

# #WEARE757 Millennials



Final Report  
Global Shapers Norfolk  
August 2016



**This is your world.  
Shape it, or someone  
else will.**

*- Gary Lew*

The mission of Global Shapers Norfolk is  
**"to activate 757  
millennials to drive  
creative change  
locally and share  
ideas globally."**

# Executive Summary

Millennials make up the the largest living generation today and, by 2020, will form 50 percent of the global workforce and of most electorates. But across the board, millennials are punching below their weight: they are less likely to vote and have formal, recognized roles in public processes. Social networks are clearly a powerful tool for civic engagement, with approximately 90 percent of young adults, ages 18 to 29, actively using social media.

Global Shapers Norfolk's inaugural local impact project, #WeAre757Millennials, responds to this size-presence disparity by creating an approachable bridge to activate millennials to engage on issues important to them, while elevating these perspectives to local and global decision makers. The social media campaign aimed also to increase thought-leadership opportunities for millennials, including decision-making roles; and, to contribute actionable ideas to decision makers on issues of importance to millennials.

**The #WeAre757Millennials campaign ran from June 23 to July 26, 2016 and resulted in more than 53,000 global impressions on social media.** Central to the campaign, more than two dozen young leaders across Hampton Roads took over the Global Shapers Norfolk Instagram account for one day to share their insights on the future of our region.

The campaign also partnered with the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community as a formal Survey Affiliate of the second annual "The Voice of Youth" survey. This partnership elevated more than 50 individual Hampton Roads voices to the World Economic Forum, which convenes the foremost political, business, and other leaders of society -- including youth -- to improve the state of the world through public-private cooperation.

Global Shapers Norfolk is excited to share findings and key insights from the #WeAre757Millennials campaign, and is dedicated to continuing the campaign as a platform for millennials to drive creative, positive change in Hampton Roads. Through social media, some of the most active Millennial leaders in Hampton Roads leaders shared what's important to them, and this brief report organizes and highlights their personal experiences and insights.



*To learn more, please visit [norfolkglobalshapers.com](http://norfolkglobalshapers.com),  
or contact [globalshapersnorfolk@gmail.com](mailto:globalshapersnorfolk@gmail.com).*



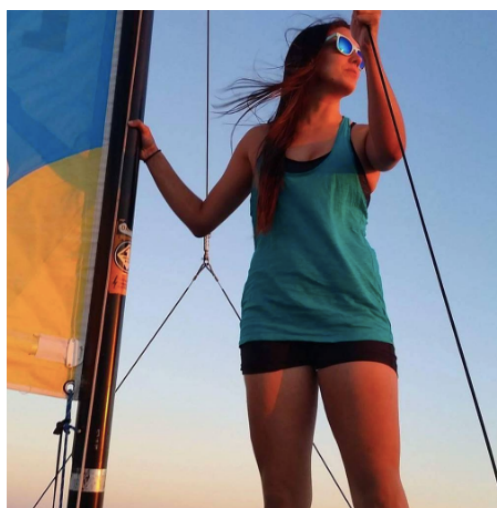
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Through this report and the campaign, our hope is that city and regional leaders will have a better understanding of millennials' diverse perspectives and are best supported to consider them in shaping our collective future. Thank you for considering these ideas when drafting future policies, and we welcome your feedback on additional ways to incorporate millennials in advisory processes.

We look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with local city councils, civic leaders, regional forums, businesses, and private citizens to help share the Millennial perspective on shaping our region's future.

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# **Economic Development**

Millennials in our campaign highlighted ideas for advancing economic development, as well as areas of future focus for economic policy to promote retention of millennials and a more sustainable, broad-based economy for all.

## Mike Feggans

Supervisor and Information  
Technology manager  
U.S. Department of Defense

### **Issue: Cybersecurity & leadership**

Idea: "I'm currently working in the Secretary of Technology's office today in Richmond, working on state cyber security issues. I believe that HRVA can become a regional leader in technology, if the seven cities can continue to work together and not apart."



