

Happy New Year 2025!

LARKSPUR

- CIVIC LEAGUE -

January 2025

A Message from Civic League President Lindsay Johnson:



As we bid farewell to 2024 and embrace the opportunities of 2025, there's a natural desire for fresh beginnings and meaningful connections. This time of year often inspires us to reflect on the ways we can make a difference—not just in our own lives, but in the lives of those around us. What better way to do this than through active participation in our neighborhood civic league?

Our civic league is more than just a group that plans events. It's the heart of our community, a collective of neighbors who come together to strengthen the bonds that make our neighborhood not just a place to live, but a place to truly belong. I want to encourage you to be part of something truly transformative in the coming year.

Why Get Involved?

1. **Shape Our Neighborhood's Future**

When you join the civic league, your voice matters. Whether it's discussing new projects, addressing concerns, or sharing ideas for community improvement, your input helps guide the direction of our neighborhood.

2. **Meet Your Neighbors**

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to feel disconnected, even from the people living just next

3. door. Being part of the civic league allows you to build relationships with your neighbors and create a support network that makes our community stronger and more vibrant.
4. **Learn and Grow**
Civic involvement offers opportunities to develop new skills. It's a chance to grow personally and professionally while contributing to a cause that benefits everyone.

How to Get Involved

- **Attend a Meeting:** Our next civic league meeting is January 16th at 6:30pm. Whether you're a long-time resident or a newcomer, we'd love to see you there. This will be a social mixer so come and meet your neighbors!
- **Join a Committee:** From event planning to neighborhood safety, there's a role for everyone.
- **Share Your Ideas:** Have an idea for an initiative or improvement? Bring it to the table!
- **Volunteer:** Whether you have an hour a week or a few hours a month, your time makes a difference.
- **Pay your Dues:** One of the simplest and most impactful ways to support our neighborhood is by paying your \$25 yearly civic league dues.

Together, we can create a neighborhood that continues to thrive—a place where everyone feels connected, valued, and proud to call home. Let's make 2025 a year of growth, collaboration, and community spirit.

I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meeting and working alongside each of you to make our neighborhood one of the best at the beach. Here's to a fantastic new year!

Warm regards,
Lindsay Johnson

Civic League President

757-582-3705

ericlindsayjohnson@gmail.com

Help Us Update Our Database!

Was the information on your letter you received incorrect?
If so, help us to update our database by filling out [this form](#).

Larkspur Civic League Meeting
January 16th
6:30 p.m.

**Come meet your neighbors and find
out what's happening in our
neighborhood!**

Fall Festival Chili Contest Winners!

Our Fall Festival this year was another wildly successful evening of camaraderie between neighbors young and old from all corners of Larkspur. Many thanks to those who helped make the evening run smoothly, especially the Larkspur Swim & Racquet Club, who helped make this joint event such a huge success.

Also, congratulations to the following neighbors whose culinary wizardry earned them top honors in the following categories:



Best Overall Chili
Liz Savage



Spiciest Chili
Mary Anne Spooner



Best Chowder/Soup
Kristen Lovering



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Virginia Beach, VA 23452
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TammyColemanHomes.com

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Treasurer's Report

It's hard to believe that 2024 went by so fast! We had a lot of successful functions and hope to continue to do a lot more in the future! Remember, your membership to the Larkspur Civic League benefits us all in so many ways! If you paid your \$25.00 Civic League dues already - thank you! If you haven't paid yet, we would love for you to do so! If you want to add your phone numbers or an e-mail address to our mailing list, please [fill out this form](#). We want to make sure you are receiving all the exciting neighborhood news!

After donating \$5000.00 to the Larkspur Swim and Racquet Club in June this past summer, to assist with repaving the parking lot (which will be done before the pool opens!), we now have a balance of \$10,014.28 in our checking account and our CD is now valued at \$5737.68. I wish you all a warm winter and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely, Jody Korman/Treasurer

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Join Us!

Larkspur Civic League: Join Us in Strengthening Our Community!

Did you know that of the 700 households in Larkspur, only about 50 were up to date on membership dues last year? We are well on our way to beating that number for 2025, already! While we deeply appreciate those who contributed, imagine the impact we could make with 100% participation!

