

THE THRIVE CHRONICLES



Serving the Thrive Community in Virtual Reality

Volume 1 • Issue 1

August 2026



Introducing The Thrive Chronicles

The Editors Corner

by The Three Thriveateers (co-editors)

Pat Parker • Ellen Steele •

Vanessa Homedew

We hope that this newspaper will provide a record for Thrive—a publication that documents the history of our community. Five years from now, new members will be able to look back at Volume 1, Issue 1 and see how Thrive grew, who the volunteers were, what events were happening, and how friendships formed.

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Welcome to The Thrive Chronicles!

Welcome to the very first issue of The Thrive Chronicles!

This month marks the launch of a new community newspaper dedicated to the people, stories, events, and friendships that make Thrive such a special place.

The past year has been a whirlwind of growth and change. We've welcomed a new president, a new board of directors, a new Thrive Home, and so much more. Through it all, our community has continued to flourish, thanks to the dedication, generosity, and hard work of our many volunteers.

Today, Thrive is home to 814 active members and offers more than 112 scheduled events each month, along with spontaneous pop-up gatherings happening almost every day. Thanks to the creativity and countless hours contributed by Jack Sturm, we now enjoy not only our beautiful new Thrive Home, but also a Wellness Center, an Art Gallery, and most recently, our wonderful Learning Center.

In each issue of The Thrive Chronicles, you'll find a variety of features, including:

- Upcoming events and activities
- Member stories
- A Volunteer Spotlight
- Tech Tips for using VRChat and Meta Quest
- Health and wellness articles
- A Creative Corner featuring poetry, artwork, and photography
- A "Looking Ahead" section highlighting future programs and events

Most importantly, this is your newspaper. We hope it becomes a place where members can celebrate one another, share experiences, discover new opportunities, and strengthen the friendships that make Thrive so unique. We encourage you to send us your stories, photos, artwork, poems, ideas, and suggestions. Together, we'll create a newspaper that reflects the heart of our community.

Thank you for being part of Thrive. We hope you enjoy this first issue of The Thrive Chronicles, and we look forward to growing it together with you in the months ahead.

Volunteer Spotlight



About Me

My name is either Donna or SerenityMoon. I answer to both equally. I live in Huntsville, Alabama with my husband, Rod. My mom also lives just a few houses down the street, so we're lucky to have family close by. Huntsville is my favorite city in Alabama. It's known as the Rocket City because of its strong aerospace industry and is home to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center along with companies like Boeing and Blue Origin. I retired here at age 58, and I love that there's always something happening and that it's one of the most forward-looking cities in the state.

Before retiring, I spent 28 years as a Juvenile Probation Officer. It could be a stressful career, but I genuinely loved working with teenagers and helping them find a better path. My educational background is in psychology, political science, education, and criminal justice. These days VR keeps me pretty busy, but outside of Thrive I also love singing, listening to music, cooking, movies, and occasionally writing poetry.

My Thrive Story

I found Thrive in 2024 while searching Facebook for a community of older VR users. I wanted to find people who enjoyed virtual reality but also wanted genuine friendships. Thrive sounded exactly like what I had been looking for.

I'm naturally an introvert, so I wasn't even sure I'd enjoy the social side of VR. Before Thrive I mostly played single-player games, and my multiplayer experiences usually involved loud lobbies full of kids. Not a good introduction. Thrive was completely different. It was welcoming from the very beginning. For my first few months, I mostly attended activities and got to know people. Then one day I realized ... there's not a movie group. Since movies have always been one of my favorite hobbies, I started wondering how we could make one happen. That curiosity led to a lot of research, some trial and error, and eventually our Movie Group was born.

What keeps me coming back is the people. The more involved you become, the more those familiar faces turn into real friends. Before long, Thrive feels less like a community you're visiting and more like one you belong to.

Volunteering

My first volunteer role was creating the Movie Group. Originally I thought I'd stream movies myself, but I quickly discovered that wasn't as simple as I expected. Ellen and Dews introduced me to Popcorn Palace and showed me how to host movies there. From there I developed our themed voting system so members could help choose movies while still giving us lots of variety. It has grown into a wonderful group, and I'm incredibly proud of what we've built together. It's fun watching movies together and hearing the laughter and the "oh noes" and the "did he just say that?" Our little conversations about the movie afterwards is one of my favorite parts. It's a great change from watching a movie in your living room.

Since then I've also hosted Escape Rooms, a lot of fun by the way, , SynthRiders, and Holofit. I fill in for Karaoke, Walkabout Mini Golf, and Strength Class whenever needed.

I'm also part of the Education Committee, helping new members learn how to navigate VR and discover everything Thrive has to offer.

