



# THE FOCUS

Something For Everyone.

END OF FIRST QUARTER ISSUE



## GLOBAL TENSIONS, LOCAL REALITIES

How global shifts are reshaping everyday life at home.

### THE NEW SOUND ECONOMY

How music consumption is evolving.

### BEYOND THE RUNWAY

A model's journey from passion to purpose.

### THE DISCIPLINE OF WELLNESS

Building strength through consistency.

### NO CAP: VOICES OF THE NEXT GENERATION

Youth speaking truth and creating change.

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE  
JUSTICE BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM CENTER

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# The Focus Magazine

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# Editor Notes

## WELCOME TO THE FOCUS MAGAZINE

*This issue is packed with inspiring articles, exclusive interviews, and other life tips to keep you ahead of the curve. Enjoy!*



As we close out the first quarter of the year, this issue of The Focus Magazine reflects both momentum and meaning.

We are living in a time where global conversations are louder than ever, yet the real impact is often felt closest to home. That duality—global tension and local transformation—sits at the heart of this edition. From international headlines to neighborhood initiatives, the throughline remains clear: our communities are not just reacting to change, they are shaping it.

This month, we highlight stories that embody growth, creativity, and resilience. You'll meet individuals stepping boldly into their purpose—whether through fashion, media, entrepreneurship, or personal development. These aren't just stories of success; they are stories of process, of evolution, and of choosing to move forward with intention.

We also continue to elevate youth voice and perspective through platforms like No Cap Zone, where authenticity leads and real conversations create real impact. At the same time, we explore how industries like music are evolving, and how that evolution is influencing the way culture is consumed and created.

What makes this issue special is its balance. It captures both aspiration and access—showing not only what's possible, but how people are actively building pathways to get there.

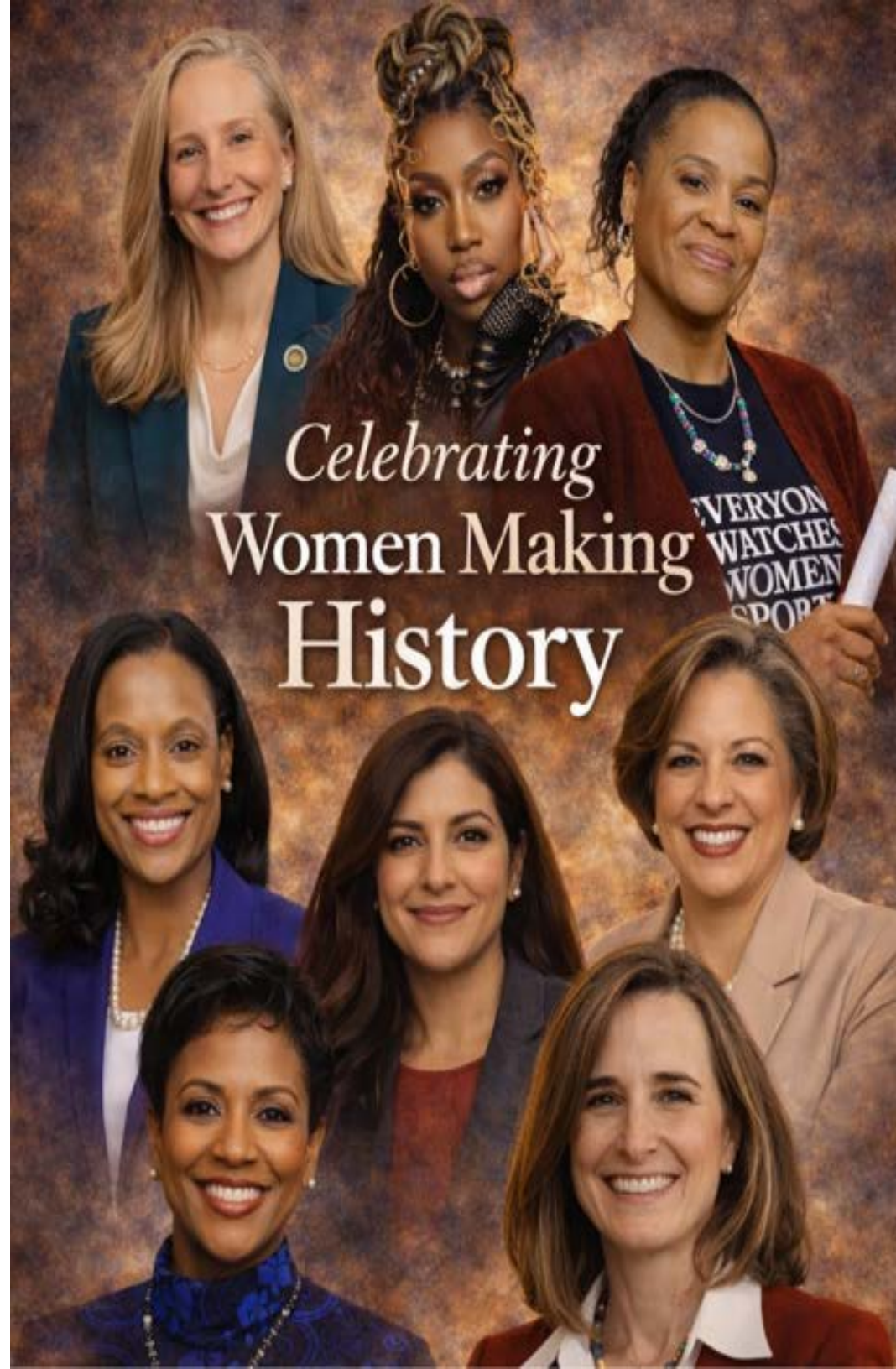
As we move into the next quarter, our focus remains the same: to inform, to inspire, and to connect. Because at the end of the day, this publication is not just about stories—it's about people, progress, and purpose.

