



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: The Academy at Virginia Randolph's 100 Men Challenge
Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Victoria Davis
Title: Management Specialist
Department: County Manager's Office
Telephone: 804-501-4276 Website: henrico.us
Email: dav127@henrico.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Douglas Middleton
Title: Deputy County Manager for Public Safety
Signature: 

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1. Program Overview

The 100 Men Challenge at Henrico County Public Schools' Academy at Virginia Randolph (AVR) is an effort to provide strong role models for male students at the school. The goal of the challenge is to invite 100 men from various professions onto campus one day per month to motivate, encourage, and support the school's male student population. The program aims to provide stability and security that will enable students to view life through a different lens and, ultimately, to empower and enhance their lives.

2. Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

The Academy at Virginia Randolph is a program center within the Henrico County Public Schools system that not only offers an alternative approach to education but also prepare students with necessary skills for life outside of school. Students attend AVR for various reasons. Some come to AVR due to its strong program in career and technical education. Others are drawn to the school's smaller class sizes. The rest are referred by either Henrico County's disciplinary officer or the school the student is zoned to attend.

Nearly 70 percent of AVR students are males. Many of these young men come from single-parent households, have relatives in prison, or have witnessed deaths caused by drugs or gang violence. In addition, many of them lack positive, male influences in their lives, and this can contribute to poor decision-making at school and in the community. The 100 Men Challenge program arose from an effort to better support these students.

The 100 Men Challenge aims to reach as many students as possible through mentorship. Mentors can provide another set of eyes on students' grades and behaviors. This enables them to help

parents and teachers hold students accountable for their progress. The mentors reach students from another perspective and can offer their assistance with assignments or conduct discussions about grades and postsecondary choices.

3. How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

By establishing a mentoring program that involves alumni and members of the larger community, the school's 100 Men Challenge used collaboration to create an innovative way to address a personal, school and societal issue that might otherwise seem daunting. The program can be emulated by other academic programs elsewhere.

The program's effect on the lives of the students is evident; students see firsthand how people with similar childhood experiences have grown up to make their mark on the world. They learn their circumstances and environments do not have to dictate what their lives will be. Witnessing this each month provides them with the courage to step outside of their comfort zones and experience something new. Knowing that more than 100 men will be there to support them as they journey through life provides a safety net that many of the male students at AVR have never experienced. Administrators have challenged staff members each month to invite male volunteers to assist in "moving the needle forward." Giving back to the community in this way enhances the learning environment at the Academy at Virginia Randolph and paves the way for personal success.

4. How Program Was Carried Out

The vision for the 100 Men Challenge began two years ago with a conversation between AVR's two administrators. The administrators wanted to see more adult males on campus in hopes of

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reaching the school's large number of male students. The initiative began at the start of the 2016-17 school year, when both men and women in the community were invited to cheer students on for their first day of school. A second event was held in the spring, when adults came to encourage students for the start of their Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) testing.

The success of these events led to the creation of the 100 Men Challenge. In October 2018, a school administrator met with potential volunteers to discuss the need for and purpose of the 100 Men Challenge. Several members of the community participated in bringing this vision to life. The first 100 Men Challenge debuted in November 2017 and it recurs monthly throughout the school year. The invitation for volunteers is driven by word of mouth and a heavy social media presence. Faculty and staff members are encouraged to invite two male volunteers to participate each month.

On the second Thursday of each month while school is in session, lawyers, police officers, educators, firefighters, politicians, entrepreneurs, pastors, financial advisors, and men in other professions arrive on campus for a meet-and-greet session with the male students. Some of the volunteers are AVR alumni. This allows the volunteers to rekindle old friendships and develop new ones.

Once school buses arrive, the volunteers greet AVR students as they enter the school building. As students head to the cafeteria, volunteers mingle with the students and join them for a continental breakfast. Many of the returning volunteers reach out to the same students to continue cultivating those relationships. New volunteers seek out students to begin forming long-lasting

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relationships. After breakfast, the volunteers escort students to class. This gives the male students a chance to have personal discussions with the volunteers.

Volunteers then proceed to the auditorium with the male students to meet and hear from a guest speaker. Many of the speakers are the volunteers themselves, who share their personal experiences. The students realize they have similarities and comparable experiences with the volunteers, and this makes the program even more effective. One administrator stresses the essence of the program by emphasizing to the attendees that, "our mentors will always have the students' backs and support them." This is physically represented by the mentors sitting directly behind the students in the auditorium. The program aims for students to lead the way and for mentors to provide support through the journey. After the speaker concludes, there is a reflection time to discuss interactions and future endeavors. Students meet the guest speaker and volunteers to deepen their network circles.

