



SPRING 2008

VOICES *of* INCLUSION

A NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

A New Beginning and Continued Dedication

A Message from the State Board Chairman of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities

With great enthusiasm and pride, I share news about our organization. Building on a legacy begun in 1935 with a mission to fight prejudice in all its forms, the former Virginia regional office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews has moved forward in a new and exciting way. We are happy to be now known as the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities.

The vital mission and work of Inclusive Communities remains the same. We continue to provide service all across Virginia, to work with our chapters in Lynchburg, Richmond, the Peninsula, and Tidewater, and to assist schools and organizations as they navigate the opportunities and challenges that achiev-

ing inclusion brings. We continue to educate and empower Virginia youth, business, education, media, and faith leaders around issues of diversity and inclusion, to make Virginia the best place it can be for all of our residents.

On behalf of the state Board of Directors, we commit ourselves to strong and dedicated leadership to such a vital mission and vision, and thank you for your past support. We invite you to join us in endorsing the work of Inclusive Communities and to continue your commitment for years to come.

- Christine N. Thomas

Chairman, State Board of Directors
Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities

Programs Reach Record Numbers

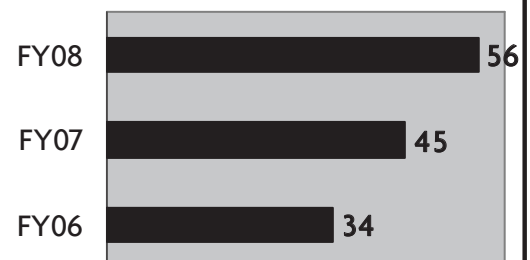
117% Increase in Participants Touched Across Virginia

The past two years have seen record increases in the number of programs conducted by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, as well as the number of people reached by Inclusive Communities programs. "The need for our work is as important as ever," notes Dr. Jeffrey B. Spence, President and CEO, "and we are committed to continuing our growth and outreach to promote inclusion, challenge assumptions, and advance understanding with youth and adults all across the Commonwealth."

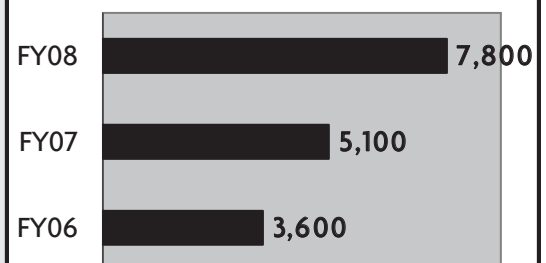
A newly formed Program Advisory Council worked with Inclusive Communities staff to develop a formalized structure and to plan for programs and outreach. Board members were also engaged in the planning process, and played a critical role in identifying key program contacts in each of our four chapter locations. The result of these efforts has been a 65% increase in the number of programs from 2005 to 2007 and a 117% increase in the number of people reached.

Learn more about the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' new program structure on page 3.

Number of Programs



Number of People Reached





Message from the President & CEO

The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey B. Spence

I am excited and pleased to join with our board members all across Virginia in welcoming you to a familiar organization with a brand new name! The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is the new name for the organization originally founded in 1935 as the Virginia Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Inclusive Communities is now an independent 501c3 not-for-profit human relations organization.

We are proud of our long history, now approaching seventy-five years, of serving Virginia as the organization that promotes inclusion, challenges assumptions, and advances understanding by working to eliminate prejudice and finding that common ground through which all of our citizens can be full participants in this great democracy.

I hope each of your receiving this newsletter will take the time to visit our new website at www.inclusiveva.org. It tells the story of how we have grown and changed in recent years, and particularly about our expanded programming and services for the citizens of Virginia. As has always been the case, we do not rely on government funding for our work. Instead, we continue to seek the support of corporate and individual donors along with grants from various organizations and agencies. One of the things I am most proud of in our new formulation is that we are a Virginia based organization that can promise you that the funds we raise in Virginia stay in Virginia.

At the same time, we remain connected to many offices across the country who engage in similar human relations work through a new organization called the National Federation for Just Communities.

