

INCLUSION PROJECT | 2018 MINI-GRANT

Sarah Dooley Center for Autism (SDCA)

This project promotes literacy and social skills by partnering with a local school and matching students with disabilities with same aged peers, based on similar interests. Students will have opportunities to be “pen-pals” and develop writing skills through a letter or e-mail exchange system. Once students are matched, SDCA students will visit the school for a “Buddy Reading Day,” to read, have lunch, and complete activities with their “buddies” while learning the importance of acceptance and inclusion for students with disabilities.

Hollymead Elementary

Through this project, children with disabilities will develop athletics skills and relationships with non-disabled peers by participating in “The Little Feet Meet”, a part of Special Olympics with track and field events. In order to better unify the school community and build the relationships between students with disabilities and peers without disabilities, activities are planned such as having a pep rally, getting the school community to make signs, planning a breakfast, holding a medal ceremony for after the meet, and having a celebratory pizza party. There are plans for a field trip after the Meet for athletes and peer buddies to extend the opportunities for them to continue learning from each other. And, to form a panel of 5th grade students who are peers to share their experience with other students.

Radford City Public Schools

The goal of this project is to host an Inclusion Day with activities involving students, parents, and teachers specifically tailored to the school and age level for which the Inclusion Day event is held. At each age group, teachers will help create materials to share at group sessions to educate students on famous people that have/had disabilities. PE teachers will develop adapted PE lessons for students with disabilities and simulations for all students to understand challenges a student with disabilities may face while in a PE class. There will be a community event with either a guest speaker or movie to increase awareness and advocacy with community stakeholders.

Legal Studies Academy at First Colonial High School (FCHS)

The goal is to host a one-day event (open to all Va Beach Public School students/families) that will include the following: 1) keynote address, 2) at least four round-robin activities (samples provided in the tool-kit and activities designed by the planning committee), 3) lunch (donated) with a performance by students with disabilities and desserts made by FCHS work-experience students, and 4) closing ceremony with a game of wheelchair basketball. Each participant will receive a t-shirt designed by a team of students with and without disabilities. Portions of the event will be filmed with reflective interviews from participants to use in future programs for other students/faculty unable to attend.

Staunton River Middle School (SRMS)

In English classes, students will participate in school-wide reading activities in which they will read about, discuss, and understand not only the issues facing students with disabilities, but how school and life is seen through the eyes of a person with disabilities. In daily homeroom, students will participate in weekly themed lessons facilitated by homeroom teachers and guidance counselors and will also work to develop presentations/promo tools to display what inclusiveness, acceptance, and understanding mean at SRMS. Finally, a one week “inclusion week” program will be planned that will end with a guest speaker and school-wide celebration of inclusiveness.

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS)

To promote Disability History & Awareness Month, ACPS students with or without disabilities, parents, school administrators, and teachers will organize an interactive art project at the Kids Art Corner section of Del Ray's Art on the Avenue, a multi-cultural arts festival celebrating diversity through the arts in Del Ray. ACPS volunteers will assist local children/students to: 1) create a large mural or a take home art piece, and 2) use various art tools to design images of what makes them unique while encouraging them to use their mouths, feet, or other means to express themselves to foster a better understanding of what it's like to have a disability. Volunteers will wear t-shirts with an ACPS logo and the text, “Disability is Natural” and hand out balloons with matching text.