



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

E.C. GLASS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO GAIN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND PREJUDICE AT PROJECT INCLUSION

Lynchburg, VA – 40 students and 10 educators from E.C. Glass High School will participate in the Project Inclusion program conducted by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. The program takes place from February 1-4, 2012 at the Eagle Eyrie Retreat Center. Sponsors include the Centra Foundation, E.C. Glass Foundation, Greater Lynchburg Community Trust, and Lynchburg City Schools Education Foundation.

The Project Inclusion program brings high school 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 Project Inclusion, participants gain valuable leadership skills involving group dynamics, conflict management, intergroup relations, communication, and advocacy. Students develop action plans in order to help bring about a change in their school culture. They return from the program as empowered and skilled agents of change and unity, having adopted a goal to reduce violence and prejudice.

“Through Project Inclusion, 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 and 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 93% of past participants report that they have the skills needed to confront racist, sexist, religiously biased, and homophobic comments. One student commented, “I felt that this was a great experience for me. It was exactly what I needed to turn my life around. I realize the wrongs that are committed to people I know and in order to help change this society, I must first change myself.”

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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.*