Inclusive Communities CEO Announces Retirement
Dr. Jeffrey B. Spence Recently Marked 30 Years of Service to Human Relations Organization

On June 30, 2009, the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey B. Spence will conclude his tenure as President & CEO of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. His service to this organization dates back to 1978, when he became the Executive Director of the Kansas City Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Two years later, in 1980, he became the Executive Director of the NCCJ-Virginia Region, the predecessor organization to the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities.

“We will be forever grateful to Jeff for his many years of work for the improvement of human relations in Virginia,” notes Christine N. Thomas, State Board Chairman. “Under his leadership, our organization built an impressive array of programs for students, clergy, and law enforcement professionals throughout the 1980’s, 1990’s, and today.”

Most recently, Jeff’s work has been focused on managing the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities’ transition to an independent 501c3 organization. FY08, our third year as an independent organization, saw unprecedented successes in programming, fund development, and community outreach.

The Board of Directors has named Mr. Jonathan C. Zur as the next President & CEO. Jeff and the board are working closely with Jonathan, the current Chief Operating Officer for Inclusive Communities, to coordinate a smooth and successful transition.

Read Jeffrey B. Spence’s message on page 2

Inclusive Workplaces Initiative Receives High Praise
Professional Development a Growing Area of Work

Since 2006, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has tripled the number of adult workplace programs offered. Through the Inclusive Workplaces Initiative, our organization provides consultation, support, and training to businesses, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations across Virginia. Programs are designed to maximize teamwork, productivity, employee retention, customer service, and service delivery.

Recent Inclusive Workplaces Initiative programs include sessions for educators focused on “Ensuring Inclusive Curriculum,” “Navigating Race in Schools,” and “Responding to Bullying and Harassment.” Workshops and retreats for businesses and non-profit organizations have focused on “Building Skills for Effective Dialogue,” “Exploring the Roots of Prejudice,” and Stages of Development for Inclusive Organizations.”

Learn more about the Inclusive Workplaces Initiative on page 3.
**Message from the President & CEO**

The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey B. Spence

In the nearly thirty-one years of my work with this organization, I have been witness to and involved in a lot of history. Upon my retirement in July, I will have overseen 132 fund raising dinners, thousands of programs, and a seven-fold growth in our work. I am very proud that our organization is today in the best financial shape it has ever been, with the strongest and most cohesive staff, and the finest and most dedicated volunteer board members we have ever had.

Our success over the years is a direct result of the generosity of both individual and corporate citizens who have given us their financial, personal, and moral support as we have worked to reduce and defeat the scourge of prejudice in our society. If the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has been successful in making Virginia a better place in which to live for all of us, it is because we have been successful in telling you our story that both Virginia and America are at their best when they are the most inclusive. You have responded to that powerful message with your time, your talent, and your treasure. For that generosity, I will always be grateful.

Perhaps the most important change in our local organization’s history took place in 2005 when we were rolled out by the NCCJ into an independent 501c3 not-for-profit corporation now known as the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. This significant change has allowed us to continue our historic work while guaranteeing to our supporters that every dollar we raise in Virginia stays in Virginia. In addition, I am happy to note that this change has resulted in a major increase in our program outreach such that we now directly reach over eight thousand people with our programs every year.

CEO’s Message continued on page 7

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**Chapter News**

- **Lynchburg Chapter** - The most successful Humanitarian Awards Dinner in chapter history took place on May 29, 2008. Kenneth R. Garren, President of Lynchburg College, chaired the event that honored George W. and Rosemary C. Dawson, Stuart C. Fauber, Laura Munson, and Sterling A. Wilder. Plans continue for a Project Inclusion program for E.C. Glass High School in March and for the May 28, 2009 Humanitarian Awards Dinner, which is being chaired by Darrel W. Staat, President of Central Virginia Community College.

- **Peninsula Chapter** - McKinley L. Price, DDS is Chairman of the chapter’s 41st annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner on February 26, 2009. The event will recognize Michael G. Anastasiou, Paul W. Garman, Pamela W. Hammond, Charlie W. Hill, Sylvia H. Scholnick, and Wesley W. Wilson. The chapter continues to hold two Project Inclusion sessions annually for all of the high schools in the Newport News Public Schools, and will conduct a Project Inclusion session for Hampton High School in February. Student graduates of Project Inclusion led a PEOPLE to PEOPLE presentation with Inclusive Communities staff in October.