Thank you for continuing to grow with us.

As always,

#StayFOCUSEDMyFriends

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A.W.C.' or similar, written in a cursive style.





## When Advocacy Saves Your Life: A Heart Survivor's Story

### Why listening to your body could be the most important health decision you ever make.

In 2019, I advocated for my life — and it saved me. That year I survived a 99% blockage in my left anterior descending artery, often referred to as the “widowmaker.” A life-saving stent changed the trajectory of my life. But before that diagnosis, I was told nothing was wrong. One cardiologist dismissed my symptoms and suggested I see a neurologist. Still, something in my spirit told me to keep pushing. I knew my body. I knew something wasn't right. So I sought a second opinion. That decision saved my life.

I share my story often now, especially during Women's History Month, because it highlights something women have done throughout history: advocate — not just for causes and communities, but for ourselves. Heart disease runs deep in my family, though I didn't always fully understand that history when I was younger. Over time, I learned more about the patterns. My grandfather passed away at just 45 years old. I lost two aunts to heart disease. Recently, my mother suffered a stroke. This isn't theoretical for me, it's generational. What surprised many people when I shared my diagnosis was that I was active. I was a runner. I exercised regularly and lived a healthy lifestyle. Running had long been part of my identity. I had completed marathons, trained consistently, and embraced movement as an important part of caring for my health. Yet heart disease still found me.

Cardiovascular disease remains the number one killer of women in the United States. Despite this reality, women are often underdiagnosed, undertreated, and sometimes unheard in medical settings. Symptoms can present differently in women, and many of us have been conditioned to push through discomfort rather than pause and ask questions. But advocacy can be lifesaving.



Today, I encourage women to move — not because everyone needs to run marathons, but because movement connects us to our bodies. Walking, dancing, cycling, stretching — every form of movement matters.

called Hearts in Motion, raising awareness and resources to support lifesaving research, education, and community outreach focused on women's heart health. I joined her team because I know what it feels like to be the woman sitting in a doctor's office trying to explain symptoms that others can't see. And I know what it means to survive. Looking back, I also recognize something important: movement helped save my life. Because I was active, I noticed when something didn't feel right. Running had always been part of my life, and when my body started sending signals, I paid attention. That awareness pushed me to keep asking questions until I found answers.

When we move regularly, we become more aware of how our bodies feel, and that awareness can help us recognize when something changes. Movement doesn't have to be extreme to be powerful. It simply has to be consistent. Just as important is knowing your numbers. Blood pressure, cholesterol levels, blood sugar, and family history all matter when it

Sometimes advocacy looks like organizing a march or leading a movement. Other times, it's quieter. It's asking another question. Requesting another test. Seeking another opinion. Sometimes it's simply refusing to accept “you're fine” when you know something is wrong. Because I advocated for myself, I am here today. My experience has deepened my commitment to raising awareness about women's heart health. In 2021, I was honored as a Woman of Impact Winner by the American Heart Association, and in 2024 I was named a Faces of Heart Honoree. Those recognitions are meaningful, but my greatest title will always be survivor — and advocate.

This year, I am supporting my sorority sister Arnita DeShields as she participates in the American Heart Association's Woman of Impact campaign. Arnita is leading a team



comes to heart health. These numbers provide important clues about what may be happening inside our bodies long before symptoms appear.

