

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: King George

Program Title: My Vote Matters

Program Category: Communications and Public Relations

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Lorrie Gump

Title: Director of Elections

Department: Voter Registration

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Telephone: 540-775-9186 Website: www.king-george.va.us

Email: lgump@co.kinggeorge.state.va.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: A. Travis Quesenberry

Title: County Administrator

Signature: *A. Travis Quesenberry*



2016 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

KING GEORGE COUNTY, VA

MY VOTE MATTERS MADNESS

CAMPAIGN



STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

We live in a nation in which every qualified citizen is allowed to vote in the election process. We have the opportunity to be a voice in elections from the smallest local elected position to the President of the United States. Although we have this privilege, we frequently hear people say that their vote won't make a difference or have an impact in the election process. Even though the citizens of King George County have the opportunity to vote, they do not always register to vote or fully participate in our local or national elections. Much of the time, citizens will vote only in the Presidential Elections and forget about the local elections; however, by making that decision, voters are missing the opportunity to engage in elections in their home communities where their individual votes have the biggest impact. The King George County Voter Registration Office partnered with the King George High School DECA Chapter to implement the "My Vote Matters" campaign in an effort to increase the number of registered voters, as well as to encourage voter participation during elections. Our joint effort was a resounding success. Not only did we remind ourselves and others of the tremendous voting privileges we enjoy as citizens of the United States, we also increased voter registration and encouraged more active participation in our community.

INNOVATION/PARTNERING OR COLLABORATION

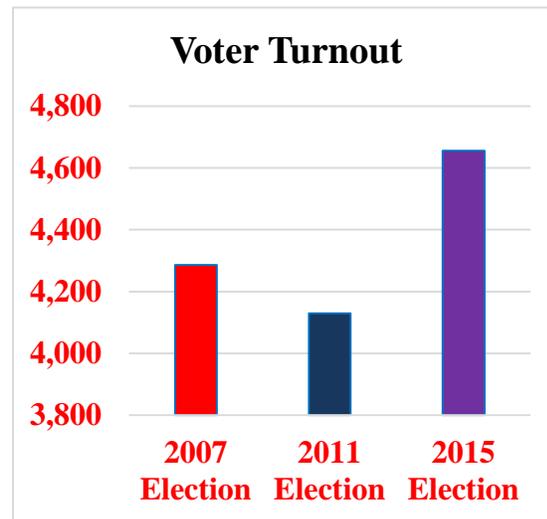
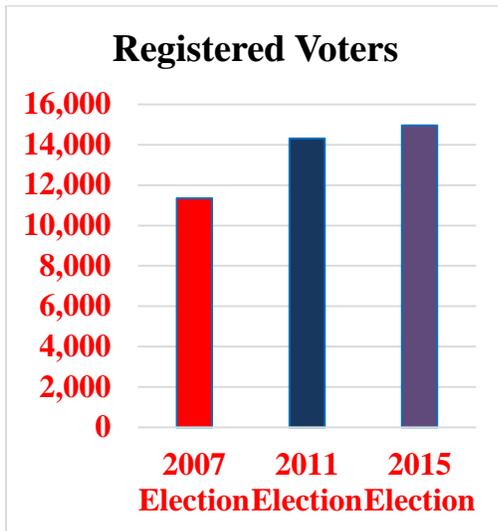
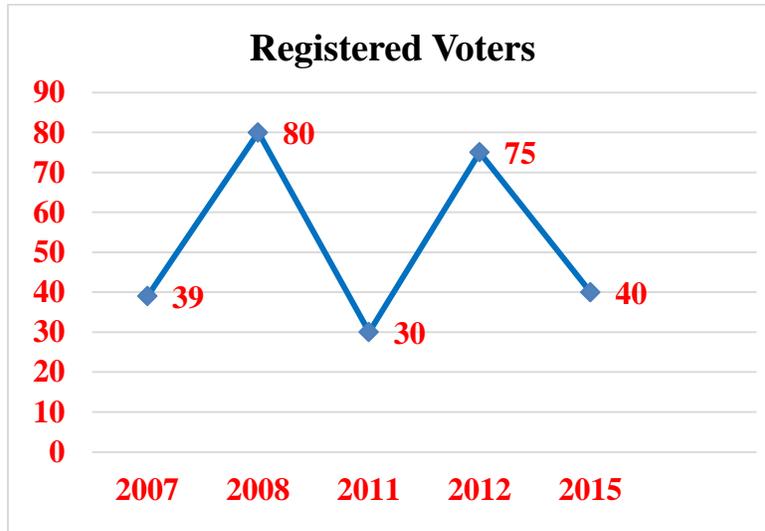
"Every election is determined by the people who show up," (Larry J. Sabato).