Watching someone's confidence grow may be my favorite part of volunteering. It's fun seeing someone arrive for their very first session as a gray robot who is trying to figure out how to stand up from a squat, then a few weeks later they're confidently showing someone else how to shrink their avatar for movie night or adjust url settings to watch videos. Volunteering has taught me how much a community such as this depends on people who are willing to give a little of themselves. Thrive has an amazing group of volunteers, and they are the reason it continues to grow. I especially enjoy watching new members find the activities and the friendships, that make Thrive feel like home.

Virtual Reality

VR has become a huge part of my life. When I bought my very first headset almost ten years ago, a PlayStation VR with wires running everywhere, I never imagined where it would eventually lead. Since then I've owned everything from the Oculus Go to today's Quest 3. Along the way I've made wonderful friends and experienced things I never would have otherwise and I've met several of my VR friends in person. I've competed in Walkabout Mini Golf tournaments, watched movies with friends from around the world, sang karaoke which I'd always been too chicken to do in "real life", gone fishing in incredible locations, and played games like Jeopardy, Family Feud, and Password on TV studio sets that feel remarkably real. It's hard to explain just how immersive it can be until you've experienced it yourself.

If you're thinking about trying VR, my advice is simple: give it a chance. It opens the door to friendships, experiences, and adventures that many people never realize are possible.

Just for Fun

Something many Thrive members may not know about me but probably guessed is that I'm a bit of a movie enthusiast. My husband collects movies, and between the two of us we have quite a collection. Starting the Movie Group felt like a natural fit because watching movies with others is one of my favorite things.

Looking Ahead

I'm excited to see Thrive continue to grow and reach even more people. I hope to keep contributing, welcoming new members, and helping create activities where friendships can grow.

Looking back on my journey with VR and Thrive, I'm amazed at how something that started as a curiosity has become such a meaningful part of my life. Through volunteering, I've found not only ways to give back but also deeper connections with people who have become true friends. Thrive has shown me that community can exist anywhere, even in virtual spaces and that it's built through shared experiences, kindness, and a willingness to show up for one another. I'm excited to continue growing alongside this community, discovering new experiences, and helping others find their place in VR just as I did.

From the Editors: Donna's poem, "Thriving," appears in this month's Creative Corner. It was first shared during our Spoken Word event, our Spotlight Event of the Month.

♥ Health & Wellness

Staying Strong as We Age
Understanding Muscle Loss and
Protecting Our Independence



By: Paul Massey

One of the quietest threats to independence as we age is muscle loss. Doctors call it sarcopenia—the gradual decline in muscle mass, strength, and physical performance. It doesn't begin suddenly in our 70s. In fact, muscle loss often starts after age 30, typically at a rate of 3–8% per decade, with the pace increasing after age 60. Over time, muscles become weaker, reactions slower, and everyday tasks more challenging.

The effects often appear gradually. Stairs feel steeper, grocery bags seem heavier, and getting out of a chair takes more effort. Balance becomes less reliable, increasing the risk of falls, fractures, and a longer recovery from illness or injury. For many older adults, a serious fall can be life-changing. That's why maintaining muscle isn't about appearance—it's about preserving the ability to shop, travel, garden, play with grandchildren, and continue living life independently.

The encouraging news is that muscle loss isn't inevitable. Safe, regular strength training is one of the best ways to maintain muscle and independence. Because older muscles don't respond as readily to exercise and protein, many seniors benefit from eating adequate protein throughout the day. A practical approach includes resistance training two or three times a week, balanced nutrition, regular balance exercises, and gradual, consistent progress. Creatine may also help support muscle strength for some older adults, though it works best alongside good exercise and nutrition.

🎨 Creative Corner



Thriving
Donna (Serenity Moon)

We used to think growing older
meant fading out...
but somehow ...
we logged in instead.

Not to chase youth,
but to find each other,
somewhere between the pixels
and the popcorn.

You know that moment,
when you straighten your headset a little,
and you hear someone laughing
on the other side of the country ...
and you realize,
this isn't escape.
This is arrival.

We came here with our coffee mugs
and our grand intentions,
to see worlds,
or maybe just keep them spinning.
And somewhere between the movie polls
and the "who's got the popcorn?" jokes,
we did.

We've become fluent
in quiet miracles:
friendships that fit
into Friday nights,
conversations that stretch
across time zones,
and the sweet, slow confidence
of being seen
exactly as we are ...
even when our avatars
are wearing pajamas,
or wings,

or we're walking cats.

It's funny ...
the world told us to keep up,
as if life were a race.
But here we are,
unrushed, unbothered,
taking our time
to learn new tricks,
new tech,
new ways to laugh out loud
without ever leaving the couch.

We're not chasing the past anymore.

We're tuning it,
like a familiar old song
that still sounds good
through new speakers.

Because what a gift,
to wake up in your fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties
and still be saying,

"I just met the most fascinating person last night."

