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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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VirginiaFIRST receives grant from the Youth Philanthropy Project

(RICHMOND) – June 30th, 2016 -- VirginiaFIRST gratefully acknowledges a grant of \$3,000 from the Youth Philanthropy Project (YPP), a joint program of The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia and HandsOn Greater Richmond. The funds will support VirginiaFIRST's efforts to grow the "Supporting Sustainability through Youth Leadership and Advocacy" (STYLA) program at Franklin Military Academy. This pilot project was originally funded by Brookfield and Capital One Foundations in 2015. Its purpose is to prepare children for success in a technology-dependent world by developing science, engineering and life skills.

"I'm happy that the students involved in the Youth Philanthropy Project were able to learn about the important work of VirginiaFIRST and its role in bringing high quality STEM-based leadership enrichment programs to youth in Metro Richmond. In addition to fully funding the original proposal, our members named VirginiaFIRST a YPP Grant of the Year, which includes an additional \$500 funded through contributions made by the YPP Steering Committee," said Erin Osiol, YPP Advisor and Program Manager for HandsOn Greater Richmond.

"Our engaging team robotics programs help open doors of opportunity for young people," said Stan Southworth, Executive Director of VirginiaFIRST. "The STYLA pilot program at Franklin Military Academy has exceeded all expectations. In just 10 months, these young leaders have demonstrated an incredible talent for creative problem solving, advocacy, self-sufficiency, and innovative marketing in their community. We are honored to be given the opportunity to work with these very smart and motivated technology leaders of tomorrow again this Fall."

VirginiaFIRST is the Virginia affiliate of FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), an international non-profit organization with the ambitious mission of transforming modern culture by celebrating science and technology and encouraging more students to be interested in pursuing education and careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Using robots as the *vehicle*, VirginiaFIRST brings after-school STEM-based leadership enrichment programs to over 6,200 middle and high school youth in Virginia, DC and Maryland each year.

Helping to bring STEM-based leadership robotics programs to students K-12 in Virginia.

Learn more at www.virginiafirst.org.

About the Youth Philanthropy Project

The Youth Philanthropy Project, or YPP, is a 9-month long leadership, service and philanthropy institute for high school-aged youth interested in being at the center of change. Twenty area youth will engage in service projects, grantmaking and leadership activities to effect positive change in the Greater Richmond community. YPP uses the goLEAD curriculum, an initiative of generationOn, an international youth service organization. We empower youth to DO - to plan, to act, to give for common good. Started in 1998, YPP is now a collaborative effort between the Community Foundation *Serving Richmond & Central Virginia* and HandsOn Greater Richmond.

YPP is based on the belief that everyone, regardless of age, has an innate desire and ability to give, to participate, to learn, and to create the world they want to see. Youth in our area are motivated and poised for action and are calling on us to help them channel their energy, skills and knowledge into meaningful service.

Once selected, the youth-led Steering Committee meet monthly to engage in leadership studies, service activity planning and implementation, and grantmaking activities to award \$15,000 to youth-led community service projects in the Greater Richmond area. For more information on YPP, Contact Erin Osiol at eosiol@handsonrva.org .