE MUSIC

Top jazz, R&B, soul and funk artists from around the world.



LOCAL FLAVOR

A taste of Richmond with local vendors, artists, and delicious eats.



COMMUNITY VIBES

Good people, good energy, real connections.



RIVERFRONT EXPERIENCE

Scenic views and unforgettable moments.



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COMING SUMMER 2026
Richmond, Virginia

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SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA:

A FESTIVAL REGION IN ITS OWN RIGHT

From the Blue Ridge Mountains to small-town main streets, Southwest Virginia comes alive all summer long with festivals that celebrate arts, culture, heritage, and community.

Whether it's live music under the stars, fresh flavors at a farmers market, or handmade crafts from local artisans, there's always something happening in Southwest VA.



LIVE MUSIC & CONCERTS

From intimate local shows to major outdoor concerts, the region's sound is always strong.



FOOD & FARMERS MARKETS

Fresh local flavors, handmade goods, and the people who make our communities special.



ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

Celebrating our history, our creativity, and the natural beauty that makes this place home.



ONE REGION. ENDLESS EXPERIENCES.

Plan your next getaway and support the festivals that keep Southwest Virginia thriving.

DISCOVER EVENTS NEAR YOU
virginia.org/festivals



“Festivals are more than fun — they are the heartbeat of our communities, the keepers of our culture, and the memories that last a lifetime.”

RICHMOND JAZZ AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

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**RJMF
AUG
8★9
2026
— AT —
MAYMONT**

2 DAYS ★★★★★
2 STAGES ★★★★★
2 GOOD ★★★★★

ALSO FEATURING FEATURING

LEON THOMAS ★ JOHNNY GILL ★ SAMARA JOY
ALEX ISLEY ★ FREE NATIONALS ★ DOUG E. FRESH
TALIB KWELI ★ LUPE FIASCO ★ TONY! TONI! TONÉ!
PETER WHITE ★ NONAME ★ DOWN TO THE BONE
TIANA MAJOR9 ★ THE BLACKBYRDS ★ HOT LIKE MARS
VICTOR WOOTEN AND THE WOOTEN BROTHERS
AND MANY MORE...

TICKETS & INFO
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Cousinz FESTIVAL

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2026

Norfolk
SCOPE
GROUNDS



T.H.

SEPTEMBER
-5TH-

"CONZ"
Norfolk,
Virginia

KEYSHIA COLE

SPECIAL SET BY

THE-DREAM

PLIES

*Bryan-Michael Cox
& Friends*

DJ BOOF

DJ ENVY

DT Quicksilver

Jae Murphy

DJ AKTIVE

COUSINZ RADIO

LIVE!



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DA DIVA**

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★ WHERE ROANOKE'S BRIGHTEST TALENT
TAKES CENTER STAGE ★



FRIDAY
**JULY 31,
2026**



**JEFFERSON
CENTER**
541 LUCK AVENUE SOUTHWEST
ROANOKE, VA



DOORS OPEN
5:30 PM



TALENT SHOW
STARTS
6:00 PM

FEATURING AMAZING TALENT



SINGERS



DANCERS



MUSICIANS

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JEFFERSON CENTER

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DOORS OPEN AT:
5:00pm

SHOW STARTS AT:
6:00pm

A Greg Addison Production

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ADMISSION
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PEOPLE FIRST NORFOLK

INVESTING IN PEOPLE.
TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES.

People First Norfolk is a \$3 million annual City of Norfolk initiative administered by Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI), designed to support residents impacted by public housing redevelopments. Our mission is simple: **make sure no one gets left behind as our city grows.**

ABOUT PEOPLE FIRST

Born from the St. Paul's Transformation Project, People First exists to ensure that families have the resources and support they need to thrive—today and for generations to come.

—PROUD PARTNER OF—

THE NORFOLK

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

USI

URBAN STRATEGIES, INC.

Family. Community. Legacy.

