



BUILDING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS MONTHLY EMAIL UPDATE

January 2010

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the January 2010 edition of the Building Inclusive Schools Monthly Email Update! The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to provide this service to educators across the Commonwealth to support your efforts to fostering respectful and affirming school communities. As always, feel free to contact our office by phone at (804) 515-7950 or by emailing Ali Thompson, Director of Education & Training at athompson@inclusiveva.org or David LeFebvre, Program & Event Coordinator, at dlefebvre@inclusiveva.org if we can provide more direct support of your work.

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--- RESOURCES LIST ---

This month's Resources List focuses on religion & belief systems. Check out page 3 for information on "ready-made" diversity programs for schools, potential funding sources, curriculum ideas, and more. Please pass along resources you know for future emails!

--- PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: DIVERSITY DIALOGUE DAY ---

Inclusive Communities is launching a new program this spring in its Lynchburg and Tidewater chapters. The 1st annual "Diversity Dialogue Day" will take place on March 8 at Old Dominion University for Tidewater area high schools and on March 9 at Lynchburg College for Lynchburg area high schools. The 2010 theme is "Stopping Stereotypes in Schools." Diversity Dialogue Day will take the students through an experience of awareness to action, specifically focusing on how stereotypes affect their school environments. Each high school is invited to bring 10 students and 1-2 educators at no cost. If you are and high school educator in either the Lynchburg or Tidewater areas, please contact David LeFebvre at dlefebvre@inclusiveva.org for more information about Diversity Dialogue Day.

--- ACTION PLAN PROFILE: ST. GERTRUDE HIGH SCHOOL ---

Each month, we seek to profile activities taking place in Virginia high schools that advance Inclusive Communities' work. As you hold programs in your school throughout the year, please share information about them to be included in future monthly email updates! This month, we profile the students from St. Gertrude High School in Richmond who have sent a delegation of students to the Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute for the past few summers. As part of the Connections program, the students developed an action plan to form a school club to promote diversity and inclusion. In November, after lots of determination and working with administration for over a year and a half, the students were able to get "Project Peace" approved. This organization will lead conversations and programs at the school about celebrating diversity and combating prejudice. Project Peace is in its initial stages of development, but the students are optimistic about its future impact to make St. Gertrude High School a more inclusive environment. All of us at Inclusive Communities congratulate them on their great work!



--- 2009-2010 CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS ---

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to share the Calendar of Holidays and Festivals for the 2009-2010 school year at <http://www.inclusiveva.org/documents/2009-2010InterfaithCalendar.pdf>. This resource is intended to increase our sensitivity to diverse cultures and traditions and includes observances from select religious, ethnic, and public communities. Since the calendar is not exhaustive, those using this resource at school may wish to add holidays or observances that are observed by students in your classrooms or community that are not included in this listing. Additionally, while we have done our best to verify all dates, it is always advisable to consult with local religious authorities.

--- ABOUT THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES ---

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (<http://www.inclusiveva.org>) conducts programs that promote understanding and respect on ALL issues of diversity, for ALL age groups, ALL across Virginia. Each year, Inclusive Communities leads educational programs, conferences, retreats, and workshops for thousands of youth, educators, community members, non-profit organizations, and corporate and business leaders.



SCHOOL RESOURCES LIST

Focus: Religion & Belief Systems • January 2010

CURRICULUM (*Ways to integrate human relations issues into education*)

How Can I Plan Inclusive Holiday Celebrations?

http://www.adl.org/education/miller/q_a/answer15.asp?sectionvar=15.

The Constitution and Religion in the Classroom

<http://www.firstfreedom.org/education/constitution.html>

PROGRAMS (*Initiatives and observances to advance character education*)

King Day of Service – January 18, 2010

<http://www.mlkday.gov/>

No Name Calling Week – January 25-29, 2010

<http://www.nonamecallingweek.org>

Random Acts of Kindness Week – February 15-21, 2010

<http://www.actsofkindness.org>

Day of Silence – April 16, 2010

<http://www.dayofsilence.org>

ARTICLES & RESEARCH (*News for sharing colleagues or as classroom discussion topics*)

Know Your Rights: Religion in Public Schools

http://www.aclu-tn.org/pdfs/briefer_religion_in_public_schools.pdf

Teaching Religion in Public School: Removing the Angst

http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev027.shtml

FUNDING (*Grant opportunities to recognize individual leadership or support class projects and clubs*)

Disney Friends for Change Grants - The Friends for Change Grants will fund kids' projects that help the environment and will look to engage children ages 5-18 as leaders in their communities.

\$500 grants

Deadline: January 29, 2010

<http://www.ysa.org/grants/announcements/friendsforchange>

Big Read Grants - The Big Read provides U.S. communities with grants and comprehensive resources to support their efforts to read and discuss a single book or the work of a poet.

\$2,500 to \$20,000 grants

Deadline: February 2, 2010

<http://www.neabigread.org/guidelines.php>

Get Ur Good On Grants – funding to support to support projects addressing critical community needs such as poverty, education, and environmental sustainability.

\$500 grants

Deadline: February 22, 2010

www.YSA.org/grants