

## *Phoenix Project increases reach in Petersburg*

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### **Body**

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PETERSBURG -- The Phoenix Project welcomed two new members to its staff Monday evening and looked toward its future programs.

David Carter will serve as general counsel and director of programs and Shanice Penn will be the operations manager.

Penn will be chiefly based out of the group's Springfield office and Carter will work full-time in Petersburg.

"This will really help us do more in Petersburg," said Marion Forsyth, associate director of the Phoenix Project.

She said Carter's duties will include expanding the partnerships between higher education in Virginia and the community and focus on the summer program.

"I do think that this will be an excellent opportunity," said Carter, who previously served as secretary and treasurer of the Phoenix Project's board of directors and as an associate in the business litigation practice of the law firm Womble Carlyle Sandridge and Rice PLC.

"I'm looking forward to having an opportunity with working with the students in the summer program and working with the people in the community."

Penn has several years experience providing administrative and programming support. She has worked as a paralegal in Washington, D.C., and graduate of the first class of the Virginia Citizenship Institute, now the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia.

"Shanice brings a wealth of relevant experience to the Phoenix Project and is a great asset on our team," Forsyth said.

Along with the two new staff members, the Phoenix Project is continuing to develop its place in the community.

"The community continues to be our leading source of advice and guidance," Executive Director Greg Werkheiser said.

During the academic year, Forsyth said, the Phoenix Project is working with Downtown Petersburg Inc., the Army Community Heritage Partnership Program, Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corp., the Supported Alternative for our Valued Youth and Petersburg Public Schools.

Sarah Curtis

## Phoenix Project increases reach in Petersburg

"We've been working with the public schools to put on a program with the high school," Forsyth said.

The program will help students work toward getting into higher education and achieve success in college, Werkheiser said.

The Phoenix Project will hold its third summer program over six weeks in June and July with about 30 students from across the state.

Along with this, the group is continuing to strengthen the partnership with several colleges and universities -- and the city of Petersburg.

"Our goal is to be able to build components in these partnerships that will outlast all of us," Werkheiser said. "We're beginning to see, in two years, the economic and social impact of the work. We're very satisfied."

The Phoenix Project uses college students and faculty to work on social problems. At its founding in 2006, it chose Petersburg as its pilot program, partly because of its economic depression.

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