

Richmond Times-Dispatch

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RICHMOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Teachers report mold, HVAC outages, asbestos concerns

Aging buildings a threat to students as new year starts

SAMUEL B. PARKER
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Inside Frances W. McClenney Elementary School in Ginter Park, teachers and staff are “suffering,” Robin Keegan said.

Keegan, a reading interventionist for Richmond Public Schools, said the air conditioning inside the century-plus-old school was broken for most of the summer. Even after contractors repaired the central HVAC unit last week, aged and dysfunctional air handlers have left individual classrooms sweltering. “It’s been really hot,” Keegan said on Monday. “I know we’re stretched for money, but people aren’t going

WATCH: See video of conditions inside Elizabeth D. Redd Elementary School by pointing your cellphone camera at the QR code and tapping the link. **NEWSVU**

to want to work here if things don’t work. It sends a bad message to staff and to the community.”

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This photo, dated July 14 and provided to The Times-Dispatch, shows a chair armrest in the auditorium at Redd Elementary School. In recent months, the school has dealt with a ceiling leak, mold issues and asbestos remediation. **PROVIDED**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



GWYNDOLYN MILES PHOTOS, TIMES-DISPATCH

A volunteer helps Jennifer Clark, far right, 33, and Araya Flowers, center, 7, pick out a pair of shoes for Flowers' first day of school.

Fresh kicks for a cause

Richmond ministry holds annual shoe giveaway for kids

Rita Willis grew up in Dinwiddie County as a Black child going to a segregated school. Now, she uses her personal history as inspiration to provide new shoes to kids who need them through Richmond's New Shoes for Back to School Ministry. “We need to help make a difference in our little corner of the world,” Willis said. “To see if we can help out families.”



GWYNDOLYN MILES



Rita Willis is seen in front of a sign that reads “NEW SHOES FOR BACK TO SCHOOL” at the Third Street Bethel AME Church.

As a child, Willis, 75, had to walk four miles to get to school every day. On her way, she

recalls often being taunted by the school bus full of white students as it passed her. Once, a

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Know an unsung hero or someone doing extraordinary work? Send a description of the good deeds and the person's contact information to reporter Gwyndolyn Miles at gwyn.miles@timesdispatch.com. Please say “Making a Difference” in the subject line.

VIEW: See more photos of the Richmond ministry in action by aiming your cellphone camera at the QR code and clicking the link. **NEWSVU**

student on the bus even threw a book at her and her classmates as they walked. Soon after, as desegregation

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AIRBNB

Just 10% of rentals in city are permitted

Property managers ignoring unenforced regulations from city

COLE KINDIGER
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Of the nearly 1,000 short-term rentals in Richmond, only 10% of them are operating with or pursuing the required permit.

Data from the city shows only 96 of Richmond's short-term rentals either have the required permits or are in the process of getting one. Short-term rentals are furnished residences rented for a short period of time, often using platforms like Airbnb or Vrbo.

According to AirDNA, a short-term rental data aggregator used by the city's Planning and Development Review, there were 956 active short-term listings as of June 2025.

These properties are subject to a number of local regulations, many passed by City Council five years ago, that are meant to balance the needs of business owners and their neighbors.

City spokesperson Michael Hinkle said, “resource constraints can make (enforcement) challenging” and that the city is “actively exploring options to improve our oversight.”

Neighbors' concerns

In 2020, council passed a spate of regulations on short-term rentals, including items like parking, proper signage and primary residency requirements, which prevent owners from renting out properties in residential districts unless they live there for at least half of the year. The regulations were revised in 2023 after significant public debate.

The regulations were meant to address growing frustration with short-term rentals and their potential impact on housing affordability and the changing character of neighborhoods.

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WATCH: Vincent Esposito describes living in Old Town Manchester alongside Airbnbs and their effect on the community. Point your cellphone camera at the QR code and click the link. **NEWSVU**

GENWORTH FINANCIAL

Company plans major move in freight market

Insuring long-term care no easy task

DAVE RESS
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Henrico County-based Genworth Financial thinks it's found a way to help people finance

long-term care that will avoid the regular double- and triple-digit premium rate increases for policies that currently cost several thousand dollars a year.

Genworth, one of the handful of players still in the troubled market, has — like the insurance giants that have dropped out

— struggled with rising costs of care, higher-than-expected claims filing and fewer people dropping coverage — all of which combined to push long-term care coverage into the red.

Genworth plans to re-launch itself into the long-term care insurance business through its

new CareScout services unit. The business is assembling nationwide networks of assisted living facilities and home health care providers in much the same way managed care firms do with doctors, hospitals and other

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European leaders to join Ukraine meeting with Trump

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