The encouraging news is that much of heart disease is preventable. Through regular movement, healthier eating, understanding our family history, and staying informed about our health numbers, we can significantly reduce our risk and take control of our heart health. Women must feel empowered to listen to their bodies. We must ask questions. We must know our numbers. We must advocate for ourselves and for one another.



## Know Your Heart Health Numbers



**Blood Pressure** Goal: Under 120/80 mmHg



**Cholesterol** Goal: LDL < 100 mg/dL



**Blood Sugar** Goal: Fasting < 100 mg/dL



**Family History** Know your risk factors



**Physical Activity** Aim for 150 min/week

Talk to your doctor about your heart health!



My story is just one story. But if it encourages even one woman to listen to her body, know her numbers, seek a second opinion, or take her symptoms seriously, then sharing it is worth it. Advocacy saved my life. And it may save yours too.

# #NABJ26 CONVENTION REGISTRATION OPEN

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[www.roanokealumnaedst.org](http://www.roanokealumnaedst.org)



[potewa.rac6658@gmail.com](mailto:potewa.rac6658@gmail.com)

# ROANOKE FASHION WEEK

# 7

THE 7 EXPERIENCE  
— GRAND FINALE —

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026  
VIP HOUR: 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
SHOWTIME: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

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WHICH ONE WILL THE JUDGES CHOOSE?

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• Exclusive Swag Bag  
• Front Row Seating



## Every Woman Is Beautiful A Message from Roanoke Fashion Week®

At Roanoke Fashion Week®, we celebrate something far greater than fashion. We celebrate women—every woman.

Beauty is not defined by a size, a number on a tag, a shade of skin, or a label on a piece of clothing. Beauty lives in confidence, resilience, kindness, and strength. Beauty lives in the stories that women carry every single day.

To the women of our community and beyond: you are beautiful. You are beautiful whether you are a boss leading a company or a woman showing up faithfully to your 9 to 5 every day. You are beautiful if you're balancing two jobs just to make sure everything gets done. You are beautiful if you're a student chasing a dream, a mother raising the next generation, or a single mother carrying the weight of the world while still showing up with love.

You are daughters, sisters, aunts, grandmothers, mentors, and friends. You are the women who hold families together, build businesses, support communities, and inspire others without even realizing it.

It takes strength to be a woman. It takes love. It takes patience. It takes long days and sometimes even longer nights.

But through it all, women remain powerful, strong, and resilient.

At Roanoke Fashion Week®, our mission has always been about more than the runway. It's about creating a space where every woman feels seen, every woman feels heard, and every woman feels valued. Fashion is simply the canvas that helps us tell our stories.

Because fashion is empowering.

Every piece of clothing has a story behind it. Maybe it's the outfit you wore when you truly felt confident in your own skin. Maybe it's the dress you wore to celebrate a





milestone. Maybe it's the comfortable hoodie you throw on after a long day when you just need to breathe

Women move through many moods and moments, and fashion moves with us.

We have our gym days when we're working on our strength. Our lounge days when we allow ourselves to rest. Our sexy days when we step into confidence.

Our fun days when we laugh freely. And our elegant days when we remind the world of the grace we carry.

And yes—sometimes we even have our "don't play with me today" days.

Those moments when we have to step into our strength and let people know we are not the one to be underestimated. Even in those moments, we are still powerful. We are still confident. And yes, we are still beautiful.

Because being a woman means embracing every side of who we are.

Fashion doesn't define women—women define fashion.

When a woman walks with confidence, when she lifts another woman up, when she shows kindness and compassion, she becomes part of something bigger. She becomes part of a movement where women support women, encourage one another, and celebrate beauty in every form.

That is the spirit of Roanoke Fashion Week®.

A place where every walk of life belongs on the runway. A place where every story matters. A place where every woman shines.

So to every woman reading this:

You are beautiful. You are powerful. You are resilient. And you deserve to be celebrated exactly as you are.

And at Roanoke Fashion Week®, we see you.



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PAWS FOR A PURPOSE

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2026

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

VENUE: Century Plaza - 14 Church Ave. SE,  
Roanoke, VA 24011



### Awards

- Best Dressed Dog
- Best Owner & Dog Duo
- Best in Show

*Dogs Only - No Other Animals*



### Doggy Requirements

- All Pets Must Have Updated Rabies Shots & Show Proof

Email [Erica@theroanokefashionweek.com](mailto:Erica@theroanokefashionweek.com)

Scan to Register

## FROM ROANOKE TO THE WORLD:

A Model's Journey  
Beyond the Runway



What first caught my attention about Roanoke Fashion Week wasn't just the fashion—it was the purpose behind it. It represented community, diversity, and real opportunity being created right here in Roanoke.

