



Historic Onancock School

Annual Report 2023 - Executive Summary

The Friends of Onancock School remain committed to establishing the Historic Onancock School and the 14 acre grounds as a vital, vibrant and accessible community and cultural center to benefit the Town of Onancock, our residents and the citizens of the entire Eastern Shore of Virginia. We believe that we are one of the many essential components that make up the Onancock Experience alongside the shops, restaurants, theaters and the waterfront that make up our charming town. This report summarizes the major initiatives and accomplishments of the organization during 2023.

HOS Vision - at the heart of our diverse community, the Historic Onancock School Community & Cultural Center contributes economically, culturally and educationally to the quality of life on Virginia's Eastern Shore while preserving the community character.

HOS Mission - to connect, inspire and embrace our diverse community through artistic, educational, social & recreational means to sustain our legacy for future generations.

HOS Diversity Statement - we are a place for all. We strive to include all citizens across race, gender, age, religion, identity, and experience as we work together to build our community.

Lease Agreements – 2023 marks the 16th year of the FOS lease with the town of Onancock

- ❖ Use of Premises - FOS continues to use the premises in the manner stated in the lease: for community purposes as a nonprofit community and cultural campus, including both indoor & outdoor spaces for educational, social, recreational, artistic, cultural, athletic and other community activities as well as legitimate casual activities.
- ❖ Rehabilitation and Development - FOS continues to use its best efforts to rehabilitate and develop the premises to be used in accordance with provisions stated above.
- ❖ Benchmarks - the first anniversary (2008), fifth (2012) and tenth anniversary in 2017 were all met (and exceeded). In order to comply with this 16th year benchmark, the director and Board President of FOS have met on several occasions with the Town Manager and Mayor to discuss operations, compliance with lease requirements as presented in the most recent annual report, funding opportunities, and future plans. We also discussed the significant capital needs and ways to address them. These casual conversations continue to further the relationship between FOS and the Town.
- ❖ Maintenance – FOS has cared for and maintained the facility in a condition that has far exceeded the condition that existed on the date of the lease. In fact, well over \$650,000 has gone towards the maintenance, upkeep and improvements to the facility since 2007.

Strategic Plan

- The Board of Directors continue to focus on our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. This plan guides our continuing efforts to improve the building and open spaces, grow revenue to provide stability to our organization and to increase the value of the Historic Onancock School as a cultural and community center.
- The Goals are as follows:
 - Continue to improve the building and open space of the Historic Onancock School
 - Ensure sufficient income to cover operational expenses and to increase contingency/capital funds
 - Cultivate greater community support and outreach to increase usage of facility

Building and Open Space Improvements:

- General interior building maintenance and repairs to studios and common spaces included continued upgrades to ensure the safety, energy efficiency and appearances, condition and use of the facility. Outdoors, upgrades included landscaping, tree & brush care, planting 20 native birch trees and pollinator plants.

- Additional improvements continue to be made to the playground with the addition of chalkboards, original from the OHS building, for budding artists and to nurture creativity. A new sail shade was added to the picnic area. On the soccer field, new regulation soccer nets were installed. This was accomplished using grant funding from the Robert E. & Marie Orr-Smith Foundation, the Gerhart Family Foundation and volunteer labor.

Financials:

- Revenues of \$137.4K include \$65.3K in studio rentals, \$19.4K in fundraising income, \$12.6K in Special Event income, \$37.8K in contributions & support & \$2.3 in grant income. Designated donations for pavilion construction were \$87.7K.
- Expenses of \$117.3K, including \$6.5K in building and facilities improvements, \$55.2K in payroll expenses and \$19.9K in utilities costs, \$6.2K in fundraising expenses and 29.5K in General Operating Expenses. Pavilion costs \$10.8K.
- Net Income of \$20.1K for Operations; \$76.9K for Pavilion.
- Bank balances of \$229.9K as of 12.31.2023.
- In-Kind Support -Volunteer Service recorded through 2023 totaled 1,043 hours resulting in a total of \$33,167.40 In-Kind dollars to support FOS. (This is based on nonprofit industry standard valuation of time as \$31.80 per hour.)

Building and Grounds Use:

- 100% of studios on both floors are rented.
- The number of people who visited or attended functions on the grounds or in the Historic Onancock School building during 2023 increased to now exceed 14,000. This total is counted and recorded from our application process, tickets sold to events as well as guest counts at our events, meetings and classes and reported visitors. The debut of the very successful Blooms & Brushes Garden & Studio Tour in June, increased attendees for Wine Wednesdays and more community use of our Gallery for private rentals has boosted numbers of visitors. [Countless others use the outdoors public access green space daily for exercise, walks on the nature trail, bird watching, playground, picnic gatherings, disc golf, soccer, home school classes and many children's birthday parties, outdoor use has more than doubled in the past 2 years.]