Our staff began to consider avenues to reach out to our residents in an effort to educate, correct misunderstandings, register more eligible voters, and increase participation for our 2015 local elections. In a happy turn of events, the King George High School DECA Chapter approached our office in May of 2015 to discuss their interest in a chapter project. In a joint collaboration we decided to call it "My Vote Matters" and focus on voter registration and participation. With one DECA student turning



eighteen and planning to vote in the 2015 November election, and 25 members eligible to vote in the 2016 Presidential Primary, the chapter was highly energized to encourage their fellow students, family and community members to exercise their right to vote. We joined forces with these motivated teens and set out to inspire county residents to engage in the election process. Our goals were to first educate the public about the whole voting process: candidate choices, the absentee voting process, the opportunity to work as an election official at the polls, the option of curbside voting, and our ability to issue Photo IDs from our office free of charge. Most importantly, our goal was to encourage citizens to turn out to vote.

We thought that the November 3, 2015, election was the ideal opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of voter participation. This election had many local candidates who would eventually have the opportunity to shape the future of our community in areas such as tax rates, business licenses, county government, zoning and other issues important in our day-to-day life. Many voters get involved during a Presidential Election, but very few in a local election or primary. Despite the obvious importance of local elections, as you can see in the charts below, turnout is lower in non-presidential elections. While our 2008 and 2012 Presidential Elections had 80% and 75% turnout, respectively, we only had a 39% and 30% turnout in our local 2007 and 2011 Elections.



In choosing the “My Vote Matters” campaign, our commitment was not only to increase voter registration, but to encourage a higher participation among the voters who were already registered.

Why would county residents register to vote, but then 60% choose to stay at home for local elections?

Are voters aware of the provisions put in place for the disabled, ill or injured? Are citizens familiar with curbside voting? Are voters aware that those with long work days have the option of absentee voting?

Only with outreach and education will voters know what their options are and not be confused by the voting procedures they hear about on television that pertain to other states and not to Virginia.



Our campaign focus was to help people overcome the excuses for not voting and understand why their voice is so important. Through this campaign, we planned to emphasize how casting one's ballot truly does impact the outcome of the election. When people choose not to vote, they are not only forfeiting their rights to vote, but they are also forfeiting their right to shape the future of their community.

HOW THE PROGRAM WAS IMPLEMENTED

It quickly became apparent that communication between the Voter Registration Office, King George DECA Chapter, and the community was the key to reaching our stated goals. After brainstorming, the following list of specific outreach steps w subsequently implemented over the next several months.

PROMOTIONAL POSSIBILITIES

1. Local print media

- a) Placing an article in the local county newspaper, The King George Journal
- b) Placing an article in the local county naval base newspaper, The Dahlgren Source
- c) Getting an article in the regional newspaper, The Free Lance Star
- d) Creating a pamphlet promoting the "My Vote Matters"