## Aazia Mickens-Dessaso

Entrepreneur, founder of FreePing,  
Global Shaper, and mother

### **Issue: Diversity in tech entrepreneurship**

Idea: "Building a high-tech, high growth company in the 757 is difficult, and the odds stacked against women and minority entrepreneurs make the challenge nearly impossible. We should ensure that entrepreneurs who represent the diversity and vitality of this region are armed with the resources necessary for success. 'In my dreams,' Aazia says, 'the community center of the future is built by entrepreneurs, is equipped with technology resources for product development, doesn't require ridiculous fees, qualifications, or barriers that restrict access, and provides child care.'"



## Jessie Williams

Legislative assistant, State Senator Lynwood Lewis

### **Issue: Underutilized beaches**

Idea: "We are all familiar with several of our beaches and waterways, but so many are undervalued and underutilized. Ocean View, Ft. Monroe, Jamestown Beach. Ft. Monroe is particularly close to my heart. Promote our Beaches! Fort Monroe is no longer an active military installation. It is, however, a national monument - designated in 2011 by President Obama. The preservation this ensures is incredibly important to maintaining the integrity of such a beautiful landmark -- and is exactly the sort of thing we should be utilizing to attract millennials and upstart companies to the area. The potential is limitless!"



## Melissa Estrada Reese

Director of Advancement for The Williams School, mother, and community volunteer

### **Issue: Affordable childcare & paid leave**

Idea: "Not only can the quality of daycare have implications on our future workforce: according to a study by USA Child Care, the annual cost of daycare today for an infant exceeds the average cost of in-state tuition and fees for public colleges in 31 states.

This past year NYC and San Francisco passed generous family leave laws requiring employers to offer 6-12 weeks of paid leave to its employees."



## **Danielle Collins**

Registered nurse, Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters

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### **Issue: Affordable housing**

Idea: "I love Hampton Roads, but my husband and I decided to buy our home and raise our family in Knotts Island. House prices and taxes were significantly lower and, even though we both commute to work in Norfolk, it was the best decision for us economically."

## **Jessie Williams**

Legislative assistant, State Senator Lynwood Lewis

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### **Issue: Blighted neighborhoods**

Idea: "This building is located in the Willow Oaks shopping center in Hampton, and it used to house the West call center a decade ago. I want to highlight the opportunity for community engagement to enable progress. HRVA is wonderful for millennials for so many reasons, but I want to highlight something special about our generation: we enjoy helping. We enjoy change-making. I'd love to see engagement with our city and local leadership to not only bring new businesses and companies to the area, but also purchase and revitalize old buildings and unused areas to create safe spaces for youth and other community members to learn and play!"

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# Politics

Millennials in our campaign highlighted transparency in government as an area of particular concern.



## Se'Era Spragley

Events coordinator, The Daily Press

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### **Issue: Transparency in government**

Solution: "In Virginia, unlike most states, records of public officials' performance and disciplinary sanctions can be sealed. State law doesn't require this, but it does permit it. The same shield of secrecy applies when elected officials discuss the work of the officials they appoint. I believe our community is at its strongest when city officials are open and transparent with its citizens."



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# Regionalism

Millennials highlighted the benefits of a regional approach to branding and marketing of the best of our collective community, as well as to transportation, particularly highlighting the promise of a shared regional personality, public relations campaign supporting our coastal assets, and Light Rail.

## Sheena Jeffers

Director of Arts Integration for Young Audiences of Virginia, director of Outreach for Todd Rosenlieb Dance, adjunct professor at Old Dominion University, and Founder of ViBe Stories

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### Issue: Light Rail

Idea: "We can fight that regionalism problem and I think that light rail can help it. I don't know if it's going to help it in our time, but I feel like 10 years, 12, 15 years from now we will have children who will have grown up on it and they will embrace it a lot more. They won't even debate its importance in their lives because its importance will be embedded into their daily knowledge and routines."

