

**Session 1**  
Getting Acquainted

**Goals**

- To help students become acquainted and feel comfortable in the mentor session.
- To choose appropriate ground rules for this and future mentor sessions
- The students will learn something about each member of their class and about their mentors.
- Students will discover the goals and purpose of the mentorship experience.

**Materials**

Activity 1  
Activity 2  
Activity 3

**Procedure**

Wait until each student is seated. Welcome the students. Briefly introduce yourself and describe the goals of the mentor program to the students. Allow a student from the class (who participated in VA Heroes last year) to share information about the program with the class. Ask the students if they have had a mentor before. Find out some of the things the students would like to get out of the mentorship experience. Share with the students what you would like to get out of the mentoring experience. Answer any questions the students may have about you and the mentoring experience.

Engage the students in establishing ground rules for the mentor sessions. Describe the goals for today's lesson. Distribute the "Getting Acquainted" form to the students. Read the directions and begin the activity.

## **Script**

### Opening the mentor session:

“My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I work for \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_ . We will meet twice a month and we will talk about a variety of things.”

“Now that you know who I am, I want to get to know you. Please tell me your name and favorite movie star.” (Be sure to get the correct pronunciation. It is important to everyone, especially young people, that their names be pronounced correctly.)

“Since we will meet as a group for the next several months there are some ground rules we need to follow. They are:”

1. Raise your hand if you want to contribute to the discussion.
2. Everyone gets the opportunity to speak.
3. Whoever is speaking, should have everyone’s undivided attention.
4. Only one person should be speaking at a time.
5. Everything discussed stays within the group.
6. That means whatever we discuss is confidential. Confidential means secret or private. (Discuss the importance of confidentiality).

Ask if there are any additional rules that the group feels should be added.

“I have an activity that will help us get to know one another a little better.”

### Closing the mentor session:

“Our time is almost up. Who would like to summarize our session today? Are there any questions before we go? I have really enjoyed meeting each of you. Thank you for allowing me to spend time with you today and I look forward to our next meeting.”

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### Activity 1: Create Your Own CD

Let's get acquainted. Your musical tastes say a lot about you. Today we are going to create our own CD. First chose your music genre. Do you enjoy rock, country, R&B, Hip/Hop, Reggae, Rap or jazz? After choosing your genre, then come up with a CD Title. Decide if you are a solo artist or do you have a CD with a group? Do you know what your CD/album art would look like? Now choose 10 song titles that will give us an impression of who you are and what is important to you. Be creative! Have fun. Be prepared to share your CD information with the rest of the class.

### Activity 2: Advising the President

In November 2008, this country will vote for a new president. Education is a hot issue on the candidates' agenda. Do you think the problems in education should be important to the candidates running for president?

Divide the classroom into four groups. Each group needs to decide which issue they think is most critical for the president to address. Pick a spokesperson for each group. Give each group 4 minutes to convince the class that their issue is the most critical.

Issues they can consider:

- Increasing high school drop out rate.
- Decrease in the number of minority students going to college.
- Program funding cuts on the elementary, middle and high school levels.
- Low teacher salaries

### Activity 3: Quote for Discussion

What do you think the author meant by this quote? Are you excited about your future? What do you think the future holds for you? How much control do you think you have over your future?

*“There is always one moment  
in childhood when the door opens  
and lets the future in.”*

*Graham Greene*

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### Activity 4: Virginia Hero

**Oliver White Hill, Sr.** (May 1, 1907 – August 5, 2007) was a civil rights attorney from Richmond, Virginia. His work against racial discrimination helped end the doctrine of "separate but equal." He also helped win landmark legal decisions involving equality in pay for black teachers, access to school buses, voting rights, jury selection, and employment protection. He retired in 1998 after practicing law for almost 60 years. Among his numerous awards is the Presidential Medal of Freedom, awarded by President Bill Clinton in 1999.

