



## BUILDING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS MONTHLY EMAIL UPDATE

November 2008

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the November 2008 edition of the Building Inclusive Schools Monthly Email Update! The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities is pleased to provide this service to educators to support your efforts at fostering respectful and affirming school communities. Archives of the email updates from previous months are available at <http://www.inclusiveva.org/resources.php>. As always, feel free to contact our office by phone at (804) 515-7950 or by emailing Jonathan Zur, Chief Operating Officer, at [jzur@inclusiveva.org](mailto:jzur@inclusiveva.org) if we can provide more direct support of your work.

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### **--- RESOURCES LIST: ABILITY STATUS ---**

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

### **--- ACTION PLAN PROFILE: "THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK" ---**

Each month, we seek to profile activities taking place in schools that promote inclusion, challenge assumptions, and advance understanding. As you hold programs in your school throughout the year, please share information about them to be included in future monthly email updates! This month, we profile a national initiative undertaken by the Ad Council in partnership with GLSEN entitled "Think Before You Speak." Visit <http://www.thinkb4youspeak.com> to learn about the public service announcement campaign that is aimed at reducing use of the phrase "that's so gay." The site includes videos, print ads, educational content, and a pledge to identify something original to say instead of hurtful words. The campaign was profiled in early October at [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/08/business/media/08adco.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=glsen%20ad%20council&st=cse&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/08/business/media/08adco.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=glsen%20ad%20council&st=cse&oref=slogin).

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

Since 2001, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has held the Project Inclusion program 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. During the 2008-2009 school year, Project Inclusion sessions will be offered to schools in Hampton, Lynchburg, Newport News, and the metro-Richmond area. For more information about this program and how to bring it to your school, contact the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities today!



### --- STUDENT ESSAY, MEDIA, AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION CONTESTS ---

Several national contests have been announced that relate to building inclusive schools! Please consider including your students in the following opportunities:

- (1) **First Freedom Student Competition (Deadline: November 24, 2008)**  
<http://www.firstfreedom.org/education/students.html>
- (2) **Teachers Against Prejudice Essay and Media Contest (Deadline: December 15, 2008)**  
[http://www.teachersagainstoprejudice.org/files/2008\\_2009\\_Essay\\_Contest\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.teachersagainstoprejudice.org/files/2008_2009_Essay_Contest_Letter.pdf)
- (3) **No Name Calling Week Creative Expression Contest (Deadline: February 13, 2009)**  
<http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/57.html>
- (4) **Doors to Diplomacy Collaborative Web Project Challenge (Deadline: February 28, 2009)**  
<http://globalschoolnet.org/gsndoors/aglance.cfm>

### --- VIRGINIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION HUMAN RELATIONS AWARDS ---

The Virginia Education Association presents several awards annually through the Leadership Development and Human Relations department. The Fitz Turner Award for Outstanding Contributions in Intergroup Relations honors an individual or organization for outstanding leadership and contributions which have enhanced the respect for human and civil rights in Virginia. The Mary Hatwood Futrell Award is presented for distinguished leadership in education. It honors an educator whose activities have fostered equality of educational opportunities and furthered the achievement of equality and excellence in education. The Fitz Turner Commission Youth Award is presented to a K-12 public school student or student organization whose achievements and activities in school have promoted positive intergroup relations and enhanced the dignity and esteem of others. Nominations for all 3 awards are due on December 17, 2008. For more information about the awards, visit <http://www.veanea.org/classroom/images/ftc-awards-info-2008-09.pdf>. The nomination form is available at <http://www.veanea.org/classroom/images/ftc-nomination-form-2008-09.pdf>.

### --- ABOUT THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES ---

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (<http://www.inclusiveva.org>) is a human relations organization that promotes inclusion, challenges assumptions, and advances understanding through dialogue, experiential learning, and education. Each year, Inclusive Communities conducts educational programs, conferences, retreats, and workshops for thousands of youth, educators, community members, non-profit organizations, and corporate and business leaders. These events and experiences teach participants not simply to notice differences, but also to respect variety in race, religion, and culture. We deliver our message in schools, houses of worship, the community, and in the workplace. Originally founded as the Virginia Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities has concluded our association with NCCJ and has joined with many of our fellow offices across the country to form the National Federation for Just Communities (<http://www.federationforjustcommunities.org>), a new movement fighting prejudice in all its forms.

## **SCHOOL RESOURCES LIST**

*Focus: Ability Status • November 2008*

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

#### **Are Media Images of People with Disabilities Accurate?**

[http://www.disabilityhistory.org/dwa/edge/curriculum/tguide/t\\_guide\\_cult.htm](http://www.disabilityhistory.org/dwa/edge/curriculum/tguide/t_guide_cult.htm)

#### **Awareness: A Welcoming World!**

<http://www.gillettechildrens.org/default.cfm?PID=1.7.4.3>

#### **Racing for Equality: Investigating the Americans with Disabilities Act**

[http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/19991105friday.html?searchpv=learning\\_lessons](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/19991105friday.html?searchpv=learning_lessons)

#### **The US Constitution and Disability Laws**

<http://www.disabilitystudiesforteachers.org/lesson.php?id=23>

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

#### **Mix It Up Day** – November 13, 2008

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

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

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org>

#### **No Name-Calling Week** – January 26-30, 2009

<http://www.nonamecallingweek.org>

#### **Day of Silence** – April 17, 2009

<http://www.dayofsilence.org>

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

#### **Creating Positive School Experiences for Students with Disabilities**

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/26319>

#### **Evaluating Children's Books that Address Disability**

[http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/fall\\_2005/fall\\_2005\\_sb\\_disability.asp](http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/fall_2005/fall_2005_sb_disability.asp)

#### **The Case against "Special Needs"**

<http://ftp.disabilityisnatural.com/documents/SpNeed.pdf>

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

**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/pdf\\_files/Mini-GrantApplicationend1.pdf](http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org/pdf_files/Mini-GrantApplicationend1.pdf)

**Youth 2 Youth Grants** – funding for youth-led and designed projects that target and benefit other youths  
*\$500 and \$250 Grants*

<http://www.dosomething.org/programs/youth-2-youth-eligibility-guidelines>