## Joe Dillard

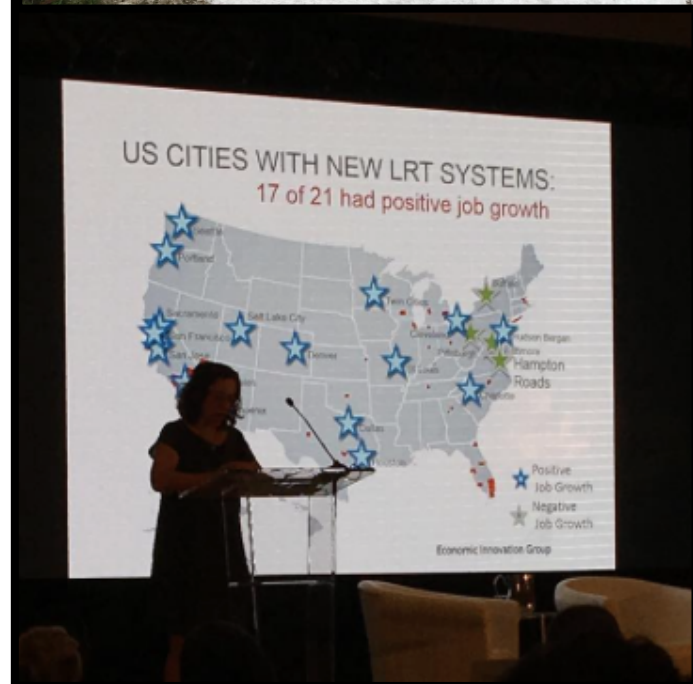
Norfolk NAACP president, Government Affairs Liaison for Hampton Roads Transit, and Global Shaper

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### Issue: Light Rail

Idea: "Statistically, Hampton Roads has the second worst recovery in the economy since the recession only to be behind Detroit. Why do I share this? Simple, that fact itself shows, this is the region of opportunity."

"Looking into transit solutions, like light rail where studies show 17 out of 21 cities had positive job growth due to light rail."





