

# PORTSMOUTH PARTNERSHIP

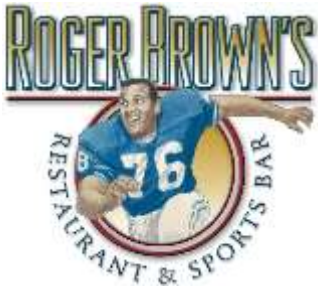
Promoting economic growth, leadership and education within the City of Portsmouth

**BUSINESS serving COMMUNITY**

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## PORTSMOUTH RESTAURANTS SERVE HOSPITALITY – AND COMMUNITY



**QUESTION :** Where would organizations like OASIS, HER, Starbase, the Humane Society, the Sports Hall of Fame, EDMARC, the PIT and a host of others be without the commitment and generosity of Roger Brown's and Mario's restaurants?

**ANSWER:** Over \$250,000 poorer.

**PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEMBERS** Ken Jolley, co-owner of Mario's, and Roger Brown operate businesses which, from the start, have been more than simply restaurants: they have been gathering spots – so-called “third places,” beyond work and home – where people are welcomed to connect with great food, drink, and people. But beyond that, both businessmen have been committed to connecting the goodwill generated by their restaurants' positive energies with local causes – while providing large helpings of good times, to boot.



The Schooner crews' oyster roast



Tidewater Youth Foundation supporters

**ROGER BROWN'S HAS** been a supporter of Portsmouth tourism from its first days, supplying food for the crews of the **Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race** oyster roast, plus fruit baskets for participating ships, to the tune of \$35,000 over 14 years. But they have also held events for the fight against child abuse, raising \$12,000, the Sports Hall of Fame Youth Awards (\$36,600), the PIT (over \$12,000) and others, including the Tidewater Charity Bowl, Roc Solid Foundation, American Cancer Society, Coast Guard Days, MDA Lockup, and a host of other non-profits. After the **Partnership's Lefcoe Leadership Class** of 2012 completed its refurbishment project for the Tidewater Youth Foundation's Airline Blvd. facility, **Roger Brown's co-owner and Lefcoe alumnus Curtis Lyons** (class of 2006) volunteered the restaurant's space for a fund-raiser that included music and a silent auction. TYF gained new supporters and new funding, and one 8- year old danced right out of her shoes (see photo at right)! With events over the years, raised and/or contributed over **\$100,000** to the Portsmouth community.



**CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE INVOLVED MORE** than just dollars, however. For over three years co-owner Curtis Lyons has volunteered with **Help and Emergency Response's Male Mentoring Program**. The three year old effort provides monthly outings for the children of domestic violence and broken homes, hosted by men in the community who show that they care by listening to and guiding kids at critical times in their lives.

**BUT THERE'S STILL MORE:** events, fund-raising and good times don't tell the whole story. **ROGER BROWN'S FOUNDATION**, founded in 2007, annually provides **scholarships** to Portsmouth's Woodrow Wilson, I.C. Norcom, and Churchland High School grads, plus makes contributions to two children's charities. Supported primarily by annual golf tournaments, the Foundation's

scholarship awards, plus contributions to EDMARC, the STARBASE Victory campus, the Boys and Girls Club of SE Virginia, and the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame Education Program, have totaled \$84,000.

WHEN FORMER PARTNERSHIP PRESIDENT KEN JOLLEY and his partners took ownership of Mario's four years ago, they were determined that the restaurant would "hold on to the things that make us a landmark," plus host events that would "raise a significant amount of funds for our community and charities." They have hit the bull's-eye on both counts.



A PIZZA, BLUES AND BEERS event in 2011 raised \$6,700 for the Portsmouth Schools Foundation and the Partnership. Since then, events have been organized for the likes of the Hoffler Creek Wildlife Foundation, the Honor and Respect for Fallen Soldiers group, Portsmouth High School Athletics, and others.

IN JUST THE LAST YEAR Mario's has staged three major fund-raisers. Shake Your Tail Feather, a Thanksgiving event benefiting OASIS, raised \$8,000. An oyster roast for the Portsmouth Humane Society raised over \$4,000 in food and cash. This, the second PHS oyster roast in the books, will be held again soon. For last summer's Pig Pickin' and Luau,

An early event benefitted schools held for the HER Shelter (Help and Emergency Response), sand covered the restaurant's parking lot, tents were erected, outdoor bars set up, and \$4,000 was raised. This, too, will happen again in 2015, as will new support for Hoffler Creek Wildlife Foundation. And . . . beyond the major events, Mario's continues to host monthly "give-back" parties for the Portsmouth Restoration and Education Corp., benefitting Cradock's Afton Theatre restoration. Each month a percentage of the night's proceeds are donated to the organization, and thus far the effort has yielded \$1,200.

MARIO'S COMES BY ITS PHILANTHROPIC MINDSET HONESTLY, as Ken Jolley and his partners share a long history of generosity. As President of the Portsmouth Partnership in 2006, Jolley steered the organization's support for a 10-house Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build with PRHA and others in the Brighton neighborhood. Since then, Jolley and his company, Associated Contracting Services, has built three more Habitat for Humanity houses, built Norfolk's "St. Jude's Dream Home Fund-raising Event" House in 2008, and performed \$30,000 worth of improvements to the Beazley Foundation's Senior Living Center. Mario's partner Mike O'Connor and wife Linda, both OASIS board members, host monthly OASIS board meetings at the restaurant and, beyond supporting its mission, provide for ongoing maintenance at the facility. Executive Director Jo-Anne Roisen asserts that, beyond direct support, Mario's in-kind work, its coordination of events such as the Peanut Butter and Jelly Jam, Soup Cook-Off, and other events have been worth over \$50,000 to her organization. At HER, Executive Director Beth Cross, too, cites the value of Jolley's in-kind support. Beyond the construction, with the Beazley Foundation, of HER's Sweethaven Bakery kitchen, which provides revenue and meaningful job skills for HER's women, Jolley "has a business eye that serves to protect us," spotting and correcting facility issues that, if ignored, would prove far more costly down the road.

ROGER BROWN'S AND MARIO'S are great places that attract good people – people who are glad to support the restaurants' many "adopted" community organizations. Both Brown and Jolley exemplify the kind of forward-thinking, generous leadership that every community needs. Their actions demonstrate the Portsmouth Partnership's commitment to positive relationships, and exemplify the motto:

## BUSINESS SERVING COMMUNITY

## JOB, INTERNSHIP AND MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES . . .

Is your company looking for seasonal or summer help? The Portsmouth Public School System has responsible students eager to work in the areas of nursing, culinary arts, child care, the hospitality industry, industrial welding, and more. To find out how you, your company and our kids can benefit, please contact:

Craig Hill, Coordinator, Career and Technical Education

Portsmouth Public Schools: 822-2711 or 822-2927

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PORTSMOUTH PARTNERSHIP - CITY OF PORTSMOUTH - PHRA  
GPDC 15 years 1,000 jobs \$22,000,000 tax revenue

