



WINTER 2009/2010

# VOICES *of* INCLUSION

A NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

## Initiative Launched to Reduce Academic Achievement Gap

**Inclusive Communities Selected to Work with Newport News Public Schools**

**T**he Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is partnering with the Newport News Public Schools on an innovative new project to address and reduce the academic achievement gap. Selected through a competitive bid process, Inclusive Communities will conduct work with selected elementary schools in Newport News, offering intensive training and support to educators and administrators through retreats, on-site workshops, and the facilitation of school-community partnerships. Using an educational framework that focuses on the “3 R’s:” rigor, relevance, and relationships, the year of programs will give adults the skills to foster school environments in which students from all backgrounds can be academically successful.

A recent report from the Washington Post notes that “On a 500-point scale, Virginia’s black students trailed white students by significant margins in 2007:

23 points in fourth-grade math; 28 points in eighth-grade math; and 20 points in fourth- and eighth-grade reading.” The work that will be conducted by Inclusive Communities to address those gaps builds on programming developed by our affiliate office in California that has been described by the Institute for Democratic Renewal at Claremont Graduate University as “the most promising vehicle for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities and narrowing the educational achievement gap in the country.”

“For many years, Inclusive Communities has worked with educators and students to foster respectful and affirming classroom environments,” notes Jonathan C. Zur, President & CEO. “Our organization is uniquely positioned to leverage this experience, as well as our strong connections all across Virginia, to support schools in their efforts to address and reduce the academic achievement gap.”

## Colleges and Universities Benefit from Allies Institute

**Program Credited with Fostering Inclusive Campus Climates**

**I**n 2004, nearly 50 people from the University of Richmond participated in a pilot four-day retreat conducted by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. The experience was so successful that the Allies Institute has been held each year since, now having trained over 225 students, faculty, and staff at UR. Additionally, Allies is now expanding to other Virginia campuses, being offered to Lynchburg College in 2010 as part of their “Year of Alliances and Diversity” observance.

At the Allies Institute, representatives from a single college or university participate in interactive workshops, small group discussions, and experiential exercises designed to foster deep thinking about prejudice and discrimination. On the final day of the program, participants develop action plans to share their learning with peers at the sponsoring institution.



**Learn more about the Allies Institute on page 3**



## Message from the President & CEO

Jonathan C. Zur

**T**he Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities conducts programs that promote understanding and respect on all issues of diversity, for all age groups, all across Virginia.

ALL issues. ALL ages. ALL across Virginia. It is an ambitious undertaking that is linked to our 75-year past and vital to our future success. We have never had a single constituency on whose behalf we worked. Instead, by serving as an organization that combats prejudice in all of its forms, this organization models the very type of relationships that we promote to students and adults in our programs each day -- simply by living out our mission.

This newsletter highlights information about three of our current programs: CAN DO (our Connections Institute follow-up program for high school students), the Allies Institute (our college retreat program), and our new Equity Initiative (a partnership with administrators and teachers that is aimed at reducing the academic achievement gap). In addition to working with three different age groups on a range of diversity issues, these programs serve different corners of our Commonwealth. And, they are only a few of the many programs offered by our organization each day.

Inclusive Communities' continued success is thanks to the support of so many Virginians who volunteer at our programs, serve on boards and committees, and contribute to campaigns like "Partners for Inclusion." I am grateful to the many people who have built and sustained this organization since its founding in 1935. And, I am excited to work with people across the Commonwealth to lay the groundwork for our next 75 years of service.

## Chapter News

- **Lynchburg Chapter** - Led by Dinner Chair Darrel W. Staat, President of Central Virginia Community College, the following people were recognized at the chapter's Humanitarian Awards Dinner on May 28, 2009: Terry H. Jamerson, Richard M. Lerner, Irma W. Seiferth (posthumously), Shannon R. Valentine, and G. Kenneth West. Planning continues for the January 2010 Allies Institute retreat for students at Lynchburg College and the annual STEP with Links middle school workshop scheduled for March.
- **Peninsula Chapter** - The following individuals and organization will be honored at the chapter's February 25, 2010 Humanitarian Awards Dinner: Golden H. Bethune-Hill, Elva W. Hunt, Kenneth B. Murov, Nicholas E. Vlattas, Alan S. Witt, and W.M. Jordan Company. The Daily Press "Citizen of the Year" will also be recognized that night. In addition to offering the Project Inclusion program to both Newport News and Hampton City Schools, the chapter will participate in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observance.
- **Richmond Chapter** - Under the leadership of James C. Snyder of Odell Associates, the chapter's October 27, 2009 Humanitarian Awards Dinner recognized Viola O. Baskerville, Peter J. Bernard, Hugh F. Gouldthorpe, A.B. James, Alexander Lebenstein, and St. Joseph's Villa. Program work continues to support schools in the City of Richmond, and Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, and Powhatan Counties. Additionally, the chapter worked with Leadership Metro Richmond in early December 2009, and offers the Allies Institute to the University of Richmond in January 2010.
- **Tidewater Chapter** - At the chapter's Humanitarian Awards Dinner on March 25, 2010, Martin A. Einhorn, Corrine D. Jones, Jagdish A. Singh, Bruce L. Thompson, Edith G. White and TowneBank will be recognized. Recent programming was held for the Hillel chapter at Old Dominion University, and the chapter is making plans for a March 2010 Diversity Dialogue Day for area high schools. The 2009-2010 NEXUS Series focuses on "An Interfaith Exploration of Current Issues in Sexuality and Religion."

