

CHAMPION



OUR CHAMPION
THE BEASLEY
FAMILY

Big Hearts.
Big Motivation.
Big Results.



CALLING ALL CHAMPIONS!

Families Multiply Our Impact

Service is part of what makes the work we do at UMFS so rewarding. But what about the families who serve UMFS? Donors, volunteers, community partners, and our employees often involve their own families in the important work that's being done for high-risk children.

In our lead story, we talk to the Beasleys, longtime child advocates who brought compassion and determination to UMFS when their adoptive daughter, Sophia, became a student at Charterhouse School.

We also caught up with volunteer tutor Ann Gill, who works with students in the English class in which her son, Patrick, is the teacher.

We round out this issue with donors Bill and Molly Lynch, who have been supporting UMFS since the Charterhouse School building in Richmond was constructed 15 years ago.

The lessons we teach at UMFS extend beyond the classroom. Life lessons, advice, or just a shoulder to lean on are intangibles that help children and families heal.

Thank you,
Greg Peters, LCSW
President and CEO

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SUMMER 2018 CHAMPION

THE BEASLEY FAMILY



Big Hearts. Big Motivation. Big Results.

PARENTS. ADVOCATES. TEACHERS. Mentors. Thinkers. Doers. Unwavering. Champions.

For much of Rai and Marie Beasley's 35 years of marriage, the couple has been advocating for high-risk children. Rai learned through his own experiences with childhood homelessness "that when you give a child the opportunity to be a child, you open up the world to them."

So opportunity is exactly what he and his wife provide. From Washington, D.C., to Pittsburgh, and now in Henrico County, the Beasleys have provided more than 30 foster children with a safe and loving home.

At one point, Rai and Marie purchased a second home so they could keep the foster boys and foster girls separated. "For a while we lived together by living apart," Rai said.

It's not only foster children Marie and Rai have provided with a family unit. They also have two adopted children, both of whom have developmental challenges. James is 17. His 14-year-old sister, Sophia, is a student at UMFS Charterhouse School.

Charterhouse School's campus-style setting, small classrooms, and caring, specialized staff have helped Sophia's development, Marie said. "She has done nothing but soar."

Charterhouse School also helped Sophia connect with SPARC, an organization that inspires children to reach their full potential through art. She recently participated in SPARC's annual LIVE: ART event and was onstage in front of a sold-out crowd at Richmond's historic Altria Theater with such musical superstars as Josh Groban, Jason Mraz, and Michael McDonald.

"Charterhouse School has done so much for her," Marie said. And for Charterhouse School, the Beasleys have done much in return. "They've demonstrated through their outstanding work and unwavering commitment to our school that it does take a village to make a school successful," said Kay Currie, Charterhouse School Principal. "Their message is clear: The whole community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of our young people."

When UMFS Charterhouse School students needed cheerleading uniforms and sports jerseys, for example, Rai made it happen. He partnered with Gail and Lew Held, owners of longtime sporting goods retailer, Disco Sports. Upon learning of the work being done at UMFS, Gail and Lew happily donated the attire.

"I'm just a conduit," Rai said. "Nothing has been done by me, only through me."

Rai has tapped his far-reaching community connections to bring guest speakers and resources to Charterhouse School. He's reached out to local businesses to procure materials for various student events, and he donates his own time and money to support school functions.

"Rai has also been instrumental in spearheading Charterhouse School's first Family Association," Kay said. The mission of the Family Association is for parents to partner with the school to learn how they can best support faculty and staff.

Earlier this year, the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities (VAISEF) recognized all of Rai's efforts by presenting him with the Parent of the Year Award.

Want to support Charterhouse School? School supply donations are always welcome. Visit [UMFS.org/volunteer](https://umfs.org/volunteer) to learn more.

But through it all, and despite his hard work, Rai refuses to take credit.

"The truth is, I'm just the arms flailing," he said. "The real spine is my wife. People always ask, 'where do you get the time to do this?' I get the time because my wife holds it down in every aspect of our life. I get the time because she believes that what's being done needs to be done."

And what needs to be done most certainly is getting done, thanks to the Beasleys. ✨

DONOR CHAMPIONS

BILL & MOLLY LYNCH

Developing the Human Spirit



“DON'T HIDE YOUR LIGHT under a bushel,” Bill Lynch said with a smile as he recalled one of his earliest contributions to UMFS from the early 2000s. It was then when he recommended to CEO and President Greg Peters that the agency construct its Charterhouse School toward the front of the Richmond campus, as opposed to the rear of the property.

