The new Youth Civics Council was sworn in at a City Council meeting on March 24th by Wicomico Clerk of the Circuit Court Mark Bowen. City Council President Jake Day observes that “great things lie ahead for the program.”

ShoreCorps/PALS Hosts Safe Spaces Workshop

Defying Definitions

On Thursday, April 17th, thirty participants enjoyed a workshop entitled Safe Spaces, hosted by ShoreCorps/PALS and made possible by a grant from the Maryland Humanities Council’s Defying Definitions Program. Defying Definitions is a public conversation engagement program exploring identity, stereotypes and diversity. It challenges participants to reflect on how they perceive others, how they are perceived by others and what they understand about themselves. The project utilizes the humanities (film, literature, photography, or poetry) to bring people together for dialogue, both online and in community settings, with the goals of breaking down stereotypes, reducing conflict, and modeling civil and meaningful discussion.

Defying Definitions is produced as a partnership program of the Maryland Humanities Council and the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, sponsored by the Maryland Public Policy Fellows Programs, a collaborative program of the Maryland Judiciary’s Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law’s Center for Dispute Resolution.

SU professors Diane Iilig and Michele Schlehofer presented “Creating Safe Spaces: School, Work, and Community.” The workshop’s goal was to help people reduce the often hostile environments in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. They discussed the power of words, and they viewed popular nursery rhymes and how they perpetuated stereotypes. They suggested different ways to help LGBT clients, students, or employees feel safe and comfortable in school or workplace environments.

Photos, reflections, and other content from the workshop will be posted on the Defying Definitions web site: www.defyingdefinitions.org.