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Actions Speak Louder

OVERVIEW

A one-day virtual high school forum, Diversity Dialogue Day (3D) is open to all high school students and educators in each of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' chapter locations. The program guides students through a process of awareness to action. 3D gives youth an opportunity to develop solutions to create a more inclusive environment at their school. Students learn about discrimination and prejudice, talk with their peers about problems facing their school, and get motivated to create changes.

GOAL

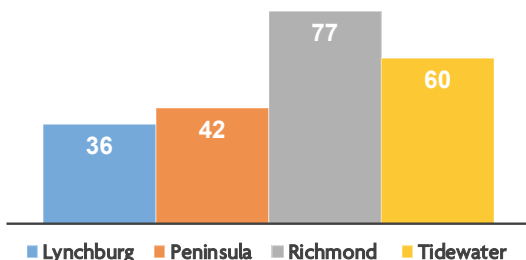
To increase high school youth's sensitivity to and awareness of diversity issues so that they can create school and community environments free from the distractions of prejudice, stereotypes, and bigotry.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase understanding of what prejudice is, decrease stereotypical attitudes, and develop an expanded awareness of discrimination and the harmful effects on individuals, groups, and communities.
- Develop an increased sense of personal empowerment and recognize the positive impact they, as individuals and as groups of students, can have on their own schools and communities.
- Create connections with peers from a similar geographic area.
- Be exposed to diverse perspectives.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

In total, 215 students, educators, and volunteers came together across four regions to address ways to combat prejudice in their schools.



WHERE

In the 2020-2021 school year, Diversity Dialogue Day forums sponsored by Dominion Energy took place for students in four regions of Virginia, including attendees from Lynchburg (including schools that represented Bedford, Greene, Lynchburg, Staunton, and Wythe, along with one regional school), Peninsula (including schools that represented Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Williamsburg-James City County), Richmond (including schools that represented Amelia, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico and Powhatan, as well as two regional schools), and Tidewater (including schools that represented Chesapeake, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach).

STUDENT PROGRAMMING

Given the nature of the 2020-2021 school year, VCIC had an opportunity to launch a digital version of our signature program: "Break the Cycle: Be the Change."

This keynote video presentation walked participants through different forms of the Cycle of Prejudice. Across all four chapter areas, participants had the opportunity to watch from home



or school and participate in a facilitated day-long discussion with other students in their region. After watching the video, students and trained community volunteers convened over a virtual platform to discuss the Cycle and how it shows up in their schools and communities. During these live sessions, the students spent time identifying and understanding their leadership styles and how they can work through their school or community issues. After community-based discussion, school groups spent time debriefing together with their educator-sponsors about ways to bring back what they learned and how they can use it to create a more inclusive school community.

EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

In the Lynchburg region:

100%

of school groups suggested having more peer conversations as a method to fight prejudice.

In the Peninsula region:

97%

of students said that they were motivated to help make their school a place where people experience less prejudice.

In the Richmond region:

100%

of participants said they were more motivated to work with people to recognize prejudice.

In the Tidewater region:

90%

of students said that they were more likely to stand up when they see a student is being excluded based on prejudice.

EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

Educators from across Virginia came together on separate days for their own Diversity Dialogue Day workshops—one held in February and another in April. During these workshops, educators explored the Cycle of Prejudice and thought about the different ways prejudice shows up in schools across the Commonwealth. While the February and April sessions examined different topics and strategies, both provided opportunities for educators to think critically about their role in disrupting prejudice within their school communities.

“I’d LOVE to look into bringing DDD into my school! I also love the analogies and ways to start conversations with colleagues about unconscious bias and institutional bias.”

Participants left the sessions with resources to consider and ideas to share with their colleagues and students—and VCIC left the sessions with a few invitations to do more work with their schools. After the program, a participating school shared a video created for their YouTube Channel, which highlighted participants speaking to their peers about the specific ways they can break the Cycle of Prejudice at their school.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Dr. Fafa Baker*	Veleka Gatling	Amy Miller
Shavar Bland	Aparna Harger	Vivian Oden
Sasha Bolden	Bryan Hooten	Melissa Politan
Sierrah Chavis	Kelly Jackson	Colonel Pratt
Brett Cook-Snell	Rebecca Johnson	Courtney Reece
Steve Dowell	Tamika Lett	Donna Sayegh
Brittani Edwards*	Melissa Little	Rita Utz
Brandy Ewell	Joy McDonald	Sylvia White*
Lewis Fisher	Justin Mercer	Jo (Zhehua) Xin*

*Dominion Energy Employees

Chat

Student #1:

I learned more about institutional bias, which is not something I have really focused on or educated myself on and will now continue to look into more and educate myself on.

Student #2:

I learned how damaging prejudices and stereotypes can be. Further, I learned how what seems like harmless behavior can lead to devastating effects

Student #3:

We have a lot more room and opportunities to be making a difference.

Student #4:

I learned about what it's like for other people in my school when it comes to stereotypes and prejudice. I also learned what it's like for people in [my] community, which I think is extremely important.

Student #5:

I learned that my peers felt similarly about bringing education to the forefront of the conversation and taking a proactive approach to prevent discrimination rather than emphasizing punishment. I also felt we had productive conversation about how we can change the culture of the school and make negative behaviors uncomfortable.

Me (Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities):