## Marla Shuchman

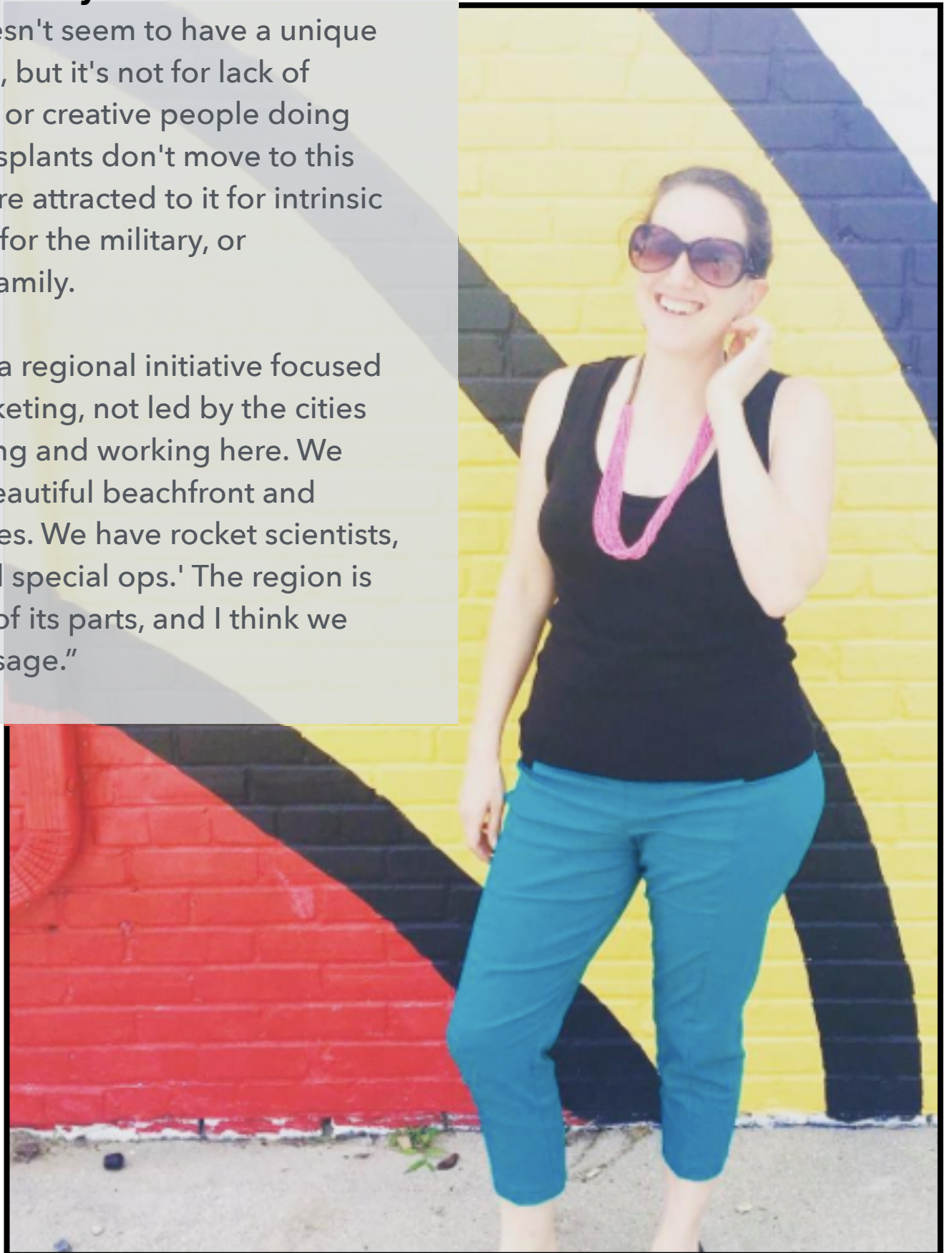
Founder of The Arsenal, a regional startup accelerator project launched this year

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### Issue: Our regional identity

Idea: "This region doesn't seem to have a unique personality of it's own, but it's not for lack of interesting attractions or creative people doing cool things. Most transplants don't move to this area because they were attracted to it for intrinsic purposes. They come for the military, or government jobs, or family.

"Imagine if there was a regional initiative focused on branding and marketing, not led by the cities but by the people living and working here. We could say 'We have beautiful beachfront and waterfront communities. We have rocket scientists, marine biologists, and special ops.' The region is greater than the sum of its parts, and I think we should push that message."



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# Sustainability

From sea-level rise to water quality, millennials raised concern with our community's collective approach to sustainability, which connects to other millennials ideas of advancing coastal resources as regional treasures and assets.





## Alex Cantwell

Horticulturalist, Norfolk Botanical Garden

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### **Issue: Water quality**

Idea: "Water quality is a huge problem in an area like ours riddled with metropolitan areas and suburban sprawl. We have a direct impact on the tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay and the Bay itself, as well as the Ocean.

"We need to take it upon ourselves to make positive impacts, and through the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Surfrider, I find ways I can volunteer to protect our waters. Get involved to preserve what made Tidewater! Pick up trash, garden responsibly, and volunteer. We owe it to nature."



A dog is running through a grassy area in a park, with people and trees in the background.

## Jessie Williams

Legislative assistant, State Senator Lynwood Lewis

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### **Issues: Sea level rise & preserving the Chesapeake Bay**

Idea: "Our location has unique advantages that allow for a great quality of life, but raising awareness and education on the importance of sustainable seafood & the restoration of oyster beds and other marine life populations are essential to continuing to grow the potential of the 757. I look forward to getting involved with organizations like Lynnhaven River Now to do my part, and I hope you'll join me!"

