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NEWS RELEASE

Connecticut Junior Republic (CJR) Holds Achievement Day for Students

Litchfield, CT – The Connecticut Junior Republic’s Cable Academic and Vocational Education Center held its January Achievement Day event on Friday, January 22, with approximately 100 students, parents and teachers in attendance. Students were recognized for their academic and vocational achievements at this occasion and three students from Torrington received high school diplomas: Randy Huxley, Branden Truax and Martin Warriner. Christopher Leone, Superintendent of Schools for Torrington and Dr. Marsha Olson, Principal of Torrington High School, participated in the presentation of diplomas to the three graduating students.

Located on CJR’s Litchfield campus, the Cable Academic and Vocational Education Center provides special, vocational and alternative education programs, as well as transition services for boys between the ages of 10 and 21, and is currently operating at full capacity of 30 students, between enrollment and active referrals. Enrolled and referred students are from 17 Connecticut towns, and represent schools in Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, and New Haven counties. Since the Junior Republic strengthened and enhanced its education programs last spring, the Cable Academic and Vocational Education Center has served 35 students from 20 towns and five of Connecticut’s eight counties.

CJR executive director John F. Boyd indicated that the Junior Republic plans to further develop its private special education program. “There is a tremendous need for special, vocational and alternative education programs, as well as transition services for students,” he stated. “We want to offer schools a range of quality special, vocational and alternative education services in an environment that nurtures and supports special needs youth as well as those who are at-risk of chronic difficulties in their homes, schools and communities,” he said. Mr. Boyd noted that school teachers and administrators in the region have welcomed the development of programs closer to local schools and students’ communities, as transporting youth long distances for special education services is both costly and difficult to coordinate.

Approved by the State of Connecticut’s Department of Education to provide private special education, the Cable Education Center is a candidate for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and it is anticipated that the site visit for full accreditation will be conducted in 2010.

The education program at the Junior Republic is individualized to meet the needs and foster the interests of participating youth. All students receive instruction in English language arts, mathematics, science (including a laboratory component), and social studies, on a daily basis. Technology skills are introduced, applied and reinforced in the academic

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setting, and ensure that computer skills are integrated into the academic curricula. Students attend physical education and wellness seminars, as well as art and music classes on a daily basis.

All students enroll in a vocational course of study at CJR. Every boy is expected to develop a theoretical base for the course content and to apply that knowledge through practical application in and out of the classroom setting. Each student develops and maintains a vocational portfolio, which integrates his skills in a given trade, in reading and writing, mathematics and independent living skills. Vocational classes currently include animal science, horticulture and landscape design, both conducted on CJR's working farm; building design and drafting; construction maintenance; culinary arts; graphic arts, which includes practical experience in a busy, production oriented print shop; and woodworking. Based upon need, students meet regularly with a licensed school psychologist, a clinical social worker, a speech therapist and are seen by a school nurse.

Transition services provide students with a practical, experiential learning opportunity that includes community involvement and reinforces work maturity and job readiness skills. Students receive guidance and support as they make decisions regarding their post-secondary education and vocational pursuits. Transition services are critical to helping students develop independent living skills and successfully re-acclimate to their public schools and communities.

"CJR has become a wonderful learning community," stated Director of Education James K. Obst. "The teachers, staff, parents, public schools and students have developed a strong partnership and we are seeing great results," he continued. "It is very fulfilling for our education staff to see students accomplish their goals and build on their strengths, and we look forward to working with more schools and students in the future," he said.

CJR Executive Director John Boyd noted that in addition to the special, vocational and alternative education programs being offered in the Cable Academic and Vocational Education Center, the Junior Republic is continuing to explore other programs for its Litchfield campus that are consistent with CJR's mission to serve at-risk and special needs children, youth and families.

Founded in 1904 through the bequest of Miss Mary Buel, a Litchfield resident who wanted to help children, the Connecticut Junior Republic (CJR) has provided residential and community-based care, treatment and education programs for at-risk, special needs and troubled young people for more than 100 years. Today, the organization's combined programs serve nearly 1,000 boys and girls from communities throughout Connecticut. CJR operates group homes for boys in East Hartford and Winchester; the Center for Assessment, Respite and Enrichment (CARE), a short term-residential program for girls in Waterbury; and community-based programs serving boys, girls and families through offices in Danbury, Torrington and Waterbury. Each of CJR's community-based programs serves children and families from a broad region.

A private charitable organization, the Connecticut Junior Republic is accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). CJR is supported by contributions from individuals, businesses and organizations, and through fees for services funded by the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) of the Connecticut Judicial Branch, the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), and by Connecticut's public schools. For further information, please contact Hedy Barton, Director of Development and Public Relations: (860) 567-9423, ext. 252; or by email: hbarton@cjryouth.org.