- **Richmond Chapter** - Led by Dinner chairman Peter J. Bernard, CEO of Bon Secours Virginia, the following people were recognized at the chapter’s Humanitarian Awards Dinner on October 23, 2008: Charles F. Bryan Jr., David D. Burhans, Darcy S. Oman, Mark B. Sisisky, and Wyatt Tee Walker. Also in October, the chapter sponsored the 8th Annual Prejudice Awareness Summit for nearly 200 middle school students. Project Inclusion was held for local high schools in December in partnership with ROSMY, and the Allies Institute was conducted for the University of Richmond in January.

- **Tidewater Chapter** - The chapter’s 45th annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner will be held on April 2, 2009. Chaired by John R. Morison, well-known community leader and former President & CEO of WHRO, the event will recognize John R. Broderick, Charles R. Henderson Jr., Miriam Seeherman, and Louisa M. Strayhorn. The theme of this year’s NEXUS Interfaith Dialogue Series is “Questioning Faiths: Open Windows and Revolving Doors.” Chapter board members continue to plan and brainstorm for programs to be conducted in area middle and high schools.
Building Inclusive Schools
Monthly Email Update
Resource Shared with Hundreds of Educators

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has developed an email update that is sent to hundreds of educators each month in an effort to support their ongoing efforts to promote inclusion, challenge assumptions, and advance understanding in their schools. Known as “Building Inclusive Schools,” the email includes best practice activities, curriculum ideas, essay contests, potential funding sources, and research. “We are so pleased to be able to offer this resource as a way to maintain relationships with and provide ongoing assistance to educators all across the Commonwealth,” notes Jonathan C. Zur, Chief Operating Officer.

Each month’s update focuses on a different theme, with topics including ability status, body image, bullying, class/socio-economic status, conflict resolution, gender, leadership, race/ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. A special feature of the updates is the opportunity to profile follow-up activities conducted in schools that have participated in Inclusive Communities programs, including Connections, the Prejudice Awareness Summit, and Project Inclusion.

A Conversation Among Friends
Dialogue Between Jewish and Christian Clergy

For the past year, key Christian and Jewish religious leaders in the metropolitan Richmond area have been meeting to build relationships and discuss issues critical to inter-religious understanding. Using the text “Irreconcilable Differences? A Learning Resource for Jews and Christians,” the clergy have held monthly discussion groups focused on such issues as ethics, holy texts, public prayer, Israel, redemption, sin, and suffering in religious contexts.

“These are critical times for Christian and Jewish clergy to explore together how we understand our respective faith traditions. In doing so, we can be more effective in working across religious lines to break down barriers of misunderstanding,” said convener of the dialogue group, Jeffrey B. Spence, President & CEO of Inclusive Communities.

After completing a year of discussion, the group decided to continue holding monthly meetings, and have invited additional clergy to join them. Members are now exploring the text “A History of God,” by Karen Armstrong.

Inclusive Workplaces Initiative [continued]

Feedback from Inclusive Workplaces Initiative programs has been outstanding. Below is a sampling of recent participant comments:

- “Thanks for doing such a thoughtful and effective job in presenting to our faculty. A large number of people told me how much they appreciated the program.”

- “It was a skillfully presented and engaging program. Handouts were excellent.”

- “The presentation was done in a very safe and positive manner that encouraged teachers to really think about how we handle hot topics and sensitive issues in the classroom.”

- “We had one of the deepest and most soulful discussions that we’ve ever had!”

- “Most open and honest dialogue we’ve had in the team.”

- “Good balance of giving us information and then practicing the skills in small group discussions.”

- “Enhancing, challenging, collaborative, engaging.”

- “The material covered was important and relevant. The activities and exercises helped make the material personal and experiential.”

- “The retreat gave me tools to deal with some of the negative dynamics at my workplace. In examining the role of prejudice, I am more well-equipped to right it.”

- “We definitely benefit from this great partnership with your organization.”

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to expand our program work in this important area. Contact us to learn more about how your school or office can benefit from the Inclusive Workplaces Initiative.
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, 2007, and June 30, 2008 (fiscal year FY08).

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Grantors: Riverside Health System Foundation / Mrs. Valerie Scott Price & Family
Program: McKinley L. Price Action Grants for Newport News Project Inclusion Alumni

Grantors: Wachovia Foundation
Program: Prejudice Awareness Summit

Matching Gifts & United Way Contributors

Our appreciation to the employees of these companies for making the extra effort to secure these additional gifts for Inclusive Communities:

- Bank of America
- Hermitage High School
- United Way of the Virginia Peninsula

In Honor of
Mrs. Clay Hofheimer Barr:
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Fink
Mr. & Mrs. Paul O. Hirschbiel Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. J. Jerry Kantor
Ms. Sara R. Trub

In Memory of
Mr. Rodney Thane Hesperhiede:
Mrs. Melissa T. Hesperhiede

In Honor of
Mrs. Catherine S. Plotkin:
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Bellemann
Mr. & Mrs. Irving Blank
Mr. & Mrs. James N. Plotkin
Dr. & Mrs. Albert H. Wilkinson

In Honor of
Mr. Robert M. Stanton:
Mr. & Mrs. J. Jerry Kantor

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 2008, which ended on June 30, 2008.

Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities  ■  5511 Staples Mill Road, Suite 202  ■  Richmond, VA 23228  ■  (804) 515-7950
CEO’s Message [continued]

As this transition process was coming to fruition, it became clear to me that my work as the full-time paid professional leader should also enter a transition. Recently, I informed the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities State Board of Directors of my intention to retire from my role as President and CEO as of June 30, 2009.

Now that I prepare to retire in a few months, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge some very special organizations. My thanks go out to the great law firm of McGuireWoods. Their counsel and support have been critical to our transition to independent status. I also wish to thank SunTrust Bank which stepped up to assist us with financial support and guidance as we became the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. Without McGuireWoods and SunTrust, we simply could not have accomplished what we have, in becoming a vibrant, independent, and truly local non-profit.

There are also a number of very special people who I have taken the time to thank personally for their support over the years. One person I must thank publicly is Dr. Allix B. James, now President Emeritus and former everything at my doctoral alma mater of Virginia Union University. His wisdom and guidance have been a mainstay of what was once the NCCJ and is now the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. His role as mentor, father figure, counselor, and most important dear friend has helped me at every step of my career, and for that, I am profoundly in his debt. Even as I prepare to retire, Dr. James, who recently achieved 86 years of age, continues to remind me that I am one of his works in progress. He will always be the teacher and I his student.

In sum, to each individual and to all the great corporations and corporate leaders who have supported us over the years, I say thank you for sustaining what has been my life’s passion and work, described so eloquently by the late Congresswoman Dr. Barbara Jordan as “the tough, tough job of making the practice of America match the creed of America.”

Meet the Inclusive Communities Board
Featured This Issue: Charlie C. Boyd, Jr. and Vernon M. Fareed

Charlie C. Boyd, Jr. first became aware of the NCCJ in high school, and he was reacquainted with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities during what he describes as “a chance encounter in a grocery store.” Today, Charlie serves as Chairman of the Lynchburg Chapter, a member of the State Board of Directors, and a dedicated volunteer at every Connections Institute program.

A graduate of the United States Naval Academy with a commission as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, Charlie is today Manager, Quality Assurance with B&W Technical Services Group. Through his military service and private career, he has lived in a number of places, including northern Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, Japan, Maryland, and now Lynchburg.

Vernon M. Fareed is Chairman of the Tidewater Chapter of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and a member of the State Board of Directors. He is the Resident Imam (Leader) of Masjid William Salaam, a Norfolk religious community.

Imam Fareed is frequently called upon to conduct workshops and give lectures regionally, nationally, and internationally. He is a member of Abraham’s Children Together (ACT), the Interfaith Prayer Breakfast Steering Committee, the Interfaith TV (ITV) Board, and the NEXUS Design Team. Vernon’s community work has been recognized by President George W. Bush, Governor Timothy M. Kaine, the AARP, the Hampton Roads Youth Leadership Conference, the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission, and the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, among others.
Guiding Principles for Inclusive Public Prayer

Leading others in group or community prayer is a special responsibility. It is a defining part of the greatness of our nation that we have the motto “E Pluribus Unum” meaning “Out of Many, One!” When we take this pluralistic value to heart, we realize our responsibility to be respectful of and caring for the feelings of our fellow citizens as we engage in any public behavior, while always being true to ourselves.

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has developed the following suggestions for our friends of every faith when called upon to lead others in group prayer or public worship. Additional information is available in the Resources section of our website, at www.inclusiveva.org/resources.php.

- Public prayer and worship should be all-encompassing.
- The language of such prayers or worship ought to be broad enough to include people of all faiths.
- Such prayers and petitions ought to be generic in nature while taking into account the audience that is gathered.
- Those who lead such prayers should make them non-denominational and respectful of the nearly universal belief in God, while avoiding language or images that are connected to any one tradition or practice of a particular faith or religion.
- Prayer is an act of worship of the Deity and should never be taken lightly or delivered without thoughtful preparation.
- Clergy should be aware that they will often be called on “at the last moment” and thus be prepared with practiced prayers that include all.
- It should be recognized that not all clergy or laymen feel comfortable engaging in community prayer or public worship using a non-denominational model. These friends in our community should be appreciated for their viewpoint.
- Those who are uncomfortable with the non-denominational model should share their concern and not accept invitations to lead others in this way.
- Public worship and prayer is a time and opportunity to bring people together as one group, and thus should always be the most inclusive in nature.