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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Journey Through Hallowed Ground Addressing Crisis in Civic Literacy through Place-Based Education**

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (JTHG) has announced the creation of the National History Academy, a 5-week summer residential camp where high school students will have the opportunity to learn by experiencing American history in the places where it happened.

This first-of-its-kind educational experience will address the crisis in American civic and historical literacy. A recent report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress found that only 18% of high school seniors showed proficiency in American history, and just 23% were proficient in civics. Of the seven subjects included in the report, students scored lowest in their knowledge of US history.

“We cannot have a democracy without future leaders and citizens who know and understand our history,” said JTHG President and CEO Bill Sellers. “Students at the National History Academy will acquire a new appreciation for the foundations of our society through our history, and a commitment to the preservation and conservation of the places where it happened.”

The Academy will employ a hybrid of traditional and innovative learning methods including discussions, reading original texts and watching films and documentaries. Most exciting and unique, however, are the immersive on-site visits to the nation’s most important historic sites. Students will also fully engage in discussions and debate using the innovative history case method developed by Harvard Business School (HBS) professor David Moss, and hear guest lectures by nationally recognized scholars. The National History Academy promises to be a life-changing experience for the high school students who participate.

“Visiting America’s great historic places will be an unforgettable experience for students,” said Brent Glass, Director Emeritus of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History and advisor for the project. “They will learn history from master teachers, historic site educators and from each other.”

One hundred students will be accepted for the 5-week National History Academy, June 24 through July 28, and will be hosted by Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Virginia. That location puts the Academy within a three-hour drive of dozens of National Parks, monuments, and historic sites, including the Shenandoah, Harpers Ferry, the C&O Canal, the Appalachian Trail, and the National Mall; presidential homes and retreats including Washington’s Mount Vernon, Jefferson’s Monticello, Madison’s Montpelier, and those of Monroe, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Wilson, and Eisenhower; numerous Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War battlefields, Washington, D.C., the Powhatan Indian Village, Colonial Williamsburg, and Jamestown. Many other nearby sites are important to the fight for civil rights, and tell the stories of Frederick Douglass, John Brown, W.E.B. Du Bois and Martin Luther King, Jr.

During the opening week of the Academy, the students will hear David Rubenstein, financier, business philanthropist and television host, speak about the Magna Carta and the Charters of Freedom at the National Archives and get a personal tour of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History led by Director Emeritus Brent Glass. HBS Professor David Moss will teach the Academy's first case, on James Madison, at Madison's home, Montpelier.

Throughout the five-week program, students will actively explore history by hiking and biking on historic trails; by participating in archeological site research; and by learning historical building trades of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The National History Academy expands the educational offerings of JTHG to the high-school level. Previous learning opportunities for younger students include the award-winning "Of the Student, By the Student, For the Student" service learning projects and "Extreme Journey Camp" for middle school students. In addition JTHG has developed partnerships with teacher development opportunities and courses.

"Place-based education has proven to be one of the most efficient and effective ways to learn. Moreover, The National History Academy portends to be transformational and fun, giving students working together, the opportunity to develop friendships that will endure. No where can US History and Civics better be learned than "Where America Happened<sup>TM</sup>." The Journey is proud to present this unique opportunity for a few select high school students," said Stuart Haney, chairman of the JTHG Board of Directors.

Limited full and partial scholarships are available on a need basis.

The National History Academy website, [www.historycamp.com](http://www.historycamp.com), provides additional information and application materials.

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The mission of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area is to promote and support civic engagement through history education, economic development through heritage tourism, and the preservation of cultural landscapes in one of the nation's most important historic regions.

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area is a 180-mile corridor from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania through Maryland and Harpers Ferry, West Virginia to Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia. JTHG is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and as a National Heritage Area, receives support and recognition from the National Park Service.