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## **VSU STUDENTS HELP PRESERVE THE HALIFAX TRIANGLE IN PETERSBURG**

This semester students in Dr. Alice Joyner's Housing and Society class at Virginia State University researched the history and significance of the Halifax Triangle to inform preservation efforts in the City of Petersburg. Their research will be used by the City's Preservation Planner to draft a nomination for the Triangle to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of the 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in America. Their portfolios were displayed last weekend at Sycamore Rouge as part of the Halifax Jazz and Blues Festival.

Students researched mentions of the Halifax Triangle, also called "The Avenue," in books and magazines, collected photographs and maps, and interviewed local residents about their recollections of the Triangle in its heyday.

"Being in the company of Mr. Edward Farley and Dr. Hermanze Fauntleroy, who explained the history about The Avenue to me, was a real tribute. It would be an honor to see the Halifax Triangle restored with new Black businesses," said Mrs. Beverly Veney, a student in Joyner's class.

If selected as one of the 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in America, the Halifax Triangle will receive nationwide media attention and increased interest from preservation funders. The Triangle, once a center of activity for black-owned businesses and musical performances, now suffers from vacant and blighted buildings. The collapse of a building last year highlighted the imminent threat to the Triangle if it is not restored soon.

"I have a better understanding, and a greater appreciation for the need to redevelop, revitalize, and maintain communities as a result of this project. I hope that our work will have an effect on what future students, business owners and residents of this area will experience going forward," said Tyanna Abrams, a student in Joyner's class.

The Phoenix Project brings resources from multiple institutions of higher education to meet community-identified needs in Petersburg. Students, faculty and administrators work with community members year-round on economic and community development projects in the City, while advancing the universities' mission of teaching and research. This summer in Petersburg the Phoenix Project will debut the full version of its Nonprofit Leadership Programs. Dozens of undergraduate and graduate students from throughout Virginia will spend eight weeks learning and serving in Petersburg. Community organizations that wish to request assistance should complete an online form at [www.phoenixproject.org](http://www.phoenixproject.org) or call the Phoenix Project at (703) 644-1605.

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