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Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative Receives \$1 Million Grant to Complete Phase II Renovations for Community Center

CAPE CHARLES, Va. – (August 2023) – The Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative (CCRSRI) has received a \$1 million grant from the [Industrial Revitalization Fund](#) through Virginia Housing and Community Development to complete phase II for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse for a new community center. The project is expected to have an economic impact on Northampton County of more than \$26 million over the next 10 years and create more than 30 jobs.

The grant award comes four years after the CCRSRI board of directors purchased the property and began to raise awareness and funds to support this vital community asset.

“We are so excited to receive this grant that will fund phase II renovations,” said CCRSRI President Tevya Williams Griffin, “which include building systems, site work, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire suppression systems, water and sewer tie-ins, grading, drainage and paving. We have been able to articulate the benefits this center will bring to the Eastern Shore in terms of economic impact and cultural significance while preserving the history and the heritage of the school. And, this major grant follows an award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the JPB Foundation in the amount of \$100,000. We are thrilled to have this momentum from such prestigious funders.”

The revitalized school will fill a void in Northampton County that currently struggles with high rates of poverty, financial hardship and underfunded schools. By design, it will be a vibrant community center and a hub for entrepreneurs, collaboration, education and social gatherings.

The lower Eastern Shore is hindered by its geography and a lack of educational opportunities. Firm commitments from Eastern Shore Community College and Hampton Roads Workforce Council will bring workforce development opportunities to the community center, which is located in the thriving tourist destination of Cape Charles. The result is a broader economic impact that will connect employers, educators, mentors and employees who want to train for higher paying, skilled jobs.

When complete, the new center will provide mentorship opportunities to launch new businesses and provide training to existing small businesses, as well as a space to produce and package products. Plans include a shared kitchen space, computer lab, classrooms, auditorium and other flexible spaces. The event spaces will attract visitors and tourism spending, boost property values, attract new residents, support local businesses and create jobs. It will also create a revenue stream for the nonprofit CCRSRI, which will manage the property and programs.

The Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative is a nonprofit organization with a mission to restore the structure and grounds of the previous elementary school to become a vibrant and inclusive cultural, educational and social center. The building was one of 5,357 schools built between 1912 and 1932 to improve the quality of public education of African Americans in the South. Of the 382 schools built in Virginia, only 126 remain including the Cape Charles school, which was built in 1928 and operated from 1930 to 1966. Currently in the restoration phase, the community and cultural center will offer historic exhibitions, job training classrooms, community kitchen, auditorium, technology hub and event and function spaces. For more information, visit ccrosenwaldschool.org.

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