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Historic Triangle Leadership Class Challenges Williamsburg Area Residents to be Healthier

(Williamsburg) – The 2011 Leadership Historic Triangle Class (LHT), a program of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, has launched Historic Triangle Healthy Habits (HTHH), a regional initiative to improve the quality of life for residents by supporting the health and well being of the community. The Historic Triangle Healthy Habits program's goal is to educate residents about the importance of healthy living for the sustainability of the community and to highlight tools available to make healthy lifestyle choices easily and on any budget.

Historic Triangle Healthy Habits (HTHH) is a three-fold effort:

The **Healthy Restaurant** component will assist restaurants in identifying healthier menu items and portion sizes. Restaurants who meet criteria developed by a registered dietician will be recognized as an Historic Triangle Healthy Habits Restaurant. They will receive a window decal, web listing and printed materials to inform their customers, the community and visitors. There is no cost to the restaurant to participate.

Fitness Markets will take place on May 7, 2011 at the Williamsburg Farmers Market at Merchants Square, and on May 14, 2011 at the Yorktown Farmers Market at Riverwalk Landing. The Fitness Markets will showcase demonstrations by local chefs, parks and recreation, and other health related organizations from our community. Fitness activities will take place during the markets.

The **Healthy Recipe Exchange** will enable local residents and chefs to submit their favorite healthy recipes on the HTHH Facebook page. Participants will be eligible to receive prizes at a raffle drawing at the Yorktown Fitness Market on May 14th. There will also be an opportunity to submit recipes that are both healthy and budget conscious.

The LHT class decided to promote a healthy lifestyle as a result of consulting with local community leaders, schools, social services agencies and health professionals, who cited the growing need in the region. Their decision was also supported by considerable research into the effects and costs of poor health on everyone – government, businesses and individuals:

- In 2010, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth cited that 22% of Virginia youth are overweight or obese.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), obesity is costly:
 - From 1979-1991, annual hospital costs related to obesity among children and adolescents increased from \$35 million to \$127 million.
 - In 2008, obesity-related medical care costs were estimated to be as high as \$147 billion.
 - In 2006, obese people spent \$1,400 more in medical care costs than did people at a normal weight.
- The CDC also reports that dietary changes and increased physical activity are the most effective tools for improving health and reducing health care costs.

Although the HTHH program is unique, the twenty-two members of the LHT class developed it using criteria similar to other programs across the country modeled on a blueprint and guidelines recommended by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Leadership for Healthy Communities. (www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org).

The LHT class is currently reaching out to area restaurants to encourage them to participate in the Healthy Restaurant program, and several have already signed on, including: Berret's; Carrot Tree Yorktown; Francesco's; Riverwalk Restaurant/High Tide Bar and Grill; Sal's by Victor; Second Street, An American Bistro; and Wasabi. Restaurants interested in participating should email hthh2011@gmail.com.

As a symbol of their personal commitment to fitness, members of the LHT class will participate by walking, running or volunteering in the Run for the Dream on May 21 & 22, 2011 in Williamsburg to benefit An Achievable Dream and in support of Wounded Warriors. (www.runforachievabledream.com)

For information about HTHH, including links to participating restaurants and healthy resources both locally and nationally, visit the website, www.historictrianglehealthyhabits.org or the Historic Triangle Healthy Habits Facebook page.

The Historic Triangle Healthy Habits logo was designed by Howell Creative Group, who donated their services to LHT.

Sponsored by the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, Leadership Historic Triangle's mission is to encourage, develop and support future community leaders. The LHT program provides the foundation necessary to develop effective leaders within the Community. The goals of the Leadership Triangle Program are (1) Increasing the community involvement and leadership skills of future leaders in our area by educating them about issues affecting our community and (2) Introducing them to other leaders and local resources to effect change.

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