

Challenge Program introduced

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WEST SHAMOKIN

RURAL VALLEY — On Monday Oct. 8, the Challenge Program came to visit West Shamokin High School.

The sophomore, junior and senior classes went to the auditorium instead of their third-period classes to listen to Mary Ann Zamias speak about the program.

We watched a short film clip with a catchy song, and then she spoke some more.

Basically, the Challenge Program gives out money to exemplary students that fit into one of the four categories: Best Overall Grade-Point Average, Most Improved, Community Service and Best Attendance as based upon students' upper-classmen years. The Challenge Program awards \$250 to each winner drawn from a pool of eligible candidates.

Zamias spoke about the program but also asked us questions mainly to make sure we were paying attention and processing the information. Her incentive for our answers?

Money. She would ask a question and hold up \$5 or \$10 bills to entice us to answer her. It definitely worked.

Students received money for remembering her name, for remembering the name of the man who started the program, for remembering the first high school the program started in, and for figuring out what her family owned.

We learned that the founder of the Challenge Program was a man named Dan Perkins. Also, that the first high school that had the Challenge Program was Bishop McCort High School in Johnstown.

This year the program is in more than 150 schools in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and South Dakota. We also found out the interesting fact that Zamias' family owns the Pittsburgh Mills Mall. At the end of her speech she encouraged us to try in school and, if we could, to be a part of one of the four categories.