

Herndon, VA Chosen to Participate in National Project

Herndon, VA was chosen as one of four communities from across the country to participate in an innovative initiative designed to prove how all children can succeed and there will be no exceptions.

Along with San Jose, CA; Pittsburg, KS; and Houston, TX, Herndon was awarded a planning, training and technical assistance grant from Kids at Hope and the National Recreation Foundation to demonstrate how a community which suspends self interest can be more effective reaching all children than they could independently.

Kids at Hope, a national organization, works with schools, youth groups, police, fire, and recreation departments in all 50 states in order to reverse the stigma, stereotype and self fulfilling prophecy associated with the abuse of the expression “youth at risk.” According to Rick Miller, Founder of Kids at Hope, “For almost three decades we have labeled most of America’s children as “at risk” thereby unintentionally limiting their potential. Kids at Hope studies the science of hope, optimism and success and teaches strategies that promote the success of all children, without exception.

In partnership with the National Recreation Foundation, Kids at Hope is selecting up to 15 communities over a five year period which will adopt and model a series of principles that include:

- Adopting a common belief, which boldly states all children are capable of success, **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- Agreeing to participate in joint trainings in order to understand each organization’s strength, share new information about youth development and support the success of the children who they serve.
- Agreeing to co brand themselves without giving up their individual identity in order to demonstrate the power of Hope Square Community partnership.
- Reviewing all existing policies, rules and practices, which inadvertently discourages collaboration.

According to Art Anselene’ Director of the Town of Herndon Parks and Recreation Department and Vanessa Jackson, Assistant Principal at Herndon Middle School, “We are thrilled and honored to be chosen for this important effort. We accept the fact that all children can succeed and there should be no exceptions, but we are concerned that there are still too many children not succeeding as they should. We believe through this partnership with Kids at Hope we will be demonstrating new models that will support all our young people’s success.

Community orientation meetings are scheduled for November 10 at the new Herndon Police Station and the Herndon Middle School auditorium. Over the next 12 months community participants will participate in a series of trainings sponsored in Herndon.

For more information contact Lydia Deem at 703-401-6040.

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