



WINTER 2011/2012

VOICES *of* INCLUSION

A NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Inclusive Communities is Recognized as a 2011 History Maker Honored for Improving Social Justice by Valentine Richmond History Center

On October 17, 2011, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities was honored at the seventh annual Richmond History Makers Celebration, sponsored by the Valentine Richmond History Center. The History Makers program pays tribute to everyday citizens and organizations that are making significant contributions. Hundreds of community leaders attended the event that also celebrated ART 180, Margaret Dabney, Joe Doetzer, and the Richmond Hospital Accompaniment Response Team.

The nomination for Inclusive Communities noted that "Whereas other organizations may attempt to provide the tools to deal with prejudice and discrimination, only the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities makes it relevant to all... Over the years, the organization has become known for one-day youth seminars, high school leadership development programs, teacher workshops, elementary school programs, police/community training, Holocaust education, clergy dialogues and many other special programs to assist Virginia communities."

"It is a high honor to be named a History Maker for our contributions to improving social justice," notes John G. Myers, Jr., State Board Chair. "The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' selection is a wonderful validation of the hard work of so many people to advance our mission and programs in ways that are making a real difference for thousands of individuals and organizations in our Commonwealth."



Connections Institute Described as "Life Changing"

Summer Leadership Retreat Leads to Year-Round Activities in Virginia High Schools

The 2011 Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute brought together teams of students from across Virginia for an intensive and meaningful five-day, four-night retreat. Nearly 50 teenagers representing 12 high schools participated in Connections from August 14-18, 2011. Through carefully structured interactive workshops, small group discussions, and experiential learning activities, these students acquired the peer leadership, conflict resolution, and human relations skills critical for success in a diverse world. They explored a range of topics, including ability status, body image, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Additionally, each school team developed

an action plan to reduce bullying, prejudice, and stereotypes in their school communities throughout the year.

"Being in a judgment-free place where differences were celebrated is something I never thought I'd get to experience," shared one student about the Connections program. Another noted "Connections was the best experience of my high school years." Evaluation results similarly reflect the effectiveness of the Connections Institute, with heightened knowledge, motivation, and skill cited by student participants.

Learn more about Connections on page 7.



Message from the President & CEO

Jonathan C. Zur

Census figures show us that diversity continues to increase in many communities across Virginia. These demographic shifts offer new opportunities to benefit from fresh perspectives and worldviews. In fact, an empirical study by Dr. Ron Burt that was cited in the summer 2011 issue of DiversityInc magazine notes that “people with more diverse sources of information generate consistently better ideas.” Indeed, our schools, businesses, and governments could benefit from new and innovative ways of thinking.

Unfortunately, however, not all neighborhoods and organizations are benefitting from our increasing diversity. In too many places, critical disparities persist along lines of education, healthcare, income, and wealth.

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is helping individuals and institutions attain success through inclusion. Programs for students and educators are reducing bullying and achievement gaps in schools. Professional development and consultation for businesses and non-profit organizations help leaders implement policies and practices that value and elevate the perspectives of their diverse colleagues and clients.

In the last six years, the number of programs delivered annually by Inclusive Communities has increased by over 300%. Even more meaningful than this massive growth are the significant outcomes that result from our programs. It is thanks to our many generous partners across Virginia that we are able to make such a difference. With your support, we are showing people how to work better together to achieve success across the Commonwealth.

Chapter News

- **Lynchburg Chapter** - The chapter's 45th annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner will take place on May 23, 2012. Walker P. Sydnor, Jr., President of Scott Insurance, will chair that event. Local programs include a “Break the Cycle: Be the Change” presentation and Allies Institute retreat for Lynchburg College, a Project Inclusion retreat for E.C. Glass High School, workshops for Leadership Lynchburg and STEP with Links, and the 3rd annual Diversity Dialogue Day for area public and independent high schools.
- **Peninsula Chapter** - John F. Biagas, President & CEO of Bay Electric Co., Inc., will chair the chapter's 44th annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner on February 23, 2012. That night, Gregory M. Garrett, Sr., Mayer G. Levy, Dwight S. Riddick, Sr., Jennifer E. Stuebbe, and the Newport News Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will be recognized. A Project Inclusion retreat is taking place for Hampton City Schools, and a new student leadership program is being developed for Newport News Public Schools.
- **Richmond Chapter** - Donald T. Cowles, Miriam R. Davidow, Willie Jones Dell, Marjorie N. Grier, Monroe E. Harris, Jr., and T.K. Somanath were honored at the chapter's 49th annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner on October 27, 2011. The event was chaired by E. Bruce Heilman, Chancellor of the University of Richmond. Chapter programs include the 11th annual Prejudice Awareness Summit for area middle schools and workshops for Leadership Metro Richmond, the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, and several local school districts.
- **Tidewater Chapter** - Under the leadership of Bruce L. Thompson, CEO of Gold Key | PHR Hotels & Resorts, the chapter's 48th annual Humanitarian Awards Dinner will take place on March 29, 2012. The event will honor Kathleen A. Broderick, Maurice A. Jones, Rosalin Mandelberg, Bruce Rader, and Cox Communications. An anti-bullying forum for area counselors and educators was recently held, and professional development is being offered to Norfolk Collegiate School. The 2011-12 NEXUS Interfaith Dialogue Series explores “Some Hard Questions About Our Faiths.”

