



## BUILDING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS MONTHLY EMAIL UPDATE

*April 2008*

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the April 2008 edition of the Building Inclusive Schools Monthly Email Update! The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to provide this service to educators across the Commonwealth to support your efforts at fostering respectful and affirming school communities. As always, feel free to contact our office by phone at (804) 515-7950 or by emailing Jonathan Zur, Vice President for Program Operations, at [jzur@inclusiveva.org](mailto:jzur@inclusiveva.org) if we can provide more direct support of your work. You may also visit us online at <http://www.inclusiveva.org>.

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### **--- RESOURCES LIST: RELIGION & BELIEF SYSTEMS ---**

This month's Resources List focuses on religion and belief systems. Check out page 3 for information on "ready-made" diversity programs for schools, potential funding sources, curriculum ideas, reports, and more. Please also pass along resources you know for use in future emails!

### **--- ACTION PLAN PROFILE: ST. CATHERINE'S & ST. CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOLS ---**

Each month, we seek to profile activities taking place in Virginia schools that promote inclusion, challenge assumptions, and advance understanding. As you hold programs in your school, please share information about them to be included in future monthly email updates! This month, we profile St. Catherine's and St. Christopher's Schools in Richmond. On Martin Luther King Day, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities presented the "Break the Cycle: Be the Change" assembly to upper school students from both schools. At a workshop later that day for student leaders, the following action plans were developed in each of five focus areas: CLASS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (create a fund to subsidize costs for textbooks and athletic/social events for those students who cannot afford needed materials); GENDER (hold discussion groups after school focusing on gender relations within each school and between the two schools); RACE (develop a code of ethics for behavior to be signed along with the honor code each fall); RELIGION (facilitate opportunities for diverse religious groups to present their identities and holidays at morning chapel sessions); SEXUAL ORIENTATION (implement "passive" poster campaign with quotes, statistics, and questions that challenge students to be more respectful around issues of sexual orientation). Groups are continuing to work on their plans with the support of school administrators.



### --- PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: PROJECT INCLUSION ---

Since 2001, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has held the Project Inclusion program (formerly Unitown) for high schools across the Commonwealth. Designed for students and educators from a single school or district, Project Inclusion brings together up to 60 students and 15 educators for an intensive four-day, three-night residential experience. While at Project Inclusion, participants explore issues of diversity and prejudice, gain insight into their own lives and values, and develop action plans to share their learning with their sending school(s). Administrators have credited Project Inclusion with improving school climates, reducing incidents of bullying and violence, and building stronger connections between students and educators. For more information about this program and how to bring it to your school, contact the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities today!

### --- 2008 CONNECTIONS INSTITUTE DEADLINE APPROACHING ---

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' 2008 Harold M. Marsh, Sr. Connections Institute (formerly Metrotown) will take place from August 3-7 at Camp Bethel in Fincastle, Virginia. High schools are invited to sponsor teams of 5 students to attend Connections. While there, students explore prejudice, identity, and diversity in interactive workshops and small discussion groups, and develop action plans to share the Metrotown message with their schools. School registration information has been mailed to high schools across Virginia, and the program brochure is available at <http://www.inclusiveva.org/documents/Connections2008Brochure.pdf>. Spaces are filling up, so please complete and return page 4 of the brochure right away in order for your school to be included! For more information, email [jzur@inclusiveva.org](mailto:jzur@inclusiveva.org).

### --- IN THE NEWS: BULLYING ---

The New York Times has recently printed several articles about bullying, many focusing on school policies:

- Visit <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/24/us/24land.html?scp=11&sq=bullying&st=nyt> to read about one student's experience in Arkansas and how his parents are responding to his school's inadequate response.
- <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/25/health/25well.html?scp=10&sq=bullying&st=nyt> focuses on adult bullying, with a focus on the workplace.
- For more on how some schools are responding to cyber-bullying, visit <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/30/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/30bullyingwe.html?scp=4&sq=bullying&st=nyt>.

## SCHOOL RESOURCES LIST

*Focus: Religion & Belief Systems • April 2008*

**CURRICULUM** *[Ways to integrate human relations issues into education]*

**Religion, Culture, and Diversity**

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/teachers/lp\\_diversity2.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/teachers/lp_diversity2.html)

**Stop the Bus: Examining Fear, Stereotypes, and Terror in Our Daily Lives**

[http://www.weta.org/crossroads/wp-content/uploads/2007/03/lessonplans\\_middleschool.pdf](http://www.weta.org/crossroads/wp-content/uploads/2007/03/lessonplans_middleschool.pdf)

**PROGRAMS** *[Initiatives and observances to advance character education]*

**Day of Silence** – April 25, 2008

<http://www.dayofsilence.org>

**Mix it Up Day** – November 13, 2008

<http://www.tolerance.org/teens/index.jsp>

**Inclusive Schools Week** – December 1-5, 2008

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/>

**ARTICLES & RESEARCH** *[News for sharing with colleagues or as classroom discussion topics]*

**Because I Had a Turban**

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/magazine/features.jsp?p=0&is=41&ar=850&pa=2>

**Religion and Ethics: Learning About Religions**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions>

**Religion in the Public School Curriculum**

<http://www.freedomforum.org/publications/first/findingcommonground/B07.inPublicSchool.pdf>

**Taking Religion Serious Across the Curriculum**

<http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/menuitem.b71d101a2f7c208cdeb3ffdb62108a0c/template.book?bookMgmtId=493e44dbdecaff00VgnVCM1000003d01a8c0RCRD>

**FUNDING** *[Grant opportunities to recognize individual leadership or support class projects and clubs]*

**Jordan Fundamentals Innovation and Inspiration Grants** - individual teacher approaches that attempt to engage students in school using either experimental or traditional strategies effectively

*Up to \$10,000 Grants*

*Deadline: April 15, 2008*

<http://www.nike.com/jumpman23/features/fundamentals/guidelines.html>

**Teaching Tolerance Grants** - for programs that engage collaboration between educators, researchers, parents/guardians and student groups that aim to equalize students' experience in schools

*Up to \$10,000 Grants*

*Deadline: May 15, 2008*

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/grants/schoolgrants.jsp>

**Pay It Forward Mini-Grants** – fund one-time-only service-oriented projects to benefit a school or community. Projects must contain a “pay it forward” focus, based on the concept of one person doing a favor for others, who in turn do favors for others, with the results growing exponentially

*Up to \$500 Grants*

<http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org/educators/grant.html>