### When I saw they were holding a casting call, I knew I had to be there.

After what felt like weeks of waiting, I received the email from the director. Seeing the word "Congratulations" confirmed I had been selected, and in that moment, everything shifted. From January to April, we practiced every Sunday, preparing not just for a show, but for an experience that required confidence, discipline, and growth. By the time the sold-out event at the Roanoke Hotel arrived, the energy in the room was undeniable.

On the day of the show, I was second in line. As the music started, my heart raced. I watched the model ahead of me step onto the runway, and then I got the signal—it was my turn.

I took a breath, stepped into character, and walked.

At the end of the runway, a crowd of photographers waited, cameras flashing. Instead of feeling pressure, I felt energy. I moved with confidence, hit my final pose, and felt the entire room come alive. In that moment, I realized this was more than a one-time experience—it was something I wanted to continue pursuing.



## Building Beyond the First Opportunity

After Roanoke Fashion Week, I didn't slow down.

I stayed committed, continued building my portfolio, and started seeking out new opportunities. That drive led me to one of the biggest stages in the world—New York Fashion Week.

Walking in New York was a defining moment. Not just because of the platform, but because it showed me that what started in Roanoke had the potential to go much further.

Since then, I've continued growing within the industry—working on photoshoots with local businesses and collaborating with brands. Each opportunity has helped me sharpen my skills, build confidence, and develop a stronger understanding of what it means to show up professionally in this space.

But through all of it, one thing has remained clear:

This journey started here.

A Different Role, A Deeper Perspective

Now, Roanoke Fashion Week returns for its seventh year—what many are calling "The Seven Experience."

This year represents more than just another show. It reflects growth, consistency, and the continued evolution of something that is putting Roanoke on the map in fashion.

And for me, it represents growth in a different way.

While I won't be walking in the show this year, I'll still be part of the experience—working behind the scenes and contributing to the production that brings everything together.

Being involved on that side has given me a deeper appreciation for what it takes to execute a show like this. From coordination to timing to creative direction, I've seen firsthand that fashion isn't just about what happens on the runway—it's about the people, the planning, and the vision that make it possible.



## More Than a Runway

Roanoke Fashion Week is more than an event—it's an entry point.

It's a space where aspiring models, designers, and creatives are given a real opportunity to step into something bigger than themselves. It's where confidence is built, potential is recognized, and people who may have never seen themselves in fashion begin to realize that they belong.

With the show returning this April, the opportunity is right in front of the next group of aspiring models.

This isn't just about walking a runway.

It's about stepping into a moment that can open doors.

## The Beginning of Something Bigger

You don't need to have everything figured out to be a part of it. You just need to be willing to show up, put in the work, and take a chance on yourself.

Because what happens at Roanoke Fashion Week doesn't stop there.

It can be the beginning of something much bigger.

I'm living proof of that.

What started as a casting call in Roanoke turned into opportunities on larger stages, new creative collaborations, and a deeper connection to an industry I now see a future in.

And as Roanoke continues to grow its presence in fashion, it's creating space for others to do the same.

Sometimes all it takes is one opportunity, one moment, and one decision to step forward.

For many, that moment starts here.



ROANOKE  
FASHION WEEK®

7

THE 7 EXPERIENCE  
NEXT GENERATION  
Children's Fashion Show

Saturday, April 25, 2026  
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM



Saturday, April 25, 2026

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Community Spotlight – Roanoke, VA



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# GLOBAL TENSIONS, LOCAL IMPACT

Why the Iran Crisis Matters to Military Communities  
By The Focus Magazine

As tensions involving Iran continue to rise, the United States Navy has once again concentrated significant naval power in the Middle East.



Aircraft carriers such as the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) and the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) are operating in the region, each leading a full Carrier Strike Group capable of launching sustained air operations across thousands of miles. A third carrier, USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77), has also been preparing for potential deployment as the situation evolves. These forces are positioned near one of the most strategically important waterways in the world — the Strait of Hormuz, where a significant portion of global oil shipments pass each day. When tensions escalate in this region, naval power plays a critical role in maintaining stability and protecting international shipping lanes.

But while these deployments dominate global headlines, their impact is often felt much closer to home. For communities like Virginia's Tidewater region, global conflict is never just a distant story. It's personal.



## Where Global Strategy Meets Local Communities

Hampton Roads is home to Naval Station Norfolk, the largest naval base in the world. From this region, aircraft carriers and strike groups deploy across the globe. Thousands of sailors who serve aboard those ships live in nearby communities such as Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Portsmouth.

