

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID  
Announced at Launch of  
Virginia Home for Boys and Girls' Brand Refresh**

Richmond, VA [June 7, 2017] – Tackling youth depression in RVA is a critical objective for Virginia Home for Boys and Girls (VHBG) not just for the children already in its care, but for the whole community. Today VHBG announced a series of Youth Mental Health First Aid educational forums to be offered free to the public.

“We’re putting out a rallying cry to make Mental Health First Aid as common as CPR,” said Claiborne Mason, President of VHBG. “Anyone, anywhere can be the one to make a difference in the life of someone with a mental health challenge – if they know what to do and what to say,” she added.

Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders in your community. VHBG will provide this nationally recognized eight-hour public education program free of charge to anyone who regularly interacts with adolescents age 12-18 (teachers, school staff, coaches, church and youth group leaders, childcare workers, parents, social workers, hospital staff, law enforcement, employers, etc.).

This announcement coincides with a fresh new look for VHBG. While VHBG has been a ‘home’ for children in crisis for more than 170 years, most people don’t realize that the organization has evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of the community and also provides therapeutic resources and a k-12 specialized school for children with emotional and behavioral health concerns.

The sub-branding for its core programs: Group Care Services, John G. Wood School, and Therapeutic Resources was necessary to make the community aware that it’s more than just a ‘home’. With specific expertise in children’s behavioral health and trauma-informed care, VHBG is glad to help educate the community about children’s mental health.



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**MORE INFORMATION**

**ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID**

The [National Council for Behavioral Health](#) operates Mental Health First Aid USA. Mental Health First Aid was created in Australia in 2001 by Betty Kitchener, a nurse specializing in health education, and Tony Jorm, a respected mental health literacy professor. More information on the history of the course is available at [Mental Health First Aid™ Australia](#). The United States is just one of many countries that have adapted the program from the original Australian program. Check out the latest map of countries with the program and news from these countries at [Mental Health First Aid International](#). Peer reviewed studies from Australia and across the globe show that the program saves lives, improves the mental health of the individual administering care *and* the one receiving it, expands knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatments, increases the services provided, and reduces overall social distance toward individuals with mental illnesses by improving mental health literacy. Mental Health First Aid is listed in SAMHSA's [National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices](#).

**Course Logistics:**

- Time: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Date: (choose one of these three dates)
  - Friday, July 21, 2017
  - Friday, August 11, 2017
  - Friday, September 15, 2017
- Location: VHGB Campus Fellowship Hall 8716 West Broad Street Henrico, VA 23294

**ABOUT THE ISSUE**

- A significant number of children in American society are exposed to traumatic life events. Traumatic events include physical, verbal, sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; parent who's an alcoholic, who's a victim of domestic violence, in jail, or diagnosed with a mental illness; disappearance of parent through divorce, loss of parent due to death or abandonment; and other traumatic losses.
- In community samples, more than two thirds of children report experiencing a traumatic event by age 16.
- 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness.
- 20% of youth ages 13-18 live with a mental health condition. 11% of youth have a mood disorder. 10% of youth have a behavior or conduct disorder. 8% of youth have an anxiety disorder.
- The average delay between onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.

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**ABOUT VHGB**

VHGB is a nonprofit organization that has been serving children in crisis since 1846. VHGB is located on a 30+ acre campus in Henrico County that includes training facilities. **Each year VHGB provides more than 130,000 therapeutic care hours.**

The refreshed logo and sub-brands were created by Aimee Koch Grindon and David Grindon of Polychrome Collective.

The new entrance sign off of Broad Street was produced, installed, and donated by Jimmy Keith, President of Keith-Fabry Reprographics.



**To sign up for Youth Mental Health First Aid go to [VHGB.org](http://VHGB.org)**

