

Hollidaysburg students 'challenged' again

Cash incentives offered for achievements such as community service, grades

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HOLLIDAYSBURG — Although they would spend the money differently, Rachel Moyer and Caitlin Collins agreed that \$250 was a pretty good incentive to come to school.

In that respect, the 16-year-old junior and 17-year-old senior, respectively, would make good competitors for an award program reintroduced to students at Hollidaysburg Area High School Wednesday morning.

The Challenge Program Inc. awards four sophomores, four juniors and four seniors with \$250 for community service participation, perfect attendance, the most improved grades and highest grade point average at the end of a school year.

Rachel, who has missed only half a day of classes since kindergarten, said she would save her winnings, but Caitlin would reward herself for a job well done.

"I'd spend it because if I did that well, you deserve it," Caitlin said, adding that she would buy something of value. "I'd put it to good use."

Sophomores Meredith Smith, 15, Aleya Albarano, 15, and Chris Spayd, 16, said they come to school to see their friends and earn good grades, but they also would make an effort for a cash bonus.

Renee M. Shaw, senior manager of business development for the program, said business ambassador Atlantic Broadband, the company shelling out the awards to Hollidaysburg students, wanted to target the area so students would know what the company does locally and what job opportunities are available.

Shaw said all 10th-, 11th- and 12th-graders are enrolled in the program by being in school, but they "need to make the commitment to try to get the award."

Cash in pocket is not the only incentive for students.

Shaw said winning the awards give students a "leg up on a resume." For example, if a student received the award for perfect attendance, companies figure the chances are good that the student would come to work, as well, she said.

Bishop McCort High School in Johnstown was the first school to participate in the program four years ago.

Hollidaysburg has participated for three years, Principal Linda McCall said. Shaw said 100 schools are involved with the program and will award \$300,000 to students this year.

"When you do well, you get money," she said.

Dara Leslie, director of customer care and marketing for the Pennsylvania region of Atlantic Broadband, said she enjoyed having the opportunity to make an impact on students and show them that the cable company is more than "the cable guy."

She said students could pursue careers in production, software engineering and marketing through

Atlantic Broadband.

Leslie said the program shows students how to be successful in high school and how to prepare to be successful after graduation.

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