CEO's Message continued on page 7

Chapter News

- **Lynchburg Chapter** - Planning continues for the chapter's 41st Annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner, scheduled for May 29, 2008. Dr. Kenneth R. Garren, President of Lynchburg College, has agreed to serve as Dinner Chairman. The event will honor George and Rosemary Dawson, Stuart C. Fauber, Laura Munson, and Sterling A. Wilder. A workshop on communication for student participants in STEP with Links continues to be a signature chapter program. Plans are underway for the second Project Inclusion session for E.C. Glass High School in Fall 2008.
- **Peninsula Chapter** - Robert F. Shuford of Old Point Financial Corporation was Chairman of the chapter's 40th annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner on February 28, 2008. The event recognized Charles C. Allen, A.J.Z. (Abe) Firestone, Henry Douglas Watson, and Jean M. Yokum. The Patient Advocate Foundation received the Distinguished Merit Citation. The chapter continues to hold two Project Inclusion sessions annually for the Newport News Public Schools, and recently expanded the Project Inclusion program to Phoebus High School in the Hampton City Schools.
- **Richmond Chapter** - The most successful Humanitarian Awards Dinner in chapter history was held on October 24, 2007, under the leadership of co-chairs Alice T. and William H. Goodwin of CCA Industries. Honored by the chapter were A. Dale Cannady, Brenton S. Halsey, Catherine S. Plotkin, and Frank J. Thornton. Also in October, the chapter co-sponsored the 7th Annual Prejudice Awareness Summit (PAS) for over 200 students representing 30 area middle schools. Student workshops and educator professional development sessions are being conducted in many local public and private schools.
- **Tidewater Chapter** - Led by co-chairs Barry and Lois Einhorn, the following people were recognized at the chapter's successful Humanitarian Awards Dinner on March 26, 2008: Clay H. Barr, Edward L. Brown, Sr., Terry S. Jenkins, Anita O. Poston, and Robert M. Stanton. The chapter continues to co-sponsor the Nexus Interfaith Dialogue Series with the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom at Virginia Wesleyan College and The Virginian-Pilot. The 2007-2008 theme was "Finding Passion in Faith."

New Program Structure Initiated

Helps to Organize and Focus Program Efforts

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has identified four major areas for its program work, each targeting a particular age group and context. Through this new organizational structure, outreach has been more focused and intentional, and record numbers of programs have been held. Details about the four program areas follow:

- **Community Programs & Partnerships** - these locally focused human relations programs are often conducted in collaboration with like-minded organizations. Included in the Community Programs and Partnerships are interfaith dialogues, panels, lectures, forums, and museum exhibits related to the Inclusive Communities mission to promote inclusion, challenge assumptions, and advance understanding.
- **Diversity in Higher Education Division** - programs for colleges and universities that help to foster learning and living environments of inclusion. The *Allies Institute* and *college student chapters* are two programming options, but many customized programs can also be designed. In recent years, programs have been designed for fraternities/sororities, orientation advisors, resident assistants, student government, and other student leader populations.
- **Emerging Leaders Institute** - a series of trainings, retreats, workshops, and assemblies aimed at middle school and high school youth. These sessions help participants understand how stereotypes, bigotry, and prejudice can negatively affect their schools. Signature programs include the *"Break the Cycle: Be the Change"* assembly program; the *Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute*; the *Prejudice Awareness Summit*; and *Project Inclusion*. Customized sessions are also offered.
- **Inclusive Workplaces Initiative** - provides educational programs, professional development, training, and consultation to enhance adult workplace environments. Programs are designed to maximize teamwork, productivity, employee retention, customer service, and service delivery. Specific audiences include educators (elementary school through college/university) and law enforcement professionals.

Meet the Staff

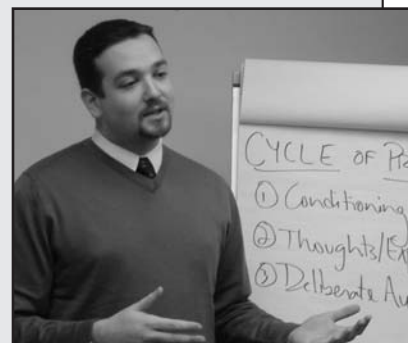
Featured this Issue: Jonathan C. Zur

Jonathan C. Zur joined the staff of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities as Vice President for Program Operations in September 2006. "I am so pleased that Jonathan is a part of the Inclusive Communities team," said Dr. Jeffrey B. Spence, President & CEO. "His expertise and experience are helping our organization expand our educational programs all across the Commonwealth."

In his role, Jonathan is responsible for the development and implementation of strategic program initiatives and all Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities human relations programs, conferences, seminars, and retreats throughout the Commonwealth. An experienced trainer and presenter, he has had a relationship with Inclusive Communities since 2000, first serving as an intern, and most recently as a consultant for the organization's youth programs.

Previously, Jonathan was a Program Manager for the American Conference on Diversity, based in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he served as a trainer in that organization's Youth Leadership Institute and Center for Workplace Diversity. From 2003-2004, Jonathan was the Director of A More Perfect Union, a coalition of organizations in central Virginia formed in response to emerging forms of bias after September 11, 2001.

Jonathan earned a B.A. from the University of Richmond, where he studied in the Jepson School of Leadership Studies. He is a member of the Leadership Metro Richmond class of 2008.



Honor Roll of Givers FY07

Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities gratefully recognizes the financial gifts of the individuals and institutions whose generosity provides the means to fulfill our mission. The following gifts were made between July 1, 2006, and June 30, 2007 (fiscal year FY07). More recent gifts will be reflected in the FY08 Honor Roll of Givers, to be distributed in the fall of 2008.

