



SOUTH CAROLINA BISHOPS' PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Recognizing God's image in the life of every child.

The Voorhees Scholars Program

Our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, calls us to take the Jesus Movement into the world. In response to his call, Province IV of the Episcopal Church issued a challenge for the development of projects to address the concerns of evangelism, creation care, and racism. The call asked for collaboration among or between dioceses. The call also asked for work with the wider community and with Episcopal institutions. Province IV offered up to \$25,000 support the launch of such work.

The Episcopal Church in South Carolina joined with the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina to apply for these funds. This project addresses racial inequity. The joint project involves Voorhees College, one of two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) affiliated with The Episcopal Church in the United States. The project is also an outgrowth of the Fellowship of South Carolina Bishops' Public Education Initiative. (This Initiative calls for people of faith to be involved in insuring excellent education for all the children of South Carolina.) The project is called the Voorhees Scholars Program, and it was launched at Voorhees College in the summer of 2018.

The vision and scope of the program is described below.

Many young people with the aptitude for higher education live in environments that do not encourage or support the setting of this goal. Those in rural and impoverished parts of our state have higher dropout rates and fewer students who go on to complete college. The Voorhees Scholars Program seeks to address this concern. Academically promising students who are finishing the eighth grade are tapped to become Voorhees Scholars for their high school years.

The students are identified by their teachers and principal. The program is designed to encourage them to set goals for themselves for higher education and to support them in these goals. The program began with 14 students in July of 2018 with a week at Voorhees College. The Scholars lived in the residence hall, attended a summer school class, and ate in the dining hall. This introduction to college life was coupled with activities and group exercises to help the students begin to understand what it takes to succeed in college.

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Throughout the academic year, Voorhees Scholars gather monthly for Saturday sessions. Some are hosted at Voorhees College showcasing various aspects of campus life, while others will be field trips for cultural or recreational exposure.

The Scholars will remain in the program throughout their high school years. As they progress, they will be offered the opportunity to have a mentor and to complete an internship. This year's inaugural class also raised the idea of some kind of travel or pilgrimage as a culmination of their experience. The energy and enthusiasm the students bring to this project is delightful.

The goal is to add a class each year.

Province IV awarded this program a portion of the monies needed. The Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina budgets for the Voorhees Scholars program. Voorhees College has made in-kind contributions for transportation. The UTO awarded the program a grant at Convention this summer. There are opportunities for people who would like to take part in the work of this program.

People who are interested in knowing more are encouraged to contact

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