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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 784

Offered February 6, 2015

Commending the Richmond Peace Education Center.

Patrons—Carr, Futrell, Hope, James, Keam, Kory, Landes, McQuinn, Plum, Preston, Rasoul, Simon, Spruill, Toscano, Tyler and Watts; Senators: Barker, Ebbin, Edwards, Favola, Garrett, Locke, McEachin, Norment and Saslaw

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Richmond Peace Education Center celebrates 35 years of working to build just, inclusive, and nonviolent communities in Richmond and around the world through education and action; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond Peace Education Center was established after members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church organized the Richmond Conference on the Arms Race to raise awareness of the dangers of nuclear war; the group continued to meet at Union Theological Seminary to discuss other ways to promote peaceful conflict resolution; and

WHEREAS, with support from other community organizations and local churches, the Richmond Peace Education Center officially opened in June 1980 with Steve Hodges, a student at Union Theological Seminary, as the first director; and

WHEREAS, in its early years, the Richmond Peace Education Center focused on the nuclear arms race; by 1983, the organization had begun to offer nonviolent conflict resolution programs and participated in Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Learning Week; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-1980s, the Richmond Peace Education Center turned its attention to unrest in Central America and South Africa; the organization sent volunteers to Nicaragua to witness for peace and helped form the local Rainbow Coalition to pursue civil rights and social justice; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Richmond Peace Education Center offered programs on Northern Ireland and the Middle East, including perspectives from both Israelis and Palestinians; the Center also established the Parenting for Peace and Justice program and hosted dozens of local workshops; and

WHEREAS, after September 11, 2001, the Richmond Peace Education Center worked with the American Civil Liberties Union to develop a program on the USA Patriot Act and developed the Family Peace Festival, an interfaith event honoring victims of the attacks; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Richmond Peace Education Center hosted countless workshops, public events, conflict resolution training seminars, train-the-trainer sessions, and other educational initiatives to promote appreciation for other cultures, promote nonviolence, build safety through cooperation and community spirit, encourage justice and equality, and empower individuals to live full, happy lives; and

WHEREAS, today, the Richmond Peace Education Center teaches nonviolent conflict resolution across the greater Richmond region and empowers teenagers to be leaders for peace and justice through its Richmond Youth Peace Project; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond Peace Education Center owes its continued success to the able leadership of many directors, officers, and board members; the hard work of countless volunteers; and generous donations from individuals, groups, and businesses; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Richmond Peace Education Center on the occasion of its 35th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Richmond Peace Education Center as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the Center's diligent work to promote social justice and peace throughout the world.

INTRODUCED

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