



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LYNCHBURG COLLEGE STUDENTS TO GAIN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND PREJUDICE AT ALLIES INSTITUTE

Lynchburg, VA – Nearly 40 students from Lynchburg College will participate in the Allies Institute sponsored by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. The program takes place from Wednesday, January 12 – Saturday, January 15, 2011 at the Eagle Eyrie Conference Center.

The Allies Institute brings college students together to discuss topics including prejudice, race, gender, ability status, socioeconomic status, religious bias, sexual orientation, conflict resolution, body image, and self-esteem. While at Allies, participants gain valuable leadership skills involving group dynamics, conflict management, intergroup relations, communication, and advocacy. Students develop Action Plans in order to bring about a change in their campus culture. They return from the programs as empowered and skilled agents of change and unity, having adopted a goal to reduce violence and prejudice.

“Through the Allies Institute, students are able to better demonstrate understanding and appreciation for their peers and neighbors who are from the variety of racial, religious, and ethnic groups that make up their campus and surrounding community,” says Jonathan Zur, President & CEO of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities.

Student participants unanimously agree that the program provides the skills to help one to work for causes and issues. Over 97% of past participants reported that after attending the Allies Institute that they are more aware of how to deal with conflicts and have good strategies for working through conflict with others. One student commented, “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.”

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The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities conducts programs that promote understanding and respect on ALL issues of diversity, for ALL age groups, ALL across Virginia. For more information, call the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities at (804) 515-7950 or visit www.inclusiveva.org.