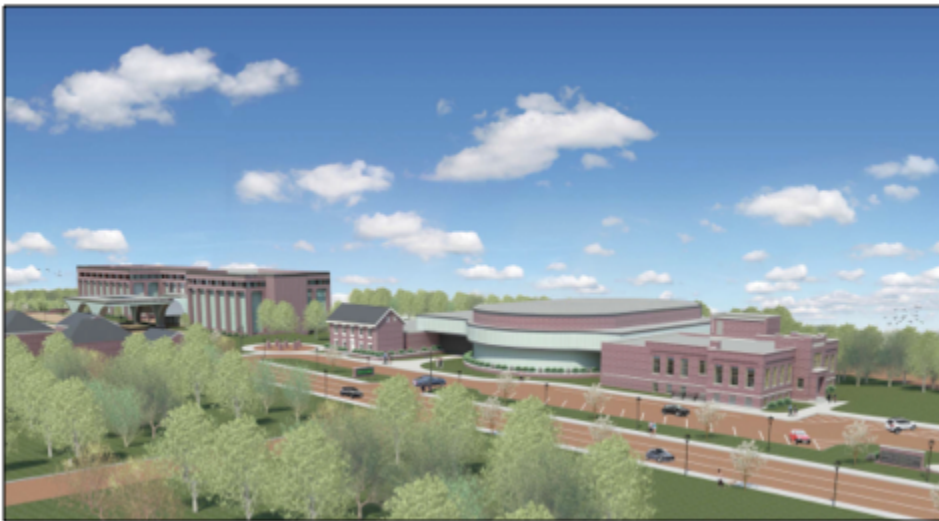


Nine high schools to receive \$3,000 Fellowship for ‘Conversation Toward a Brighter Future’

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EDWARDSVILLE – Nine area high schools will be awarded \$3,000 fellowships this fall to implement student projects aimed at creating positive change in their schools and communities over the 2016-2017 school year.

Students will present these “Conversation Toward a Brighter Future” project proposals to local school leaders from 9:30 a.m. – noon, Thursday, May 12, at the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities, located at 1210 N. Main St., Edwardsville, Illinois.

Following a summit held at the center Feb. 23 and 25 with more than 200 middle school and high school participants, students worked to identify and research issues in their school and community and develop plans to address them.

“Each of the projects demonstrates and reflects the commitment of these schools to positive change,” said **MJCH Foundation Executive Director Ed Hightower**.

High school fellows include **Alton, Civic Memorial, Center for Educational Opportunities, Collinsville, East Alton-Wood River, Edwardsville, Granite City, Madison Senior High and Triad**. Middle school fellows will be announced later in the week.

“I’m excited about what the ‘Brighter Future’ project will provide for our students and how it will help them come together to create a positive culture in the building and help our school become better all in all,” said Triad Principal Rodney Winslow.

During the summits, participants held discussions around the MJCH Foundation’s four core values – Respect, Dignity, Understanding and Forgiveness – and were encouraged to think outside their comfort zones to consider how people must treat one another for society to thrive.

Granite City High School Principal Daren DePew said GHS is excited about the cultural changes that are and will be taking place through the project.

“Our students are the future and by working together on this project, the design team has seen what type of impact they can have on that future,” said DePew.

Edwardsville High School Principal Dennis Cramsey said his students chose to enhance an existing program that will strengthen the manner in which the school welcomes new students into its culture.

“The culture that exists at EHS is so positive due, in part, to our students taking leadership roles and always searching for ways to make student life better,” Cramsey said. “The work done through the ‘Conversation Toward a Brighter Future’ project does just that – it makes student life better by developing strategies and activities that better equip a new student to be a student with a positive attitude, high standards and a desire to be a person of influence.”

Each developed plan has measurable outcomes and offers the ability to be replicated by other schools and communities. Schools were given \$1,000 to begin their projects and will receive the additional \$3,000 in September 2016.

“I would like to thank Regional Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Daiber, retired teachers Andrew Reinking, Annice Brave, Chris Head, Deb Pitts, Jim Kerr, LaDonna

Whitner, Sean Hill from Lewis and Clark Community College and project coordinator Sydney Ehmke for their outstanding leadership and working with schools to produce such an outstanding project,” Hightower said.

Following the high school reception, the middle school fellows’ reception will be held from 9:30 a.m. – noon, Tuesday, May 17, at the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities.

For further information on the “Conversation Toward a Brighter Future” program, visit www.mjchf.org/page/brighter-future-new or contact Ed Hightower or Sydney Ehmke at (618) 655-2881 or drehightower@mjchf.org.

The Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, which supports the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities, a division of Lewis and Clark Community College. The center was created to bring together diverse audiences and humanities programming through lectures, readings, dialogues, public engagement opportunities and educational activities.

Learn more about the MJCH Foundation at www.mjchf.org or find us on Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Twitter and Riverbender.com.