Your \$25 annual membership dues go a long way in supporting neighborhood initiatives, community events, and improvements that benefit all residents. That's less than \$2.10 a month—far more affordable than an HOA fee, which would likely charge that amount or more every month!

By now, every household should have received a letter and invoice for 2025 membership. If you haven't already, please take a moment to renew or join today. It's a simple way to invest in our neighborhood and make sure your voice is part of the conversation.

Together, we can build a stronger, more connected Larkspur. Let's make 2025 the year of full participation—because when we all pitch in, everyone wins!

To pay your dues or learn more about how your contributions help, visit www.larkspurcivicleague.org. Thank you for supporting the Larkspur Civic League!

Eric Johnson

Larkspur Civic League Membership



Civic League Membership

For a small \$25 donation per year to our Civic League you can enjoy a quarterly newsletter, advocacy, and Civic League picnic. Help us get to 100% membership in the neighborhood!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____



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Let's Chat!

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(757) 582-3705

lindsay@ocean-mist.com

www.ocean-mist.com

Let me be your guide to finding (or selling) the perfect home in Larkspur!



Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations (VBCCO)

Wayne Mitnick, the Larkspur representative to the Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations (VBCCO) passes along an exciting program currently in the works at the VBCCO: the VBCCO University! Read on for more information.

VBCCO University: Your Gateway to Civic Engagement

The Virginia Beach Council of Civic Organizations (VBCCO) is thrilled to announce the launch of VBCCO University, an exciting new initiative designed to educate and empower Virginia Beach residents on how to engage effectively with local government. With classes set to begin in early 2025, this program aims to break down barriers to civic involvement and provide residents with the tools they need to make their voices heard.

Our Mission

Time is often the biggest barrier to learning and involvement in local government. VBCCO University aims to overcome this by offering concise, impactful one-hour classes taught by City elected officials, staff, and subject matter experts. These sessions will provide practical knowledge about how Virginia Beach operates and how residents can interact with their government to influence decisions that shape their community.

Kickoff: Class 1 in Q1 2025

The first class, "Introduction to Virginia Beach City Government," will serve as the foundation for VBCCO University and is scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2025. Classes will be held at the Virginia Beach Central Library, a convenient and accessible location for residents across the city.

Once logistics, including the place, time, and content for Class 1, are finalized, the remaining curriculum will be scheduled.

Curriculum Overview

VBCCO University offers a wide-ranging curriculum designed to make residents more aware of City Government and empower them to take an active role in their community. Topics include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introduction to Virginia Beach City Government● Civic Engagement and Advocacy● The Comprehensive Plan: A Citizen's Guide● Working with Councilmembers● Engaging Planning Commissioners● Collaborating with Department Directors and Staff● City Website Deep Dive● How to File and Track a FOIA Request● Locating Grant Opportunities and Funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Effective Community Advocacy● Conflict Resolution and Mediation● Crisis Communication and Media Relations● Zoning and Land Use 101● Building Resilient Neighborhoods● Leadership Development for Civic Leaders● Participating in the Budget Process● Mastering the Legislative Process |
|---|---|

Program Highlights

- One-Hour Classes: Focused sessions that respect your time while delivering valuable insights.
- Expert Instructors: Learn directly from those who lead and work within the City, as well as other subject matter experts.
- Interactive Learning: Classes are designed to be practical and engaging, helping residents take actionable steps to influence their local government.
- Building Knowledge and Skills: Topics range from navigating the City's website to understanding zoning, budget processes, and conflict resolution.

VBCCO's Vision

VBCCO University is more than just a series of classes; it's a long-term commitment to fostering a more informed and engaged community. The ultimate goal is to make Virginia Beach a model for civic education and engagement by giving residents the knowledge and tools they need to participate meaningfully in local government.

Get Involved

Whether you're a seasoned advocate, a curious resident, or someone looking to enhance their leadership skills, VBCCO University offers something for everyone. Stay tuned for details on enrollment and the official start date of Class 1. Together, we can make Virginia Beach a stronger, more resilient community! Questions? Please contact Wayne Mitnick (757) 651-8115 (wmitnick@aol.com), or Mike Anderson (757) 585-5695 for more information.

