Virginia Association of Counties
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** 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: Tech the Halls: Reaching Our Community With a Holiday Event

Program Category: Customer Service

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Victoria Davis

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Anthony McDowell

Title: Deputy County Manager for Public Safety

Signature: _Anthony E. McDowell_

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Program Overview

"Tech the Halls" is a holiday event created by the Advanced Center Education (ACE) Center at Hermitage High School to bring the community together and share some of the center's career and technical education programs. The ACE Center offers students within Henrico County Public Schools an opportunity to gain hands-on career skills and earn industry certifications. The Tech the Halls event took an unconventional approach to creating awareness of the ACE Center's offerings: visitors learned about ACE Center programs while experiencing interactive activities such as health checks, CPR and first aid demonstrations, human service activities, kid-friendly activities, a petting zoo and auto-winterization checks. Families came into the school and were able to experience the center's programs in a tangible way. The event provided an opportunity for the school and community to build a relationship outside the classroom. By creating awareness of ACE Center programs, the event also opened up opportunities for student internships and possible job opportunities that will help the center's students in the future.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Because the ACE Center at Hermitage is an "Advanced Career Education" center, it is important for the community to understand the intent of the center's programs. A stigma still exists toward educational programs related to career and technical education – even though there is a great need for young people in the various fields of training we provide. The program takes responsibility for opening the doors of our "home" to the community so they can see what we offer for students. We are proud of our students and our programs and we want the world to know what we do and how well our students meet with success.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

One of our goals as an ACE Center is to connect with families and businesses in the community. These people and institutions can support our programs, and we can support them by providing educated students, a better community and qualified employees. Through Tech the Halls, we were able to provide a new opportunity for connection with our community, in ways beyond those we've used in the past. HCPS plans to repeat the event annually. Other school divisions can easily replicate this community event, which proved a win/win for all.

How Program Was Carried Out

In deciding as a team how to do this, we opted to think outside of the box. Through our discussions, we created "Tech the Halls." We wanted to provide services to the community while showing how we train young people to be professionals. We have several objectives for our Tech the Hall program. One is to educate our community about the programs offered in the ACE Center, as well interact with the students and teachers. We also hope this event will create an environment where local businesses can further develop relationships with our programs that may lead to internships and/or jobs for our students. During the event, students have the opportunity to showcase skills they have learned in their ACE Center programs. Ultimately, this event is designed to provide a fun and interactive environment that promotes community support for our school.

In the months before our inaugural Tech the Halls event the entire faculty met in August 2018 to set goals and a format for the schoolwide event. We sought faculty volunteers for the event and to serve on the event committee. We chose a name and date for the event.

The next month, our committee met to organize and refine the event, based on input given by the faculty. They began developing plans for needed supplies and how to use faculty and volunteer staff.

In October and November, the committee presented their updates to our faculty and continued putting together pieces of the event by creating subcommittees for the different areas. By December, we were tying up loose ends to ensure success on the event's date, on Saturday, Dec. 15, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Our target audience was families in the community. Henrico Schools' departments of Career and Technical Education and Communications and Public Relations assisted with resources and publicity for the event. Business partners also contributed items to be used for the event.

Financing and Staffing

The cost of the program was minimal. Most items for the event were donated by individuals or business partners. We had a silent auction and tickets for certain activities during the event that helped to offset expenses.

Most items were donated from our community members, faculty members and classes. These were:

- Bouncy house.
- Popcorn machine.
- Decorations.
- Food supplies for concessions.

- Cakes for cake walk.

- Supplies and activities for kids' zone.

- Petting zoo.

- Silent auction entries.

- DJ services.

- Concessions.

The expenditures were:

- Shirts for student volunteers and staff members: $640.

- Police officer for event: $150.

- Custodian for event: $250.

- Cotton-candy machine and supplies: $65.

Program Results

The event met our expected outcomes. People in the community confessed that they weren't aware of the ACE Center and felt informed by attending Tech the Halls. The event included industry vendors that employ people with the skills we teach at our school. These vendors encouraged us in moving forward to planning next year's event and how to improve the experience for our event guests. Many families who attended the event shared that they were excited about the event and planned to attend next year. Community members attended the event and participated in the activities related to our programs. For instance, our veterinary science program had a petting zoo, and people were able to touch and learn about the animals. Attendees could watch a CPR demonstration and then practice what they had observed on a CPR training mannequin. Cosmetology students demonstrated hair-braiding techniques on the attendees.