



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE STATE BUILD SKILLS AS UPSTANDERS AND ALLIES AT CONNECTIONS INSTITUTE

Richmond, VA – In preparation for the 2023-2024 school year, over 40 high school students will spend a week at the Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute exploring how to reduce bullying and foster inclusion. Conducted by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, this program will prepare student delegates to work toward creating more inclusive school environments. Connections will take place from August 7 – August 11, 2023 at the W. E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center.

“Through the Connections Institute, students are able to better demonstrate understanding and appreciation for their classmates and neighbors,” says Jonathan Zur, President & CEO of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. “As we mark the 30th anniversary summer of this program, it is inspiring to see all of the ways program graduates continue to make a difference across the Commonwealth.”

Ten schools and community groups are sending delegations of high school students to the 2023 Connections Institute. Students representing the following schools and communities will be in attendance: Atlee High School (Hanover), Hampton Youth Commission (Hampton), Huguenot High School (Richmond), the Lynnhaven School (Henrico), Newport News Mayor’s Youth Commission (Newport News), Richmond High School of the Arts (Richmond), St. Christopher’s School (Richmond), Steward School (Henrico County), and William Fleming High School (Roanoke). Funding support for the program is generously provided by the R.E.B. Foundation.

Interview Opportunities: Members of the press are invited to visit the Connections Institute during portions of the program. Most parents/guardians have granted permission to photograph and interview students. For interviews, the preferred visiting time is Friday, August 11 from 11:30am - 12:15pm. To observe the program, the preferred visiting times are Monday, August 7 from 7:30pm - 10:00pm or Thursday, August 10 from 7:15pm - 9:45pm. Other times can be arranged.

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The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success by addressing prejudices, in all forms, in order to improve academic achievement, increase workplace productivity, and enhance local trust. Through workshops, retreats, and customized programs that raise knowledge, motivation, and skills, VCIC develops leaders who work together to achieve success throughout the Commonwealth.