Larkspur Garden Club News



The Larkspur Garden Club had a busy and fun year in 2024! The club started the year out in January with a presentation on Ikebana Floral Arranging, and members had fun making their own arrangements. In May, the club had a successful Plant Sale (thank you to our neighbors who bought plants from the club). Also in May, the members took a fun trip to the Norfolk Zoo. The flowers were blooming, and the weather was beautiful. The club's last meeting before their traditional summer break was held at The Whitehurst-Buffington House in Virginia Beach. New officers were installed followed by a luncheon. The new president is Mary White, vice-president Karin Dridge, secretary Debbie Blackledge, and treasurer Stacey Allin.

Yard-of-the-month judging continued through the summer months. After the summer break, the club resumed its monthly meetings in September. In October they had a pumpkin decorating presentation, where members decorated pumpkins; the pumpkins were beautiful and made a nice addition to their home fall decorating décor. Some of the club's members also attended the Virginia Beach Council of Garden Clubs November fundraiser on flower arranging.

December was for wreath making and our club helped to make wreaths for the city of Virginia Beach, and decorated the banister at the historic Whitehurst-Buffington house (the decorations were ALL natural). The holiday wouldn't be complete without a party. One of the club members opened her home to host the annual Garden Club's Christmas/holiday party.

The Garden Club would like to thank Margaret "Cookie" Duffey for serving as the club's president for the past six years. The position of Club President has traditionally been a much shorter term, but for various reasons, Cookie remained in the position. Several events and accolades for the club punctuated her years of leadership. Cookie turned the reins over to incoming president Mary White, and continues to participate in all the club's activities.

The Larkspur Garden Club meets the third Tuesday of each month (Sept-Nov and Jan-May) from 9:30 a.m. to approximately 11:30 a.m. in the Larkspur Pool Clubhouse. If you're interested in attending a meeting or joining the garden club, we welcome you! Membership is open year-round.

For more information about an upcoming meeting please contact Mary White at (757) 407-6211.



Yard of the Month Winners!

October 2024

Mike and Kristen Windslow
525 Gleneagle Drive

November 2024

Frank and Trish Watson
601 Sam Snead Lane

December 2024

Tim and Valery Pyron
608 Ryder Cup Lane

Congratulations and thanks to all who participated; it's great to see Larkspur looking so good!

For those interested in participating in *Yard-of-the-Month*, here is what the judges will be looking for:

- General Appearance: Grass mowed and edged, weed free, green with no brown grass
- Beds cleaned and edged
- Walks, driveways, and curbs edged and swept
- Shrubs neatly trimmed and pruned
- Seasonal colors (flowers)
- General neatness: Garbage cans out of sight; no toys, bikes etc. on front lawn; hoses rolled up; air conditioners hidden by shrubs; no boat or R.V. in the driveway (those items have to be hidden behind a fence).
- The front lawn has a discernable, intentionally balanced landscape design
- House and property must be in good order and upkeep

***The same judging criteria is used each month, but the judges change monthly and remain anonymous.
Good luck to all!!***

The LGC encourages residents to take pride in their homes and neighborhood. In turn, we look to celebrate those who do a superior job in maintaining their yards in such a way that they enhance the overall curb appeal of the entire community, contributing to a neighborhood we can all be proud of!



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Larkspur Ladies Looking for Volunteer Opportunities, Please Take Note!!

Charity SPOTLIGHT

EMPOWER 757:

Strengthening Hampton Roads
One Donation at a Time

By Lyana Hulings



In November 2022, a small yet mighty group of women came together with a shared goal: to make a meaningful impact in their community. That's how Empower 757 was born, a local women's charity organization dedicated to supporting Hampton Roads' nonprofits. With just under two years of activity, the group has already left a significant mark, boasting 25 active donors, and a collective contribution of roughly \$25,000 by the end of this year.

Empower 757's mission is clear and threefold: learn about local charities in need, provide them with immediate financial support, and amplify their reach through social media exposure. It is a simple, yet powerful strategy that is proving to be highly effective.

