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FORMER GOVERNOR MARK WARNER MEETS WITH PETERSBURG COMMUNITY LEADERS

Former Governor and current U.S. Senate candidate Mark Warner will visit Petersburg on Tuesday, February 26th to meet with more than fifty community leaders in an afternoon event organized by the Phoenix Project. Nearly sixty leaders of Petersburg's public, private and nonprofit sector will gather to share their perspectives on the city's challenges and opportunities and to learn more about Governor Warner's vision for Virginia. The event is open to the media and will take place at Tabernacle Community Life Center, 444 Halifax St. in Petersburg beginning at 1:00pm.

Governor Warner is a strong supporter of the Phoenix Project's work and recently headlined the first round of the Phoenix Project's statewide conference series entitled Accelerating Social Entrepreneurship in Virginia. Hosted by Governor Tim Kaine and Lt. Governor Bill Bolling, Round II will take place March 19 in Richmond and include over 200 participants from the public, private and nonprofit sectors.

The Phoenix Project seeks to alleviate poverty by building a sustainable partnership between Virginia higher education and the Commonwealth's most distressed communities that adds civic capacity to communities, strengthens the mission of universities, and provides a powerful context in which to prepare nonprofit and social entrepreneurs for tomorrow's Virginia.

The Phoenix Project has been building over the past two years in Petersburg a successful university-community partnership model that now engages stakeholders from eight higher education institutions in capacity building work with over fifty partner nonprofit and civic organizations. Over the past two years, working side by side with members of our community, the Phoenix Project's growing list of partner universities have completed over 100 important projects for 50 nonprofit organizations and municipal agencies, engaging over 250 university students, faculty, staff and alumni and providing \$1,500,000 worth of labor at no cost to the city.



After an extensive planning process, the Petersburg community prioritized four issue areas on which it would like the assistance of the Phoenix Project's higher education partners. These four include: (1) Strengthening the public schools (only 2 of the 9 public schools are accredited); (2) Preparing the City to benefit from the BRAC-ordered expansion of Fort Lee; (3) Meeting the youth needs of the community, including prevention of teen pregnancy and lowering high school drop out rates (Petersburg has the highest teen pregnancy and high school drop out rates in Virginia); and (4) Promoting neighborhood revitalization efforts led by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

Building on the success of the Petersburg Partnership, in 2008 the Phoenix Project is launching two additional university-community partnerships based on this model in Southeast Newport News and along the Route 1 Corridor in Northern Virginia.

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