When tensions rise overseas, deployments often begin right here.

Behind every carrier strike group are thousands of sailors — and thousands of families who support them from home. Military towns understand something many Americans rarely see.

When ships leave port, communities change. Spouses take on greater responsibilities. Children adjust to long periods without a parent at home. Families develop a rhythm of resilience that defines life in places shaped by service.

And those families carry their own form of sacrifice.

## Understanding the Power of a Carrier Strike Group

When most people hear about aircraft carriers operating overseas, they often imagine a single ship sailing across the ocean. In reality, a carrier never deploys alone. It serves as the centerpiece of a Carrier Strike Group, a coordinated fleet designed to project power and maintain stability in critical regions.

A typical strike group includes:

A nuclear-powered aircraft carrier

Guided missile destroyers

A cruiser equipped with advanced radar and missile defense systems

Attack submarines operating beneath the surface

Logistics ships that supply fuel, food, and equipment

Together, these vessels form a floating operational ecosystem capable of sustained military operations anywhere on Earth.

Each carrier also carries an air wing of more than 70 aircraft, including strike fighters, electronic warfare aircraft, and surveillance platforms. In total, a carrier strike group can involve over 7,000 sailors and aviators working together to maintain readiness at sea.



Behind every aircraft launch and every mission are thousands of individuals performing specialized roles — from radar operators and intelligence specialists to mechanics and engineers.

It is a system built entirely on coordination, trust, and precision.

### A Perspective From the Watch Floor

I understand that system from a unique vantage point.

During my service aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) in the mid-1990s, I worked as an Operations Specialist and Air Intercept Controller (AIC) inside the ship's Combat Information Center (CIC).

From that darkened room filled with radar screens and communications equipment, we monitored the battlespace and communicated directly with aircraft performing strike missions and patrols.

Every transmission mattered.

Every radar contact mattered.

The pilots in those cockpits depended on the information we provided.

From that position, you quickly realize that a carrier strike group is more than a collection of ships.

It is a coordinated network of people and technology operating across vast stretches of ocean.



### Then and Now

In March of 1995, the USS Theodore Roosevelt deployed on a cruise that stretched into the fall. A little over a year later, in November of 1996, we were turning right back around for another deployment.

At the time, the world was still adjusting to the post-Cold War landscape. The shadow of Desert Shield and Desert Storm lingered across the Middle East, and tensions in Europe would soon erupt into the Kosovo conflict.

For most Americans, these events appeared briefly on television.

For sailors and their families, they defined daily life.

Standing watch aboard a carrier in those years, the focus was always the mission.

You monitored radar.

You communicated with aircraft.

You ensured the operation continued safely and effectively.

The larger historical patterns were not always obvious in the moment.

But time brings perspective.

Looking back now, it's clear that the same strategic waterways, the same shipping lanes, and the same geopolitical tensions continue to shape global security today.

### The Human Side of Readiness

Military readiness is often described in terms of ships, aircraft, and advanced technology. But the true strength behind those systems is people.

It's the sailor standing watch at three in the morning.

It's the mechanic ensuring aircraft are ready for launch.

It's the radar operator tracking every contact on the horizon.

And it's the families back home who support them through long deployments and uncertain timelines.

Communities like those across Tidewater understand this better than most.

They live it every day.

## A New Perspective After Two Decades

More than twenty years removed from the military, I see those experiences through a different lens.

When I was serving aboard the Roosevelt, my focus was the watch floor and the mission ahead. Today, my work centers on building community and economic ecosystems that support the people connected to that service — veterans, military families, and the communities that surround them.

In many ways, the lessons are the same. Success depends on coordination, trust, and people working together toward a common purpose.

The mission may look different now. But the commitment to supporting those who serve remains unchanged.

## Why Awareness Matters

For readers outside military communities, rising tensions with Iran may feel like another distant headline.

But for regions like Tidewater, the connection is immediate.

The ships leaving port.

The sailors deploying.

The families waiting.

These are reminders that global events are never as far away as they seem.

Sometimes, their impact begins right here at home.



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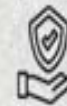
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## How Today's Consumers Discover New Music

Not long ago, I came across a short video clip of singer Elmiene improvising during a live performance while R&B artist Tank paused to fix his keyboard. It wasn't a polished studio moment. It wasn't a music video. It was simply a spontaneous performance — raw talent meeting a real moment. But it caught my attention. Immediately, I wanted to know more.

Like millions of listeners today, the next step was instinctive. I opened Apple Music and searched his name. Within minutes I was listening to his top songs. From there, curiosity took me to YouTube, where I watched his Tiny Desk performance.

