

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2017.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico

Program Title: Loving: A School's Behind-The-Scenes Role in a Major Film Production

Program Category: Community & Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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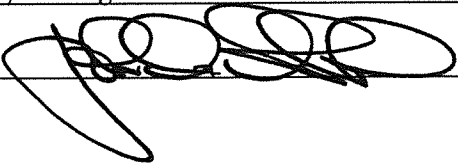
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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: John Vithoukias

Title: County Manager

Signature: 

1. Program Overview

Schools must do more than just teach students; they must be able to provide experiences that can enrich students’ lives. The partnership that developed between Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) and the Loving Production Company led to such an enrichment opportunity for the students of the Academy at Virginia Randolph.

The Loving Production Company filmed parts of the movie *Loving* in Henrico County and the surrounding area. In order to add authenticity to the film, the main character needed to develop and exhibit credible onscreen masonry skills. The production company reached out to HCPS for assistance, since the division’s Department of Career and Technical Education offers masonry programs for students.

Using the school’s facilities, HCPS instructor Chris Simmons gave Joel Edgerton, the film’s male lead, the skills that allowed him to fulfill the role as a credible mason. Students from the Academy at Virginia Randolph had opportunities to interact with Edgerton, to visit the set, and to serve as extras in the film.

The partnership not only allowed the students the chance to see how major motion pictures are made but also provided them an opportunity to learn about a key event in Virginia’s – and America’s – legal and civil rights history.

2. Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

The Academy at Virginia Randolph serves students who want or need an alternative approach to education. It offers opportunities for students to earn a high school diploma and a career and

technical education certificate. Many of the students are from economically-disadvantaged homes and may not have opportunities for enrichment accessible to other students. When the opportunity to assist the Loving Production Company was presented, the school immediately saw it as a means of enrichment for the students and worked on forming a partnership that would facilitate it.

3. How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

This was an innovative program and a unique collaboration with a growing industry that could provide HCPS students with career options. Students saw real-life applications of skills they are learning in an environment they may have never before considered. The production company became aware of the many things of which our students are capable. In future productions, county students may gain the opportunity to work in films or intern with production companies as more productions are filmed in central Virginia. No other school division in Virginia can boast of a similar partnership, blending lifelong learning with application of skills to real life applications and expanding students’ historical, civic, and career awareness.

4. How Program Was Carried Out

In summer 2015, the Loving Production Company contacted HCPS’ Career and Technical Education Department for assistance. The production company was in the early stages of planning for the film *Loving*, the story of Richard and Mildred Loving, a couple arrested for violating the Commonwealth of Virginia’s anti-miscegenation statute. The Virginia couple’s 1958 marriage was held to violate the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, prohibiting interracial marriage. The Supreme Court eventually ruled unanimously that the Virginia law was unconstitutional. This landmark 1967 decision ended all racially based restrictions on marriage in the U.S.

Actor Joel Edgerton was cast to play Richard Loving, a brick mason. In keeping with the details of his career, the production company wanted Edgerton to learn the basics of laying brick and block so that he could appear credible as Richard Loving for scenes in the film. The Academy of Virginia Randolph stepped forward. Masonry teacher Chris Simmons worked with Edgerton. The actor set aside time to talk with students, tour the campus, visit classrooms, and encourage students to reach for their dreams. As part of the production company’s partnership with the school division, students had a chance to visit the set and have onscreen roles as extras in the film. Virginia and the Richmond area are becoming more involved with film and television productions, and, with this, comes more career opportunities. This partnership provided relevance to many of the courses taught at Virginia Randolph and showed students the value of what they are learning, as well as the relation of these classes to the film and TV production industry.

In November 2015, students visited the set for a scene shot at the Richmond Dragway. There students saw the behind-the-scenes world of film production and accompanying career opportunities that might be available to them. Students expressed surprise at the large support staff needed to make a film. Among the support crews the students encountered were those for makeup, wardrobe, set carpentry, set electrical work, catering, sound, lighting, and film. Students were able to make the connections among these careers and classes they were taking, including cosmetology, carpentry, electricity, and culinary arts. Students also had the opportunity to serve as extras in two scenes, one as spectators at a drag race and one as customers in line at a concession stand. Others were able to watch as the filming took place, noting how each scene was shot from different angles simultaneously and how math skills were used to accomplish this. All of these activities served to offer enrichment and learning opportunities to the students and show the value of forming partnerships with community stakeholders.

5. Financing and Staffing

While there were no direct expenditures for the project, there were indirect costs associated with the students’ participation in the onsite visit. The transportation cost for a school bus and driver totaled just over \$200. Four staff members were also present as chaperones. Because of the nature of the Academy at Virginia Randolph, other teachers covered the classes of the four teachers on the trip. It is possible that other schools enacting a similar program might need to pay for substitutes.

The instructor spent several hours working with Edgerton teaching him basic masonry skills. Because the instructor is a contractual employee, the production company compensated the school division by providing a \$500 scholarship for a student interested in masonry. The instructor spent about 20 hours working with Edgerton. At a rate of \$24 per hour, the instructor’s time would have cost \$480. The program’s benefits for students – including strengthened relationships, career exposure and historical understanding – far outweighed the program’s minimal costs.

6. Program Results

The success of the partnership between Henrico County Public Schools and the Loving Production Company surpassed expectations. Behind-the-scenes exposure to a major motion picture offered varied and important benefits to students. They had the experience of meeting and talking with a well-known actor, the opportunity to see the many details that go into a major film production, and the chance to investigate possible career options.

One example that had an impact on the masonry students was seeing Edgerton learning to lay brick and block using the same processes and techniques they had learned. Edgerton expressed

his appreciation for the chance to understand what is required to perform a skilled trade. Edgerton is seen numerous times in *Loving* showing the skills he acquired through HCPS, adding to the film’s realism. This can show students that their goals may be closer than they think and reinforces that they must have determination to meet them.

Students were also exposed to a critical and sometimes overlooked event in the history of Virginia and the nation. With exposure to the human dimension of this landmark civil rights case, they had a chance to learn about struggles others have made to ensure basic rights available to them today.

7. Brief Summary

The Loving Production Company filmed parts of the movie *Loving* in Henrico County and the surrounding area. In order to add authenticity to the film, the main character needed to develop and exhibit credible onscreen masonry skills. The production company reached out to HCPS for assistance, since the division’s Department of Career and Technical Education offers masonry programs for students. Using the school’s facilities, HCPS instructor Chris Simmons gave Joel Edgerton, the film’s male star, the skills allowing him to fulfill the role as a credible mason.

Students from Virginia Randolph had opportunities to interact with Edgerton, to visit the set, and to serve as extras in the film. The partnership not only allowed the students the chance to see how major motion pictures are made but also provided them an opportunity to learn about a key event in American legal and civil rights history.

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