A close-up of a jellyfish in the water, showing its internal organs and tentacles.

## Jessica Johnson

Manager of Annual Giving, The Up Center

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### **Issue: Sea level rise**

Idea: "While sea level rise and climate change are scary topics, they also present interesting opportunities for conversation and innovation in our region. I'm hopeful that, together, we'll rise to the occasion. Here's to doing what we can as individuals and as a region to curb flooding while learning to go with the flow."

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# The Arts

Culture was raised by a number of millennials as a significant draw to the region and a retention point for millennials and their families. millennials encouraged further investment in the arts and culture, as well as youth-driven efforts to shape those investments in the years to come.





## Sheena Jeffers

Director of Arts Integration for Young Audiences of Virginia, director of Outreach for Todd Rosenlieb Dance, adjunct professor at Old Dominion University, and founder of ViBe Stories

### Issue: Funding for the Arts

Idea: "For 2016, Virginia's art budget was \$3,462,374, which was down 3.8% from the 2015 budget. This worries me. I do not feel our local representatives put as much funding power behind the arts as we need. Money for the arts must be voted on and supported by our state representatives.

"My wish: I hope for more awareness and action-oriented advocacy with research backing our efforts and purpose; I hope our local representatives (our Hampton Roads' mayors and city council members) actively involve the arts in discussions and decisions made for our cities because investing in the arts will create more well-rounded, better-constructed human beings."

## Ben Davenport

Virginia Beach City Councilmember, co-founder of the Virginia Gentleman Foundation, and supporter of the SPCA & CASA

### Issue: Cultivating arts and culture

Idea: "Why doesn't Virginia Beach have more culture?" or "Why don't we have this or that?" The answer: because nobody has done it yet. We are going to be the ones to do it. The millennials are going to be the ones to shape the character and identity of our great city and we are getting stronger every day. Let's make it."





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# Shaping the Future

Millennials shared ideas from other communities that may resonate here in Hampton Roads, including adaptive architecture and micro-marketplaces.



## Chris Shelton

Managing director of the Old Dominion University Innovation Center and co-founder of Cure Coffeehouse & Brasserie

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### Issue: Urban revitalization

Idea: "Roanoke's historic City Market has done a wonderful job of adapting its historical architecture to our modern needs and wants. I often find inspiration on my travels, and this is one of those moments. I would like to see more of this in Hampton Roads. Downtown Norfolk might be way cooler if we had recognized the value of Adaptive Architecture before our little renaissance really took off. We should learn to truly embrace more the things we already have in the 757. Let's continue to build an authentic Millennial city."

## Karen Pinkston

Public Relations professional, former media reporter, and Global Shaper

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### Issue: Vibrant cities

Idea: "The Midtown Global Market in Minneapolis is a success story cities like Norfolk could follow. The Neighborhood Development Group (similar to Downtown Norfolk Council) worked to find successful small businesses to fill a large vacant building by giving them incentives to move into the market. The space is a popular place to try foods from around the world, buy locally made soaps and artwork, take a cooking class and listen to live music. It's been a success for more than 10 years, 'comprised of locally-owned, independent businesses that represent the spirit of entrepreneurship present in our communities.'

"Open Streets' is an idea they're also using in Minneapolis. It's a chance to close down a Main Street in a diverse neighborhood, not the usual downtown, to help bring new people together with ethnic food, music, and crafts."

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# **What Millennials Love About Hampton Roads**

While many millennials posted about ways to improve our region, the campaign also highlighted why millennials love Hampton Roads. These posts outline why Hampton Roads is attractive to millennials, and what they value.



# The Local Culture

Millennials in our campaign highlighted the local businesses, craft breweries and restaurants, and the arts that make the region unique.

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## Key Takeaways:

- Support and encourage locally-owned businesses
- Continue investment in the arts districts and local galleries

"Made an evening stop by Local Heroes Comics, one of my favorite places to spend money in the 757. Supporting local businesses is SUPER important for millennials."