Just like that, I became a fan. That simple chain of discovery — a short clip, a quick search, a playlist, and a live performance — perfectly illustrates how audiences discover new music today.

And it shows just how dramatically the music landscape has changed over the last decade.

**The New Front Door to Music**  
Not long ago, discovering new music often meant waiting for a DJ on the radio to break a new record, hearing a mistake in the neighborhood, or getting a recommendation from a friend.

Today, technology has created an entirely new ecosystem for music discovery.

Streaming platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube Music have become the modern front door for listeners exploring new artists. Instead of waiting for a program director or radio station to introduce a new track, listeners now rely on personalized playlists and algorithm-driven recommendations.

Curated playlists, trending charts, and "discover" features place emerging artists in front of audiences who may have never heard their name before.

For independent musicians, landing on the right playlist can expose their music to thousands — sometimes millions — of listeners overnight.

**The Power of Social Media**  
While streaming platforms guide discovery, social media often sparks it.

Platforms like TikTok and Instagram have become some of the most powerful launchpads for new music. A 15-second clip used in a viral video can transform an unknown track into a national or global trend almost instantly.

Songs now travel through culture in ways that would have been unimaginable just a decade ago. A dance challenge, a comedic skit, or a personal story shared online can introduce a new artist to millions of viewers across the world.



**For listeners, these moments often serve as the first introduction to a song. For artists, they can become career-defining breakthroughs.**

**A Level Playing Field for Artists**  
This shift has created new opportunities for independent artists, particularly those emerging from urban music communities.

In the past, breaking into the industry typically required major label backing, radio promotion, and significant marketing budgets.

Today, the barriers are lower. A creative social media presence, a compelling story, and a loyal digital community can elevate an artist from obscurity to global recognition.

Many of today's emerging artists are building their audiences directly through their fans rather than relying solely on traditional industry gatekeepers.

**Digital Tastemakers**  
Another major force shaping music discovery is the rise of digital curators.

Influencers, DJs, bloggers, and music enthusiasts now create playlists that highlight underground sounds, regional artists, and emerging genres before they reach mainstream platforms.

These digital tastemakers have become a new generation of cultural gatekeepers.

For listeners who want to stay ahead of trends, following these voices can be just as influential as listening to a traditional radio station.

Publications that spotlight culture and independent voices also play an important role in this ecosystem. Urban magazines, blogs, and digital platforms introduce audiences to artists who reflect the stories and sounds of their communities.

By highlighting emerging talent and providing cultural context, these outlets help audiences connect with music on a deeper level.

# NEW MUSIC

**POINTE OF VUE**  
2026 Schedule

**2026 UPCOMING DATES**

<b>PECOLA'S</b> HAMPTON, VA	<b>APRIL 03, 2026</b>	<b>PRIVATE EVENT</b> ROANOKE, VA	<b>JUNE 06, 2026</b>
<b>HAMMEN WINE &amp; SPIRIT EXPO</b> HAMPTON, VA	<b>APRIL 11, 2026</b> TICKETS UP NEXT		
<b>FAILED SMOKE</b> NEWPORT NEWS, VA	<b>APRIL 25, 2026</b>		
<b>TO BE ANNOUNCED</b> ROANOKE, VA	<b>MAY 23, 2026</b>		
<b>PECOLA'S</b> HAMPTON, VA	<b>JUNE 06, 2026</b>		

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## Technology Meets Culture

At its core, music discovery today is driven by connection. Technology may deliver the song, but culture, community, and storytelling give it meaning. A single moment — a clip online, a playlist recommendation, or a live performance video — can open the door to an entirely new artist. And for listeners, that discovery journey often unfolds within minutes.

Where the Magic Really Happens  
For me, that journey started with a short video clip of Elmiene improvising on stage. But after listening to his songs and watching his performances online, the next thought was simple:  
I want to see him perform live.

Because while streaming platforms and social media may introduce us to new artists, the real magic still happens on stage. Live performances are where artists build lasting fans, connect directly with audiences, and turn casual listeners into believers.

In many ways, that's the ultimate goal for every artist — not just streams or views, but a room full of people who discovered their music somewhere along the way and showed up to experience it in person. The digital world may start the journey. But the stage is where it comes to life.