WE BELIEVE STRONG COMMUNITIES ARE BUILT ON STABLE HOMES, OPPORTUNITY, AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

BY THE NUMBERS



\$3 MILLION
Annual Investment



FOUR PILLARS
Comprehensive support for the whole family



HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES
Served each year



MULTIPLE COMMUNITIES
Across Norfolk



CAREER & EDUCATION SUPPORT
Building pathways to opportunity



HOUSING STABILITY
Helping families find, maintain, and build stable housing

THE FOUR PILLARS



HOUSING STABILITY
Safe, stable housing is the foundation for everything.



ECONOMIC MOBILITY
Workforce training, job readiness, and financial empowerment.



EDUCATION
Cradle-to-career support for students and lifelong learners.



HEALTH & WELLNESS
Connecting families to healthcare and resources for a better quality of life.



OUR COMMITMENT IS TO PEOPLE.
OUR FOCUS IS THE FUTURE.

Through compassion, collaboration, and community investment, we are creating brighter futures across Norfolk.

COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Transforming neighborhoods. Building opportunities. Strengthening Norfolk.



1 TIDEWATER GARDENS

FROM THEN. TO NOW. TOGETHER.

Once home to thousands of families, Tidewater Gardens is now being reimagined as Kindred, a vibrant, mixed-income community that honors its legacy while creating a stronger future.



2 CALVERT SQUARE

A FRESH START FOR FAMILIES.

Modernized homes and community spaces are creating a safe, stable environment where families can grow, connect, and thrive.



3 YOUNG TERRACE

STABILITY. SUPPORT. SUCCESS.

Through People First, families at Young Terrace receive the resources and support they need to build a foundation for long-term success.



4 BOWLING GREEN

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY.

We're investing in residents and partnerships that preserve the heart of Bowling Green while creating new opportunities for the future.



5 KINDRED AT ST. PAUL'S

A VISION OF WHAT'S NEXT.

Kindred is more than new buildings—it's a new vision for inclusive, sustainable, and connected living in the heart of Norfolk.



6 ST. PAUL'S TRANSFORMATION

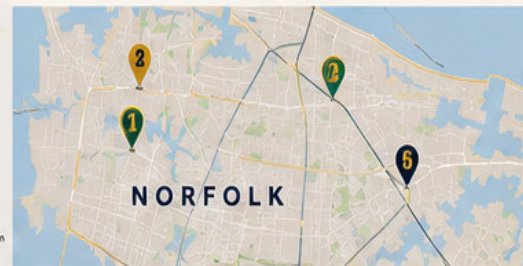
BUILDING A LEGACY OF OPPORTUNITY.

The St. Paul's Transformation Project is a comprehensive redevelopment creating quality housing, community spaces, and pathways to prosperity.

BUILDING A BETTER NORFOLK

Our communities stretch across the city, but **our mission** is one. We are creating stronger neighborhoods and brighter futures—together.

- 1 Tidewater Gardens / Kindred
- 2 Calvert Square
- 3 Young Terrace
- 4 Bowling Green
- 5 Kindred at St. Paul's
- 6 St. Paul's Transformation



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SCAN TO SHOP



FROM TIDEWATER TO TOMORROW

One Student's
Journey Through
Change

By Ahmad Coston

Growing up in Norfolk means watching change happen right before your eyes. For Ahmad Coston, that change was personal, sudden, and deeply tied to the place he called home.

Growing up in the Downtown area and Tidewater Park, Ahmad watched the neighborhood he loved transform overnight. Before the city boarded it up and tore it down, Tidewater Park was full of families who suddenly found themselves in the exact same pand hinn: Nurning 'fo' PIRIBW 'plac'd to live.

Driving past his old neighborhood and watching the buildings get boarded up and systematically demolished was surreal. When the dust finally cleared, the landscape of his childhood was completely unrecognizable.

Those years of upheaval and transition were made possible because of People First. They stepped in to aid his family, providing critical assistance and ensuring they did not slip through the cracks of a changing city.

