



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS TO GAIN SKILLS TO REDUCE BULLYING & STEREOTYPES AT PROJECT INCLUSION

Newport News, VA – Nearly 60 high school students and educators from Newport News Public Schools will participate in the Project Inclusion program conducted by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. The program takes place from June 28-30, 2016 at An Achievable Dream Middle and High School, with participation from An Achievable Dream, Denbigh, Heritage, Menchville, Warwick, and Woodside High Schools.

The Project Inclusion program brings high school students together to discuss a variety of topics, including prejudice, race, gender, ability status, socioeconomic status, religious bias, 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. Throughout the program year, students will also develop action plans in order to help bring about a change in their school culture. They return from the program as empowered and skilled agents of change and unity, having adopted a goal to reduce violence 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 and 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. All of last year’s participants specifically said that Project Inclusion gave them skills to start discussions with people who are different from them, as well as skills to share their perspective on different kinds of prejudice. 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: Tuesday, June 28 from 1:45pm – 3:15pm or from 6:00pm – 8:30pm; Wednesday, June 29 from 10:15am - 11:45am; or Thursday, June 30 from 1:15pm-2:15pm. 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.