

October 2023

WILLIAMSBURG'S

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VOL.17, ISSUE 10

PRICELESS

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home

All About Health

Bill Pribble



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Dedication to Serving Our Community

By Kristine Hojnicky

Murawski Photography

In the heart of historic Williamsburg, Virginia, a small yet influential organization has been quietly working to improve the health and well-being of the community for over two decades. The Williamsburg Health Foundation has been a beacon of hope and support for countless individuals and organizations in the region and Bill Pribble, Vice President of Programs, has witnessed many of the successes over his 20 years at the Foundation.

“I’ve always wanted to help others. I feel blessed and fortunate that I am able to work

where I do and provide resources to these great organizations doing important work,” he says. Bill’s story is deeply intertwined with the town of Williamsburg. He was born in 1998 in Winchester, Kentucky. His family moved to Williamsburg when he was just a year old when his father accepted a job as the executive director of Eastern State Hospital. Growing up, Bill attended the local schools, graduating from Lafayette High School in 1997. His path then led him to Virginia Tech, where he pursued a degree in Business Management.

Bill’s connection to Williamsburg and his desire to contribute to the community became evident early on. He spent his high school summers working at Busch Gardens, where he gained a unique perspective on the inner workings of the park. After graduating from Virginia Tech, he briefly explored other opportunities but soon found himself back in Williamsburg. “I thought I would never come back to Williamsburg,” he says with a laugh.

In 2002, Bill learned about a part-time position at the Williamsburg Health Foundation.

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“I had previously spent a summer working at the Foundation as an intern, where my role was to determine which software package would best suit the organization’s needs and then train the staff on how to use it. I was looking for jobs and called to ask if I could use the Foundation as a reference, and they told me there was an opportunity available that was similar to my internship.”

At the time, the Foundation was still a part of Sentara Hospital and was in its nascent stages. Bill’s initial role as a grants administrator involved managing the intricate backend processes of the Foundation’s grant-making system. In those days, everything was done on paper, and Bill compiled information from nonprofit agencies’ proposals for the Foundation’s board to review.

“We would receive these big, thick proposals from nonprofit organizations in the community,” he explains. “We would review them and take the information these provided us and enter it into our database so funding recommendations could be made.”

However, the Foundation was on the brink of transformation. In 2003, it gained private Foundation status after the acquisition of Williamsburg Community Hospital by Sentara. This transition marked a turning point in the Foundation’s history, and Bill played a pivotal role in modernizing its processes. He led the charge to transition grant applications online, streamlining and digitizing a system that was once paper based.

Bill’s dedication and hard work did not go unnoticed. In 2010, he was promoted to the role of Program Officer, where he took on the responsibility of reviewing grant applications, conducting due diligence, and making recommendations to the grants committee and board. For over a decade, he excelled in this position, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the Foundation’s mission.

The year 2022 marked a significant milestone in Bill’s career when he was appointed Senior Program Officer. And earlier this year, in April 2023, Bill reached another pinnacle as he assumed the role of Vice President of Programs. In October 2023, he will celebrate a remarkable 20 years with the Williamsburg Health Foundation, making it his only professional place of employment since college, a rare feat in today’s ever-changing job market.

“I really enjoy my latest role,” he says. “I have responsibility for the strategic development, implementation, and evaluation of our grant programs.”

While Bill’s journey at the Williamsburg Health Foundation is impressive, it’s equally important to shed light on the organization’s contributions to the community. Bill’s tenure has witnessed numerous initiatives that have left a mark on Williamsburg.

One such initiative is the School Health Initiative Program (SHIP) in the Williamsburg-James City County school system. The Foundation has supported this program since 2005, focusing on combatting childhood obesity. By encouraging physical activity and healthy eating habits among students, SHIP has reached 11,000 students and their families.

“I remember when the SHIP staff first started, they learned very quickly that some of the students didn’t even know what a fruit or vegetable looked like. They took it back to the basics of healthy eating,” he says.



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The Foundation has also partnered with the Virginia Peninsula Food Bank to support mobile food pantries. These monthly distributions provide nutritionally dense food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, to community members who may not have access to such resources.

“Access to healthy food is such a need in this community and one that the Foundation really looks to support,” he says.

As Bill reflects on his 20-year journey with the Williamsburg Health Foundation, he sees a bright future for the organization and the community it serves. The Foundation has recently completed a staffing transition, and Bill envisions it playing an even more pivotal role in the community.

“There’s a lot of great work going on in this community, and I feel fortunate to have a little role in it,” he says. “We give out around \$5 million a year and that may sound like a lot, but there are a lot more agencies and programs out there that need our support to fulfill their missions.”

He emphasizes the Foundation’s role as a resource, encouraging all nonprofits and community partners to reach out for support and collaboration. “We want to be viewed as a resource to all of those in our community looking to improve their health,” Bill affirms.

Beyond his professional achievements, Bill has developed a deep appreciation for the Williamsburg community. He has witnessed its remarkable growth and transformation over the years, and he’s proud to be a part of it. Participating in the Williamsburg Chamber’s LEAD Program a few years ago allowed him to explore and appreciate the community’s diverse facets, even as a lifelong resident.

“I learned about how different organizations in Williamsburg view leadership, and I was also exposed to things in our area that I had no idea about even though I’ve lived my whole life here, like our local arts theater.”

His commitment to health and wellness also extends to his personal life. Bill’s journey to better health began during the pandemic, when he adopted an active lifestyle. With his energetic chocolate lab, Piper, by his side, he discovered a newfound love for running and exploring the area’s scenic trails.

“I realized I needed to focus on my own health. That kickstarted a whole new interest. I’ve participated in local races, and I chase Piper around on a daily basis.”

Additionally, Bill finds joy in being a tourist in his own town, exploring historical sites like Colonial Williamsburg, making each day an opportunity to uncover something new.

As Bill approaches the remarkable milestone of 20 years at the Williamsburg Health Foundation, he remains humble about celebrating his achievements. His focus has always been on the work and the community, rather than personal recognition. However, his dedication and the Foundation’s unwavering commitment have made Williamsburg a healthier and happier place for all its residents.

Bill Pribble’s journey from a local graduate to the Vice President of Programs at the Williamsburg Health Foundation is a testament to the power of passion, dedication, and a commitment to serving one’s community. His story serves as an inspiration to all who aspire to make a difference, reminding us that when you give back to your community, it becomes a better place for everyone. NDN