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SV-SLI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SHENANDOAH VALLEY SCHOLARS' LATINO INITIATIVE
PRESENTS DOCUMENTARY SCREENING**

HARRISONBURG, Va. - The *Shenandoah Valley Scholars' Latino Initiative (SLI-SV)* is hosting a documentary screening of "The Voice Unheard" at *James Madison University's (JMU) Grafton Stovall Theater* on September 21, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in order to spread awareness about *SV-SLI* and its mentor program to freshman and sophomores at *JMU*.

The first screening will be on September 21, 2017 at *Grafton Stovall Theater* at 7:00 p.m. The *Grafton* screening will be an intellectual and social passport event for Health 100 class. In addition to the *Grafton* screening, there will be other showings at *Bridgewater College's Auditorium* on September 28, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. and at the Latino Film Festival at *Court Square Theater* on September 29, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. Each screening will have a discussion afterwards with current *SV-SLI* mentors to discuss why the program is so vital to the community.

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The unique forty-five minute documentary focuses on the *SV-SLI* program and the impact it has on the Harrisonburg community and with participating Latino scholars. The documentary introduces the framework of *SV-SLI* and gives a brief explanation of how the program found its grounding. It includes interviews of recent *SV-SLI* members and mentors to illustrate not only the benefits of the program, but also the close and friendly relationships that form between mentors and mentees. Furthermore, past mentors explain the program application process and how it impacted their lives. A brief fifteen minute question and answer panel with current mentors follows the documentary.

SV-SLI is partnering with *JMU's Latino Student Alliance*, *Alpha Phi Omega*, and the School of Social Work in order to reach civically engaged students who are passionate about the cause and are interested in becoming mentors themselves. These organizations also bring a knowledge of community outreach that adds to the question panel.

“Every time I talk to my mentee, I'm given a new sense of optimism because of the excitement and drive she has to achieve goals that, before *SLI*, never seemed feasible,” said Christine Solitario, *SLI* Mentor.

“They have teachers pushing behind them, and they have family members pushing behind them, but what they don't always have is support in the university that knows they are there. One of the things we do as an organization is create these opportunities for contact,” said Dr. Carlos Alemán, *SV-SLI* University Mentoring and Academic Program Coordinator, about the importance of the program.



SV-SLI prepares first-generation, Latino youth for college through a pathway of programming, mentors and supports in grades 10-12. The goal is for every scholar to graduate from a four year university. SV-SLI currently serves scholars at Handley (Winchester, VA) and Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, VA) High Schools.