

# CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE



## PROCLAMATION

### DIGITAL INCLUSION WEEK OCTOBER 2-6, 2023

**WHEREAS** broadband services play an important role in civic and cultural participation, lifelong learning and access to essential services for communities in the City of Charlottesville, and nationally, nearly half of all people who are digital disconnected are people of color and are less likely to have a broadband internet connection or a desktop or laptop at home; and

**WHEREAS** digital equity ensures all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy; and

**WHEREAS** the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how the digital divide impacts our residents, particularly our racially and ethnically diverse residents and communities, and access to a reliable, affordable internet connection is a social determinant of health, with higher COVID-19 mortality associated with a lack of an internet connection; and

**WHEREAS** digital skills are a gateway for career advancement and crucial for economic growth, intergenerational wealth-building and prosperity; and

**WHEREAS** the City of Charlottesville remains committed to closing the digital divide for its residents through collaboration with the Regional Digital Equity coalition partners, including the Albemarle County Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office, the University of Virginia, Charlottesville City Schools, the Jefferson Area Board for Aging, the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library, the Blue Ridge Health District, and Piedmont Housing Alliance, all of whom are working to launch programs that address barriers to digital equity including: distributing Wi-Fi hotspots, providing digital skills training, distributing laptops and tablets, and coordinating the development of a digital equity plan;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED**, that the Charlottesville City Council declares the week of October 2-6, 2023, as Digital Inclusion Week in Charlottesville, and

**BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED** that the Charlottesville City Council encourages residents to raise awareness of advancing digital equity and being committed to closing the digital divide.

Signed and sealed this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October 2023.

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**J. Lloyd Snook, III, Mayor**

Attest:

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**Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council**