2. Broadcast media

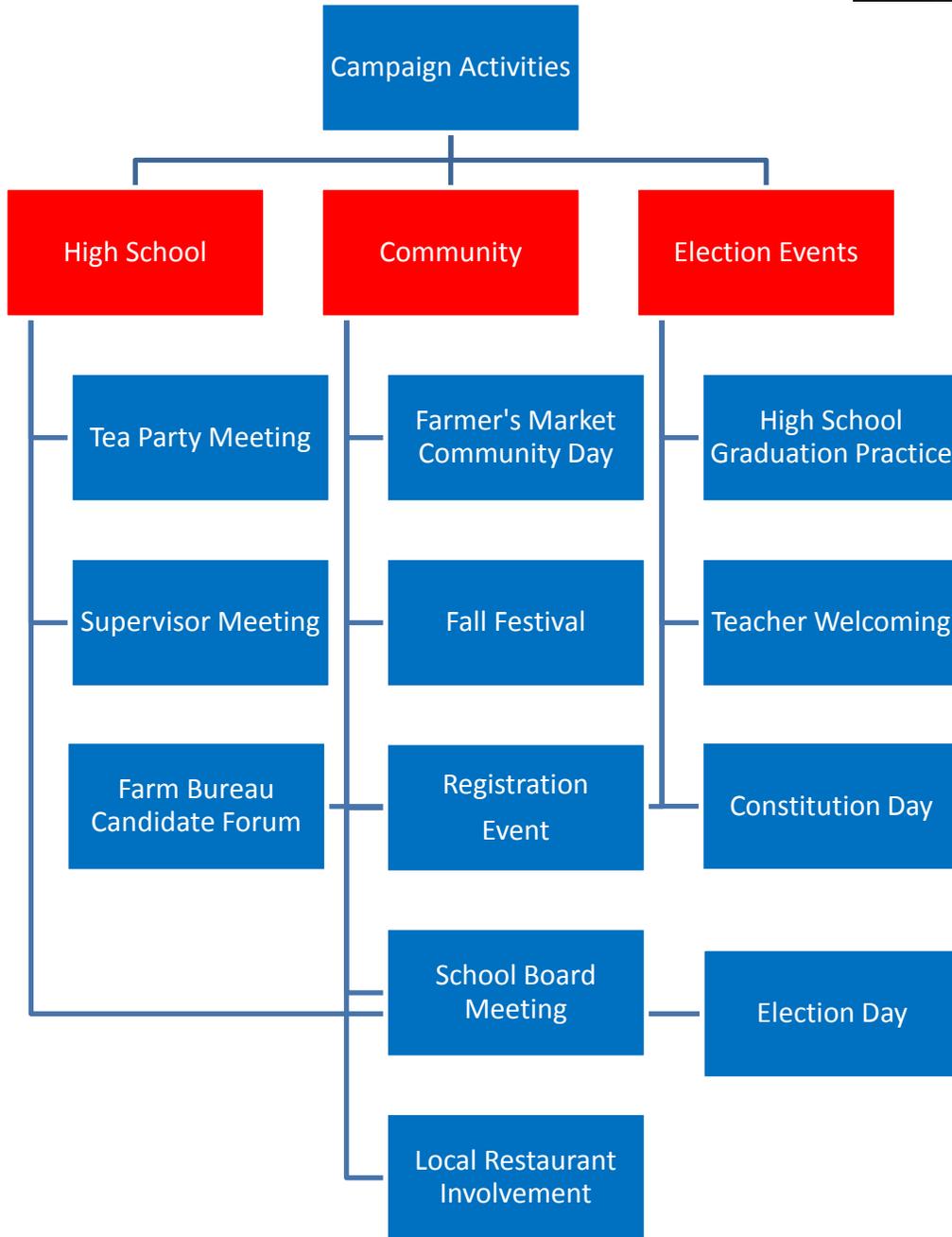
- a) Having an announcement made at DECA meetings
- b) Public Service Announcements on local radio stations such as: 93.3 WFLS, 99.3 The Vibe, 99.5, B101.5, 95.9, 104.5, and 96.9 WWUZ
- c) Public Service Announcement on channel 8, the local cable station
- d) Social Media

3. Signage

- a) Hanging posters and flyers in local businesses and around the community
- b) Hanging a banner at the high school, alongside Route 3, a major highway in King George



