



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

E.C. GLASS AND HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO GAIN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND PREJUDICE AT PROJECT INCLUSION

Wirtz, VA – 50 students and educators from E.C. Glass and Heritage High Schools will participate in a Project Inclusion retreat program led by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. The program takes place from Wednesday, January 20 – Saturday, January 23, 2016 at the W. E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center. Funding support for this program is provided by the Greater Lynchburg Community Trust, the Lynchburg City Schools Education Foundation, and the E.C. Glass Foundation.

Project Inclusion brings high school students together to discuss a variety of topics, including prejudice, race, gender, ability status, immigration, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, conflict resolution, and leadership. While at Project Inclusion, participants gain valuable skills to help them deal with group dynamics, conflict management, intergroup relations, communication, and advocacy. Students develop action plans in order to help bring about inclusive changes in their school culture. They return from the program as empowered and skilled agents of change and unity, having adopted a goal to reduce bias and prejudice.

“Through Project Inclusion, students are able to better demonstrate understanding and appreciation for their peers and neighbors who are from the variety of racial, religious, and ethnic groups that make up their schools and surrounding community,” says Jonathan Zur, President & CEO of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities.

Student participants unanimously agree that the program provides the skills to help them identify issues and to work for different causes. Over 97% of past participants believe that Project Inclusion will help them to contribute to people getting along better in their schools. One student commented that as a result of Project Inclusion, “I can be the difference I wish to see in my school and I can be an inspiration to others.”

Members of the press are invited to visit Project Inclusion anytime during the retreat. The preferred visiting times are: Wednesday, January 20 from 7:30pm - 10:00pm; Friday, January 22 from 7:15pm – 10:15pm, or Saturday, January 23 from 9:45am - 11:45am. Students and educators will be available for interviews.

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*The **Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities** works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success through inclusion. For more information, call the **Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities** at (804) 515-7950 or visit www.inclusiveva.org.*