***Skye Zentz, singer-songwriter and named "Best Acoustic/Folk" artist at the 2013 Veer Music Awards***

"Hampton Roads is home to some 18 craft breweries with more scheduled to open by year's end. These small businesses draw in tourism and create great social environments throughout the region. They also provide inspiration for home-brewers like me."

***Robert Hart, corporate strategist at Sentara Healthcare***

"The region's identity is no longer just the beach and boardwalk, but a growing culture and arts district and I am so proud to be a part of that change in my hometown."

***Mary Elizabeth Kaufman, founder of Bluebird's Garage Vintage Rentals & Styling and co-founder of the Creative Union***

"What do I love about this region? What makes millennials great? What are we doing to further our cities? Our music! Huge thanks to Lava Festival and O'Connor Brewing for making the Lava Musical Festival happen!"

***Alex Cantwell, horticulturalist, Norfolk Botanical Garden***

# Quality of Life

Millennials value walkable neighborhoods where one can enjoy local shops and restaurants and urban centers where one can work, live, and play. The posts also highlight the relatively low cost of living in our region and access to great schools.

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## Key Takeaways:

- Promote live-work-play neighborhoods
- Invest in the Elizabeth River Trail and plans to expand opportunities for safe biking

"Biking is another way I shape the future. I'm a bike commuter and I really enjoy biking through Norfolk on the Elizabeth River Trail. The new city bike plan should make it even easier to get around next year. I also enjoy picking up treats at the Chelsea Bakehouse in Chelsea.

*Tim Masterson, senior advisor of Solutions Engineering, Anthem*

"My neighborhood library, The Slover, is world class. We do baby-garten, playtime, check out movies and books here. They also have a graphics design lab and green-screen studio. World class tools to make global impact."

# Diversity

Our region is among the most diverse in the country and is becoming more representative of racial, cultural, and religious groups thanks to the growing number of millennials who are proud to call the 757 home.

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## Key Takeaways:

Shine a light on our diversity and use more active, digital storytelling to create awareness about what makes the region unique and engaged

"I'm a Hampton Roads native through and through, but I've also moved a few times throughout the years. Seeing these different areas has really helped me appreciate the diversity Hampton Roads has to offer. So many people from so many walks of life live here, especially when it comes to bettering our community. People aren't afraid to speak out here. We love our area and we fight for it. That kind of attitude is what keeps me here after all."

***Nicholas Bailey, founder of Make Caring Cool***

"Our campaign followed the Silent Mile march to create awareness about Black Lives Matter and criminal justice reform. "So great to see such a big turnout that represented the diversity of our city. This is the region that I know and love."

***Brandon Ballard, student at Old Dominion University and intern with the Norfolk NAACP***



# Higher Education

The campaign shared much among its millennial commentators, but perhaps one of the strongest threads was the interconnection of our community's institutions of higher education (IHEs) as a draw to the region and a sustainer. Many millennials shared their proud alumni/us connections to one of the 13 IHEs calling our region home.

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## Key Takeaways:

More synergy between cities and universities to help solve brain drain

"When I think about what defines this region for me, I would be remiss if I did not mention Old Dominion University. ODU pumps more than \$1 billion annually into the local economy. They also hold second place for the most affordable public university education. With its cutting-edge research and commitment to providing a practical education with real-life experience, ODU is an important part of the 757 area. It has also become a second home to me. There are many mentors here that I owe my success to. Additionally, ODU boasts a diverse population that has taught me so much about the world around me. And for all of this, I'm forever thankful."

***Brandon Ballard, student at Old Dominion University and intern with the Norfolk NAACP***

# Waterfront Living & Nature

Our millennial hosts enjoy the benefits of living on the water, including running on the beach, catching a cruise ship from Downtown Norfolk, and doing yoga along the waterfront.

