



December 2013

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## Chapter Team

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## Don't Forget

You are REQUIRED to have a Virginia Tech PID (vt.edu email address) to access the Chapter Forms database.

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The Chapter Newsletter is a communications tool between the Virginia Tech Alumni Association and its chapters.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please send them to your chapter liaison. If you have problems viewing the newsletter, please contact [Ginny Ritenour](#), Chapter Program Coordinator.

## Dear Chapter Volunteers,

The end of the year marks the halfway point for our alumni chapter programs and what a busy and exciting fall we've had! Not only were football game watching parties and tailgates hosted across the country, but we've also seen more community service projects, speaker programs, young alumni mixers, and holiday parties than ever before. Chapters are taking advantage of our alumni emails and postcard mailers to get the word out, but also ramping up their own social marketing efforts (including Facebook, Twitter, and local email lists) to ensure that they're reaching all alumni in the their chapter area. Be sure to ask your chapter liaison for more information or assistance to maximize your marketing efforts.

With the holidays quickly approaching, please take note of the alumni office closings and university schedule listed below. We will have limited staff for some periods throughout the holiday season and the university will be closed for several days.

Let us take this opportunity to thank each of you for your contributions to the Alumni Association and Virginia Tech and wish you and yours a happy holiday season and a successful and joyful new year. We are truly blessed to have such an outstanding group of volunteers who care so deeply for our alma mater and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

*Debbie, Josh, Greg, Patty, Kelly, Jack, Jordan, Ginny, and Betty*



## Chapter Event Highlight: Hokie Holiday Parties

Holiday parties are some of our most popular chapter events. Hokies are always ready and willing to share their holiday spirit with fellow alumni and these festive parties are a terrific way to wrap-up the football game watching season and kick-off the holidays.

Many chapters have long-standing holiday party traditions, choosing to host their events at the same venue or home each year, with options ranging from potlucks to plated dinners. Alumni look forward to honoring these traditions and continue to return year after year to spend time with treasured friends.

Other chapters look for new and fun ways to draw in local alumni by offering theme parties, one of our favorites being the Ugly Christmas Sweater Party. The Roanoke Valley Chapter hosted an Ugly Christmas Sweater Party this year, inviting alumni to a local restaurant to celebrate the season and participate in their Hokies for Heroes community service project. Donations were collected for care packages to be sent to military personnel serving overseas, while 20% of the dinner checks helped raise funds for shipping the care packages. All alumni wearing a sweater or bringing donations were eligible for a raffle ticket to win seats at a Virginia Tech basketball game.



*The Roanoke Valley Chapter celebrates the season at their Ugly Christmas Sweater Party*

Other chapters choose to host a traditional holiday potluck dinner. The Atlanta Chapter held just such an event this year at a local community room. The chapter provided main dishes (such as turkey and ham) and alumni were asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share. Participants were also encouraged to bring a new and unwrapped toy for a local children's hospital.

Community service projects are a natural fit for holiday parties and are easy to incorporate into your event. The Greenville, NC Chapter hosted their very first holiday party this year at a local bar and grill that provided a family friendly venue. They asked alumni to donate toys or cash for Toys for Tots and collected donations on the spot.

Holiday parties also provide an opportunity to host your annual speaker event. The Palmetto Chapter welcomed Art Buikema, Alumni Distinguished Professor of Biology to their holiday party this year. Dr. Buikema presented a talk on "Teaching in the New Millennium" then joined in with alumni to celebrate the season.

If your chapter has yet to host a holiday party, talk with your chapter liaison about opportunities for next year. Events range from simply hosting a Holiday Happy Hour, arranging a game watching party around the ACC Championship or bowl game, or gathering at the home of a local alum for fellowship and networking.



*The Atlanta Chapter joined together to host a potluck dinner at a local community room*





*Art Buikema, Alumni Distinguished Professor of Biology, visits with Palmetto Chapter alumni*



*Greenville, NC Chapter Hokies gather at Tiebreakers Bar & Grill for their first holiday party*

## Alumni Design Virginia Tech Hokie Bird Hooded Towel



*Karen '99 and Scott Cowan, '95 & '00, Grace and Eden Cowan*

Little Sinks, LLC recently announced the release of their Hokie Bird Hooded Towel, designed to replicate the beloved Virginia Tech mascot.

Little Sinks, LLC was founded by Virginia Tech alumni, Scott Michael Cowan '95 & '00 and Karen Bednarczyk Cowan '99. Longtime season ticket holders, the Cowan family embarked on a trip to Blacksburg, where they would introduce their two young daughters, Grace and Eden, to live college football. Their children were fascinated with the lovable mascot parading around Lane Stadium. Shortly thereafter, the hooded towel was designed, licensed by Virginia Tech and the Collegiate Licensing Company, and prepared for production.

Little Sinks, LLC has worked hard to build a series of beautiful [“Hokie Inspired” boards on Pinterest](#) which is where word of the towel quickly spread. The boards are filled with items dedicated to Virginia Tech, but which also capture the essence of the Cowan family and the company.

The Hokie Bird Hooded Towel is available online at [www.LittleSinks.com](http://www.LittleSinks.com) and at the Campus Emporium in Blacksburg.