Educational Equity Initiative Making a Difference in Schools

Rapid Expansion a Sign of Success

Educators in several school districts are building skills to reduce academic achievement gaps thanks to the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' Educational Equity Initiative. Now in its third year, the effort is demonstrating promising results: one school district cited a "culture of inclusiveness" as a reason that short-term suspensions have decreased 27%, long-term suspensions are down 68%, and expulsions reduced by 60%. Teams of educators in every school in that district have been trained by Inclusive Communities to create more equitable learning environments.

In another district, two middle schools that participated in intensive professional development and consulting from Inclusive Communities have initiated meaningful action plans that are making important advances. One school created a "One Book, One School" program through which all students are reading "Bystander" by James Preller. Associated programming has contributed to a 74% decrease in discipline referrals during the first month of the 2011-2012 school year. A program entitled "Drown Out Drama" at another middle school was featured in an article in The Daily Press for its innovative approach to reducing bullying, intolerance, and gossip.

With support from The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia, VCIC's Educational Equity Initiative will expand to Richmond Public Schools in 2012.



National Conference Hosted by Virginia

As a proud founding member of the National Federation for Just Communities, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities hosted the organization's annual conference from September 23-25, 2011. The national network connects like-minded organizations working across America to advance values of diversity, inclusion and social justice in our communities.

Forty colleagues from affiliates in Arkansas, California, Florida, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Virginia came together to share, learn, and collaborate over three days. Visits to the Richmond Slave Trail and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts enhanced the conference experience.

Meet the New Development & Program Coordinator

Trey Hartt Brings Experience and Passion to Inclusive Communities

Welcome to Trey Hartt, the new Development & Program Coordinator at the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities! Trey comes to VCIC with a background in arts administration, grassroots organizing, and using art as a tool for social change. A graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University with his BFA in Theatre Performance, he has been immersed in the non-profit field with professional work or internships at AlternateROOTS, Arena Stage, The Conciliation Project, and Virginians for the Arts.

"We are so pleased that Trey has joined our staff team," states Jonathan Zur, President & CEO. "His talent in building partnerships and planning events, along with his strong knowledge of how to leverage inclusion to achieve success will be particularly valuable as Inclusive Communities advances our work." In his role, Trey will plan, organize, and manage events and campaigns connected to VCIC's fund development and program efforts, including the Humanitarian Awards Dinners and one-day program forums.



Partners for Inclusion FY11 [ended June 30, 2011]

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities gratefully recognizes the gifts of the individuals and institutions whose generosity provides the means to fulfill our mission. The following gifts were made between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011 (fiscal year 2011).

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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 2011, which ended on June 30, 2011.

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Cox 11's Plugged-In Features Inclusive Communities

Show Focuses on "Breaking the Bully Culture" in Schools

Recognizing the significant challenge of bullying in schools, Cox 11 reached out to the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities for support in developing its recent Plugged In program on that topic. The hour-long show debuted in November 2011 and launched a statewide anti-bullying campaign led by Cox Virginia.

Inclusive Communities' work was spotlighted in two segments of the show. Segments of "Pushed: explorations into bullying" were shown to middle school students in the studio audience. "Pushed" is an engaging theatrical performance that was developed as a partnership between The Conciliation Project and Inclusive Communities. The students were especially enthu-

siastic about how "Pushed" realistically portrayed bullying in schools, while serving as an effective catalyst for dialogue on the topic. Additionally, four educators who participated in the Educational Equity Initiative sponsored by Inclusive Communities shared how they have successfully worked to create more respectful school climates.

"We applaud Cox 11 for encouraging conversation on this important topic, and appreciate the chance to be included in the recent 'Plugged In' broadcast," states Jonathan Zur, President & CEO.



Connections Institute Photos & Evaluation Responses

[continued from page 1]



As a result of attending the 2011 Connections Institute:	Strongly Agree / Agree
I am more open to having friends of different races, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and ethnicities.	98%
I have an increased understanding and appreciation for people of different genders, sexual orientations, races/ethnicities, and religions.	100%
I have an increased understanding of the effects of stereotypes and assumptions.	100%
I have a better understanding of the pain some people feel because of discrimination.	100%
I am more aware of my own stereotypes and prejudices.	98%
I feel comfortable that I can use my skills and knowledge when I return to my school.	93%
I would recommend the Connections Institute to a friend.	100%

Inclusive Communities Supports "RACE: Are We So Different?"

Educational Programs Tied to Exhibit Hosted by Science Museum of Virginia

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to partner with the Science Museum of Virginia when the "RACE: Are We So Different?" exhibit comes to Virginia in 2012. From January 28 - April 29, students and adults will be able to explore the science of human variation, the history of race, and race in our culture today through this interactive and engaging exhibition. Companion programs will enhance learning and dialogue throughout the exhibit's time in Virginia.

In preparation for the exhibition, all employees at the Science Museum of Virginia have received professional development training from Inclusive Communities staff. Additionally, museum educators and volunteers have participated in more intensive workshops led by VCIC.

As a companion to the exhibit, school trips to the museum can include facilitated dialogue led by Inclusive Communities staff. Additionally, two Inclusive Educator Summits are being led by VCIC to help teachers consider how to engage the exhibit's content on racism and eugenics in their classrooms. The Inclusive Educator Summits are generously sponsored by the Alexander Lebenstein Fund for Tolerance and Human Rights of the Richmond Jewish Foundation and the Herbert J. and Ruth B. Rubel Holocaust Education Fund of Richmond Jewish Foundation.



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