As Ahmad entered his senior year at Granby High School, their focus shifted from immediate stability to long-term opportunity. They actively invested in his future career, offering guidance, resources, and professional pathways that helped him transition from a high school student into a focused, career-driven young man.

“ They didn't just help us relocate. They helped me build a future. ”

A PARTNERSHIP THAT CHANGES LIVES

People First is a \$3 million annual City of Norfolk human services initiative designed to support families impacted by public housing redevelopments.

Administered by Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI), a national non-profit leader in neighborhood transformation, the program functions as a comprehensive, human-centered support system.

Through housing stability, economic mobility, education, and health & wellness services, People First opened doors that once felt out of reach and gave Ahmad the tools to walk through them.

“ People First didn't just help us relocate. They helped me build a future. ”



LOOKING AHEAD

Today, Ahmad is focused on building a career, giving back to his community, and showing other young people that where you start doesn't define where you finish.

PEOPLE FIRST BELIEVED IN US. NOW WE'RE BUILDING WHAT'S NEXT.

MY JOURNEY



WORDS TO THE NEXT GENERATION

To any young person going through change: keep going. It might not make sense right now, but better days are coming. Lean on the people who care about you, use every resource available, and never stop believing in what's possible.

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COVER STORY

BEHOLD: JUSTIN JOURNETTE'S FINAL SWING

There's a moment, right before a pitch arrives, when a hitter's whole career compresses into a single decision. For Justin Journette, those moments built into something no Norfolk State player had ever achieved: both the single-season and all-time career home run records, the latter shattering a mark that had stood untouched for 36 years.

Fresh off a senior season that pushed his career total to 56 home runs, Journette now heads into his third HBCU Swingman Classic with a real shot at hearing his name called on MLB Draft day.

56 CAREER HOME RUNS
NSU ALL-TIME LEADER

18 HOME RUNS IN 2026
NEW SINGLE-SEASON RECORD



3-TIME SELECTION
HBCU SWINGMAN CLASSIC



A SENIOR SEASON FOR THE RECORD BOOKS

Norfolk State opened 2-13, but Journette was the steadiest bat in the lineup from week one. In a midweek loss to VMI in March, he went 2-for-4 with two home runs, four RBIs, and three runs scored, the kind of one-man rally that became a pattern throughout the spring.

By mid-March he was leading the entire Northeast Conference in home runs, HR per game, total bases, and slugging percentage, while ranking among the league's best in runs scored. He carried a .350 batting average into the stretch run.

On May 16 at Lou Gorman Field in the Spartans' season finale, Journette delivered a three-run homer in a ninth-inning rally in the opener. He came right back in the nightcap with five hits, three RBIs, and another three-run blast—his 10th home run of the season, a new NSU single-season record.

Norfolk State closed 20-31, but Journette closed his career as the program's all-time home run leader with 56, surpassing Mel Wearing's mark of 35 set in 1989.



2026 BY THE NUMBERS

.350

BATTING AVERAGE
(LED TEAM)

18

HOME RUNS
(SINGLE-SEASON RECORD)

52

RBIs
(LED TEAM)

1.226

OPS
(NEC LEADER)

CAREER AT A GLANCE

GAMES

199

HITS

204

HOME RUNS

56
(ALL-TIME LEADER)

RBIs

161

WALKS

104
(ALL-TIME LEADER)

.316

BUILT ACROSS FOUR YEARS



THE WALK-ON

No real recruiting offers out of high school—just a dream and a willingness to work.



TRUE FRESHMAN IMPACT

Led the team with 8 home runs as a true freshman, announcing himself early.



AWARD-WINNING SOPHOMORE

15 home runs, HBCU Baseball Player of the Year and All-NEC Second Team.



JUNIOR BREAKOUT

Another 15 homers and a triple-crown season earned All-NEC First Team honors.



SENIOR LEADER

18 home runs, new NSU single-season record and All-NEC Second Team.