## Allies Institute [continued]

Student evaluations of the Allies Institute consistently demonstrate the program's effectiveness. Below is a sampling of alumni responses:

- "[Allies] surpassed my expectations beyond anything I could have imagined... It truly has been one of the best experiences of my life."
- "I can't say enough how much I've learned about myself and other people. I'm so psyched for what we're going to do in the future and I am really looking forward to continuing to change."
- "I will vouch with my whole heart to support more [retreats] and building the community even more."
- "[Allies] has changed my perspective in a matter of days. Now I hope that prejudice in any form can slowly become acceptance and understanding. Everyone should get to experience this 'emotional roller coaster.'"
- "It was emotional, effective, and challenging. I can't wait to start making changes."
- "This was the tool I have been looking for."
- "Helped me break away from intellectual to emotional. I've rarely gained so much from an emotional and intellectual standpoint."
- "I now feel the courage and strength to continue with my goals for cultural diversity."
- "I feel that I have grown and become the person that I want to continue to be. Through [the retreat], I see things through a whole new light. I feel less of a victim and more as a source to a solution."

## "CAN DO" Offers Year-Round Support to Connections Alumni

### Students Empowered to Spread Program Message

During the week of August 16-20, 2009, eleven high schools and one non-profit organization sent teams of students to the Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' signature Emerging Leaders program. The residential experience allowed student participants to break barriers, deal with biased behavior, and gain insight into their own lives and values. Throughout the 2009-2010 school year, graduates will implement action plans that they developed at Connections to share the program message with their peers in high schools across Virginia.

To provide ongoing support to Connections Institute student graduates, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities facilitates "CAN DO," the Connections Alumni Network for Diversity Outreach. This initiative is offered in response to requests from schools and students for continued learning and support from Inclusive Communities after the meaningful summer experience. The program provides resources for students to implement their action plans, allows them to maintain a support network with other Connections graduates, and gives students the skills to plan a Diversity Week at their schools in the spring.

"At CAN DO meetings, students will have the opportunity to share ideas, develop skills in planning an event, and further enhance their awareness on all issues of diversity," states David E. LeFebvre, Program & Event Coordinator. "We are pleased to offer this program to make sure that the Connections Institute has the greatest possible outcomes for participating students and schools."

## Inclusive Communities Expands Online Presence

In an effort to stay in regular communication with supporters, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has increased its activity on the internet. Visit [www.inclusiveva.org](http://www.inclusiveva.org) for up-to-date information about our programs and events, as well as resources, board listings, and a complete calendar. You can now also get regular updates by:

- Becoming our fan at [www.facebook.com/inclusiveva](http://www.facebook.com/inclusiveva)
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# Honor Roll of Givers FY09 [ended June 30, 2009]

**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, 2008, and June 30, 2009 (fiscal year FY09).

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### **In Honor of**

**Mr. & Mrs. Joyce & Paul Kaplan:**  
Mr. William A. Harrison, Jr.

### **In Memory of**

**Mr. & Mrs. Irving and Edith May:**  
Mrs. Edith May Lebet

### **In Honor of**

**The Rev. Robb Moore:**  
Mr. Max V. Vest

### **In Honor of**

**Dr. McKinley L. Price:**  
Mrs. Valerie Scott Price

### **In Honor of**

**Rabbi Sylvia Scholnick:**  
Mr. & Mrs. David S. Gussman  
Legum Bangel Foundation

### **In Honor of**

**Mrs. Miriam Seeherman:**  
Mr. & Mrs. Irwin Brownstein  
Mr. & Mrs. Ira Gissen  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald C. Jaffe  
Mr. Robert G. Liverman  
Ms. Sara R. Trub

### **In Memory of**

**Mrs. Irma W. Seiferth:**  
Dr. & Mrs. William R. Cardwell

### **In Honor of**

**Mr. Mark B. Sisisky:**  
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Belleman  
Mrs. Shirley J. Brown  
Ms. Susan F. Davis  
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel W. Dubansky  
Dr. & Mrs. S. Harold Horwitz  
Mrs. Catherine S. Plotkin