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## Key Takeaways:

Create a grassroots effort to promote our region's natural beauty to millennials by participating in digital projects like #WeAre757Millennials and @757Collective

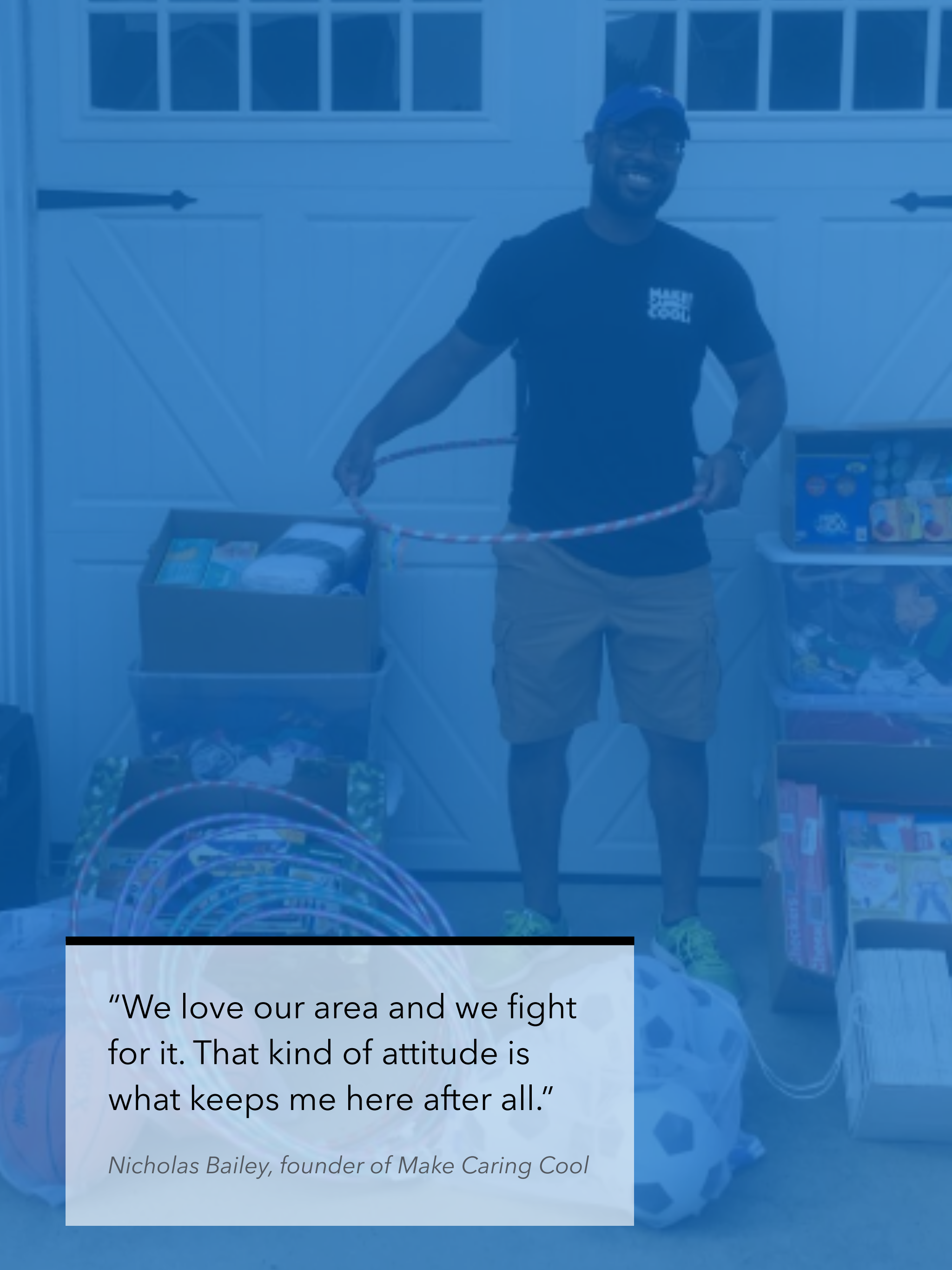
"I believe our relationship with the soil is going to shape our area's future for better (or worse!). With amazing local resources like the education center at New Earth Farm in Pungo and my step-dad, Farmer John Wilson, it's a great time to learn about growing your own food and flowers! I'm always reminded on walks through the Fred Heutte Center and the Norfolk Botanical Garden, that I am fully capable of growing things myself. I may not have the greenest thumb, but I'm working on it! Virginia soil is magical stuff!"

