



## **CIVIC SERVICE CONSORTIUM**

In 2009 The Challenge Program, Inc. was invited to participate in a consortium with other organizations that focus on community service. The main interest of the group was to help facilitate Judge Marjorie Rendell’s civic service initiative. Since then, the consortium has been meeting to discuss ways to incorporate civic service, social action that makes a difference at a local or national level, into education.

On February 4, 2010, The Challenge Program Inc. Educational Advisory Board met with the consortium to discuss the importance of civic service in high schools.

Barbara Grandinetti, Executive Director of The Challenge Program Inc., spoke to the group about how the program can include civic service under their community service award category. The Challenge Program Inc. provides a \$250 cash incentive to students for achievement in each of four areas—community service, academic excellence, academic improvement, and attendance—in the sophomore, junior, and senior grade levels.

“The Challenge Program provides the resources to incentivize students to be involved in civic service projects,” Grandinetti said. “If schools are interested, we will work with them to award more of these projects under the community service umbrella.”

Also in attendance was Beth Specker, Chief of Staff to First Lady Marjorie Rendell. Specker said that Rendell’s initiative is to focus on civics education and making students better



citizens. Specker noted that Rendell looks to teach future generations the importance of democracy.

“This is a global issue,” Specker said. “Judge Rendell wants students to have the knowledge and attitude to be effective citizens. She celebrates what The Challenge Program is doing to implement these goals.”

Specker also noted that The Challenge Program’s partnership with local businesses can play a major role in the incorporation of civic service into the award categories.

“Business and government go hand in hand. If a pilot program is initiated, businesses could donate supplies, time or resources for the student projects and their work could be rewarded under The Challenge Program,” Specker said.

David Trevaskis, Executive Director of LEAP-Kids, presented Project Citizen books at the meeting, tools that educators could use to get their students more interested in participating in civic service projects in their communities. Projects could include petitioning local government to change a law, or improving the standards in communities by working through the democratic process.

“We want students to learn about public policy and research ways to solve problems,” Trevaskis said. “Not only do we want to teach them these skills, we want to teach them how to use these skills to make changes in their own communities.”



Grandinetti suggested that interested schools could work with The Challenge Program to implement a pilot program that would focus on the number of civic service projects already being done by students, and reward them under the community service award category.

“We want to recognize and reward students who are doing these projects and honor them for their service,” Grandinetti said. “It’s The Challenge Program’s way of saying thanks to schools and students for working hard.”

*The Challenge Program, Inc. is a unique non-profit organization that partners with business to motivate high school students both in and out of the classroom. This partnership creates good habits in students and provides business with tangible results on their investment. For more information about The Challenge Program, Inc. please visit our website at [www.tcpinc.org](http://www.tcpinc.org) or contact us at 814-533-7401.*