

Press Release  
February 25, 2020

Emily Lucier, Manager of PR & Marketing  
[elucier@VirginiaHistory.org](mailto:elucier@VirginiaHistory.org), 804.342.9665

## Virginia Museum of History & Culture Announces the National History Day Program 2020

Richmond, VA — The National History Day program in Virginia is gearing up for its 2020 season of competitions. Virginia's History Day program is coordinated by the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC) and competitions begin at the district level. The state is broken down into 8 districts, representing every geographic region of the state. The Central Virginia district contest will be held on Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at John Tyler Community College in Midlothian. The district contest is coordinated by Dr. John Kirn, professor of history, and Greg Hansard, instructor of history, at John Tyler Community College. The state Virginia History Day program is coordinated by Sam Florer at the VMHC.

History Day is very similar to a science fair program, but for history. Specifically, it is a project-based program focused on historical research, interpretation, and creative expression for 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. By participating in History Day, students become writers, filmmakers, web designers, playwrights, and artists as they create unique contemporary expressions of history around a yearly theme. This year, the theme is *Breaking Barriers in History*. The experience culminates in a series of contests at the local and state levels and an annual national competition at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), in June.

The National History Day program sees over 500,000 students participate every year from all 50 U.S. states, Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and international schools in China, Korea, and south Asia. Virginia History Day reaches over 8,000 students each year around the Commonwealth. The Richmond area district contest is the second largest in Virginia and is growing every year. Last year, participation increased by 300% with 358 middle and high school students displaying their projects at John Tyler Community College in Midlothian. Additional growth in the program is anticipated for this year, especially as elementary students in grades 4 and 5 will be eligible to compete for the first time.

Last year, the top two winners in each category and age division at the district contest were invited to the state contest held at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture in April 2019. Representatives from the Central Virginia district did very well at the state contest. Six students from the area received third place, five second place, and one entry won first place. The six second and first place winners went on to compete at the national History Day contest held at UMCP.

Due to the successful growth of the program, this year the state contest will be held over two days for the first time. Elementary and middle school students will compete on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> and high school students will compete on Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. The state contest sees approximately 300 students from every region of the Commonwealth gather at the museum, along with several hundred family members, volunteers, and judges. The top two winners in each category of project and age division are invited to the national History Day contest held at UMCP.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society — a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation. For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

### Virginia Museum of History & Culture

Owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society

428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard  
Richmond, Virginia 23220

PO Box 7311  
Richmond, Virginia 23221

804.340.1800  
[VirginiaHistory.org](http://VirginiaHistory.org)

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is located at 428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard in Richmond's Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the research library. For more information call 804.340.1800, visit [VirginiaHistory.org](http://VirginiaHistory.org), or connect on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

###

**Virginia Museum of History & Culture**

Owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society

428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard  
Richmond, Virginia 23220

PO Box 7311  
Richmond, Virginia 23221

804.340.1800  
[VirginiaHistory.org](http://VirginiaHistory.org)