

NEWS ADVISORY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College receives \$75,000 from Robins Foundation to expand college access for at-risk youth

RICHMOND, Va. (February 9, 2009) – J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College has been awarded a \$75,000 grant from the Robins Foundation to fund the Boost Academy, a component of their Middle College program, designed to prepare at-risk students for success in adult education programs.

“The Boost Academy will provide reading, writing and math remediation for Middle College applicants who do not meet entry requirements for the program,” explained Middle College Director Mary Jo Washko. “It is intended to create a pipeline of better prepared students for Middle College or for those who go on to participate in other community adult education programs.”

Reynolds’ Middle College program helps 18-24 year old high school dropouts in the Richmond region complete a GED. The long term goal of the program is to prepare the region’s at-risk youth for a successful college education, and ultimately the workforce, to increase their lifelong earning power. Despite more than 500 applicants each year, Middle College serves approximately 100 students annually. Now in its fifth year, Middle College has helped nearly 450 students overcome barriers to accessing education – 68 percent of whom now hold a GED. Even more promising is 48 percent of last semester’s graduates are working toward a college degree at Reynolds. Funding for the Boost Academy will allow the Middle College program to serve an additional 100 students this year.

“This grant will allow us to double the number of lives we touch this year through education and create an opportunity for students, who dropped out of high school, to re-enter the academic arena,” added Washko. “In addition, it will help us continue to make a positive impact on the high school drop-out crisis in the City of Richmond.”

Middle College is a key initiative of JSRCC’s \$15 million Major Gifts Campaign to address pressing needs in the Richmond community. To date, nearly \$13.8 million has been raised toward goals to remove barriers to education, raise the standard of living for area citizens, and provide trained workers for businesses in Greater Richmond.

Serving over 18,000 students annually, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College is the youngest and third largest of 23 community colleges in Virginia. The College operates three campuses serving residents in the City of Richmond and the counties of Henrico, Hanover, Goochland, Powhatan and Louisa.

The Robins Foundation is a family foundation created by E. Claiborne Robins in 1957. Mr. Robins was chief executive officer of the A.H. Robins Company, based in Richmond, for 39 years. Since his death in 1995, the Foundation has provided more than \$50 million in funding for nonprofit organizations in the Richmond region, with special emphasis on the needs of at-risk youth.

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