Hill was born as Oliver White in Richmond, Virginia in 1907. His parents separated while he was still a baby, and he took on his stepfather's last name. The Hill family moved to Roanoke and then to Washington, D.C., where he graduated from Dunbar High School. Oliver White Hill earned his undergraduate degree from Howard University and graduated from Howard University's School of Law in 1933. In law school, Hill was a classmate, and close friend of future Supreme Court Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall. He graduated second only to Marshall in his class.

Hill began practicing law in Richmond in 1939. In 1940, working with fellow attorneys Thurgood Marshall, William H. Hastie, and Leon A. Ranson, Hill won his first civil rights case. The decision in *Alston v. School Board of Norfolk, Va.*, gained pay equity for black teachers. In 1943, Hill joined the United States Army, and served in the European Theatre of World War II. Returning to his law practice at the end of World War II, he won the right for equal transportation for school children in the Virginia Supreme Court. In 1949, he became the first African American on the City Council of Richmond since Reconstruction in the late 19th century.

In the early 1950s, Hill was co-counsel with Spottswood W. Robinson III in dozens of civil rights lawsuits around Virginia. In 1951, he took up the cause of the African American students at the segregated R.R. Moton High School in Farmville who had walked out of their dilapidated school. The subsequent lawsuit, *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* later became one of the five cases decided under *Brown v. Board of Education* before the Supreme Court of the United States in 1954.

During the 1940s and 1950s, the safety of Hill's life and family were threatened by his work. Due to the barrage of telephoned threats, Hill's young son was not allowed to answer the telephone, and at one point a cross was burned on the Hill's lawn. However, Hill and his clients continued to wage legal battles. After Brown decision, Virginia under the Byrd Organization followed a policy known as massive resistance to avoid desegregation, including tuition grant support of segregation academies set up to avoid the extant public schools. In 1959, after public schools had been closed in several localities, notably Norfolk Public Schools and Warren County Public Schools, the Virginia Supreme Court finally ruled Virginia's law prohibiting integrated public schools was unconstitutional. Following that ruling, "Massive Resistance" as an official state policy was abruptly dropped by Virginia Governor James Lindsay Almond, Jr. and the schools in Norfolk and Front Royal were reopened.

However, it was to be more than ten more years before many school districts in Virginia were significantly integrated, following the U.S. Supreme Court decision against freedom of choice plans in the *Green v. School Board of New Kent County* case of 1968, in which his law partner Samuel W.

Tucker was lead counsel, supported by a young lawyer Hill had recruited, Henry L. Marsh, III. He was long a partner in the Hill, Tucker and Marsh law firm in Richmond and continued civil rights litigation until he retired in 1998. In Richmond, a bronze bust of him is visible at the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia. The city's Oliver Hill Courts Building was named for him.

In October 2005, Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner dedicated a newly renovated building in Virginia's Capitol Square in his honor. The Oliver W. Hill Building is the first state-owned building as well as the first in Virginia's Capitol Square to be named for an African American. "Oliver W. Hill has worked tirelessly to end the injustice of segregation, and today we honor his lifetime of contributions to our commonwealth and our nation" said Governor Warner. "It's my hope that the generations of Virginians and Americans who come after us and visit this Square will think that the history we reflect in our monuments is as rich and diverse as our people, and that the heroes that this generation has chosen to honor bring new and vital lessons."

On Sunday, August 5, 2007, Oliver Hill died peacefully during breakfast at his home in Richmond, Virginia of natural causes at the age of 100 years old. Later that day, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine issued a statement, saying:

"As a pioneer for civil rights, an accomplished attorney, and a war veteran, Mr. Hill's dedication to serving the Commonwealth and the country never failed. And, despite all of the accolades and honors he received, Mr. Hill always believed his true legacy was working to challenge the conscience of our Commonwealth and our country."

## **Activity 5: Teen Health and Safety**

Health Fact: Did You Know?

- Americans eat half of their meals at restaurants. Fast food represents 65% of restaurant sales; the money spent exceeds that spent on higher education or new cars.
- Every month, 90% of children aged 3 to 9 visit a McDonald's while only approximately 42% visit the library.