



BUILDING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS MONTHLY EMAIL UPDATE

May 2009

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the May 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.

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--- RESOURCES LIST: PEER LEADERSHIP ---

This month's Resources List focuses on peer leadership. 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: AN ACHIEVABLE DREAM MIDDLE AND 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 students from An Achievable Dream in Newport News who attended Project Inclusion in April. While attending Project Inclusion, the “Dreamers” made plans to address hurtful comments that are made about cultural or ethnic groups that are not represented at their school. They expressed particular concern about words being used during foreign language classes and in the student café. The team decided to plan several Cultural Fairs as a way to expose their peers to the traditions, music, and food of diverse cultures. Thanks to the Riverside Health System Foundation, this action plan will be financially supported by the McKinley Price Action Grant program. The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities congratulates the Project Inclusion graduates from An Achievable Dream for coming up with such a great plan!

--- PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: “BREAK THE CYCLE: BE THE CHANGE” ---

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities offers an assembly program entitled “Break the Cycle: Be the Change” to schools across Virginia. Examining the concept and consequences of prejudice, “Break the Cycle: Be the Change” is a fast-paced, interactive, 75-minute presentation. Beginning with the roots of prejudice, the program demonstrates clearly its progression from thoughts, to words, to actions. Using humor, role playing, audience participation, and real-life examples and stories, “Break the Cycle: Be the Change” motivates students to consider the ways in which they may have contributed to prejudice and helps them to assume the responsibility to work for change as agents of unity. For more information about this program and how to bring it to your school, contact the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities today!



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--- CURRENT EVENTS: CARL WALKER-HOOVER ---

An 11-year-old Massachusetts boy, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, hanged himself on April 11, 2009 after enduring bullying at school. Despite his mother's weekly pleas to the school to address the problem, Carl was taunted daily with phrases like "you're gay," and "you act like a girl." This is at least the fourth suicide of a middle-school aged child linked to bullying this year. The other three known cases of suicide among middle-school students took place in Chatham, Evanston and Chicago, Ill., in the month of February. Learn more about Carl and hear from his mother by viewing this news clip from Anderson Cooper 360 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dplCyCvv5s> and this interview on the Ellen Show at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJJF7d2gatc>. GLSEN offers four steps that schools can take to address anti-LGBT bullying and harassment at <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2263.html>.

--- ONE SPACE REMAINING FOR 2009 CONNECTIONS INSTITUTE ---

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>. One space remains, 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.

--- 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: Peer Leadership • May 2009

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

How Do Leaders Communicate their Ideas? A Look at John Brown, Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth

<http://www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit17/lesson2.html>

Strategic Alliances: Collaborating with Peers to Capitalize on One's Recognized Areas of Expertise

http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20060907thursday.html?searchpv=learning_lessons

Suggestions for Creating a "Starfish" – Put Down Free School

<http://www.starfishcare.com/starfishsample.html#materials>

Tutu and Franklin: A Journey Toward Peace

<http://www.pbs.org/journeytopeace/teachers/tguide.pdf>

PROGRAMS *[Initiatives and observances to advance character education]*

National Learn and Serve Challenge – October 5-11, 2009

<http://www.learnandservechallenge.org>

Mix-It-Up Day – November 10, 2009

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

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

Better Together: An Innovative Curriculum Spurs South Carolina Students to Fight Bigotry

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/magazine/features.jsp?p=0&is=16&ar=143>

Peer Leadership: Helping Youth Become Change Agents in their Schools and Communities

http://www.partnersagainsthate.org/publications/Peer_Leadership_Guide.pdf

Pier to Peer: A Class Project in Kansas City Facilitates Interaction Between Students and Refugees

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/activity.jsp?ar=307>

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

Youth Service America Disney Minnie Grants – Grants for young people ages 5-14 to implement service projects in the areas of poverty, hunger, education, environment, global citizenship, sustainable community development, or disaster prevention and relief

Deadline: June 15, 2009

Up to \$500 Grants

<http://ysa.org/MyYSA/YSAContent/YSANews/tabid/219/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/134/DisneyMinnieGrant2ndRound2009.aspx>

Do Something Awards – honors teenagers that do something exceptional to help solve a problem in their community

\$500 Grants

<http://www.dosomething.org/grants/general/apply>