The public Facebook page for the “My Vote Matters” campaign was able to expand the outreach of the Registrar’s Facebook page. In one week the page had reached 781 people, in two weeks 884 people with 36 page likes, and at four weeks the number had grown to 1,232 people with 112 page likes. Multiple community members shared the page which was very helpful in networking. There were numerous Facebook posts and updates concerning upcoming events, shared information from the Voter Registrar’s page, and posted pictures from our events. While the Facebook page quickly gained viewers, the efforts were widened through Instagram and Snapchat, and multiple articles were submitted to The Free Lance Star and The Journal newspapers regarding the efforts. Even though the campaign was being highly publicized, it became apparent that in order to further our goals, we needed to have specific events to talk with people on a more personal basis. This led to the design of the following campaign organizational chart which included member involvement and project descriptions, giving us clearly defined activities.



By sponsoring booths at various local events, we were able to distribute promotional items we had prepared such as “My Vote Matters” bracelets, bumper stickers, magnets and t-shirts. We could offer Voter Registration Applications, and answer questions or concerns about the voting procedures in King



George. Because of the political nature of some of the events, the Registrar’s office abstained from participating in order to maintain our standard of integrity and impartiality in elections, leaving DECA to coordinate and implement. In other events, because of age requirements for handling voter applications, DECA students deferred to our staff and helped out in secondary ways.

Once we had established our goals and events, we quickly moved forward. The following chart provides an overview of our joint activities.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

May 7, 2015	Tea Party Meeting
	Description: A short presentation introducing the "My Vote Matters" campaign.
June 4, 2015	High School Graduation Practice
	Description: Flyers and absentee registration forms were placed on the chairs for the graduating seniors.
August 17, 2015	Teacher Welcoming with Registrar Lorrie Gump
	Description: We had a booth in the high school cafeteria with "My Vote Matters" bracelets and gave a small presentation to the King George County teachers about the importance of one vote. We made them aware of when absentee registration and voting would begin.
September 5, 2015	King George Farmer’s Market Community Day
	Description: Campaign bracelets were passed out and flyers were distributed with information about the campaign of “My Vote Matters”.
September 17, 2015	Constitution Day, KGHS Flex Time Booth with Registrar Lorrie Gump
	Description: Each senior was given a post card with information about this event. During the high school lunch period, we set up a booth outside of the cafeteria and registered over 20 students to vote in the upcoming local election. Many students were grateful to be able to register at school and be offered assistance from the Registrar as needed.



September 23-24, 2015	Speaking with Local Restaurants
	<p>Description: Placements were created with information about the upcoming election and also some interesting facts about how one vote mattered. Multiple restaurants agreed to participate and support the campaign. The Dahlgren Domino's and Pizza Bono put a placemat on each pizza box sold that week. Also, King's Pizza put a placemat with each take-out order. This was an effective and efficient way to share our placemats with the community. The other restaurants involved taped a few placemats to their entrance doors and put out the rest for sit-down customers.</p>
October 5, 2015	Farm Bureau Candidate Forum
	<p>Description: The DECA students held a drawing for a "My Vote Matters" t-shirt and a \$10 Ice Cream Nook gift card. The Ice Cream Nook was one of the participating restaurants that used our placemats. In order to enter the drawing, the person had to have their picture taken with our campaign sign. This generated a lot more involvement from community members.</p>
October 10, 2015	Fall Festival Booth
	<p>Description: Sample ballots were passed out for each district and had maps to inform people where their polling place would be located. Flyers were also passed out with information about our campaign.</p>
November 3, 2015	Election Day Pages
	<p>Description: 33 students volunteered to be pages on election day and help at each polling place. They were each given a "My Vote Matters" t-shirt to wear to the polls in order to further promote the campaign. Each sticker given to voters said "My Vote Counts".</p>
November 23, 2015	Supervisor Meeting and School Board Meeting Presentation
	<p>Description: We spoke about the "My Vote Matters" campaign and how we would be continuing our efforts through the Presidential Primary and November Presidential Election.</p>
January 6, 2016	KGHS Government Class Presentations with Registrar Lorrie Gump
	<p>Description: Ms. Gump spoke about the "My Vote Matters" campaign and registered a total of 72 students for the Presidential Primary election. They were informed of the procedures and requirements for the election.</p>