“

Discipline and contact were as much a part of my game as raw strength. I just wanted to help my team win.

– Justin Journette

”



THE SWINGMAN CLASSIC & THE NEXT CHAPTER

The HBCU Swingman Classic, founded by Hall of Famer Ken Griffey Jr., in 2022, gives the nation's top HBCU players a stage during MLB All-Star Week, broadcast on MLB Network in front of professional scouts.

This July 10, Journette returns for his third appearance at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia—part of a small group recognized for sustained excellence.

Ten Swingman Classic alumni have already been drafted. Griffey's mission is clear: create opportunity, change lives, and grow that number.

THE DRAFT CONVERSATION

No mock draft can guarantee the future, but the case is strong: \$6 career home runs, a record-breaking senior season, a disciplined approach, and the tools—6'2", 220 lbs, natural loft and power—that scouts covet.

July could be the moment. One phone call can change everything.



WHAT COMES NEXT

Whatever July brings, Justin Journette has already given Norfolk State, Richmond, and the broader Hampton Roads baseball community something rare: a record that took 36 years to fall, and a career total strong enough to make sure it stays his for good.

Alumni, teammates, coaches, family—the village behind the journey.

Hope to see you at the next level!



“A RECORD THAT TOOK 36 YEARS TO FALL.
A LEGACY THAT WILL LAST FOREVER.”

Justin Journette



CAREER TIMELINE

2022	2023	2024	2025
FRESHMAN	SOPHOMORE	JUNIOR	SENIOR
8 HR	15 HR	15 HR	18 HR (NEW RECORD)

CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ NSU All-Time Home Run Leader (56)
- ✓ Single-Season Home Run Record (18 in 2025)
- ✓ HBCU Baseball Player of the Year (2023)
- ✓ 3x All-NEC Selection
- ✓ All-Time Leader in Walks (104)
- ✓ Pitched in HBCU Swingman Classic (3x)



BEHOLD THE LEGACY.

Toni Gravely
 ASSOCIATE BROKER
 20+ years in the business



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WHAT'S GOOD VA

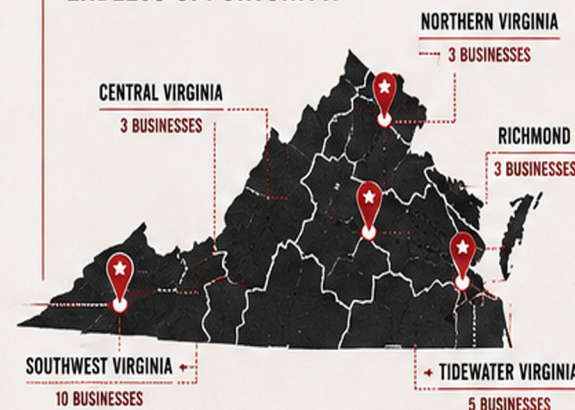
BUILDING THE JUSTICE IN BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM, ONE COHORT AT A TIME

By Nari'k Page

Across Virginia, a quiet but deliberate movement is taking shape — one built not on speeches, but on spreadsheets, storefronts, and shared purpose. It's called the Justice in Business Ecosystem, and — issue's What's Good VA takes a closer look at how nonprofits, and independent creatives across five regions: Northern Virginia, Central Virginia, Richmond, Southwest Virginia, and Tidewater Virginia. Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Central Virginia — all in partnership with NFX.

The premise is simple: business justice isn't — just about access to capital. It's about access to community, mentorship, contracts, and the kind of collective infrastructure that lets a small business become a lasting institution. That's the work happening right now across all five regional cohorts, and it's growing.

