



VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Story of Virginia

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Virginia Historical Society Receives Honorable Mention Award Educational HistoryConnects Program Recognized by Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration

Richmond, VA—The Virginia Historical Society (VHS) was recently recognized with an honorable mention Pinnacle Award for the 2012–13 school year. The award was presented to the society for its HistoryConnects program by the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC), which helps schools by advancing learning through videoconferencing and collaborative technology. The VHS, one of only two organizations in Virginia to win the award, received the honor in the first year it was eligible.

The awards are presented annually to providers who post top-ranking programs on the CILC website for K-12 students or professional development for educators. These awards are based exclusively on feedback from teachers who have used the content in their classrooms or for their own professional advancement. Providers are assessed on seven factors, including effectiveness of the presenter and educational content of the program.

“The popularity of—and recognition for—the VHS HistoryConnects program since its launch in early 2012 has far surpassed our expectations,” Evan Liddiard, VHS senior education specialist, said. “Our programs are informative and engaging experiences that bring history to life. Exposing students to these programs reinforces the importance of primary source learning and historical inquiry. And educators appreciate the added benefit we are offering to their classroom environment.”

HistoryConnects is an interactive VHS outreach education initiative that utilizes computers and the internet—including videoconferencing, web conferencing, Skype, podcasts, and online courses—to reach learners across the globe. HistoryConnects programs are conducted by a trained museum educator; utilize the VHS collections; are aligned to state and national standards; can be customized for all ages and groups; and include direct question-and-answer sessions.

The VHS created HistoryConnects in January 2012 to deliver educational programs over the internet to maximize outreach and serve people far from its headquarters in Richmond.

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The HistoryConnects program is based on the traditional museum outreach education model, beginning with VHS staff introducing the topic and leading an interactive historical discussion with students. HistoryConnects programs offer in-depth investigation of primary sources and replica artifacts. The technology allows educators to share high-definition details of letters, maps, and photographs that could not be used in traditional outreach.

The VHS offers a catalog of twenty HistoryConnects programs, covering such topics as the Powhatan Indians, the Westward Movement, the Civil War, and the African American experience in Virginia. During the 2012–13 school year, the VHS conducted 227 HistoryConnects programs serving more than 7,000 students. The VHS has already booked more than 200 programs for the 2013–14 school year.

“Students were engaged from start to finish,” said Kimberly Koch, eight grade English teacher at Lenape Middle School in Doylestown, Pa., and recent HistoryConnects participant. “Students had exciting and thought-provoking questions as a result of the presentation. Their ability to visualize the historical fiction novel we are reading is extremely more in-depth. As an English teacher, the amount of research I would have needed to complete to deliver this material would not have been manageable. Using the VHS enabled me to really speak to kids about primary sources. They have a good sense of the setting of their text, they have linked Social Studies and English, and they see the importance of primary sources to research. I would recommend the VHS HistoryConnects programs to any educator looking to enhance classroom instruction.”

“Virginia history is American history,” Liddiard added. “Students across the country benefit from hearing stories of Virginia coming straight from the 8.5 million items in the VHS collection.”

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For more than 182 years, the **Virginia Historical Society** (VHS) has been connecting people to America’s past through the unparalleled story of Virginia. The VHS—a history museum and research library—features award-winning exhibitions that are entertaining and educational for visitors of all ages. The Society is the only museum with all of Virginia’s history under one roof—all centuries, all regions, and all topics are covered. Although designated the Official State Historical Society, the VHS is a privately funded non-profit organization that relies on contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations to sustain its operations. The VHS is located at 428 North Boulevard in Richmond’s Museum District. Admission is free. Museum hours are Monday–Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m.–5 p.m. Library hours are Monday–Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. For more information, call (804) 358-4901, visit www.vahistorical.org, or find the VHS on Facebook and Twitter.

The **Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration** (CILC), established in 1994 as a not-for-profit, specializes in the access to applications and the utilization of video conferencing for live interactive content and professional development as well as web-based collaborative learning environments for K-20 education. CILC provides consulting expertise in video conferencing, integration, problem-based learning projects, school-community partnerships, and effective techniques for the delivery and development of quality programs. Visit www.cilc.org to explore the various providers of content and diversity of programs and trainings available.

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