How Empower 757 Works

Empower 757's approach is designed to be quick, impactful, and accessible. Every quarter, members meet for just one hour. During these gatherings, local charities are invited to make a five-minute pitch explaining their mission and needs. Afterward, group members discuss the presentations, ask questions, and ultimately vote on which charity will receive their support. Each member donates \$100 directly to the charity. By members committing to give \$100 per quarter, and by pooling their resources, Empower 757 is able to make a larger, more concentrated donation.

This format allows the organization to make a real difference in a short amount of time. Members enjoy the efficiency of the process and the ability to provide immediate financial assistance. Plus, for many, the social aspect of these meetings—often held in local restaurants—offers an opportunity to connect, relax, and enjoy the camaraderie of like-minded women.

This article, which appeared in a recent edition of *Kempsville Living*, brings to light a fantastic organization that is doing great things to help local non-profits. We are bringing it to your attention here in our newsletter because some of our Larkspur neighbors are members. The organization describes itself as “a collective of women dedicated to making a meaningful impact in the Hampton Roads community by providing financial support and volunteering our time to uplift local non-profits and drive positive change.”

If, after reading through the information, you are interested in finding out more, please reach out at empower757vb@gmail.com

A Growing Impact

What started as an idea inspired by a similar group in Pennsylvania has blossomed into a powerful movement. Since its inception, Empower 757 has collectively volunteered 350 hours and donated both money and much-needed supplies to several local charities. Recent projects include preparing meals at the Ronald McDonald House, cooking for the Judeo-Christian Outreach Center (JCOC), and providing over \$700 worth of laundry detergent to Moms on a Mission, helping families in need of clean clothes for their children to attend school.

Empower 757's impact is not just about money—it is about building connections and finding creative ways to help. Many charities discover new resources through Empower 757's network, from volunteer support to collaborations with other nonprofits.

Looking Ahead

Empower 757 has set an ambitious goal of growing to 100 members, allowing them to further expand their support across the Hampton Roads area. They are also working toward securing their 501(c)(3) status, which will enable the group to increase its reach and provide even more support to local causes.

If you are interested in joining Empower 757 but unsure if you are ready to commit, the group invites you to attend their next meeting on January 21st. While guests cannot vote until they commit, attending a meeting offers a great way to see the group in action. You can also reach out to Kim Maxwell, Tammy Coleman, or Lindsay Johnson for more information, or visit the group's website at Empower757.com.

Through collaboration, collective action, and a dedication to helping others, Empower 757 is strengthening the Hampton Roads community, one donation at a time.

Empower 757

Website: www.empower757.com | Facebook: Empower 757

Contacts:

Kim Maxwell, Organizer 757-472-9440,
Lindsay Johnson 757-582-3705,
Tammy Coleman 757-434-4595




empower757VB@gmail.com

<https://www.empower757.com/>

Questions? Concerns? Ideas?



Have a question, concern or idea about the Larkspur Neighborhood? Let us know so we can bring it up for consideration at our upcoming board meeting on October 6th! Our current agenda includes the following items:

- Revisiting sidewalk petition on Edwin Drive
- Landscaping at the entrances to the neighborhood
- Painting the brick columns on the Larkspur entry signs
- Creating and distributing membership mailers for 2025

Send your thoughts, ideas and/or questions [here!](#)

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Stayed Tuned for News and Info. on the Summer of 2025!



It's never too early to start thinking about summer in Larkspur! By the time our next newsletter is out, plans for summer fun at the pool will be well underway, and information about the Larkspur Lasers will be available. For now, find out more about the Larkspur Swim & Racquet Club [here](#), and click [here](#) for a general overview of what the Larkspur Lasers are all about.



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Secretary- Kim Bedinger

Committee Members:
Mike Anderson Jim Stone

To contact Board or Committee Members, please email larkspurvirginia@gmail.com or call (757) 219-2089



Save the Dates!

January 16th	Civic League Meeting at the LSRC Clubhouse	6:30 p.m.
January 29th	Blood Drive at the LSRC Clubhouse	9:00 am.-3:00 p.m.

*** Yard of the Month Judging will take place during the last few days of each month.