Kudos and Thanks:

- To all of the volunteers, business and individual donors and the Town of Onancock and other local organizations who supported FOS.
- We are grateful to the Town Council for voting in favor of an assessment to be completed on the building. This will be a valuable tool in making future repair & improvement decisions on this 103 year old building.

Local Collaborations

- Local nonprofits, organizations, services who support HOS by bringing their meetings, classes, seminars and events along with their members and guests to support our facility.
- Academy of Lifetime Learning (ALL) classes
- Eastern Shore Master Naturalists
- Ye Accawmacke Garden Club
- Eastern Shore Housing Summit
- Paul Nolz Soccer Camp
- Roseland Cinema & Entertainment Center (RCEC)
- ESVA Historical Society /Shore History
- Virginia Coastal Reserve /The Nature Conservancy
- Eastern Shore of VA Land Trust
- Eastern Shore Art League
- Onancock Business & Civic Association (OBICA)
- ESVA Chamber of Commerce / ESVA Tourism
- Community Christian Youth Fellowship
- Little Hands Little Feet, LLC.
- Eastern Shore Center for Independent Living
- ES Maritime Museum
- Onancock Main Street
- Accomack Community Band
- Eastern Shore of VA Museum Network
- Eastern Shore Health District
- Eastern Shore Cruisers Car Show
- Eastern Shore Spartans
- Nandua High School
- Broadwater Academy
- Artisans Guild of the Eastern Shore
- Town of Onancock
- ESVA Community Foundation
- East Coast Migrant Head Start
- Weichert Realty

Additional accomplishments in 2023

- The Onancock High School (OHS) Memorabilia Exhibit opened in October 2023. This exhibit was a result of a fundraising Class Challenge conducted in 2022. The exhibit is on display in the south hallway and will continue to expand in the future to accommodate donations of memorabilia that we have received.
- The Class Challenge/Memorabilia Exhibit has also launched a Room Naming Campaign that will continue through 2024. Several rooms and the front portico and entry foyer are now dedicated.
- The Eastern Shore Disc Golf Club held its spring disc golf tournament on the grounds and will return in 2024
- The Eastern Shore Car Cruisers selected HOS for one of their fundraising shows which resulted in a generous donation to FOS.
- The Holiday Artisan Market at HOS, started in 2018 to add to the OBCA sponsored *Christmas in Onancock* festivities, has grown to include 12 guest vendors along with many of our open studios. We had over 275 visitors to attend the market and many purchased tickets to the Homes Tour and attended Cokesbury Concert series while visiting our town.
- The premier of the 'Blooms & Brushes' Garden Tour was a resounding success on many levels, most importantly the collaboration with local businesses, organizations as sponsors and generous homeowners who donated their time and allowed us to showcase their home gardens. We would like to mention their names again as their participation and support was outstanding. Janice & Jay Miller, Beth & Greg Temple, Kate & John Morgan, Dana & Jake Dillon, Rosemary Paparo, Shore History/Ker Place, and Eastern Shore Master Gardeners.

Grants Received in 2023

Gerhart Family Foundation
Robert E. & Marie Orr-Smith Foundation
United Way of Virginia's Eastern Shore

Looking Ahead in 2024:

We plan to continue our annual fundraising and events:

- 'Blooms & Brushes' Garden & Studio Tour on June 8
- Creekside Crawl 5K/ 'Love Your Park' for Public Lands Day on September 14
- Champagne & Oyster Tasting on November 17th
- Plus, the addition of a new event 'Field Day Fiesta' on May 4th This new event will focus on our outdoor recreational space featuring fun events for kids of all ages and families to participate. A full day of activities, music, refreshments and festivities is planned.
- We look forward to returning favorite events, the OBCA Ice Cream Social and Artisans Guild Holiday Tour among other partnerships.
- This October the CBES Bike Tour has selected Onancock and HOS as the site for the CBES Bike Ride. This fundraiser will bring 1,200 riders and guests to our town on October 26.
- Fundraising for the pavilion and related improvements to the grounds, including a memory garden will continue.
- The construction of a Performance Pavilion will resume to provide a destination for arts, cultural events, performances and community events.

As presented by Joani Donohoe, Executive Director of HOS to the Onancock Town Council on February 26, 2024