

**STAYING IN TOUCH W/LOCAL NONPROFITS**  
**Supported by RFM**

**ORGANIZATION NAME: Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (VADP)**

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<b>Contact name:</b>	Beth Panilaitis
<b>Title:</b>	Executive Director
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<b>Direct phone:</b>	(434)984-4655 (Note: Administrative Director is Matt Sellman)
<b>Mission:</b>	<p><b>VADP's Statement of Purpose</b></p> <p>Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (VADP) is a statewide citizens' organization dedicated to educating the public about alternatives to the death penalty.</p> <p>The bases for our beliefs and actions include the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The death penalty panders to fear and outrage by attempting to provide a simple solution to complex questions.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The death penalty is ineffective. Numerous studies show that it does not deter crime.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The death penalty discriminates against: the poor, people of color, and people from rural areas.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Our opposition to the death penalty in no way negates or contradicts our sorrow over the loss of life suffered by murder victims and our compassion and sympathy for their families and friends.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">All of humanity's major wisdom traditions call on us to love one another and value human life. The state should not completely devalue human life and execute anyone by repeating a violent act.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The death penalty saps our economic resources. Since it costs more to kill a prisoner than to house one for life, executions waste tax dollars that can be spent on effective crime prevention.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Research shows that despite all legal safeguards, innocent people have been wrongly convicted of murder and have been killed by the state. After 130 death row exonerations, common sense tells us that, because humans err, the justice system simply cannot be made foolproof. Some innocent people will die as long as we have a death penalty. These mistakes can never be corrected.</p>
<b>Population(s) served (number, demographics)</b>	Persons on Death Row in Virginia and their families; defendants who might potentially receive the death penalty; work with families whose family members have been victims of capital murder,
<b>Main activities:</b>	<p>**Educating public about alternatives to the death penalty</p> <p>**Grassroots organizing and lobbying with General Assembly to impact death penalty laws, including testifying at hearings</p>

	<p>** Is key Virginia organization working to abolish death penalty, linking with other Va. Organizations in this work</p> <p>**Visiting/contacting death row inmates</p> <p>**Coordinating information about vigils</p>
<p><b>Annual budget (w/administrative percentage):</b></p>	<p>**The 2009 VADP budget is \$169,000. The majority of this, \$ 133,591.09, goes to administrative costs (salaries [2 staff], benefits, website, computers &amp; software, phones, office supplies, taxes, mailings).</p> <p>**This is not broken down into how much time staff spend on programming, etc. Much of our programming is low cost and primarily only entails the cost of staff time, travel, and materials which would be included in this under administrative costs.</p> <p>**It is also important to note that our office spaces in Richmond and Charlottesville are in-kind donations.</p>
<p><b>Volunteer opportunities:</b></p>	<p>**From Beth Panilaitis: I think that the majority of the meeting is already signed up with VADP, but if there is any way to engage others to sign up, that would be great. Individuals are much more likely to be active in legislative advocacy, attending events, organizing against execution etc. when they are receiving information on a regular basis.</p> <p>** Additionally, the Richmond Friends could help with the sponsorship/promotion of events.</p> <p>**If there is an event in the area (for education or advocacy) or an upcoming execution, it would be great if that could be announced to help increase public awareness.</p> <p>**Please let me know if there is interest in the future in hosting another event such as a film screening or a lecture.</p> <p>**Sign up to receive action alerts</p>
<p><b>Anything else like RFM to know about your organization:</b></p>	<p>**VADP always has the need for additional financial contributions, and we would greatly appreciate the continued financial support of the Richmond Friends Meeting.”</p>

**Observations from on-site visit (if possible): N.A.**

**Name:** Sally Andrews Gudas

**Date:** July 31, 2009