Or, "Wait ...how do I unmute again?"

Or, "You have to see this world ...
it's got stars that move when you breathe."

We've learned that connection
doesn't fade with time ...
it just gets better at finding new routes.

Like roots that grow
under doors and under sidewalks,
carrying friendship and love
in all directions.

So when people say,
"Isn't it strange,
making friends in virtual reality?"

I smile and think ...

Strange?

No, no stranger than writing poems
to people I've never hugged,
and meaning every word.

We are proof
that the future belongs
to the open-hearted, and open minded,
the curious,
the ones who keep showing up

week after week,
headsets charged,
souls wide open,
ready to be moved
by a movie,
a play,
a moment,
or each other.

Because this ...
this right here ...
is what thriving looks like:
still curious,
still kind,
still learning how to love
To reflect,
Filled with...
the laughter,
and the light
that we carry
into every world we enter.

*Originally shared during Thrive's
Spoken Word event and reprinted with
permission.*

Your Thought for the Month

**"You are never too old to
set another goal or to
dream a new dream."**

— C.S. Lewis



A Word from the Board

Community Update: A Message of Gratitude from the Treasurer

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the many donors and supporters of Thrive Pavilion. While we maintain relatively low operating overhead, we do encounter regular expenses. The vast majority of your generous contributions directly fund our essential infrastructure, including website maintenance, scheduling software, internet security protocols, GoDaddy services, and our community VRChat Plus account. While financial accounting and record-keeping are vital to keeping Thrive Pavilion on a steady path, it is truly our people who drive our daily success. Our dedicated hosts and the education committee volunteer their time, effort, and consistent energy to propel us forward. Their unwavering commitment has shaped the wonderful community we enjoy today; they are our organization's true currency. Reflecting on our journey, it is remarkable to see how far we have come. Thrive Pavilion has evolved from a small group of individuals meeting in VR a few times a week into the robust international organization we see today, now bridging members across the USA, Canada, and the UK through a diverse array of activities. Thank you for your continued support as we look forward to a bright future together.



Ellen Marie Steele
Treasurer

THRIVE BY THE NUMBERS



814 Active Members



112 Monthly Events



USA • Canada • UK



Powered by Volunteers



Tech Tips

Too Loud? Turn Them Down!

If one person's microphone is much louder than everyone else's, you don't have to mute them.

1. Open your Quick Menu.
2. Point at the person and select them.
3. Find the User Volume slider.
4. Drag it down until they're at a comfortable level.

Good to know: VRChat remembers your setting, so the next time you meet that person, their volume will already be adjusted.

Bonus Tip: If everyone seems too loud in crowded worlds, go to Settings > Audio and lower Voice Distance Fading so voices become quieter as people move farther away.



Spotlight Event

SPOKEN WORD

GIVING VOICE. BUILDING COMMUNITY.

Thrive's once-monthly event continues to inspire, uplift, and connect.

By Thrive Times Staff

There's power in spoken words—and at Thrive, that power comes to life every month at **Spoken Word**.

Hosted by Trey and Co-Host Dews24u, this vibrant event is a space for creativity, healing, laughter, and truth.

Whether you're stepping up to the mic or soaking in the words of others, **Spoken Word** is a night to remember.



A night of expression, connection, and community. That's the Thrive Spoken Word experience.

MEET YOUR HOST:

★ **TREY!** ★



“Don't let your nerves get the best of you! Come out and experience this wonderful Thrive Event!”

— TREY

Spoken Word was founded by **Linda Fisher**, the original host, in December of 2024 and has been going strong ever since. Trey stepped into the role of host in January of 2026, continuing the legacy of creating a safe, welcoming space for all.

The event meets once a month, usually on the fourth Sunday, and everyone is welcome.

From poetry and short stories to life experiences and song lyrics—if it pulls at your heartstrings or makes you laugh, it belongs on our stage.

We've had guests share original stories they wrote themselves, open up about their journeys, and inspire everyone in the room.

Whether you're a first-time speaker or a loyal listener, there's a place for you here.

“Spoken Word is more than an event. It's a movement of voices, a night of truth, and a reminder that you're not alone.”

EVENT DETAILS



WHEN:
Once a month, usually on the fourth Sunday



WHERE:
Thrive
(Join in-world!)



WHAT TO EXPECT:
Poetry, stories, life experiences, song lyrics, and more!

COME TO LISTEN.
COME TO SHARE.
COME TO THRIVE.

*Your voice matters.
We can't wait to hear it.*

**ONE MIC.
ENDLESS VOICES.
REAL IMPACT.**



**BE INSPIRED.
GET CONNECTED.
THRIVE TOGETHER.**

**FOLLOW FOR UPDATES
ON UPCOMING EVENTS!**





Vanessa — Community Gallery Curator
 “One of the original visionaries behind the Thrive Pavilion Community Gallery, Vanessa helps curate each monthly exhibit and welcomes members to share their creativity with the entire Thrive community.”

