



SUMMER 2011

# VOICES *of* INCLUSION

A NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

## Community Leaders Explore the 2010 Census at VCIC Forum

Mayor Launches Anti-Poverty Commission at Event Co-Sponsored with Hope in the Cities

**T**he 2010 United States Census and the 2009 American Community Survey expose critical disparities along lines of race and class in our country. In an effort to raise awareness and promote action regarding these wide gaps in metropolitan Richmond, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities co-sponsored "Unpacking the 2010 Census: The New Realities of Race, Class, and Jurisdiction" on March 18. Over 200 community leaders attended the forum, which was hosted by Virginia Commonwealth University and co-sponsored with Hope in the Cities and ConnectNetwork.

Dr. John V. Moeser, Senior Fellow at the University of Richmond's Bonner Center for Civic Engagement, delivered the keynote presentation. During the forum, Richmond Mayor Dwight C. Jones announced the creation of an Anti-Poverty Commission. After his remarks, participants moved into small groups to explore the impact of poverty in one of six sectors: business, civic life, education, healthcare, housing, and religion.

Outcomes from the conference were outstanding. 91% of attendees reported that they increased their knowledge as a result of attending the forum. Over half stated that they planned to be more active in addressing poverty in the region. Since the "Unpacking the 2010 Census" program, participants reported sharing their learning with undergraduate and graduate school classes, with business and non-profit leaders, and with houses of worship. Additionally, a dialogue group was formed to discuss poverty in the region. Continued planning is underway to bring the "Unpacking the 2010 Census" presentation and dialogue to more audiences.



## Inclusive Workplaces Initiative Continues Growth

Businesses and Non-Profit Organizations Benefit from VCIC's Professional Development

**B**uilding upon a successful record of professional development and consultation with K-12 schools, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is increasingly being called upon to provide training for businesses and non-profit organizations. These companies recognize that employees and clients are best served by workplace environments that value and respect diversity. Communication, teamwork, and awareness are heightened after working with Inclusive Communities professional staff. Some examples of recent workplace professional development include:

- A municipality held a training session for department heads, elected officials, and council appointees to explore ways that city representatives can effectively serve diverse constituents.
- One business hosted a "Lunch & Learn" presentation for employees focusing on what they can do if their children are being bullied.
- An organization's diversity council held a half-day retreat aimed at raising awareness, teambuilding, and establishing strategic priorities.
- Professional development was provided for internship coordinators and student interns to improve cross-cultural communication.



## Message from the President & CEO

Jonathan C. Zur

**D**uring a recent visit to a high school, an administrator pulled me aside to share these incredible words: **“We have students graduating who I am certain would not be, without the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities’ programs.”**

It was a profound statement about the power of our work. And, it reinforces a key concept: that creating a “sense of belonging” can make an important difference in schools, businesses, and communities. Indeed, if students feel connected at school, they are more likely to go to class, do their homework, and get involved. Similarly, if adults feel affirmed in the workplace, they are more likely to care about the quality of their work, stay late to get the job done, and volunteer to take on additional responsibilities.

At Inclusive Communities’ programs, we help individuals gain knowledge, experiences, and skills to help them build greater inclusion and equity. For students, our workshops have resulted in peer-led initiatives to reduce bullying and harassment. Professional development for educators has led to curriculum and pedagogy that is more reflective of diverse students’ backgrounds. Organizations have more inclusive non-discrimination policies, better communication, and improved customer service after working with Inclusive Communities.

We cannot achieve these tremendous outcomes without sustained contributions from generous individuals and organizations. As Inclusive Communities conducts record numbers of programs and events each year, we extend our sincere thanks to our many donors across Virginia. It is with your support that we are creating a Commonwealth in which every person is valued, every voice is heard, and everyone has a fair chance to succeed.