In an effort to encourage the male student population to strive for success, they receive assistance to dress for success. Recently, the 100 Men Challenge formed a partnership with the private Steward School in Henrico County. Steward School held a professional clothing drive to benefit AVR. The drive provided the school with dress shirts, pants, sweaters, and ties. The male students' mindset has begun to change by expressing an interest in dressing professionally.

Other objectives of the 100 Men Challenge include providing students a sounding board for discussions about choices, grades, and personal problems. The mentors provide students this valuable resource beyond teachers and parents. The encouragement of volunteers provides a strong male presence that may be lacking in students' personal lives. Some of the relationships

have developed and moved beyond regular school hours, which is an intent of the program. The 100 Men Challenge aims to help students improve their grades and behavior in and outside of school and make decisions that will put them on the right path to employment opportunities or postsecondary education.

5. Financing and Staffing

The 100 Men Challenge program requires no additional funding, however, donations are accepted to support aspects of the program, such as the continental breakfasts each month. Currently an administrator purchases coffee and juice from his own personal funds. He also has developed a partnership with a local Panera Bread, who often provides bagels for the monthly event. Support from the community is 100 percent voluntary.

6. Program Results

The program's successes have been evident. The mere presence of having so many professional men on campus to offer their time and experiences is impactful to the students. The number of volunteers varies each month, but the goal is for 100 men to be on campus simultaneously. Shy students have become more outgoing and social. Some of the volunteers even meet weekly with the students to check on their academic and personal progress. One volunteer works with his student in a hobby they both enjoy repairing computers. Many of the volunteers and students share similar interests, strengthening their relationships. The volunteers come each month and encourage students to make good choices and share how negative decisions can hinder their futures. Other program topics include conflict resolution and preparing for employment after high school. Students are learning that their associations can affect their futures. Some of these relationships have opened doors to job opportunities and lifelong friendships.

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Students are also learning how to conduct themselves with guests. They have learned the art of shaking hands, looking into another individual's eyes as a form of respect, and engaging in small, social conversations. Interestingly, since the inception of the 100 Men Challenge, there has been a dramatic decrease in student disciplinary infractions on the day of the event. There is also a stronger connection between male staff members and male students.

7. Brief Summary

The 100 Men Challenge at Henrico County Public Schools' Academy at Virginia Randolph is an effort to provide strong role models for male students at the school, who make up more than 70 percent of the student body. Many of these young men come from single-parent households, have relatives in prison, or have witnessed deaths caused by drugs or gang violence. In addition, many of them lack positive, male influences in their lives, and this can contribute to poor decision-making at school and in the community.

The goal of the challenge is to invite 100 men from various professions onto campus one day per month to motivate, encourage, and support the school's male student population. The program aims to provide stability and security that will enable students to view life through a different lens and, ultimately, to empower and enhance their lives.

On the second Thursday of each month while school is in session, lawyers, police officers, educators, firefighters, politicians, entrepreneurs, pastors, financial advisors, and men in other professions arrive on campus for a meet-and-greet session with the male students.

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Volunteers greet AVR students as they enter the school building and join them for a continental breakfast. They move to the auditorium where they hear from a guest speaker (often a volunteer) who shares his personal experiences. After the speaker concludes, there is a reflection time to discuss interactions and future endeavors. Students meet the guest speaker and volunteers to deepen their network circles.

Students receive assistance in how to dress for success. They get a sounding board for discussions about choices, grades, and personal problems. The mentors provide students this valuable resource beyond teachers and parents. The encouragement of volunteers provides a strong male presence that may be lacking in students' personal lives. Some of the relationships have developed and moved beyond regular school hours, which is an intent of the program. The 100 Men Challenge helps students improve their grades and behavior in and outside of school and make decisions that will put them on the right path to employment opportunities or postsecondary education.

The Academy at Virginia Randolph's 100 Men Challenge



AVR'S 100 MEN CHALLENGE

AVR'S 100 MEN CHALLENGE

Thursday, February 15
8:30 am
The Academy at Va Randolph
2204 Mountain Road

To volunteer contact:
Jeff Millner
jamillne@henrico.k12.va.us
804-261-5085