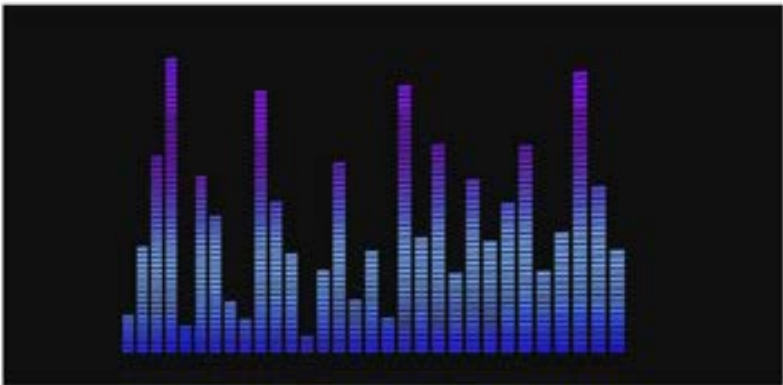


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# HOPE Swings GOLF TOURNAMENT

Join HopeTree Family Services for HopeSwings, our annual golf tournament supporting programs that serve children, adults, and families across Virginia. Save the date and help create brighter futures across our communities.

## Save the Dates & Double the Impact!

- RICHMOND**  
Friday, May 1, 2026  
Birkdale Golf Club  
Tee Time: 9:00 a.m.
- ROANOKE**  
Friday, May 29, 2026  
Hanging Rock Golf Club  
Tee Time: Noon

**Registration Available**  
Individual: \$125 | Team: \$400

**Register at [hopetreefs.org/hopeswings](http://hopetreefs.org/hopeswings)**



ARI LENNOX  
VACANCY

*Tour*



JUNE 2  
THE DOME  
VIRGINIA BEACH



WALE & SMINO  
EVERYTHING IS ...  
THE TOUR



FRIDAY, JUNE 19  
THE DOME at rutter mills  
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA



PROJECT  
DISCOVERU  
A component of otap

TOMORROW'S LEADERS  
Every 1st Saturday | 10 AM - 2 PM



COME  
DISCOVER  
YOU!



Content Creation | Youth Mentorship | Games | Field Trips



[www.tapintohope.org](http://www.tapintohope.org)

- ✓ Fun & Supportive
- ✓ Mentorship
- ✓ Creative Activities
- ✓ Awesome Field Trips!



SCAN ME



# Finding My Voice at 12: How Podcasting and Project Discover U Changed Me

*Being 12 years old, most people think you're just supposed to go to school, do homework, and maybe hang out with friends. But for me, it's been so much more than that. I've had the chance to step into something bigger—something that's helping me grow, speak up, and actually make a difference. That's all because of Project Discover U.*

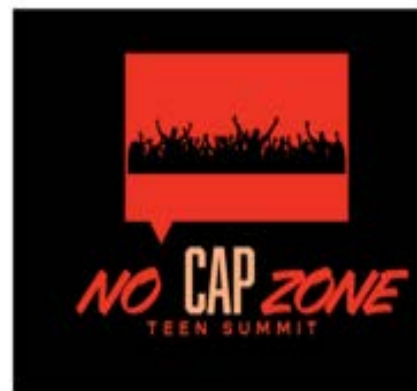


**Project Discover U is not just a program—it's an opportunity. It's a space where kids in our community can learn real skills, especially in media and content creation. We get hands-on experience with things like video production, storytelling, and digital media. These aren't just "cool" things to learn—they're skills that can actually help us in the future, whether that's for college, careers, or even starting our own businesses.**



Out of everything we do, my favorite part is definitely the podcast sessions we have once a month. It's called **NO CAP ZONE**, and it's exactly what it sounds like—real, honest conversations. No pretending, no filters. We talk about real-life situations that kids deal with every day, like peer pressure, school stress, friendships, and growing up. But we don't just talk about problems—we work together to find solutions.

What makes **NO CAP ZONE** special is that it gives us a voice. Adults don't always hear what kids are going through, but this podcast creates a space where we can speak up and be heard. It's not just about talking—it's about creating change. We want people in our community to listen, understand, and grow with us.



***NO CAP ZONE isn't just a podcast—it's a movement. It's about helping the community hear us, understand us, and grow with us. Because we're not just the future—we're the present. And we're here to be the change, make the change, and keep the change going.***

This experience has had a real impact on my life. Before this, I was already interested in creating content and even had my own YouTube channel. I used to think about starting my own podcast called *Girl Talk*, where girls my age could open up and share their experiences. But being part of Project Discover U and **NO CAP ZONE** showed me something even bigger—it showed me the power of working together and being part of something that's already making a difference.

Project Discover U is also super convenient for youth in our community. It gives us a safe and creative space to learn, express ourselves, and explore new opportunities. We don't just sit around—we go on trips, work on real media projects, and get exposed to different career paths. They even help prepare us for college, which is something a lot of us don't always think about at this age. At the end of the day, it's more than just fun—it's preparation for life.