### **In Memory of**

**Mrs. Jean Spence:**  
Dr. & Mrs. Louis W. Hodges  
Mrs. Eleanor L. Lipkin

### **In Honor of**

**Dr. Jeffrey B. Spence:**  
Ms. Kathleen Burke Barrett  
Jones, Blechman, Woltz & Kelly  
Mr. Gilbert M. Rosenthal

### **In Honor of**

**Delegate Shannon R. Valentine:**  
Ms. Virginia Huntington

*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 2009, which ended on June 30, 2009.*

**Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities ■ 5511 Staples Mill Road, Suite 202 ■ Richmond, VA 23228 ■ (804) 515-7950**

## "Top 40 Under 40"

### Board Member and CEO Recognized

**C**ongratulations to board member Marc W. Cheatham and President & CEO Jonathan C. Zur for being named among Style Weekly's "Top 40 Under 40" in Richmond. Both were profiled in the October 13, 2009, issue of the newspaper.

Cheatham is Senior Assistant for Policy in the Office of the Governor of Virginia. As a high school student, he participated in the inaugural Connections Institute program sponsored by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. Since that time, he has been a dedicated volunteer for the organization. After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, Marc earned his degree from VCU before beginning work for Governor Kaine.

Zur began his tenure as President & CEO of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities on July 1, 2009. Previously the organization's Chief Operating Officer, he led a 152% increase in the number of programs offered by the organization since 2006.

## Partners for Inclusion Sustain Our Work

**I**nclusive Communities' mission of promoting understanding and respect requires the dedication of board members and volunteers, as well as the financial support of individuals, corporations, and foundations. Your donation goes a long way towards helping us deliver much-needed programs across Virginia. All tax-deductible contributions help the organization to reach even more people and make even more of a difference.

☐ \$1,000   ☐ \$500   ☐ \$250   ☐ \$100   ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Daytime Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Meet the Inclusive Communities Board

**Featured This Issue: Golden H. Bethune-Hill and Bernard I. Einhorn**

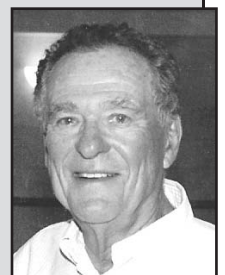


**G**olden Bethune-Hill is Secretary of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities State Board of Directors and Vice Chair of the Peninsula Chapter. A resident of Hampton, she is an Executive Vice President at Riverside Health System in Newport News.

Golden has had a long and successful career as a medical professional, having served hospitals in New Jersey, New York, and Lynchburg, Virginia before returning home to the Virginia Peninsula. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from North Carolina A&T State University, and her Master's Degree in Nursing Administration from VCU.

An active member of the community, her involvement includes the boards of Access Partnership and the Virginia Air & Space Museum. She has also been appointed by the Governor to two state commissions.

**B**arry Einhorn and his family have a long history of leadership with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. He currently serves as Treasurer of the State Board of Directors. Along with his wife Lois, Barry co-chaired the Tidewater Humanitarian Awards Dinner in 2008, and the two were honorees in 1999. Children Marty and Wendy both join him on the Tidewater Chapter board, where Barry is past Chairman.



A retired dentist, Barry has held leadership roles in the African American/Jewish Coalition, the Jewish Community Center of Tidewater, Operation Understanding Hampton Roads, the Optimist Club, Temple Israel, the Tidewater Dental Association, and many other organizations. He earned his BA from the University of Virginia, an MA from Old Dominion University, and his DDS from the Medical College of Virginia.

# Inclusive Communities Marks 75th Anniversary in 2010

Organization Founded as Virginia Region of National Conference of Christians and Jews

In 1935, a team of Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant religious leaders known as the "Tolerance Trio" were invited to bring their message of interfaith understanding to Virginia. Their presentation at Lynchburg College attracted nearly 1,000 people from all over the Commonwealth. Those in attendance were so moved by the program's message that they went back to their local communities and started chapters of what was then known as the Virginia Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Today, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities continues the vital work of the former NCCJ Virginia Region. And, using the Christian and Jewish principles that inspired its founding, the organization promotes understanding and respect on all issues of diversity, for all age groups, all across Virginia. "We are so proud to reach this milestone," notes State Board Chair John G. Myers, Jr. "Inclusive Communities today remains a vibrant contributor to our Commonwealth, reaching thousands of young people and adults annually," he adds.

The organization plans to incorporate 75th anniversary observances into its 2010 Humanitarian Awards Dinner events, and will also increase its marketing and outreach efforts throughout the year. Additionally, the board is embarking on a strategic planning process that will ensure that the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' work remains relevant and meaningful for years to come.



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