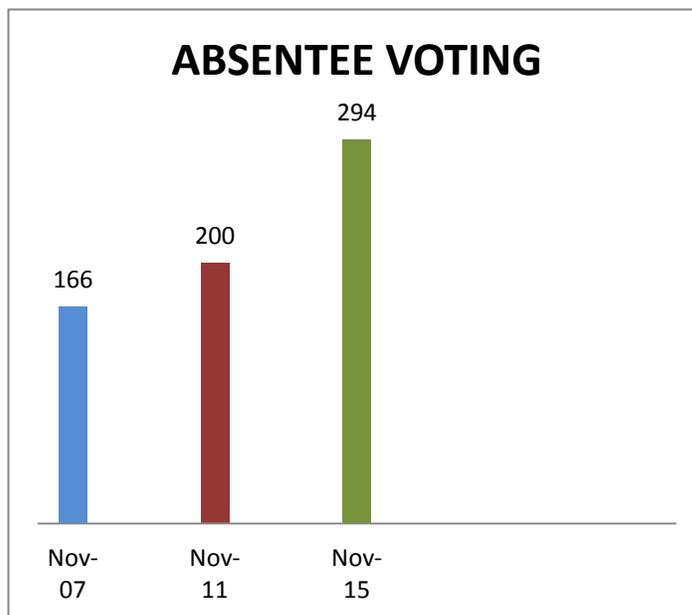
February 27, 2016	Rescheduled Madness Registration Event with Registrar Lori Gump
	Description:
	This event was a “My Vote Matters Fair” for the Presidential Election in November. Information was provided about voting locations and what it means to have a Dual Primary. Sample ballots were distributed. This event took place prior to the March 1 st Dual Presidential Primary.
March 1, 2016	Presidential Dual Primary
	Description:
	22 students volunteered to be pages on election day and helped at each polling place. Each sticker given to voters said "My Vote Counts."

King George County is home to 25,371 people, 26% of whom are under the age of eighteen. When we were deciding whom our target population would be, the DECA chapter and the Registrar’s office initially focused on those who would be 18 by the upcoming local election, county residents who had not yet registered to vote even though they were eligible, and voters who were registered but were not actively participating in elections. Our target audience was widened to include voters who were registered and wanted to participate, but weren’t aware of our options such as curbside voting or absentee voting. In the end, every eligible voter in King George County was targeted since we wanted full voter participation and believed that every vote matters in the election process.



EVALUATION AND RESULTS

In evaluating this campaign, the King George County Voter Registration Office, considered the “My Vote Matters” campaign a complete success on many different levels. During the campaign we saw an increase in our number of registered voters as well as the percentage of voters participating during the election. We had more individuals participate through absentee voting completing our view of the success of this campaign.



We had 6 eighteen year olds from the High School serving as Officers of Election and 33 students serving as pages. By involving these young citizens in the election process, we predict that through their increased understanding and experience, they will continue to educate their friends and family and encourage a life-long participation in one of our most sacred rights – the right to vote. What a privilege it was to work with a great group of young adults whose enthusiasm was contagious throughout this



campaign! The DECA chapter plans to continue to be involved in the “My Vote Matters” campaign as we move towards the upcoming Presidential Election. We were very grateful for the partnership of local businesses whose participation throughout this campaign provided us with a wide variety of opportunities for promotion and advertisement. These business partners continually offered their assistance where it was needed and had a major impact on the amount of community participation we were able to achieve.

CONCLUSION

The success we had in this campaign was far greater than we expected. We hoped our voices in the community would lead to greater communication, education, and participation in local elections. We hoped that we could make a difference in our community and in the lives of individuals by educating them in services such as absentee voting and the importance of going out and casting one’s vote. We were able to accomplish both of these goals. Our expectations were exceeded by the cooperation of local restaurants and county officials in helping us work towards our goals. We were pleased and appreciative to see 33 students serve as pages in the November 2015 election, and 22 students serve in a similar capacity during the March 2016 primary. We were excited to register 72 new voters at the King George High School registration event. On top of all of this, we had an increase in voter participation and registration. We never imagined that the campaign would be such a positive experience for so many people. All of this participation and individual support cemented our view that not only does, “My Vote Matter”, but every voice and every vote matters!