The podcast, the projects, the experiences—they all help us grow into better versions of ourselves. We're learning how to communicate, how to lead, and how to think about the world around us. Most importantly, we're learning that our voices matter.



AHRIYA CARES FOUNDATION

SATURDAY APRIL 4<sup>TH</sup> 2026

Bringing Joy to kids in need

# BASKETS OF HOPE



## Help us make this Easter special for children in our local group homes.

ITEMS NEEDED: EASTER BASKETS, COLORING BOOKS & CRAYONS, BUBBLES, CANDY, SMALL HAND TOYS, SMALL STUFFED ANIMALS, EASTER EGGS, CHILDRENS TOOTH BRUSHES & CHILDRENS TOOTH PASTE

DROP OFF STARTS AT 12 NOON

OUR MISSION IS TO GIFT 10 to 20 KIDS WITH HOPE BASKETS

Email : [ahriya.caresfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:ahriya.caresfoundation@gmail.com) to find out more information on how you can help make this event a successful



# W+E=Be Academy

WORKFORCE + ENTREPRENEURSHIP = BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

## BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF WORKFORCE & ENTREPRENEURS

WEBe Academy is a workforce and entrepreneurship training ecosystem designed to prepare individuals for **employment, business ownership, and long-term economic success.**

We combine real-world training, entrepreneurial mindset development, and hands-on experience to move participants from opportunity to **Business Enterprise.**

### WHAT WE OFFER

- WORKFORCE READY TRAINING**
  - Resume & Interview Prep • Career Pathways
  - Soft Skills • Job Placement
- HIGH-DEMAND FIELD TRAINING**
  - Digital Media • IT Fundamentals • Admin Ops
  - HANDS-ON, REAL-WORLD, EMPLOYER-ALIGNED**
- ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING**
  - Ice House (ELD) Curriculum
  - Business Planning • Launch Strategy
- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**
  - Powered by **THE PLAYBOOK™**
  - The Art of Dreaming - Dennis S. Haley

### WHO WE SERVE

- Youth & Young Adults (14-24)
- Veterans
- Returning Citizens
- Career Transition
- Workforce Transition

### WHO WE SERVE

- Youth & Young Adults
- Veterans
- Career Transition
- Nitork10-cc
- Workforce Transitional

### HOW IT WORKS

#### 4-PHASE ENTERPRISE MODEL

- ASSESSMENT & DISCOVERY**
- TRAINING & MINDSET DEVELOPMENT**
- HANDS-ON APPLICATION**
- WORKFORCE OR BUSINESS PLACEMENT**



### OUTCOMES

- Job Placement & Career Readiness
- Business Launch & Growth
- Industry Skill Development
- Confidence & Leadership



### READY TO BUILD YOUR FUTURE?

Join WEBe Academy and take your next step toward

**BUSINESS ENTERPRISE.**

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# NFX

# JUSTICE BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

## Just BE Center

It starts with the people.

## Justice Capital Endowment

Investing where others haven't



WBE Academy

Train. Employ. Empower.



FLEMING-ROSE BUILDING

## THE WELL

Live where you grow.

## NuFocusVA.com

The digital front door to the ecosystem



Acting Faith  
Ministries & Services

Faith in action, together.



EXCLUSIVE INDIE  
Partnerships

Building the business behind the art



DIAMOND STARS

Shine through the pressure



PANTHER SECURITY

Community safety through community strength



# A brighter, simpler way of doing business.



### OUR STORY

Lumina Payments was founded by industry leaders and business owners who know the struggle of working with payment processors from the inside out. After spending a combined 40+ years with large national processors, the founding team set out to build an organization focused on putting the customer first.



### OUR VISION

By focusing on the customer and providing education about the industry's pitfalls, we will serve our communities with honor and integrity. Although we may miss short-term profits, we will win over the long haul as our clients will stay and grow with us.



### OUR MISSION

Businesses can grow and succeed while still doing the right thing. Although doing the right thing is not rocket science, too often, companies choose profits over their customers' experience. The payments industry and its agents have taken advantage of the need for more transparency in the space for too long. Instead of shining a light on the inaccuracies and simplifying the process, the industry perpetuates the narrative to seek greater returns. At Lumina, we choose people over profits. And we will rise together as we focus on doing the right thing!

**Our mission is to become the brilliant light in an opaque industry.**

Steve Martin 919.417.7470



[www.luminapayments.com](http://www.luminapayments.com)

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