Campus expansion drives fundraising push

Drive along Main Street, and you’ll see just how much progress has been made on Virginia Commonwealth University’s 11-acre Monroe Park Campus expansion.

The structural components (steel for the School of Business and concrete for the School of Engineering) are well under way; you can see the “skeleton” of the building.

But that doesn’t mean the need to raise money for the project is eliminated.

“Watching the remarkable progress being made on the building is so exciting,” said Anne D. Jacobson, associate vice president for advancement, who is working closely with the two schools on fundraising efforts. “The ongoing construction fuels our push to reach our ambitious fundraising goals.”

When the fundraising goals for the Campaign for VCU were announced in April 2004, the business school was charged with raising $32 million, and the engineering school’s goal was $65 million. At the end of July, business still needed to raise $5.8 million and engineering $3.17 million. The funds will support the building project as well as scholarships, professorships and other programmatic initiatives. The campaign ends June 30, 2007.

The $228 million Monroe Park Campus project includes construction of a new School of Business building, an expansion of the School of Engineering, renovation of the historic Central Belting Building for the VCU Adcenter, the first of two residential colleges and a parking garage.

When complete, the campus will integrate and promote the interdisciplinary nature of the two schools, preparing future engineers and business leaders to enter and succeed in the ever-growing world of high-tech industry. The buildings are expected to be open for students at the beginning of the spring 2008 semester.

“Finally being able to visualize this exciting project and see the tangible progress, we hope, has energized greater and greater numbers of our alumni into supporting the campaign,” Jacobson said.

Throughout the campaign, the unique, collaborative nature of the Monroe Park Campus expansion has encouraged many donors, including Wachovia Bank/Wachovia Securities, SunTrust, and Hanover, Henrico and Chesterfield counties, to split their gifts between the two schools.

“It is our intention that VCU will be the national model for successfully combining engineering and business in both the curriculum and in real life-based project experiences,” said School of Engineering Dean Russell D. Jamison, Ph.D.

And as the campaign enters the homestretch, School of Business Dean Michael Sesnowitz, Ph.D., hopes others agree that such an alliance is vital for the community as well as the students.

☆ see Expansion, continued on Page 4
Looking for a new way to make a gift to VCU?

A new law has made it easier for donors to make charitable contributions from their IRA accounts.

Signed by President George W. Bush in August, the Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows tax-free, no-penalty contributions from an individual’s IRA directly to a charity. Donors age 70½ and older can contribute as much as $100,000 per year. They will not be eligible, however, for a tax deduction for such a gift.

At Virginia Commonwealth University, these gifts are more than welcome and can be put to use in a variety of ways.

“This legislation offers an excellent opportunity for alumni and friends to create a new endowment fund or add to an existing endowment at VCU,” said Thomas C. Burke, executive director of the VCU Foundation. “It is important to note that this is a time-sensitive option for charitable giving.”

The provision expires at the end of 2007, so act fast.

For additional information about making a gift from your IRA, contact Tom Burke at (804) 828-3958 or tcburke@vcu.edu, or visit the VCU Foundation Web site at www.vcuf.org and click on Ways to Give, then Planned Gifts.

Expansion, continued from Page 3

“This is a rare opportunity for alumni and other friends of VCU to play a part in such a transforming project,” he said. “When the campus is complete, our students will have an opportunity to learn in a truly collaborative environment, one that will provide exceptional preparation for the challenges they will experience when they enter the corporate world.”

For information about donating to the School of Business campaign, contact Douglas G. Knapp, director of development and alumni affairs, at (804) 827-1805 or dgknapp@vcu.edu. To make a gift to the School of Engineering, contact Brian S. Thomas, vice president of the School of Engineering Foundation, at (804) 828-0067 or bsthomas@vcu.edu. To learn more about the Campaign for VCU, visit www.vcu.edu/campaign.

