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Virginia Celebrates Disability History and Awareness Month

RICHMOND—Did you know that October is Disability History and Awareness Month in Virginia? The 2009 Virginia General Assembly responded to the call from young people with disabilities to pass a resolution designating the month and to encourage public schools and universities to engage in activities that promote awareness.

Youth with disabilities helped design a toolkit of information that teachers can use to celebrate with their students of all ages. These materials can be found at www.virginiasefadvocacy.org. The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities and the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University worked together to create this resource bank of lesson plans, video links, and suggested projects for school personnel, parents, and students. The Virginia Department of Education has also been a strong supporter of the event, making sure that all school divisions received information about available resources.

One-fifth of all Americans have disabilities, including almost one million people in Virginia. During October, Disability History and Awareness activities provide an opportunity to create greater public awareness for individuals with disabilities, with the goal of full inclusion in their communities. “Increasing the awareness of students and teachers about people with disabilities can result in promoting positive attitudes in schools. Creating a culture of mutual respect and equal opportunities for all students is an important goal of Disability History and Awareness Month,” said Fred Orelove, executive director, Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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