**FIVE REGIONS. ONE ECOSYSTEM.
 ENDLESS OPPORTUNITY.**



NFX

NETWORK FOR
 EXCELLENCE



**24
 BUSINESSES
 AND GROWING**



**5
 REGIONS**



**1
 ECOSYSTEM**



**1
 VISION:
 GLOBAL REACH**

★ SWVA: THE FLAGSHIP, HEADQUARTERED IN ROANOKE

The heart of the ecosystem beats in Southwest Virginia, headquartered in Roanoke, where ten businesses are currently working side by side on ten distinct action projects. This isn't a symbolic gathering — it's a working cohort, where entrepreneurs troubleshoot real operational challenges together, share resources, and hold each other accountable to growth benchmarks. SWVA set the model for what regional cohesion in the ecosystem could look like, and it remains the proof of concept for everything expanding around it.

📅 TWVA: THREE YEARS IN THE MAKING

In Tidewater Virginia, the story is one of patience and payoff. Five businesses have spent the past three years being brought fully online — a process that, for many small operators, is the single hardest barrier between local hustle and sustainable growth. That investment is now bearing fruit: this cohort is actively servicing the US/People First Norfolk contract, a milestone that reflects what happens when digital readiness meets real opportunity. It's a case study in what long-term commitment to a business, rather than a quick turnaround, can produce.

👥 NOVA, RVA, AND CVA: THE NEXT WAVE

Further proof that this model travels: three businesses each in Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Central Virginia round out the ecosystem's five regions, extending the reach of the Justice in Business framework well beyond its SWVA and Tidewater roots. Each of these regional cohorts is smaller for now, but that's by design — steady, intentional growth over rapid expansion. The goal isn't just more businesses on a roster. It's businesses that stay connected, stay supported, and stay in business.



⚙️ THE ENGINE BEHIND IT: THE BUSINESS ENTERPRISE ACADEMY

None of this happens without infrastructure, and that infrastructure has a name: the Business Enterprise Academy, built on a simple but powerful equation — Workforce + Entrepreneurship = Business Enterprise. The Academy is where the training happens, where solutions get facilitated, and where the ecosystem's door stays open to small businesses, nonprofit organizations, independent artists, and entrepreneurs of every kind. It's the common thread running through every regional cohort, ensuring that the support isn't just regional — it's foundational.

🎯 TEN IN EVERY REGION

The ambition here is clear and it's big: ten businesses in each of the five regions. SWVA has already hit that number. TWVA, NOVA, RVA, and CVA are on the path. The belief driving this target isn't arbitrary — a cohort of ten creates enough critical mass for businesses to genuinely support one another, enough density for a regional economy to feel the impact, and enough momentum to make the ecosystem self-sustaining.

— THE ROAD AHEAD —



A REPLICABLE MODEL
of cohort-based business development rooted in justice and partnership.



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Entrepreneurs.
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For any small business, nonprofit, independent artist, or entrepreneur wondering where they fit into this picture: that's exactly the point. This ecosystem was built for you. Whether you're in Southwest Virginia, Tidewater, Northern Virginia, Richmond, or Central Virginia — or watching from outside wondering how to get in — What's Good VA will keep tracking this story as it grows, region by region, business by business.

“ Together, we build more than businesses. We build generational change.”

BECAUSE WHAT'S GOOD FOR VIRGINIA'S ENTREPRENEURS
IS GOOD FOR VIRGINIA.
AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

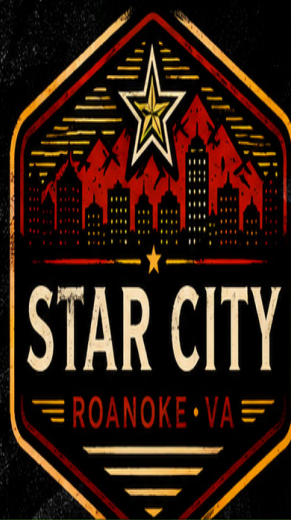


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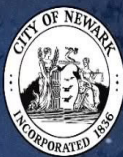


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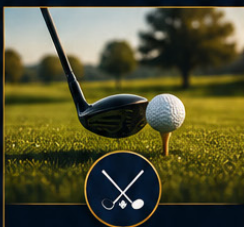
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