♥ Community Spotlight

The Gallery That Keeps Growing

What started as a simple idea has blossomed into one of Thrive Pavilion’s most popular gathering places.

In January 2026, after visiting Jack’s Museum of Memories world, Trey and Vanessa imagined a place where Thrive members could share their own artwork with the community. They brought the idea to Jack, who transformed their vision into reality by building the Thrive Pavilion Community Gallery. Vanessa, Trey, and Ennae became the gallery’s curators, and the rest is Thrive history.

Today, the gallery is much more than an art exhibit—it’s a place where creativity brings people together.



Gallery volunteers and members celebrate another successful exhibit



Ennae, Vanessa,
 Trey and Jack

Every month, members submit artwork, photography, digital creations, and treasured memories to be displayed. The curators carefully review each submission, arrange new exhibits, and feature a different artist each month, giving members an opportunity to showcase their talents and inspire others.

Jack says the response has been beyond anything he imagined.

“The Thrive community’s participation has exceeded my expectations. The amount of art contributed has grown every month, and we’ve continued adding new gallery rooms to make space. But the artwork is only part of the story. The real magic happens when people stop to admire a piece, meet the artist, hear the story behind it, and leave with a new friend.”

In just six months, the Community Gallery has welcomed nearly 3,000 visitors. Behind the scenes, Jack and the three volunteer curators work together each month to review submissions, select new artwork, and prepare each month’s exhibit.

And yes...if you look carefully, you’ll even find one very special duck. 🦆

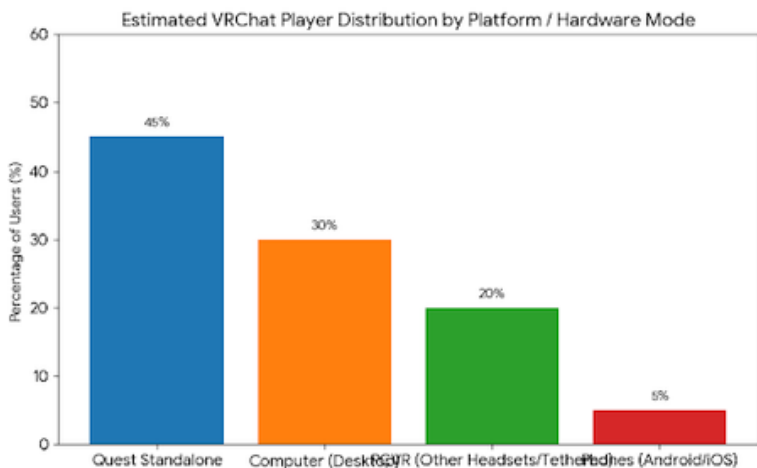
Whether you’ve submitted artwork, attended an opening, or simply wandered the halls enjoying the creativity of fellow Thrivers, you’ve helped make the Community Gallery one of the most successful and beloved projects in Thrive Pavilion.

A heartfelt thank you to Jack for bringing this vision to life, to the curators for their dedication, and to every artist and visitor who continues to make the Community Gallery a place where creativity, friendship, and community thrive. We can’t wait to see what next month’s gallery will bring!

There's never been a better time to try something new at Thrive! This month we're excited to welcome several new events to our calendar, including *Meditation & Mindfulness* with Willy Trombone, *Tai Chi & Chill* with Curious Seahorse, *Qigong* with Linfisher, *Night Owls* with Pat Ferguson Parker, *Wander Tours* led by our members, and *Script Reading*, which debuted in July.

Coming in August, don't miss *Game Show Night*, featuring popular TV game shows, and our new *Lunch & Learn* series with a variety of hosts covering topics of interest to our community. *All Things Books* has expanded into *Ellen's Meanderings*, celebrating books and other forms of media. We're also adding *Game World Testing* as a regular calendar event.

Don't see an event that interests you? Have an idea for a new one or would like to become a host? Contact Linfisher for information about hosting and event policies.



Content on this page by Ellen Steele



Ellen's PCVR Journey

How many Thrive members use PCVR? Have you tried it, or are you thinking about taking the plunge?

I recently did—and I've discovered it's a bit more complicated than I expected! It's definitely not "plug and play." I'm learning one small step at a time, asking AI lots of questions, watching YouTube tutorials, and figuring out which settings and hardware work best together.

Then I realized...that's exactly how I learned to use my Quest headset. It took patience, plenty of trial and error, and lots of help from my fellow Thrivers.

If you're learning something new, don't give up. We all start somewhere, and there's always someone in our community willing to help.