



PRESS RELEASE

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Local leaders engaging more young people in life skills development and equity promoting activities

Today's young people are facing extraordinary challenges and change. For nearly 70 years, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award equips young people with the skills and confidence needed to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing world. The program encourages young people to improve their mental and physical health, give back to their communities, and find their purpose, passion, and place in the world. The Award just announced it is expanding its availability in the DC Metro area and across the USA.

This past week a gathering of local leaders with The Duke of Edinburgh International Award USA (Award USA) focused on how to expand the Award in the DC metro, Virginia, and Maryland regions. The Award is a global, non-formal education framework which challenges young people to develop new skills, get physically active, learn about teamwork and leadership through adventurous journeys and volunteer within their communities. Throughout they work with multiple mentors. Once achieved, the Award is a globally recognized resume credential and Award holders join a prestigious global alumni network.

"We are excited to grow the availability of the Award in the DC metro area. As always, we are working to be sure the cost to participate and undertake activities is not a barrier as the Award is open to all young people inclusive of their background, circumstances, and self-defined interests," shared CEO Buffy Higgins-Beard.

The event was attended by Prince Edward, The Duke of Edinburgh, who is especially passionate about organizations and causes which provide opportunities to young people around the world. A Gold Award holder himself, he is Patron and Chairman to the global Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation and has previously Chaired the International Council covering 130 countries and territories for 17 years. Prince Edward continues the legacy of his father Prince Philip, who founded the Award, and His Royal Highness was named The Duke of Edinburgh by King Charles III earlier this year.

Loudoun County Virginia's Morven Park was the location for a recent gathering of philanthropists determined to assist young people's wellbeing, civic engagement, and sense of potential. Exploring how the framework of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award can impactfully increase confidence, community connectedness through service, health, and leadership skills for all young people, the gathering was borne of seeing synergy in the Award's aims and Morven Park's Center for Civic Impact. Morven Park through its center works to empower young people to know their voices matter and that they can impact the world around them.

"We were honored to host HRH and the members of Duke of Edinburgh's International Award USA in Morven Park," shared Stacey Metcalfe Executive Director to Morven Park. *"Their mission resonates deeply with our Morven Park Center for Civic Impact's goal of empowering children to find a confident voice that will inform the actions of engaged and motivated citizens. We are inspired by the long-term*

commitment to young people around the globe exemplified by the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award."

The event was hosted by Lara and Eric Major. Joining them was HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, US Chair to Award USA Ryan Ruskin and CEO Award USA Buffy Higgins-Beard as well as Executive Director to Morven Park Stacey Metcalfe along with fourteen other guests.

To find out more about the Award in the United States, please visit www.usaward.org. To find out more about Morven Park please visit www.morvenpark.org

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For more information, case studies or Award content in the United States, contact Lisa Metzger-Mugg, Phone (773) 209-5958, email lmetzgermugg@usaward.org

Note to Editors

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award USA

- The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a global, non-formal education framework which challenges young people to develop new skills, get physically active, learn about teamwork and leadership through adventurous journey and volunteer within their communities.
- It is the world's leading youth achievement award, equipping young people for life. With a proven framework operating in more than 130 countries and territories around the world, the Award is available for all young people ages 14 to 24, inclusive of their background, culture, physical ability, skills and interests.
- It is a fully inclusive program and has no social, political or religious affiliations. Over half of US involved Award participants report they are from a marginalized race, ethnicity, or ability status. In 2022, one in five of US Award participants reported living with low income.
- Its US division, @TheAwardUSA, www.usaward.org now in its sixth year, was established in 2016 and operates as an independent 501(c)3 charity based nationally in Chicago. Inspirational stories of the infinite potential of Award USA participants can be found in this [video series](#),
- Currently the Award is offered locally in Maryland at Holton Arms School, in Virginia through the Boy Scouts of Tidewater Boy Scout Council and in DC at the British International School of DC. Young people without an Award Center nearby can also participate through the Open Award Center virtually.
- As today's young people face the unprecedented challenges from COVID-19 and beyond, as well as calls to address racial injustice, the Award is dedicated to ensuring that young people will have what they need for the future: to benefit from great non-formal education and learning.
- The Award is led by HRH The Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh who serves as the global Chairman to the international Board of Trustees. It was founded by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh in 1956, in conjunction with German educationalist Kurt Hahn and Lord Hunt.
- There are currently more than a million young people completing their own unique Award program, via hundreds of thousands of youth-focused partners and operators, including schools, after school youth organizations, faith-based organizations and juvenile justice involved institutions.
- For more information on the impact of the Award, including recent social value analysis, please visit [Award-Global-Impact-Report-2020.pdf \(usaward.org\)](#)

- National and international case studies, imagery and additional video content are available on request. More information on the global Award can be found at www.intaward.org

Morven Park

- [Morven Park](http://www.morvenpark.org) is a 1,000 acre historic estate located at Leesburg, Virginia. Owned and operated by the Westmoreland Davis Memorial Foundation, a non-profit organization, Morven Park first opened to the public in 1967. Known as the “Central Park” of Loudoun County, Morven Park welcomes 500,000 visitors each year who come to enjoy exquisite scenery, formal boxwood gardens, the Morven Park International Equestrian Center, the iconic Greek Revival mansion, hiking trails and award-winning student programs through the Morven Park Center for Civic Impact (MPCCI). www.morvenpark.org
- Morven Park’s mission is to preserve and protect Morven Park for all, inviting current and future generations to explore history, embrace civic engagement and celebrate the outdoors.
- The Morven Park Center for Civic Impact (MPCCI) is guided by passionate educators who believe all youth deserve to know their voices matter and they can have a positive impact on the world around them. Launched in 2014, MPCCI strives to inspire a new generation of active and engaged community members through FREE, high-quality, and authentic learning experiences. Our lessons prepare individuals for their roles as community members, employees, and leaders.
- Morven Park is proud to launch the 246 Years Project, a social justice initiative dedicated to documenting and honoring the millions of enslaved men, women, and children whose names and life stories deserve to be known. For 246 years the life events of enslaved individuals were recorded in a variety of documents by enslavers managing their “property”. These records survive today in the archives of historic sites, community history organizations, and local courts. The 246 Years Project will bring to light thousands of untold stories of strength, resilience, and persistence, creating an opportunity for truth-telling, recognition, and memorialization.





Photos by Genevieve Leiper