



For Immediate Release

Contact:  
Shanna Francisco-King  
Program Director  
Martinsville Henry County After 3 Initiative  
276-656-5493  
276-732-2472  
sfrancisco-king@ph.vccs.edu

Allyson Rothrock  
Assistant Executive Director  
The Harvest Foundation  
276-632-3329  
arothrock@theharvestfoundation.org

## **Patrick Henry Community College Initiative Offers Innovative Afterschool Enrichment Programming**

**(Martinsville, VA) – January 8, 2008** – Patrick Henry Community College received a grant from The Harvest Foundation for \$504,560 to continue support of the Martinsville Henry County After Three (MHC After 3) initiative. This effort coordinates afterschool enrichment and academic activities for middle school age students in Martinsville and Henry County, and is the only afterschool program of its kind in our region. MHC After 3 has achieved immense success since its beginning operations in April 2006. It has added a great deal of new programming opportunities to attract and retain middle school aged students and continues to make sure the program addresses the wants and needs of these students.

“With this grant, middle school youth in this county will be able to explore opportunities in woodturning, robotics, dance, participation with scientists at the Virginia Museum of Natural history, arts immersion in collaboration with Piedmont Arts Association, college readiness, and many other activities,” said Shanna Francisco-King, Program Director of MHC After 3. “The Harvest Foundation’s commitment to our community’s youth speaks volumes about its dedication to provide opportunities our youth need to excel as lifetime learners. MHC After 3 partners and staff have enjoyed tremendous success in our first year of operation and with the additional funding will ensure that our area’s students are safely engaged in activities that foster positive learning and development,” Francisco-King added.

Renewed funding allows MHC After 3 to continue delivering high quality programming while expanding enrollment and increasing new opportunities for youth to stay engaged in a safe and productive environment. Martinsville-Henry County is home to more than 2,400 middle school age children, approximately one-third of who go home to an unsupervised setting everyday afterschool. It is during these critical hours that youth are at increased risk of alcohol consumption or other drug use, and being the victim or perpetrator of a crime. Currently the program has almost 300 area students enrolled in the MHC After 3 program and with the additional funding from The Harvest Foundation, has the capability to increase the number of area students it serves.

“MHC After 3 addresses a vital need for our youth to stay engaged in scholarship and developmental programming during after-school hours. This initiative provides a tremendous opportunity for youth to learn, develop, and succeed as productive citizens and contributors to our vision of making Martinsville-Henry County a “community of choice” said Richard Killingsworth, Executive Director of The Harvest Foundation.

The MHC After 3 Program strives to make connections between school time and out-of school time by bringing local care providers, families, school faculty and service providers together to focus their efforts on the success of this age group. Aligning the programs and goals of these groups will establish greater opportunities not only for middle-school students but for the entire community.

“As the program matures and the connection to the schools becomes ever stronger; the approach to connect schools, families, and out-of-school time programs will ensure success for all children. Research shows that schools alone cannot meet the learning needs of our children. Providers operating alone have little chance of achieving this goal, but combining the efforts creates an opportunity for our youth to emerge as productive citizens,” stated Allyson Rothrock, Assistant Executive Director of The Harvest Foundation.

After-school students are transported directly from school to one of the seven afterschool partner sites: Bassett Community Center, Boys and Girls Club, Fieldale Community Center, Focus on Youth, Martinsville Henry County Family YMCA (Martinsville and Collinsville locations), and Spencer Penn Centre. Highly qualified site directors and group leaders serve as a mentor and role model for each child. Additionally, students enrolled in MHC After 3 have the benefit of free academic tutoring and homework help led by licensed teachers and certified tutors. After healthy snacks, students participate in an array of fun and exciting arts, academics, and athletics enrichment programming with service partners: Blue Ridge Regional Library, Healthy Community Initiative, New College Institute, Patrick Henry Community College, PHCC School of Craft & Design, Piedmont Arts Association, and Virginia Museum of Natural History.

“My children have enjoyed MHC After 3 so much that all other activities have to be scheduled around MHC time. They really think it’s cool to have the opportunity to try new things like woodturning at The Artisan Center and I really appreciate the tutoring and homework help,” said Eric Bolio, parent of MHC After 3 participants.

“I really enjoyed expressing my feelings through poetry,” declared Cassidy Agee, another student participant.

*MHC After 3 Initiative is Martinsville Henry County’s free afterschool program for middle school age children that seeks to provide fun and exciting afterschool activities to middle school students in Martinsville-Henry County. MHC After 3 believes that young people are a community’s greatest resource and very best accomplishment. MHC After 3 partner organizations are committed to fostering the holistic development of all participants. For more information please go to:  
<http://www.ph.vccs.edu/content.cfm?c=1&path=22,748>*

*The Harvest Foundation supports health, education, and welfare initiatives that serve our vision of fostering a “community of choice” for Martinsville and Henry County, Virginia. The Harvest Foundation was established in 2002 from the sale of Memorial Hospital. For more information please go to:  
<http://www.theharvestfoundation.org/>.*

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