

Conversation toward a brighter future kicks off Student Summit at MJCH

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EDWARDSVILLE – Madison County high school and middle school students will bring excitement to the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation (MJCHF) as they begin discussions around the MJCHF four pillars - Respect, Dignity, Understanding and Forgiveness. High school students will meet at the MJCH for the Student Summit on Tuesday, February 23, and middle school students on Thursday, February 25, starting at 9 a.m.

“Our world is becoming increasingly pluralistic and polarized. We must learn to listen, respect, understand, and even at times forgive. As the future leaders of this nation, we must rely on our youth to begin the conversation toward ways we can make this country better,” said Executive Director Ed Hightower.

The **MJCH** and **Lewis & Clark Community College** will partner with the **Regional Superintendent** and **Madison County** to encourage area youth to think outside their comfort zones and consider how we must treat each other if we are to exist as a thriving society.

Beginning Tuesday, February 23, 83 high school and 91 middle school students from across Madison County will participate in the ***Conversation Toward a Brighter Future*** under the supervision of school sponsors and retired educators. The goal is to work in teams to identify and research school and community issues and create a plan that yields positive results reflecting the MJCHF four pillars. Plans must have measurable outcomes and offer the ability to be replicated by other schools and communities.

Students will be challenged to answer questions such as: What are the consequences if students, teachers, administrators and staff fail to embrace respect, dignity, understanding and forgiveness? How can the four pillars result in a better future for our schools, communities and country?

“I’m excited about the positive support received from school leaders regarding the *Conversation Toward a Brighter Future*. I am also thrilled to have retired teachers such as James Kerr, Chris Head, Annice Brave and LaDonna Whitner and current administrators **Dr. Linda Chapman, Dr. Sean Hill** and **Andrew Reinking** volunteering as facilitators and supporting school teams as they begin their research project,” said **Regional Superintendent Dr. Robert Daiber**.

Students will have the opportunity to earn up to \$5,000 for their school to fund their two-year research project. Students must submit a project proposal, statement of issue describing a problem, and solutions regarding how their school or community will benefit from their findings. If the project proposal is approved, students will be awarded a fellowship grant for the implementation of their school research project. Students will

then present an assessment and best practices in May 2017 and those selected will receive a grant of \$1,000 for year two.

To find out more information about the MJCHF, individuals are encouraged to visit www.mjchf.org, Instagram [@mjchfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/mjchfoundation), Twitter [@mjch_foundation](https://twitter.com/mjch_foundation), as well as the MJCHF Flickr and Facebook page and Riverbender.com.