The Campaign for VCU update

Some schools and units have reached their campaign target; however, a handful still have money to raise. The figures below are as of July 31, 2006. The Campaign for VCU closes June 30, 2007.

- Advantage Virginia Tennis Academy – Lobs and Lessons, Phase I: $310,565
- Athletics: $2,510,716
- Rice Center, Phase I: $2,726,243
- School of Business: $5,835,609
- School of Dentistry, Clinical Simulation Lab: $3,990,660
- School of Engineering: $3,169,803
- School of Nursing: $1,715,849
- School of Pharmacy: $2,090,483
- Schools of Social Work and Education: $266,273

Reynolds family turns their tragedies into hope

In 1966, avid flyer R. Roland Reynolds, a member of the Reynolds Metals family, was at Byrd Field preparing to take his plane for a flight. Sadly, he accidentally walked into its moving propeller.

He was rushed to what is now the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center with severe head trauma, recalled his cousin Richard S. “Major” Reynolds III, president of the Richard S. Reynolds Foundation.

“They tried to help, but there wasn’t much that could be done,” he said.

Out of that tragedy sprung hope and generosity. In 1981, the Richard S. Reynolds Foundation made the first of many gifts to VCU.

“Our giving began when that tragedy occurred,” Reynolds said. “Ultimately, we funded a chair in Roland’s name that would deal with head trauma.”

Since then, the Reynolds family has continued to support neuroscience research in VCU’s School of Medicine, making gifts totaling more than $3 million.

Other Reynolds family experiences — some heartbreaking, some with happier endings — strengthened the ties, Reynolds said.

The death of Major Reynolds’ brother also has played a part in the foundation’s generosity. Former Lt. Gov. J. Sargeant Reynolds died in 1971 at age 34 of a brain tumor while he was in office.

This summer, the foundation again moved in support of the medical school with a $1 million pledge to endow the William G. Reynolds, Jr., Chair in Neuro-Oncology, which will expand options for patients with cancers of the brain and spinal cord.

“The latest step in our ongoing relationship began when my cousin Bill sadly died a little over three years ago. He had a brain tumor, like my brother,” Reynolds said. “Ultimately, it couldn’t be dealt with. He had some quality time, but it was not survivable.”

Businessman and philanthropist Bill Reynolds served the Richmond community until his 2003 death. After joining the Reynolds Co.’s law department in 1968, he rose to the post of vice president of government relations and public affairs. His community service included a three-year term on VCU’s Board of Visitors and stints as a trustee of the MCV Foundation Board and as a member of the School of Business Advisory Council.

Major Reynolds said three factors contributed to the foundation’s decision to fund the chair at this point: the Campaign for the VCU Massey Cancer Center, the death of Bill Reynolds and the opportunity to double the gift’s impact. The dean of the School of Medicine, Dr. Jerome F. Strauss III, has made a commitment to match the Reynolds grant dollar-for-dollar.

“Creating a $2 million chair really was an inducement,” Reynolds said.

Once fully funded, the Reynolds chair will support the work of a medical oncologist who will lead a research program that translates new discoveries in basic science labs to the clinic, with the goal of developing new therapies for treating malignant brain tumors. The new recruit will be an addition to a neuro-oncology multispecialty team that draws physicians from a half-dozen departments. Key recruitments to this team have resulted in the expansion of its expertise and research, providing treatment strategies that carry patients from the initial visit through follow-up rehabilitation.

William G. Reynolds Jr.

 Darling Reynolds, continued on Page 7
In June 2003, David and Sharron Hart unexpectedly lost their daughter, April Marie, who was a student at Virginia Commonwealth University.

With the help of friends, family and their community, David and Sharron responded to tragedy with hope for the future by establishing the April Marie “Sweet” Hart Scholarship just weeks after their daughter’s death.

April, who began studying to become a teacher in 2000, was a role model not only at VCU but also in her hometown of Sandston, Va. Before starting at VCU, April had gained experience by instructing children as a gymnastics and cheerleading coach.

