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WALKING WITH PURPOSE

COMMUNITY WALKS CELEBRATE HOMETOWN PRIDE AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

by [Kelley McGee](#) | November 12, 2025*Read time: about 2 min*

The sidewalk hummed with cheerful chatter as nearly 200 walkers made their way from the University to neighboring Warwick High School. The event marked the fourth time President Bill Kelly led a delegation of students, staff, law enforcement, and civic leaders on a visit to a local school. The Community Walks are designed to build connections with Christopher Newport's hometown of Newport News, as well as celebrate the University's growing partnerships with the public schools.



"Our goal is to be the hometown university for the Peninsula, the South Side and the Hampton Roads region, and certainly for the high school that is right across the street from us!" said President Kelly, adding how proud the University is that so many Warwick High Raiders have chosen to become Captains.

Warwick's marching band and cheerleaders gave walkers an enthusiastic welcome, which included performing a special cheer created just for the occasion. Athletes from various teams also took part in the welcome, along with

students representing the high school's Naval Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corp (NJROTC), the Governor's Health Sciences Academy, and the International Baccalaureate Programme.

Warwick Principal Tiffany Thompson presented President Kelly with a school lapel pin and baseball cap, declaring him an "honorary Warwick High Raider." For his part, President Kelly extended a special invitation to Warwick's students to attend men's and women's basketball games during the upcoming season.

"We'd like students to come over for a men's and women's basketball game. Have your pep band join our pep band. Have your cheerleaders join our cheerleaders, and have your students join our students on campus," he said.

Macoi Spencer, a '23 Warwick graduate who is now a [Community Captain](#), spoke at the event. She urged students to consider all of the great opportunities available to them close to home at Christopher Newport.

"I had worried about tuition costs, moving, and most importantly, being homesick and losing touch with all my friends and family. But little did I know my solution was just a couple of blocks away," she said. "The Community Captains program has opened up a world of opportunities, allowing me to step into the area of career development and access a vast network of opportunities, right in my own community."

Students weren't the only ones inspired by Spencer's words. Wendy Pearson, mom of three CNU Captains and a lifelong educator, was so moved by Spencer and the school spirit she witnessed at the walk, that it inspired her to take the next step of getting more involved in the city she now calls home.

"I discussed with school administrators the possibility of working with students to provide math tutoring assistance. I miss being part of a school community and am still trying to find where I can fit into the school communities here in our new home in Newport News," said Pearson. "I'm so glad I decided to join the walk today because I've been curious about how Christopher Newport and Warwick High School have been working to deepen their relationship, and have been so impressed and interested in the success of the Community Captains program."

In addition to parents and local residents, other community members that joined in the walk included state Delegate Shelly Simonds, Newport News School Board Chairman Dr. Terri Best, Newport News Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Michele Mitchell, School Board Vice Chair Maritsa Alger, and School Board member Lisa Surles-Law.