***Skye Zentz, singer-songwriter and named "Best Acoustic/Folk" artist at the 2013 Veer Music Awards***

"Tidewater is home to so many native plants. Not only are they incredibly beautiful, but they support our wildlife and native pollinators! These plants evolved with our animals, and are critical to a functioning ecosystem."

***Alex Cantwell, horticulturalist, Norfolk Botanical Garden***





"We love our area and we fight for it. That kind of attitude is what keeps me here after all."

*Nicholas Bailey, founder of Make Caring Cool*

# Making Waves

The #WeAre757Millennials social media campaign caught the attention of the World Economic Forum, including Yemi Babington-Ashaye, head of the Forum's Global Shapers Community and a former member of the Nigerian Ministry of Finance. As a result, Hampton Roads millennials were invited to participate in the Forum's second annual "The Voice of Youth" survey and include their thoughts on the future of global change. This partnership elevated more than 50 individual Hampton Roads voices to the Forum, which convenes the foremost political, business, and other leaders of society -- including youth -- to improve the state of the world through public-private cooperation.

In addition, Global Shapers Norfolk was encouraged to replicate the #WeAre757Millennials campaign model globally through application for a \$10,000 grant from the Coca Cola Foundation. If awarded, the campaign model would be replicated across an estimated 75-100 city-based Hubs of the Global Shapers Community worldwide and be featured at the Forum's Annual Meeting of political and business leaders, held in Davos, Switzerland. Extrapolating from the campaign's current impact estimate of 10,000 positively impacted millennials, 75 to 100 additional campaigns worldwide could directly impact and help activate 750,000 to 1 million lives around the world. Dependent on the level of activation resulting from these millennials, the ripple effect could be much larger.



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# About Global Shapers Norfolk

## About Global Shapers Norfolk

Global Shapers Norfolk is the first Hub of the Global Shapers Community based in Virginia, and we're dedicated to serving the Hampton Roads region. We have a unique Hub that serves the region's seven coastal cities and surrounding community. Our mission is to activate 757 millennials to drive creative change locally and share ideas globally. We choose bold projects, and have fun doing it.



## About the Global Shapers Community

In 2011, with more than 50 percent of the world's population under the age of 27, the World Economic Forum took an important step and established the Global Shapers Community. It is a dedicated foundation focused on ensuring young leaders play an active role in shaping the agenda globally, regionally and locally. Structured as a network of intimate, self-organizing city-based Hubs, the Community brings together a close-knit group of young leaders—known as Global Shapers—in their twenties, united by a commitment to contribute to resolving challenges by driving positive change within their communities. Part of the magic is collaborating and sharing ideas with Shapers from across the world at international conferences, like the Annual Curators Forum in Geneva and the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos. The Global Shapers Community now numbers more than 450 Hubs worldwide.

*To learn more, please visit [norfolkglobalshapers.com](http://norfolkglobalshapers.com),  
or contact [globalshapersnorfolk@gmail.com](mailto:globalshapersnorfolk@gmail.com).*

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## Global Shapers by the numbers

458 Global Shapers Hubs worldwide

6,362 Global Shapers worldwide

The Global Shapers Norfolk Hub was chartered in 2014

Notable Shapers include 2 United States mayors, 2,000+ entrepreneurs, and 1 crown prince





# #WeAre757 Millennials