

# Peabody graduate challenges high achievers with cash offer

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

By Joe Smydo, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A successful Pittsburgh Peabody alumnus returned to his alma mater yesterday to tell the students they should dream big, too.

And the real estate developer brought \$3,000 in incentives with him.

Keith B. Key, a 1983 Peabody High School graduate, announced that he will fund the launch of the Challenge Program at Peabody.

He donated \$3,000 to be divided this school year among 12 students who post the best grades, demonstrate the most academic improvement, have the best attendance and compile the best records of community service. Four awards of \$250 each are earmarked for students in grades 10, 11 and 12.

Mr. Key was roundly cheered when he made the announcement at a student assembly. Joining him were Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Mark Roosevelt, state Education Secretary Gerald L. Zahorchak and Daniel T. Perkins, founder and chairman of the Cambria County-based incentive program, which was in about 70 Pennsylvania schools in 2006-07.

Yesterday's presentation may have touched a chord with students of the East Liberty school.

"All these kids talk about is money," senior Brittany Wylie said. The aspiring nurse added, "I'm going to win some."

Mr. Key, 42, founder of KBK Enterprises, a development company based in Columbus, Ohio, said he grew up in a Garfield family that "didn't have a dollar in our pocket."

"Today, I'm a millionaire," he said, crediting his success to ambition and hard work.

Mr. Key said his role as captain of Peabody track, football and basketball teams taught him to look after others, and that's one reason he's sponsoring the Challenge Program. He also noted that his company is spending \$60 million to replace public housing in Garfield with a new mix of private housing options, and he said he couldn't do that without bringing some money to Peabody.

Mr. Zahorchak also visited Pittsburgh Faison's primary campus in Homewood to tout after-school programs yesterday. Today, he's scheduled to visit Arsenal Middle School in Lawrenceville to promote a fitness program, What Moves U, with Steelers defensive end Brett Keisel.