In addition to an excellent piece of development advice, Bill and his wife, Molly, have generously supported UMFS through the years. Bill is a real estate developer in Northern Virginia. He was recruited to the UMFS Guardian Foundation by Skip Coston, a fellow developer and UMFS supporter. Bill later served as president. The Guardian Foundation helped raise funds for the construction of Charterhouse School, which was, indeed, built at the front of UMFS' campus in 2003.

Bill couldn't help but chuckle looking back on his recommendation. “Greg seemed to think I was a genius for

making a simple observation with fresh eyes,” he said. “But sometimes we can't see the forest for the trees.”

From his I-95 Business Parks Management offices in Lorton, just off Route 1 and not far from the banks of the Occoquan River, Bill and Molly spoke of their love of family, food, entertaining, and philanthropy.

“UMFS is an organization where unsung heroes do important work out of a sense of service and not in search of recognition,” Bill said. He noted that his late father's involvement with the agency made serving on the Guardian Foundation a “natural fit.”

Molly complimented the holistic-healing approach. “That's what I like about UMFS,” she said. “It's really about mentoring kids into a full life. I think that's really powerful.”

When reflecting on their successes and 42 years of marriage, the

college sweethearts remain appreciative, grounded, and humble. Their sincere hope is that through their own good fortune they may serve others.

Generosity from supporters like Bill and Molly Lynch allows UMFS to provide high-risk children with top-quality care. You, too, can make a difference. Visit [UMFS.org/donate](https://umfs.org/donate).

“You really don't know what another person's life is like unless you walk a mile in their shoes,” Bill said. “The work of this organization is about healing and developing the human spirit in our young people.”

“It's not about the end of the journey,” added Molly. “It's about the journey itself. It's about improving lives, and sometimes that takes a real helping hand and a compassionate heart.” ✨

VOLUNTEER CHAMPION

ANN GILL

For the Love of Learning



IT'S THE SORT OF SETTING in which Ann Gill thrives.

Pens, pencils, and paper are strewn about. Announcements and assignments are scribbled on white boards in blue and red dry-erase marker. In the hallway, children laugh and shout and do their best to prolong the short intermission between bells.

And while the classrooms at UMFS Charterhouse School in Richmond aren't all that unlike the ones in which Ann used to teach, the children whom she now volunteers to tutor are.

"Other students I've worked with weren't at-risk," she said. "I don't have any idea what these kids have been through." Which is why the retired Chesterfield County and private school special education teacher keeps an open mind, an open heart, and is flexible in her approach.

If a tutoring session doesn't get off to a good start, for example, Ann will seize the opportunity to simply spend time with the student. "I let them know I'm here, first and foremost, because I want to be here," she said. "I enjoy being here with you."

That sort of positive reinforcement is critical to a child's development. Pair that with consistency and sincerity, Ann said, and it often yields favorable results. "I love teaching, but more so I love to see students come out of their shell and their confidence grow."

Homeschooled for a time, Ann's own six children are well aware of their mother's innate ability to reach kids. That's part of why her son Patrick recruited her into his classroom.

Before coming to Charterhouse School in 2016, Patrick taught students with neurological differences but hadn't worked with behavioral issues. With support from colleagues and after the discovery of the movie *Resilience*, Patrick said he was able to more effectively reach his students.

The methods introduced in the movie "made more sense than raising my voice," Patrick said. So much sense, in fact, that he took his parents to see a screening of the film so they'd have a better understanding of the children he was working with.

"Incredibly interesting and enlightening," Ann said of the movie. "I had no idea of the effects of trauma on children."

Patrick said the work his mother is doing with his students is invaluable, noting an often new-found enthusiasm within those students for having work checked "because they know they have the right answer."

UMFS volunteers like Ann offer children a remarkable opportunity to not only learn, but to build relationships. Learn more about volunteer opportunities at UMFS by visiting [UMFS.org/volunteer](https://umfs.org/volunteer).

But beyond books, there's something even more Ann offers to students at Charterhouse School. "It's important for students to know and see our relationship," Patrick said. "To see that family dynamics can be positive."

Added Ann: "When children know you love them, they can learn from you." ✨