

NEWS RELEASE

J. Sargeant Reynolds
Community College



For Immediate Release

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Middle College program graduates first summer class

Richmond, VA (August 20, 2007)...Middle College graduate Marcus Smith said the program has changed his life. Donned his royal blue cap and gown, Smith recently joined 20 of his peers in a ceremony recognizing the completion of the GED and the transition from high school drop out to college freshman. The summer program was funded through the generosity of Capitol One Financial Services.

The Middle College is a free “college entry” program for individuals between the ages of 18-24 who have not completed their high school education. The program was initially sponsored by former Governor Mark Warner and funded through the appropriation of Virginia’s statewide Workforce Investment Act funds.

The Reynolds’ Middle College program started in 2003 as one of two pilot programs in the Virginia Community College System. Since its inception, the program has served hundreds of students seeking a second chance.

Sherika Gillison-Chew, a 2004 graduate of the program and a Reynolds student, encouraged the graduating class to keep reaching for their dreams. “A few years ago, I never would have thought I would be a college student,” said Gillison-Chew. “If I can do it, you can do it.”

Several students completing the summer program will follow in her path, enrolling as Reynolds freshmen this fall. Students are provided assistance through financial aid and scholarships to continue with their postsecondary education towards completion of a certificate or degree program. Others will take their new acquired skills directly into the workforce.

Serving over 17,000 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. For more information visit www.reynolds.edu.

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