My Vote Matters Judges Summary

The objective of this project was to create awareness among the residents of King George county concerning:

- 1) Registering to vote, and
- 2) Voting on Election Day.

“Every election is determined by the people who show up,” (Larry J. Sabato). Local Elections are what effect one’s everyday life the most. Who wins will decide the future of the community, what businesses come to the area, and how high or low the taxes are within the county. King George County has over 16,000 registered voters, but unfortunately only about 30% show up for a non-Presidential Election to cast their ballot. Our goal was to get the word out to all the residents to make the November 2015 election have more than 30% participation. Voter apathy is an issue, especially in small towns where local elections may only have one candidate on the ballot, or the people do not like who is running for election.

Our campaign focus was to help people overcome the excuses for not voting and understand why their voice is so important. Through this campaign we emphasized how casting one’s ballot impacts the outcome of elections. When one chooses not to vote, they are not only forfeiting their right to vote, but they are also forfeiting their right to shape the future of the entire community.

We appreciate the assistance of everyone who worked on this campaign, but we especially appreciate the tireless efforts of the King George DECA Chapter to help get the word out to the entire community. Their enthusiasm and participation throughout the campaign, as well as the community involvement and increased voter education and participation, made it a rewarding success!



“My Vote Matters” campaign t-shirt

DECA yearbook photo with everyone showing the
“My Vote Matters” symbol on the sleeve of the DECA t-shirts.



DECA Students Clara,
Kelly and Briana



Constitutional Day



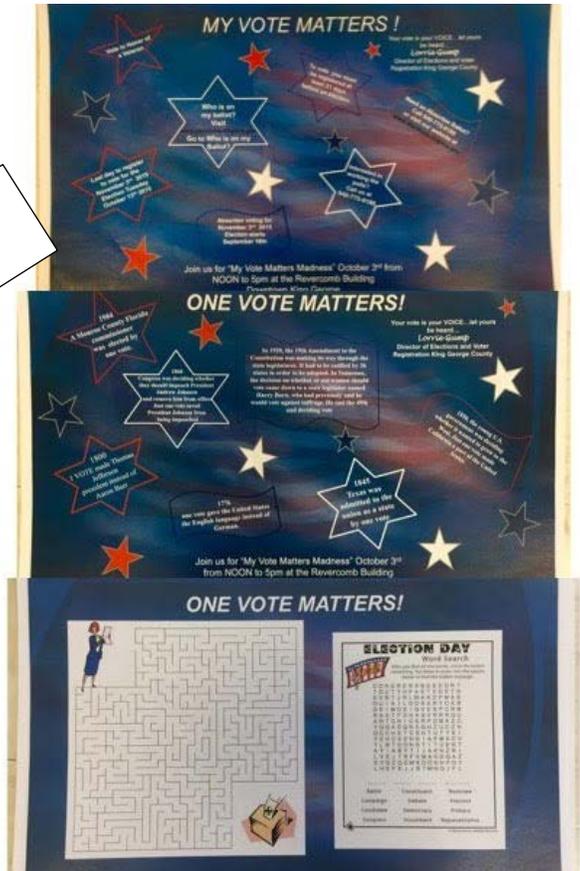
Government Teacher Ms. Jackson &
Registrar Ms. Lorrie Gump

Deputy Lyons and Kelly





“My Voter Matters” Placemats
(Front and back)



Surrounding Restaurants in the area displaying are placements – Uncle Dave’s, Vinney’s and Roma’s



Registering Students on Constitution Day at the High School



Jordan and Hannah
At the Farmers
market



Clara and Briana talking to a local
group about "My Vote Matters"

