



BUILDING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS MONTHLY EMAIL UPDATE

April 2009

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the April 2009 edition of the Building Inclusive Schools Monthly Email Update! The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to provide this service to educators to support your efforts at fostering respectful and affirming school communities. Archives of the email updates from previous months are available at <http://www.inclusiveva.org/resources.php>. As always, feel free to contact our office by phone at (804) 515-7950 or by emailing Jonathan Zur, Chief Operating Officer, at jzur@inclusiveva.org if we can provide more direct support of your work.

IN THIS EMAIL:

- (1) **Resources List: Religion & Belief Systems**
- (2) **Action Plan Profile: E.C. Glass High School**
- (3) **2009 Connections Registration Deadline Approaching**
- (4) **PAS Educator Summit Invitation**
- (5) **About the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities**

--- RESOURCES LIST: RELIGION & BELIEF SYSTEMS ---

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

--- ACTION PLAN PROFILE: E.C. GLASS HIGH SCHOOL ---

Each month, we seek to profile activities taking place in Virginia high schools that promote inclusion, challenge assumptions, and advance understanding. 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 E.C. Glass High School students who attended Project Inclusion in March. While attending Project Inclusion, the students made plans to work on issues of ability status, gender, race, and sexual orientation. Among their projects are a "P-3" campaign, which stands for "Push Positive Phrases" and encourages students to reduce using hurtful or derogatory language. Another group will be working with administrators to stage "What Would You Do?" events that catalog how students and educators respond to acted out incidents including name calling, bullying, and violence. Results will be presented to faculty, along with recommendations for how to effectively interrupt such occurrences. The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities congratulates the Project Inclusion graduates from E.C. Glass High School for coming up with such great plans!

--- 2009 CONNECTIONS INSTITUTE DEADLINE APPROACHING ---

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' 2009 Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute (formerly Metrotown) will take place from August 16-20 at Chanco on the James in Surry, Virginia. High schools are invited to sponsor teams of 5 students to attend Connections. While there, students explore prejudice, identity, and diversity in interactive workshops and small discussion groups, and develop action plans to share the Connections message with their schools. School registration information has been mailed to high schools across Virginia, and the program brochure/registration form is available at <http://www.inclusiveva.org/documents/Connections2009Brochure.pdf>. Spaces are filling up, so please complete and return page 4 of the brochure right away in order for your school to be included! For more information, email jzur@inclusiveva.org.



--- PAS EDUCATOR SUMMIT INVITATION ---

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities offers an Educator Summit each spring for schools that send middle school students to the fall Prejudice Awareness Summit. This year, we are pleased to offer a limited number of spaces for schools that did not send students to the PAS to still be able to participate! At the Educator Summit, administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and other participating school personnel will have the opportunity to (1) consider the experiences students and educators have navigating issues of diversity; (2) develop skills to build culturally sensitive curriculum and pedagogy; (3) learn strategies to interrupt incidents of prejudice in classrooms and hallways; and (4) identify best practices for building more inclusive and affirming school communities. The Educator Summit will take place on Friday, May 1 from 9:00am – 3:00pm in the Richmond area. There is no cost to attend, and lunch is provided. Please email jzur@inclusiveva.org if you would like to register to attend the PAS Educator Summit.

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

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (<http://www.inclusiveva.org>) is the only organization that conducts programs that promote understanding and respect on ALL issues of diversity, for ALL age groups, ALL across Virginia. Each year, Inclusive Communities conducts educational programs, conferences, retreats, and workshops for thousands of youth, educators, community members, non-profit organizations, and corporate and business leaders. These events and experiences teach participants not simply to notice differences, but also to respect variety in race, religion, and culture. We deliver our message in schools, houses of worship, the community, and in the workplace. Originally founded as the Virginia Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has concluded our association with NCCJ and has joined with many of our fellow offices across the country to form the National Federation for Just Communities (<http://www.federationforjustcommunities.org>), a new movement fighting prejudice in all its forms.



SCHOOL RESOURCES LIST

Focus: Religion & Belief Systems • April 2009

CURRICULUM *[Ways to integrate human relations issues into education]*

Leadership: Social Contributors and the Interfaith Movement

<http://www.ifyc.org/system/files/Faith%2BHeroes%2BCurriculum.pdf>

Religion and Immigration

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/lessons/religion-and-immigration/background/361>

Religion and Peace

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/teachers/lp_peace.html

ESSAY CONTENTS *[Opportunities for students to write about human relations topics]*

Peace Essay Contest – essay contest for students in grades K-12 who respond to the African proverb, “Peace is costly but it is worth the expense.”

Deadline: April 20, 2009

<http://www.rpec.org/Essay%20Contest%202009.pdf>

Mix-It-Up Stories: Get Published! – essay contest that offers prizes for students who write about their experiences “breaking down barriers and increasing understanding and respect in their schools”

\$25 cash, \$50 gift card, or \$50 donation prizes

<http://www.tolerance.org/teens/win.jsp>

ARTICLES & RESEARCH *[News for sharing with colleagues or as classroom discussion topics]*

A Teacher’s Guide to Religion in the Public Schools

<http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/PDF/teachersguide.PDF>

Council for America’s First Freedom Suggested Reading List

<http://www.firstfreedom.org/PDF/AdvisoryBoardPublications.pdf>

One Nation, Many Gods

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/magazine/features.jsp?is=41&ar=851>

The Complexities of Santa Claus

<http://www.tolerance.org/parents/kidsarticle.jsp?ar=54>

FUNDING *[Grant opportunities to recognize individual leadership or support class projects and clubs]*

Dollars for Change Grants – support for youth-led, high-impact semester long service learning projects that engage at least 100 youth volunteers

\$2,000 Prize (Deadline: April 30, 2009)

<http://ysa.org/MyYSA/YSAContent/YSAnews/tabid/219/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/129/DollarsforChangeGrant.aspx>

Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes – honors young people, ages 8-18, who have shown leadership and courage in public service

\$2,500 Prize (Deadline: April 30, 2009)

<http://www.barronprize.org/nominate/index.html>