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A Must See: Students in Perry County Empowered for Global Change

Around the world seems a lot closer to a group of Perry and Hale County students. These small-town kids no longer feel isolated from the world outside their community, and they realize they can make a global difference. From the Judson College library in Marion, AL (population 3,623), 27 young minds and 6 teachers are collaborating to craft a powerful, worldwide message for cultural change.

Youth Converts Culture is a summer enrichment program sponsored by **A+** Education Partnership. In its inaugural year it is already proving that no matter where students live or go to school, with the right tools and progressive teachers they can connect with the world and impact change in significant and relevant ways.

“This is not happening anywhere else,” exclaims Beth Sanders, social studies teacher from Tarrant High School and co-founder of the Youth Converts Culture initiative. “These students are real trailblazers!”

The students, along with some innovative teachers from the same district, are working on a video to be screened on the final day of the camp. Media and community leaders are invited to their celebration on **Friday, July 20th, at 4:00pm** on the campus of Judson College, where the video will debut in the Lowder Science Building lecture auditorium.

The event will also be streamed live online for those who are unable to attend. (*Link below*)

Each day, students create a video blog to capture some of their key ideas and thoughts. Just watching the Day #1 video blog from these inspiring students provides a glimpse into what they have to say about themselves, their community and what they want the world to know.

Daniel Whitt, co-founder of the project for Perry County, has big plans to expand this program to many other rural school systems in Alabama. He and Beth Sanders created the camp out of concern over the tremendous gap between “technology and humanity” as they’ve witnessed, how students perceive a very different value set online.

“We want to show students how they can use the powerful, digital tools in their hands to come together as a community, have their voices heard, and make a lasting impact in the world,” said Whitt, formerly a teacher at Liberty Middle School in Madison City, AL where he helped its students create the “I’m Human” video that went viral on YouTube (over 124,000 hits). Whitt is now the English/language arts and broadcast teacher at James Clemons H.S., also in Madison City.

The camp was created as a result of the Leadership Alabama Class XXII education retreat where participants saw the “I’m Human” video. Many of the class members were so inspired that they raised money to make this camp in Perry County a reality. **A+** Education Partnership is sponsoring the camp and plans to continue and expand it.

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The following links will provide more information:

Website: www.youthconvertsculture.com
Live Event streaming video: www.ustream.tv/channel/youthconvertsculture
Daily video blog by students: <http://youtu.be/XgZqDri5GcM>
(Or visit YCC website)
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/YouthConvertsCulture>
Discover on Twitter: **#youthcc**, or <https://twitter.com/#!/search/realtime/%23youthcc>

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[A+ Education Partnership](#) was founded 20 years ago by a diverse group of Alabama citizens who believed that the quality of a student's education should not be determined by his or her zip code. We work directly with public schools by engaging innovation in the classroom and fostering excellence with teachers and administrators. We help implement proven best practices that show real results with students. A small part of our mission is to promote good public policy that supports such innovation and would put Alabama on a faster track to real reform.