“There are so many kids out there who never got a chance to experience the gifts that she had, which were love and teaching,” Sharron said.

Since July 2003, David, Sharron, April’s brother, Jonathan, and the rest of the extended Hart family have accumulated more than $30,000 for the scholarship through a series of grass-roots fundraisers. The scholarship is awarded each year to a student in the College of Humanities and Sciences or the School of Education who plans to be a teacher and has shown interest in gymnastics or cheerleading.

April’s friends and former students at the East Richmond Gymnastics Center jumped at the chance to help build the scholarship. A group kicked off the Harts’ fundraising with an event April had participated in before, a “cartwheel-a-thon,” in which gymnasts complete as many cartwheels as they can to collect on donors’ pledges. It had been one of April’s favorite fundraisers.

The family also teamed up with an Applebee’s Neighborhood Grill and Bar for another fundraiser, offering a pancake breakfast for donations. At this event, which took place at a Tappahannock restaurant near April’s grandparents’ home in Lottsburg, the manager donated food, and family members pitched in by preparing the flapjacks and serving customers. All of the proceeds went to the scholarship fund.

The Harts started an equally successful bake sale at the bank where Sharron’s mother works. Now, Sharron said, the annual “April Sweetheart” bake sale takes place near Valentine’s Day, with sales of homemade cakes and pies donated by bank employees raising about $1,000 a year.

Each year around Christmas, the family also holds the April Marie Sweetheart Shopping Spree in Tappahannock where vendors sell their goods with a percentage of the proceeds benefiting the scholarship.

David Scott Green, the first scholarship winner in 2004-05, knew April not only as a high school classmate but also as a co-worker at the gym, where he was a cheerleading coach. Another recipient, Kelly Ferguson, took her first tumbling class from April.

While the most recent recipient, Laura Davenport, did not know April, she said she is inspired by April’s drive to teach children.

“As soon as I read the description of the scholarship, I knew it was a good fit for me. April Marie Hart had a passion for gymnastics, cheerleading and teaching children, and I share all of these joys,” said Davenport, an undergraduate science major who is simultaneously pursuing a Master of Teaching in Early Childhood/Elementary Education through the extended five-year program in the School of Education.

April’s success now serves as a benchmark that motivates scholarship recipients to do their best. She started gymnastics at age 9, training at the center where she would go on to teach during her senior year of high school. At VCU, April earned high marks during her three years at the university.

April’s father, David, said the family created the scholarship so they could see students such as Davenport succeed.

“We did this more or less to get other kids to become teachers and help the little ones that April loved so much,” he said. “She wanted to get them when they were young and show them learning could be fun.”

For information about donating to the April Marie “Sweet” Hart Scholarship, contact Anne Hoffler, director of donor relations, at (804) 828-3383 or ahoffler@vcu.edu.

Richard S. Reynolds Foundation history of giving
The foundation has donated more than $3 million to VCU and its programs since the early 1980s. Here is a partial list of the programs the money has benefited:

• Richard Roland Reynolds Neurosurgical Laboratory, established in 1982
• Richard Roland Reynolds Chair in Neurosurgery, established in 1991
• Harold F. Young Neurosurgery Fund
• VCU Massey Cancer Center
• Rhoda Thalhimer Endowed Chair in American Art
• School of Nursing Campaign
• Bishop Walter F. Sullivan Chair in Catholic Studies

For more information about making a gift to the School of Medicine, contact Tom Holland, associate dean of development, at (804) 828-3800 or tholland@vcu.edu.
Becky’s Garden blossoms into a healing reality

Close your eyes and imagine yourself surrounded by gorgeous flowers, elegant water fountains, geometric sculptures and small trees. Feel yourself wrapped in a gentle breeze as tranquility fills you and warm sunlight beams down.

Now picture the same scene in downtown Richmond, Va.