## Community Service Highlight: Minnesota Chapter, Donation Sorting Event



*Minnesota Chapter volunteers sort goods  
Arc's Value Village in Richfield, MN*

The Minnesota Chapter participated in a unique community service project in November, sorting items for a local charity store.

[Arc's Value Village](#) is known as the Twin Cities' best thrift store. For more than 30 years, Arc's has opened their doors to help make life better for people with intellectual and development disabilities and their families. With 10,000 items arriving daily, they rely on volunteers to process inventory and rotate stock.

On Saturday, November 23, twelve volunteers from the Minnesota Chapter worked a three hour shift at Arc's, helping them unpack, sort, and stock their winter clothes in their Richfield, MN store. This event was open to local alumni and their families, giving children (and future Hokies!) a chance to participate as well. A total of twelve volunteers came out to show their support for this important project.

When they had finished their shift, this hardworking group of Hokies had processed over \$10,500 in retail goods, which directly benefits their greater Twin Cities area.

## Chapter Volunteer Highlight: Adam Ressa '10, Central Florida Chapter



*Adam Ressa (front, far right) with Central Florida Chapter,  
including president Holli Wosnitzer (front, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left), and  
Lu Merritt, Director of Development for Intercollegiate  
Athletics (2<sup>nd</sup> row, far right)*

Central Florida Chapter volunteer Adam Ressa has been "Imagineering the future" since his 2010 graduation from Virginia Tech, where he earned dual degrees in theatre arts and industrial and systems engineering. Following a dream that began as a second grade student, Adam is now a full-time associate set decorator for the Walt Disney Imagineering Prop Department in Orlando, Florida.

Adam's early leadership experiences (including serving as high school wrestling team captain, theatre department leader, and earning Eagle Scout) led him to seek out opportunities with his local alumni chapter to help promote Hokie events and programs in the Orlando area. Adam has served as the Central Florida Chapter webmaster and vice president.

Spheres, the annual magazine of the College for Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, featured Adam in their [2013-2014 issue](#), where Dean Sue Ott Rowlands highlighted the wide variety of successes of the college's alumni.



## Staff Highlight: Jamie Cowell-Lucero, Director of Alumni Relations, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences



Since 2006, Jamie has provided leadership for Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' alumni relations activities. She is responsible for directing the CALS Alumni Organization, its board of directors' activities and their annual "Scramble

for Scholars" golf tournament, for planning special events for alumni, faculty, staff, and students, and for CALS Connections, the college's award winning alumni e-newsletter. She serves as chair of the college's Diversity Council. She also holds a joint appointment with the Virginia Tech Alumni Relations office where she is responsible for assisting with reunions and other special programs.

As a board member of the National Agricultural Alumni and Development Association (NAADA), Jamie chairs the education committee which is responsible for the educational sessions for the annual conference.

Jamie received her B.S. and M.S. degrees in Animal Science from the University of Central Missouri and Kansas State University, respectively. She is currently working toward a doctor of philosophy in agricultural and extension education from Virginia Tech. Jamie enjoys spending time with her husband, Warren, and daughters, Emma and Madison, volunteering for Montgomery County 4-H as a Livestock Cloverbud Club leader, and cheering on the Hokies!

## Undergraduate Admissions PSA: How to Become a Hokie!

The Virginia Tech Office of Undergraduate Admissions has put together a lighthearted yet factual video about what to expect during the application process and what they are looking for in a freshman application.

We encourage you to share [this fun video](#) with potential Hokies in your area!



## 2014 Black Alumni Reunion: Save the Date!



The 2014 Black Alumni Reunion, "Sharing Our Story: Past, Present, Future," will be held on March 20-23 on the Virginia Tech campus.

Set your sights on Blacksburg for a special occasion to embrace the past, understand, the present, and inspire the future! Join us in March for an exciting reunion weekend full of celebrating, socializing, and networking with students, faculty and alumni.

[Registration opens January 2, 2014](#); early bird registration will end on March 1, 2014.

For volunteer or sponsorship opportunities, contact [Latanya Walker](#).

## Dates to Remember:

- December 20: [Fall Commencement](#)
- December 24 through January 1:  
All university offices closed
- January 20: Martin Luther King Holiday  
(no classes; university offices closed)
- January 21: Spring semester begins
- January 25: Scholarship applications  
emailed to early decision students;  
chapters will receive list of students who  
received the invitation to apply. If you have  
not submitted your updated 2014  
application, please contact [Ginny Ritenour](#).
- February 7-8: [Drillfield Series: Food for Thought](#)
- March 8-16: Spring Break
- May 16: Spring Commencement
- May 30-31: [Drillfield Series: Focus on Photography](#)
- June 6-7: [Drillfield Series: Top of the Mountain at Mountain Lake](#)
- June 16: [Hokie Classic Golf Tournament](#)
- June 28: [Summer Beer Festival at Virginia Tech](#)
- July 10-11: [A Day in the Life of College Admissions](#)
- August 8-9: [Drillfield Series: Happy and Healthy Pet Weekend](#)

## HOKIES on FACEBOOK



*The Western Maryland Chapter brings the "sweet" spirit for their VT vs. UVA football game watching party*



*Baltimore Chapter volunteers participate in local college fair*



*Shenandoah Chapter alumni participated in several opportunities to volunteer for the local Salvation Army*