

For Immediate Release

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**Students from 37 Different Area Schools Converge At Anytown Alabama Summit
Explore Race Relations and Religious Diversity**

BIRMINGHAM, AL, May 31, 2018 – How are teens coping with the issues of their generation? Find out as students from across the Greater Birmingham area, representing nearly 37 different schools, explore the topics of race relations, the complexities of religious beliefs, and talk cultural differences June 3 – June 9 at **Anytown Alabama, a teen leadership summit** at the Camp Hargis Retreat in Chelsea (928 Hargis Drive, Chelsea, AL 35043). This week long retreat immerses students into group exercises and discussions that provide an open forum for engagement in honest dialogue about topics that are often considered too controversial.

Started by the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) in 1989, Anytown is now the product of a partnership with YWCA Central Alabama (since 2011). Delegates to the summit are diverse in terms of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and neighborhood, and they are challenged to consider how they can help make their schools and communities more fair and inclusive for all.

Students learn to respond to difficult real-life situations with kindness, courage and respect. Interaction with a diverse group at Anytown prepares students for life after high school, where cultural sensitivity and the ability to communicate with all types of people are crucial.

Sessions the media can attend are as follows:

Tuesday, June 5

- 9:15 a.m. - Privilege Walk – Students consider their own life experiences through a privilege walk, which provides fodder for listening and learning from other delegates' stories.
- 1 p.m. – The Neighborhood – This is a simulation designed to help participants grasp the different experiences of people with and without socio-economic privilege.

Wednesday, June 6

- 9:15 a.m. – Racial and Ethnic Identities -- Students will explore their own racial identities and examine what difference race makes to their experiences in life.
- 1 p.m. Philosophy of Life/Religious Oppression -- Delegates will consider their own religious beliefs and will discover how they are similar to and different from those of other delegates.
- 7 p.m. – Culture Celebration - Students learn the value of appreciating other cultures and beliefs while celebrating their own.

Friday, June 8

- 9:15 a.m. – Cycle of Liberation – Participants will learn conflict resolution and are challenged to think about how they will use their Anytown experiences to challenge oppression, be empowered, and stand up for what they believe is right.

Saturday, June 9

- 9:15 a.m. - Graduation at YWCA gymnasium downtown Birmingham [309 23rd Street North]

Due to the sensitive nature of some of the sessions, reporters will not be able to listen in or take video footage of some activities and small group conversations. However, individual interviews with staff and student delegates may be conducted during these times. Please check in with a co-director for guidance upon arrival.

About the YWCA

The YWCA Central Alabama is a United Way organization dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. To learn more, visit www.ywcabham.org.

About NCCJ of Alabama

NCCJ of Alabama, the National Conference for Community and Justice, was founded in 1932 and is dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism through advocacy, conflict resolution and education. Led by an all-volunteer board since 2010, NCCJ raises funds through its Brotherhood and Sisterhood Awards Dinner to support Anytown Alabama.

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