No need to pinch yourself — this dream world really exists at the heart of the new Goodwin Research Laboratory at the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center. In 2001, this oasis was the vision of Rebecca Massey, a dedicated volunteer and fundraiser for the center. Thanks to community support, her dream was realized with the construction of a 3,000-square-foot garden.

Massey imagined creating a “healing garden” that would sit on the rooftop of a parking deck below. This, she believed, would give visitors the sensation of floating high above the city on a cloud of calming art and lush greenery. The elevation of the garden even distorts the sound of traffic from Interstate 95, making the noises nothing more than a soothing swoosh.

Named “Becky’s Garden” after its creator and greatest champion and completed in May, this garden is a place where cancer patients and their families can take a break from treatments and embrace nature.

“We had hoped this garden would ease the suffering and pain that comes along with cancer treatment,” Massey said. “It provides a space that promotes nature and a natural healing environment and gives a respite from the medical environment.”

The garden’s unique location provided some roadblocks as Massey, with the help of a garden committee and national landscape design firm EDAW, made floral and architectural decisions. They accommodated the rooftop’s piping by varying soil depths and strategized to meet the plants’ irrigation needs.

Massey and the other planners carefully selected plants to ensure odors would not bother sensitive chemotherapy patients. They also avoided berry-sprouting plants that would attract birds. Massey said most of the garden’s maintenance will be done by volunteers. The garden bursts with trees, shrubs, flowering bulbs, perennials and annuals.

Because the entire laboratory is focused on collaboration and finding new treatments, the garden, she hopes, will also serve as a site for collaboration among staff.

“I see it as a transition between treatment of the patients and the research for finding the cures,” she said.

Massey’s support for cancer research and awareness stretches well beyond the garden. For more than a decade, she has tirelessly helped as a volunteer at the Massey Cancer Center, which was founded by Dr. Walter Lawrence. The Massey Family Foundation gave the leadership gift for the center and has continually provided major financial support throughout the years.

Massey’s motivation? She wants to set an example for her three sons and provide resources that could one day help eradicate cancer.

“I do not want my future grandchildren to wake up every day of their lives wondering which cancer they may be afflicted with,” she said. “There is still far too much suffering and death from cancer.”

Massey said she is inspired not only by “the responsibility of a place carrying your name” but also by other individuals who have helped make Massey Cancer Center such a respected and successful institution. People who stand out in her mind include Dr. Gordon Ginder, the center’s director, and Alice and William Goodwin, who have generously supported the Campaign for Massey.

In return, the people who have contributed to the research laboratory and the garden call Massey the piece that brings the whole puzzle together. Alice Goodwin said Massey’s spirited work has provided crucial support for the garden and for cancer research in general. “I can’t say enough about Becky’s energy and all she did for the garden,” Goodwin said. “She’s been in that garden every single day for several years. She has worked on every piece and every minute detail.”

Shelly Arthur, a landscape designer who served on the garden committee, said Massey truly cares about improving the lives of patients and families.

“She’s a person who gives 100 percent and gets the job done,” Arthur said.

In addition to large contributors, Massey also considers the people who give $10 or $20 gifts essential to the success of the cancer center, and she thinks the community is fortunate to have a National Cancer Institute-designated Cancer Center in its midst.

“We know with today’s cancer statistics one in every two men, one in every three women will develop a form of cancer. If we live long enough, we will all be touched by cancer. We’re all involved,” Massey said.

For more information about donating to Becky’s Garden or to the VCU Massey Cancer Center, contact Rosemary LaVista, executive director of development and external relations, at (804) 828-1452 or rlavista@vcu.edu.

Inside Becky’s Garden

- Three water features
- Three sculptures commissioned and one donated for the garden: solid bronze screens used as walls by local artist Allen Jessee, a lobby mobile sculpture by VCU faculty member Kendall Buster, a large stainless steel piece by Steve Bickley of Virginia Tech and iron orbs by Fred Crist of Fredericksburg
- Seating includes an arbor swing and versatile, lightweight chairs that can be easily moved
- $1.5 million raised
Early lessons teach the benefits of lifelong giving

For Gaurav “G” Shrestha (B.S. ’03), making a substantial gift to Virginia Commonwealth University was a no-brainer.

