

## **Fairfax County Area Non-Profit Organization and Faith Community Youth Partnership Programs**

Youth gain a great deal when every part of a community comes together to support their education, safety, health, mental wellness, and strong social development. We encourage the growing partnerships between Fairfax County area non-profit organizations and local faith communities to strengthen community assets for youth. Partnerships can be implemented within a non-profit organizations or faith community facility. Partnerships can support existing non-profit organization programming or services, replicate best practice models in underserved or hard to reach communities, or initiate new programming.

The structure and implementation of non-profit organization and faith community partnership programs must allow for religion to be treated with fairness and respect. A partnership program can neither foster religion nor preclude it. At all times a youth's religious expression and freedom of conscience must be vigorously protected regardless of the physical location of the program.

Fairfax County area non-profit organization and faith community partnership programs:

1. May not forbid youth, acting on their own, from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs solely because they are of a religious nature.
2. May not discriminate against private religious expression by youth, but must instead give youth the same right to engage in religious activity and discussion as they have to engage in other comparable activity.
3. May not endorse religious activity or doctrine, nor may they coerce participation in religious activity.
4. Recognize that the right of religious expression in a government program does not include the right to have a "captive audience" listen or to compel other youth to participate.

To ensure youth's religious freedom and participation in activities in school or in school supported programs outside the school facility, it is important that structures are in place to protect these basic rights. As non-profit organizations and faith communities develop partnership programs, the development of written agreements or memorandums of understanding can clearly establish the program parameters and how they will be implemented. Guidelines to frame the development of non-profit organization and faith community partnerships are outlined on page two.

## **Guidelines for the Development of Fairfax County Area Non-Profit Organization and Faith Community Partnership Programs**

The following guidelines provide a foundation for the development of a non-profit organization and faith community partnership program. A non-profit organization and faith community partnership program:

1. Jointly determines and defines objectives and goals which are agreed to in writing.
2. Identifies, defines, and agrees to, in writing, program expectations and scope to include timelines, specific activities, and methods employed to conduct activities.
3. Executes measures to ensure staff and volunteers understand and agree to implement program objectives, goals, expectations, and scope as identified and defined.
4. Develops and conducts training for both the non-profit organization and faith community staffs and volunteers on the application of program guidelines and implementation of activities.
5. Will provide programs for which a youth's participation is voluntary. Parental permission must be granted for participation in a partnership program.
6. Allows and makes reasonable accommodations for a youth's religious and cultural requirements.
7. Will not require youth to participate in an activity which is restricted by their religion.
8. Will not give a youth religious materials or send religious materials to a youth's home.
9. Will conduct a partnership program, which is held in a faith community facility; in a separate space from those where religious programs and activities are being conducted.
10. Will develop and implement a communications process between the non-profit organization and faith community partnership leadership that will facilitate the effective conduct of activities and application of guidelines and support continued program improvement.