

# Virginia Commonwealth University

Community Engagement Grant Recipients  
2015-2016



**VCU**

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

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## Purpose

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With support from the Offices of the Provost and the Vice Provost for Health Sciences, the Council for Community Engagement provides grants up to \$20,000 to support interdisciplinary projects that will enhance and increase university engagement to meet community-identified needs in the greater Richmond community and will contribute to the research and teaching of VCU units. Visit <http://www.community.vcu.edu/council-for-community-engagement/community-engagement-grants/> to learn more.

## 2015-2016 Recipients

### [A CBPR Evaluation of \*Mommies, Babies, Bellies & Daddies - the ABC's of Breastfeeding\*](#)

Community Partners: Healthy Hearts Plus II; Kinfolks Community

Primary VCU Contact: Susan Bodnar-Deren, Assistant Professor

VCU Partners: Department of Sociology; Institute for Women's Health

Breastfeeding provides substantial health benefits for children and mothers, including reduced infection rates, obesity, and post-neonatal mortality among children, and a lower risk of breast and ovarian cancer among mothers. However, young mothers of low socioeconomic status are unlikely to breastfeed. *Mommies, Bellies, Babies, & Daddies- the ABC's of Breastfeeding* (ABC's of Breastfeeding) program is a targeted community-based, grass-roots intervention to encourage, inform and empower mothers to care for themselves and their babies and to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration. This project will evaluate and disseminate the outcomes of the ABC's of Breastfeeding using community based participatory research (CBPR) methods. Findings will be used as baseline data for seeking federal funding to establish the ABC's of Breastfeeding as an evidence-based best practice model for community based breastfeeding promotion.

### [Expanding Healthy Relationships in Central Virginia](#)

Community Partners: Hearth Havens, Inc.; Virginia Anti-Violence Project

Primary VCU Contact: Molly Dellinger-Wray, Project Coordinator and Director, Partnership for People with Disabilities

VCU Partners: Department of Rehabilitation Counseling; Partnership for People with Disabilities; School of Education; School of Social Work

Healthy relationship education is a widely accepted primary intervention for preventing abuse. It is particularly important for people with disabilities because of the much higher risk for experiencing abuse than those without disabilities. This project will address this disparity by training an interdisciplinary group of VCU students to implement and evaluate the Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention (LEAP) healthy relationship curriculum. This partnership will advance abuse prevention for adults with disabilities in several ways. The people with disabilities who participate in the LEAP training will better understand healthy relationships and develop skills for disclosing unhealthy or confusing relationships to a trusted person. VCU students will gain foundational knowledge for supporting people with disabilities as well as learn the dynamics of interpersonal violence and how to respond if someone were to disclose abuse.

## Monroe Park Campus Garden

Community Partners:	Center for High Blood Pressure; Community Food Collaborative
Primary VCU Contact:	Erin Stanforth, Director, Office of Sustainability
VCU Partners:	Department of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science; Division of Community Engagement; Office of Sustainability; Green Unity; mOb Studio & Storefront for Community Design; RamPantry; Verde

Food deserts are areas with limited access to healthy food options and are a major contributor to health issues and inequality in the United States. In 2012, the U.S.D.A. identified Richmond as the largest food desert for a U.S. city its size. The goals of the Monroe Park Campus (MPC) Garden project are twofold: (1) to provide experiential learning opportunities around growing and accessing healthy food, and (2) to grow a high volume of fresh produce for donation to underserved individuals. This project will create a master plan for the construction and management of a high-output garden on VCU's Monroe Park Campus that upon implementation will solidify a strong network of partnerships between the university and Richmond community members.

## PALETTE in Motion

Community Partners:	Promoting Art for Life Enrichment Through Transgenerational Engagement (PALETTE); Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging
Primary VCU Contact:	Jay White, M.S., Director of Professional and Community Development, Department of Gerontology
VCU Partners:	Departments of Dance and Choreography, Gerontology, Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science, and Physical Therapy

Promoting Art for Life Enrichment Through Transgenerational Engagement (PALETTE) launched in January 2014 as an intergenerational visual arts program for interprofessional students and senior adults. This project will expand PALETTE to present a movement arts program. PALETTE in Motion will pair VCU students with senior adults to participate in creative movement classes over the course of a semester. Ageism (fear of senior adults) and negative attitudes toward senior adults are shown to reduce effective care delivery and impact senior adults' long term health outcome. PALETTE in Motion is designed to challenge these attitudes by promoting successful aging, fostering community engagement and offering students new options for translating their studies into their career.

### [\\$WAGIFY: Savings and Wealth as Goals in African American Youth](#)

Community Partners: Girls for a Change; Ndugu Business & Leadership Academy

Primary VCU Contact: Vivian Dzokoto, Associate Professor

VCU Partners: Departments of African American Studies, Finance, and Psychology

African Americans lag substantially behind other racial/ethnic groups in financial literacy. Culturally-tailored financially literacy programming is an important tool to closing this knowledge gap. Financial literacy programs and information are currently available at the state level, on the internet, and via volunteer and after school programs. However, in Richmond, none of these are culturally tailored, limiting accessibility, relevance, and practical application to the community. This program will explore community-specific barriers to financial literacy and financial inclusion and then develop and pilot a culturally-tailored financial literacy education program for African American youth in Richmond.

### [The Red Flag Campaign: Promoting Prevention through Program Messaging Evaluation](#)

Community Partner: Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance

Primary VCU Contact: Rowena Briones, Assistant Professor

VCU Partners: Department of Social and Behavioral Health; Institute of Women's Health; The Wellness Resource Center; Richard T. Robertson School of Media & Culture; School of Education

In 2006, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance developed the Red Flag Campaign to prevent dating violence on college campuses. The Red Flag Campaign is widely adopted nationally, but lacks empirical validation due to its lack of an outcome evaluation. Additionally, Red Flag Campaign's social media messaging is also in need of refinement and evaluation. This project will continue an ongoing project at VCU to refine and test an evaluation tool and social media campaign for the Red Flag Campaign. The data collected will assist the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance with enhancing their status as a key evidence-based violence prevention program.