“If I had gone to another school, I don’t think I would be where I am today. This gift is my way of saying thank you,” said Shrestha, who now is a financial planner with Virginia Asset Management. “Being young, it’s easy to blow a hundred bucks out on the town in one night. Or, just think of it as the Starbucks effect: a $1,000 gift is $83 a month or $20 a week or 4 bucks a workday, which is coffee and a muffin.”

At an early age, Shrestha was shown the power of giving back. When he was a baby, his parents, Sumitra and Chandra, emigrated from Nepal. They made the move, in large part, thanks to grants and scholarships Chandra, who was pursuing his Ph.D. in economics, received from the University of Kentucky.

As a teen, Shrestha again benefited from the generosity of others. He earned the Tobias Wolff (author of “This Boy’s Life”) Scholarship to attend the prestigious Hill School in Pottstown, Pa. Scholarships (plus a full-time job at SunTrust) helped Shrestha fund his VCU education, too.

“Being the benefactor — directly or indirectly — of the generosity of others taught me the power of giving back,” he said. “Because I received scholarships to attend VCU, by someone else giving back, I was able to save enough money to buy a house right out of college. This gift is my way of taking the little success I’ve achieved so far and giving back to a good cause.”

The School of Business, of course, is grateful for the generosity and championship of one of its alumni.

“G was an outstanding student both in and outside the classroom. As a student, he contributed to the intellectual life of the school in so many ways,” said Dean Michael Sesnowitz, Ph.D. “He is continuing to do so as an alumnus, and the school and its students are most grateful for his support.”

During his student days, Shrestha spearheaded the effort to revamp and revitalize the student-run Financial Management Association at the School of Business. Under his leadership, the group earned superior chapter status two years in a row.

After graduating, Shrestha worked with administration officials to create the Young Alumni Council. They saw the need for a steppingstone to keep students linked to the university immediately after graduation.

“I wanted to get young alumni more involved and connected with older alumni for networking and for establishing prospective mentoring relationships with successful, older alumni,” he said. “If alumni are connected right after graduation they are more likely to give back to VCU. This group benefits everybody.”

The Young Alumni Council has made great strides in its first year, organizing social get-togethers, career assistance seminars and other events to encourage participation with the VCU Alumni Association and other alumni.

“G has done a great job,” said Chip Rossi, executive director of alumni relations. “The group is making progress, offering good events and activities in the first year, and we hope to take it to the next level this year.”

One of Shrestha’s main goals as president of the Young Alumni Council is to increase overall alumni association membership. Often, alumni join but then forget to renew their membership. Shrestha understands how easy it can be to let your membership lapse.

Last year, Shrestha was in a New York City bar waiting for a phone call. He checked his messages and was surprised to hear Bill Ginther, then-president of the VCU Alumni Association, on the line. Ginther was participating in a phone-a-thon to encourage lapsed members to rejoin and found Shrestha’s name on the list.

“I thought it was a joke. This is crazy; of course I’m a member. I’m on the board!” he said to himself at the time.

But sure enough, he had forgotten to renew. “Now, I’m a lifetime member,” Shrestha said with a chuckle.

But why should other alumni invest in a membership?

“Why wouldn’t you join? To me, it’s so inexpensive to become a member plus it’s a small way of giving back because the association does so many things for students.”

And that message of giving back, of helping others, is a mantra Shrestha preaches to the people he encounters as a financial planner.

“I’ve also been able to witness the joy on my clients’ faces when we’ve incorporated charitable giving as a part of their estate and financial plan. Oftentimes, people have charitable intent (like making a gift to their alma mater), but are unaware of the many creative, tax-favored techniques that are out there,” he said. “Once they realize the benefits not only to the charity or institution but also to them, they are more likely to give. It’s a win-win.”

