

SERVANT LEADER AWARD WINNER

Hollie Freeman '18

Executive Director, MathScience Innovation Center

How long have you been in the Richmond region?

I was born and raised in Richmond and attended Open High School. I went to college in NYC and stayed in the northeast (NYC and Boston, MA) for 25 years. I returned home to Richmond seven years ago.

In which locality do you reside?

I live in Henrico County.

What brought you here and/or what has kept you here?

I came back home to spend time with my aging grandmother and father. It's been wonderful to reconnect (in person) with high school friends and especially with my friends that I've known since pre-school and elementary school.

Who has inspired you along your journey?

There are many people who inspire me. Marian Wright Edelman is a person who inspires me with her tenacity around important issues that matter, particularly for children who are under-resourced in this country. For the rest, I take inspiration from a myriad of friends, colleagues and community members who exemplify kindness, passion, focus and fun. For me, it's not about how many high leverage connections you have (although that is helpful when running a business) but it's more about, are you kind, are you fair, do you help others in need, do you have a heart for your work.

How has LMR helped you be a better leader?

LMR provided me with a "behind the curtain" understanding of many of the issues with which the metro Richmond community is facing. Also, the cohort(s) pushes to the foreground, individuals that are ready and willing to talk about and work collectively on issues facing the community.

What projects are you working on?

I am currently working on restructuring the MathScience Innovation Center to be a statewide model for STEM education. I am also working on several personal projects including photography showcases and educational consulting.

What's the best piece of advice you have ever received?

My mother always says, "it's not the load that breaks you, it's how you carry the load." You're not working hard by yourself — and you've furthermore got a responsibility to ensure no one else is either.

What advice do you wish to share with other leaders in the Richmond Region?

It's important to actively support ideas, people, organizations, etc. that matter to you. You have to be "in the arena" (doing the work) not sitting on the sidelines cheering people on.

