



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DRF Kicks Off The Dan River Center for Community Change on Friday, 9/21/12

Danville, VA (September 21, 2012) – For the Dan River Region to prosper, interest in and opportunities for civic engagement and leadership development are vital. To meet this critical need, DRF announces the creation of **The Dan River Center for Community Change (DR Center)**. The DR Center seeks to create a culture of highly engaged citizens, with its primary target audience being millennials (people born between 1980 and 2000). The objective of the DR Center is to move young people from being passive within the community to becoming active citizens engaged at each level of leadership. The DR Center will act as the virtual hub providing service and leadership development opportunities for young people by establishing strong regional partnerships and collaborations, examples of which include higher institutions and community organizations. “We know that service is a powerful tool in developing leadership characteristics, building community and improving academic success,” says DRF Program Officer Wendi Goods Everson. The DR Center will house two initiatives dedicated to increasing regional community involvement – Engage Dan River Region and Dan River Year.

Engage Dan River Region

Engage Dan River Region (Engage DRR), is a service-learning initiative developed by the DR Center. The goal of Engage DRR is to incorporate service into the curricula of the three higher learning institutions in the Dan River Region: Averett University, Danville Community College (DCC), and Piedmont Community College (PCC). In doing so, Engage DRR paves the way for new traditions of civic engagement for our college students in the area. Service-learning is a form of experiential learning that introduces meaningful community service to the classroom. Service-learning provides the opportunity to utilize students as a resource for positive community change, while providing opportunities for academic and professional development.

Dan River Year

Dan River Year (DR Year) seeks to capitalize on the enthusiastic spirit of millennials by putting talented young professionals to work on community issues within the region. These participants will perform 10 months of paid service, in which they will gain real-world experience and expand their professional network. Most importantly, DR Year will provide participants with the opportunity for personal growth and tangible attachment to the area. The participants will become an integral part of the community, connect with its members, and tackle its key issues.

Kick-Off Events: 9/20/12



To kick-off these initiatives, DRF partnered with United Way, Averett University, DCC, and PCC to host a Service Day that engaged college students in the community. On Thursday, September 20th over 100 students from Averett, DCC, and PCC volunteered throughout the entire day with different organizations in the region.

One great example of a Service Day project involved members of the Averett University Men's Basketball team partnering with Get Fit to promote healthy eating habits in our region. The players picked up fresh produce from a local farmer and passed out bags of these fruits and vegetables to the residents, along with a healthy recipe for the families to cook.

DRF Fellow Rachel Covington commented, "The best part of the day for me was going around to each site and seeing the students all wearing their Engage t-shirts, all involved in helping their community, and most importantly, all enjoying themselves and wanting to come back to volunteer more. That was the objective of Service Day: making that connect between the

students and their community to get them excited about service and to encourage them to become involved outside of Service Day.” – Rachel Covington, DRF fellow.

Other organizations participating in the event were; God’s Pit Crew, Habitat for Humanity, Head Start, Boys & Girls Club, Goodwill, God’s Storehouse, YMCA, Danville Science Center, Caswell Senior Center, Dan River Basin Association, Caswell Parish, and Early Head Start (Yanceyville). The day ended with reflection and a celebration with food, music, games, and prizes.

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DRF is a catalyst for innovation and an agent for transformation. Understanding that significant community change takes time, DRF invests for the long term in efforts that promise sustained positive impact for the Dan River Region. DRF is committed to activities, programs, and organizations that address the health, education, and well-being of residents of Danville and Pittsylvania County, Virginia and Caswell County, North Carolina.