As someone who gives advice for a living, what words of wisdom does Shrestha have for his fellow VCU alumni?

“If you can’t donate money, donate time or become a member of the association,” Shrestha said. “If a pesky 24-year-old can do it, so can everyone else.”

For information about making a gift to the School of Business, contact Douglas G. Knapp, director of development and alumni affairs, at (804) 827-1805 or dgknapp@vcu.edu.
New rooms enhance the care of very ill children

At the Virginia Commonwealth University Children’s Medical Center, providing pediatric palliative care is a full-time mission.

This past June, a new pediatric palliative care patient room and waiting room were unveiled. The pediatric palliative care room is like no other room on the pediatric floor. Its homelike decor meets families’ emotional and spiritual needs while facilitating excellent medical care and making the children feel at ease with their potentially life-limiting conditions.

The patient room, known as the “comfort room,” was renovated with funds from Ronald McDonald House Charities of Richmond. The MCV Auxiliary and the Brett Jones Foundation provided funding for the renovation of the family waiting area, known as the Arnold Salzberg Family Waiting Room. The room was named after Salzberg to recognize his service as a pediatric surgeon and division chair for pediatric surgery.

“With the ever-increasing technological advances in health care, there is much focus on preservation of life. The question is, at what cost?” said Deborah Fisher, clinical director of pediatric palliative care at VCU Children’s.

The rooms’ pleasant colors, soft lighting and gentle atmosphere are designed to enhance family-centered care. The comfort room is home to a calming mural portraying a family of deer, a shimmering waterfall and a pink sky. Photographs in the waiting room continue the pediatric inpatient unit’s existing theme of “animals around the world” with crisp, up-close shots of wildlife.

Such private spaces will allow tender moments to go undisturbed, a goal Fisher said VCU Children’s Medical Center constantly strives to provide for families. With the larger comfort room, family members can easily fit by the bedside without overwhelming the child. The waiting room provides a place for families to go when they need to escape the daily stressors of caring for an ill child.

“Parents may just need a break to get away, quietly reflect or let their guard down. The waiting room is close to the palliative care room,” Fisher said.

At the celebration, Dr. Sheldon Retchin, chief executive officer of VCU Health System and vice president for Health Sciences, said the commitment to care should not be based on statistics alone. Although more adults die from illnesses than children, he said, more importance should not be placed on adult care. Each year, more than 50,000 children die while the number of adults who die from illnesses annually — 2.5 million — is considerably higher. Retchin expressed admiration that the VCU Medical Center dedicates so many resources to providing top-notch pediatric palliative care, in spite of these statistics.

‘Surprise’ award honors researcher’s giving

It takes a lot to surprise Louis Harris, Ph.D.

But his friends and admirers on the MCV Campus and at the MCV Foundation, with the assistance of his wife, Ruth, managed to pull off a big one.

At the MCV Foundation’s annual dinner in June, Harris was awarded the W. Robert Irby, MD Award as the outstanding MCV Campus faculty philanthropist. The award was established by the foundation in memory of Dr. Bob Irby, who was renowned for his fundraising prowess, which nearly equaled his patient-care and diagnostic skills. Previous winners are Drs. George Vetrovec, Richard Wenzel, Harry Young, Gordon Ginder and A. “Berry” Fowler.

In theory, Harris, 79, is retired, but you’d never know it judging from his travel, research, grant-writing and fundraising activities. He has won every award given by and has held every office in the national and international professional societies of which he is a member. He also continues administrative duties as vice chair of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine’s Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, overseeing a $15 million research program.

“The award was a very well-kept secret,” said Harris, relaxed in a comfy-looking chair in his office, which is lined with the awards and certificates recognizing his accomplishments and features a stunning painting of his wife. “I didn’t realize why everyone was so insistent I attend the dinner.”