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these listings.

Please contact us if you note an error in the reporting for the fiscal year 2007, which ended on June 30, 2007.

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CEO's Message (continued)

As one of 18 charter members of the National Federation for Just Communities, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities benefits from mutual support and sharing with colleagues all across the country. You can learn more about the NFJC at www.federationforjustcommunities.org.

Once again, welcome to the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities! Please accept my deep thanks for your support in the past. I hope you will continue to give your financial and personal commitment to our work. Virginians have long been leaders in their support of the independent nonprofit organizations that serve them so well.

I have been affiliated with our organization in Virginia since 1980. It has been particularly enriching for me to see the incredible growth and advancement our organization has realized as a result of the changes of the past few years. On behalf of the board members and staff of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, I welcome you to our new organization with a new name that is built on a long history of service to our great Commonwealth and this great nation!



- HOME
- ABOUT US
- PROGRAMS
- HUMANITARIAN AWARDS
- CALENDAR
- GIVING
- RESOURCES
- CONTACT

WHO WE ARE



The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is a human relations organization that promotes inclusion, challenges assumptions, and advances understanding through dialogue, experiential learning, and education.

[Learn More →](#)

FEATURED PROGRAM



Over 200 students representing 29 middle schools attended the 2007 Prejudice Awareness Summit! Spending the day learning about inclusion and respect, participants left the PAS with action plans to share the program message with their schools throughout the year. Special thanks to the Wachovia Foundation for serving as the lead sponsor, and to the VCU School of Business for hosting the summit.

[Learn More →](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 26
Tidewater Chapter Humanitarian Awards Dinner

March 27-30
Newport News Public Schools Project Inclusion

March 31
Nexus Interfaith Dialogue Series

April 5
STEP with Links Workshop

April 8
Educator Professional Development Workshop

[Learn More →](#)

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities launched its exciting new website in the summer of 2007. In addition to information about our history, mission, and work, a calendar of programs and events is regularly updated. Special thanks to the staff of GroundWork Design for their work in developing our site. Find our newsletters, dinner invitations, financial reports, board members, and links to many resources at www.inclusiveva.org.

Meet the Inclusive Communities Board

Featured This Issue: Christine N. Thomas and John G. Myers



Christine N. Thomas joined the the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities in 2000 and currently chairs the State Board of Directors. She is a vice president at U.S. Trust Bank of America Private Wealth Management in Richmond, where her responsibilities

as a Trust Officer focus on helping clients reach their wealth structuring goals and satisfy all of their wealth, credit, banking, and investment needs.

In addition to her leadership of Inclusive Communities, Chris chairs the Black Catholic Commission for the Diocese of Richmond and serves on Bishop Francis DiLorenzo's Ethnic Advisory Council.

Chris earned a BS from Carlow University and an MBA from LaSalle University. She obtained her designation as a certified financial planner in 1990.

John G. Myers, Jr. is Chairman-Elect of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities State Board of Directors, and is Chairman of the organization's Richmond Chapter. He has been a member of the Inclusive Communities board since 2004. John is a First Vice President at Thalheimer/Cushman & Wakefield, Inc., where he is a practitioner of commercial real estate.



In the community, John is on the board of the Faison School. He has previously been chairman of the Downtown YMCA, and also chaired the board of Northstar Academy.

John is a graduate of the University of Virginia, where he earned a BA in English. He is a lifelong Richmond resident, having attended Thomas Jefferson High School.

"This is an Inclusive Place" Campaign



Are you interested in demonstrating your support of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities? Our new marketing campaign, "This is an Inclusive Place," can help you to share our message in a tangible and powerful way.

Contact the Inclusive Communities office to obtain a decal (*pictured at left*), which can be displayed in your home, school, workplace, house of worship, or anywhere else that you want to publicly signify your support of inclusion. Also, ask about our lapel pins and other items that you can use to display your commitment to the mission of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities .

2008 Connections Institute Visiting Times

The Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute (formerly Metrotown) is the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' signature Emerging Leaders Institute program. Since 1993, this peer leadership experience has prepared high school students to make decisions based on an appreciation of the vast diversity within Virginia. At Connections, student participants learn to break down barriers, deal with biased behavior, and develop an action plan to reduce prejudice in their schools. The 2008 Institute will take place at Camp Bethel in Fincastle, Virginia. Community members are asked to RSVP by emailing center@inclusiveva.org if you would like to attend during one of the following visiting opportunities:

Sunday, August 3 (8:00pm-10:00pm) • Monday, August 4 (2:00pm—3:30pm)
Tuesday, August 5 (10:30am—12:30pm) • Wednesday, August 6 (7:00pm—9:30pm)

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