## Chapter News

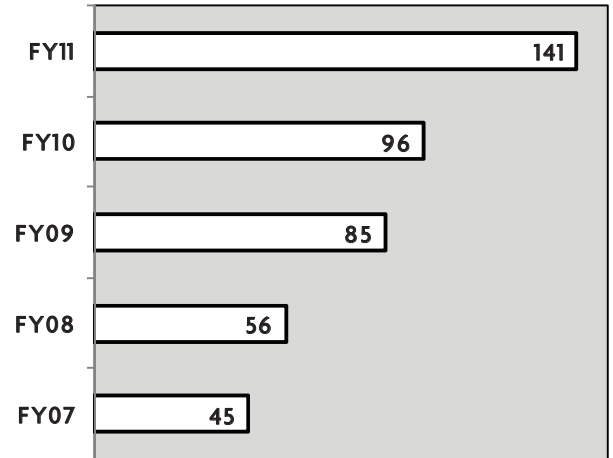
- **Lynchburg Chapter** - The most successful Humanitarian Awards Dinner in chapter history took place on May 25, 2011. Bert Dodson, Jr., of Dodson Pest Control, chaired that event which recognized Lorenza E. Davis, Sr., William H. Gorman, Robert C. Roberts, Patricia S. Worsham, and James W. Wright. Recent programming included a Project Inclusion retreat for Lynchburg City Schools and a Diversity Dialogue Day forum for Amherst, Bedford, Campbell, Lynchburg, and area independent schools.
- **Peninsula Chapter** - James E. Barnett, Kenneth R. Frantz, Allen R. Jones, Jr., Steven S. Kast, Christine B. Mignogna, and Nhu Q. Yeargin were recognized at the chapter’s 43rd annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner. Brian K. Skinner of TowneBank chaired the February event, at which the Daily Press also presented the “Citizen of the Year” award to William R. Harvey. Community programs were recently presented with People to People and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Project Inclusion program continues to be a signature offering for Hampton City Schools and Newport News Public Schools.
- **Richmond Chapter** - On October 27, 2011, the chapter’s 49th annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner will honor Donald T. Cowles, Miriam R. Davidow, Willie Jones Dell, Marjorie N. Grier, Monroe E. Harris, Jr., and T.K. Somanath. Workshops were recently provided for Big Brothers Big Sisters, Partnership for the Future, and other local businesses and non-profit organizations. School programs have been provided to middle school students, high school students, and educators in Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, and Richmond Public Schools, as well as many area independent schools.
- **Tidewater Chapter** - Under the leadership of John R. Broderick of Old Dominion University, the following individuals and organizations were recognized at the chapter’s March 31, 2011 Humanitarian Awards Dinner: Helen E. Dragas, Joe B. Fleming, J. Jerry Kantor, Kenneth D. Newman, DOMA Technologies, and the Rumi Forum. The chapter recently co-sponsored a program with the Urban League of Hampton Roads, held a “Lunch & Learn” event at Norfolk State University, hosted a Diversity Dialogue Day forum, and conducted a workshop for the Virginia High School League.

# Programs Continue to Reach Record Numbers

Over 140 Workshops and Events in FY11 Mark Record for 76 Year Old Organization

**F**rom July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities conducted 141 workshops, retreats, presentations, and events. This total number of programs delivered is the highest in the organization's 76 year history, and marks a 300% increase over the last six years.

Requests for programs have come from all corners of the state. Schools, colleges, businesses, non-profit organizations, and community groups have all reached out seeking Inclusive Communities' services. "We are proud to continue our growth as a resource for communities that seek to be more inclusive in our increasingly diverse Commonwealth," states Jonathan Zur, President & CEO.



## Connections Institute Visiting Opportunities

**T**he Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute (formerly Metrotown) is the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' signature Emerging Leaders Institute program. For 18 years, this peer leadership experience has prepared high school students to make decisions based on an appreciation of the vast diversity within Virginia. At the Connections Institute, student participants learn to break down barriers, deal with biased behavior, and develop action plans to reduce prejudice in their sponsoring schools.

The 2011 Institute will take place at the Jamestown 4-H Educational Center in Williamsburg, Virginia. Over 60 high school students from 13 schools and organizations will participate. The program will be facilitated by nearly 20 volunteers and Inclusive Communities professional staff. Community members are asked to RSVP by emailing [contact@inclusiveva.org](mailto:contact@inclusiveva.org) if you would like to visit during one of these opportunities:

- **Sunday, August 14 (8:00pm-10:00pm)**
- **Tuesday, August 16 (10:00am-noon)**
- **Wednesday, August 17 (7:00pm-9:30pm)**

## Responding to Bullying

Inclusive Communities Offers Range of Programs

**B**ullying continues to be a critical topic for schools and communities, in Virginia and across the country. Each week, there are reports of additional incidents of bullying and harassment. Students, families, educators, and community leaders are increasingly contacting the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities for support and resources as they grapple with this growing challenge.

To support students, Inclusive Communities offers a range of programs for middle and high school-age youth. Assemblies, customized workshops, one-day forums, and multi-day retreats all help students build conflict resolution and communication skills that encourage them to be effective allies around incidents of bullying, rather than bystanders, victims, or bullies.

Educator professional development helps teachers, counselors, and school administrators to think about bullying and harassment on multiple levels. The "Building Inclusive Schools" monthly email update provides ongoing resources and support. Workshops and consultations support educators by building skills in creating inclusive classrooms, effectively interrupting bullying, and maximizing teachable moments. An educator who recently participated in a professional development workshop noted "[This workshop] empowered me as a teacher... I am less intimidated about handling incidents of prejudice with students."



# Program Photos Show Inclusive Communities at Work

School and Community Programs Bringing Diverse Groups Together All Across Virginia

While there is nothing like seeing Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities programs firsthand, these photos offer a small glimpse into the learning and community building that takes place. Pictured (clockwise) are:

- High school Project Inclusion graduates speaking at a community forum
- Participants at a college Allies Institute retreat
- Actors in "Pushed: explorations into bullying," a new theatrical performance developed in partnership with The Conciliation Project
- Presenters sharing at a "Break the Cycle: Be the Change" assembly



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