He is a member of the MCV Foundation Board of Trustees, but this year’s dinner threatened to take second place to a professional meeting in Arizona. Thanks to his wife’s intervention, he headed home sooner than planned.

“It’s nice to be recognized, particularly by the board of the foundation. It’s nice in many ways because it recognizes people who are not necessarily able to give millions,” Harris said.

The Harrises have been generous to VCU, contributing more than $605,000 over the years. The first gift they made more than 20 years ago was to the Smith Building Campaign Fund. At the time, Harris was chair of the growing Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, which needed a home.

“We were eager to get that building up,” he said, “so Ruth and I decided to make a gift to get things started.”

As the department and the university expanded, Harris identified another issue: the lack of endowed professorships.

“We were a relatively new university, with comparatively little endowment,” Harris said. “The only way to become first rate is to attract and retain the best faculty. It then follows that we will get the best students, and that’s what makes a university great.”

He has set out to do his share to remedy the first part of that situation — attracting the best faculty — with the creation of the Louis and Ruth Harris Distinguished Professorship in Pharmacology and Toxicology. In addition, in recognition of the growing “cross-pollination” within the university, the couple established the Louis and Ruth Harris Exceptional Scholar Professorship in Biomedical Engineering in the VCU School of Engineering.

To address the second issue — boosting the quality and number of students — Harris led the department’s fundraising initiative to establish the PharmTox Graduate Student Support endowment. The income from the endowment is used to increase
“Kids don’t understand what’s rare and what’s not,” Retchin said. “I’m really proud of a medical center that recognizes this need for taking care of kids who are, after all, our most vulnerable population, the most needy, the most innocent.”

As Lauren Goodloe, Ph.D., director of medical and pediatric nursing at VCU Health System, noted at the June celebration, even free-standing children’s hospitals often don’t have a program devoted solely to palliative care. With the help of several generous gifts, Goodloe said, VCU Children’s has taken steps toward providing some of the best pediatric care in the region.

“We take care of these children every day and have for years. It’s nothing new that we’re taking care of them,” Goodloe said, “now we just have some of the facilities that we need and a lot of the expertise to make this a world-renowned program.”

Coupled with VCU Children’s dedication to excellent pediatric palliative care, these rooms quickly made an impact; just weeks after they opened, she said, families were already noticing the difference.

As a free-standing children’s hospital is planned for completion in 2012, Fisher said she hopes an expansion of pediatric palliative care is in the cards. Fisher hopes the facility, which will be built on the block bounded by 10th, 11th, Marshall and Broad streets, will have additional rooms dedicated to pediatric palliative care.

For more information about donating to the VCU Children’s Medical Center, contact Jennifer A. O’Rourke, director of development, at (804) 828-4326 or jorourke@vcu.edu.

At the Anthem Gurney Tourney 2006 in June, teams of hospital staff members and corporate employees raced 32 hilariously decorated gurneys through a wacky obstacle course to raise money for the Hospital Hospitality House and the MCV Auxiliary. More than $130,000 was donated for the Hospital Hospitality House, which provides lodging for those who must stay in Richmond while family members are receiving care at MCV Hospitals, the Veterans Affairs Hospital or six other area hospitals, and the MCV Auxiliary, whose donations this year went to Virginia Commonwealth University’s Pauley Heart Center. The heart center at the VCU Medical Center is recognized as a national leader in developing and implementing cardiovascular procedures. In addition, volunteers logged more than 3,000 hours in preparation for the event.

A new fundraising event was added to the mix this year in conjunction with the tourney. At Dinner with Indy, presented by Dominion, more than 150 guests mingled with the IRL community, including drivers Bryan Herta and Buddy Lazier, at a barbecue-style dinner. Attendees tested their driving skills on an Indy car simulator, bid on Indy-related items in a live auction and competed for a chance to win a Mazda Miata in a putting contest.