



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 27, 2020

CONTACT: JONATHAN ZUR, 804-515-7950
JZUR@INCLUSIVEVA.ORG

VCIC Announces Recipients of 52nd Annual Peninsula Humanitarian Awards

(Newport News, VA) - The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 52nd annual Peninsula Humanitarian Awards. The awards honor individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the promotion of respect and understanding among people of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds in the Peninsula community. The 2020 awards will be presented by the Peninsula Chapter of VCIC at their annual dinner on Thursday, February 20, 2020 at the Newport News Marriott at City Center.

The 2020 Peninsula Humanitarian Awards Recipients

Carlton S. Ashby – Carlton S. Ashby is a life-long educator. He retired as a classroom teacher after nearly 40 years, serving the entire time in a Title 1 school setting with children from low socio-economic backgrounds. Today, Carlton is a Primary Enrichment Teacher for the Young Achievers Academy at Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Temple. In addition, he conducts a Teen Leadership Academy for students during the summer months. Carlton served as a school board member for Newport News Public Schools for three terms, including two years as Chair and two years as Vice Chair. During his tenure, on-time graduation rates increased from 72.3% to 93.4%. In the community, Carlton supports several programs for youth including Junior Temples, Young Gavel/Junior Toastmasters, Hampton University's Head, Hand and Heart Institute, Innovative Scholars Program, Youth Meals on Wheels and Saturday Mentoring. A native of Long Island, New York, Carlton is a graduate of Hampton University and he later went on to earn a Master's Degree from The College of William & Mary.

George Chioros – Reverend George Chioros is the parish priest at Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church, serving since his appointment is 1999. He has participated in national and local charities by giving of his time as well as physical donations of blood every 60 days to the local Red Cross blood bank. He continues his efforts to bridge the gap between the Orthodox Christian faithful and those of other faiths as a guest columnist in the Daily Press and by serving on various committees and boards, including Chaplain at the Hampton Veterans Hospital; Coordinating Cabinet member of the Virginia Council of Churches; Past Chair of the Pastoral Advisory Committee for Riverside Hospital; Past Board President and current Chair of board development of the Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center; Treasurer of the Hampton Roads Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood; and member of the Peninsula Chapter of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. Father George attended Hellenic College for his B.A. and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology for a Masters of Divinity.

Janet V. Green – Janet V. Green has served as the CEO of Habitat for Humanity since 2002. Before joining Habitat, Janet worked for 20+ years in Washington, D.C., including proudly serving as Special Assistant to the President and Director of White House Operations for President Clinton during his first term. Among her responsibilities, Janet helped spearhead the Corporation for National Service/AmeriCorps. In the community, Janet serves on a variety of Boards and volunteers with numerous organizations, including CIVIC Leadership Institute, Dominion Energy EnergyShare, Habitat for Humanity International U.S. Council, James City County Housing Task Force, John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, Lee's Friends Helping People Live with Cancer, Planned Parenthood, Peninsula Builders Association, Tidewater Builders Association, and Wason Center for Public Policy. Janet received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work from Michigan State University.

(continued on pg. 2)

C. Michael And Nancy B. Petters – Mike Petters is president and CEO of Huntington Ingalls Industries, America's largest military shipbuilding company and a provider of professional services to partners in government and industry. He is also a member of HII's Board of Directors. A native of Florida, Mike earned a B.S. from the U.S. Naval Academy, and an MBA from The College of William and Mary. Nancy B. Petters is the president of the board of directors at Downtown Hampton Child Development Center, which serves children from age 6 weeks to 5 years and operates on a sliding scale for tuition. Originally from Franklin, VA, she earned a B.A. from The College of William and Mary, and taught French in Virginia Beach public schools and at Hilton Presbyterian Preschool. Nancy and Mike are passionate about the need for delivery of high-quality early childhood education for all, and are engaged in and supportive of multiple organizations that work to enhance the lives of children. This includes the Downtown Hampton Childhood Development Center; An Achievable Dream, and Camp Launch, a two-week residential program providing seventh- and eighth-grade gifted students from low-income families with enrichment and academic opportunities on the campus of William and Mary.

Valerie S. Price – Valerie Scott Price taught for 30 years before starting The GET UP Project to educate parents in preparing their children for kindergarten. She is a member of several organizations and boards such as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Lambda Omega Chapter (Life Member), Past Chairman of the Newport News Healthy Families Initiative's Community Advisory Board (and member of the Blue Ribbon Committee), and Chairman of the Peninsula Agency on Aging's Community Advisory Board. Representing the 3rd Congressional District, she was a Governor appointee to the Commonwealth Council on Aging, serving as the Chairman during her term. A lifelong member of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, she has served as a Trustee, past president and current Vice President of the Episcopal Church Women, two three-year terms on the vestry, and as a member of the choir. Valerie is a native of Newport News, educated in the Newport News Public Schools, before receiving her B.S. from Hampton Institute (now University) and M.S.Ed. from Old Dominion University.

Peninsula READS – Peninsula READS is a community-based adult literacy program that provides one-on-one instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and math, as well as small group instruction in English for speakers of other languages, provided by trained volunteers. By helping them attain their literacy goals, Peninsula READS is helping them to be more effective in their lives and community. Any adult 18 years and older who is not enrolled in high school and would like to receive literacy tutoring services is qualified to receive assistance. With about 30,000 adults on the Peninsula without a high school diploma, a typical learner is an adult whose literacy skills are below a fourth grade level. Since 1968, Peninsula READS has been teaching adult literacy, serving about 250 learners per year. Since 1971, Peninsula READS has been a member agency of the United Way of the Virginia Peninsula. On two occasions, the Virginia Literacy Foundation recognized Peninsula READS as an "Outstanding Private Literacy Group" in Virginia.

Fifty-two years ago, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities - then called the National Conference of Christians and Jews - began a tradition on the Virginia Peninsula, "to honor the work of our friends, neighbors, and family members who gave to others the same rights, respect and dignity that they sought for themselves." Today, VCIC works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success through inclusion. The 85-year-old organization delivers programs to educators and students in the region through Diversity Dialogue Day, Project Inclusion, and professional development sessions. VCIC also conducts workshops for many local businesses and nonprofit organizations, leveraging diversity and inclusion to achieve success. The organization opened an office in Hampton Roads in 2018 to better serve the community.

The 2020 VCIC Humanitarian Awards Dinner is co-chaired by Joni L. Ivey and Ashby C. Kilgore. Metro Productions is the Humanitarian sponsor, and the Benefactor sponsor is TowneBank.

For more information about the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities or about reservations for the Awards Dinner on February 20, go to www.inclusiveVA.org.

###