

# STEPPING

## up to the challenge

*Several area students are presented awards for their achievements.*

BY MARILYN FORBES  
FOR THE DAILY COURIER

Stressing the steps needed for a successful path for the future of high school students, members of The Challenge Program Inc. recently visited Mt. Pleasant and Connellsville area high schools to recognize students for their achievements.

The Challenge Program Inc. was created to work as a connecting factor, bridging the gap between students and those in the business community by stressing the importance of good work ethics at a high school level.

The premise for The Challenge Program is that by applying these qualities to a student's work mode now in his or her formidable years, it will then carry over into their adult lives.

"We held a kick-off in the fall to announce our program," Linda

Hammers of The Challenge Program said. "We are pleased to be awarding these students in the 10th through 12th grades. Our mission is to relate that a job well done in school will lead to a job well done in life."

The organization recognized 12 students from the three grades in each school

Categories for reward recognition included best attendance, which acknowledges dedication; most improved academically, which demonstrates hard work; most community service, which demonstrates the student's willingness to give back to the community; and best overall grade-point average, which signifies top performance.

All schools are partnered with a participating business that supplies encouragement and stresses hard work, while also donating awards for presentation.

All top students were given a \$250 gift voucher from Idlewild Park.

In categories such as best attendance, multiple students qualified and the winner was chosen ran-

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LINDA HAMMERS  
THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM

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domly, with the other students then receiving smaller awards.

Mt. Pleasant and Connellsville are two of 93 schools in the state that participate in The Challenge Program. Hammers hopes to see that number increase dramatically.

"This all started with one school in which we awarded \$2,500 and it's grown to 93

schools," Hammers said. "We'd like to see every school in the state become part of the program."

Not only does the program award students for well accomplished achievements, but by pairing with local businesses, it also makes students aware of job opportunities within their areas.

"Idlewild Park is the largest employer of people your age in Westmoreland County," Ken Repak of Idlewild Park said to the students. "We employ 850 students every year. Use your education as a platform as it's never too early to build work experience or work ethic."

Recipients at Connellsville Career & Technology Center were:

■ Community service: Christina Hindman, 12th grade; Mike Mountain, 11th grade; Danielle Switzer, 10th grade.

■ Most improved academically: Samuel Basinger, 12th grade; Heather Smith, 11th grade; Barbara Lilley, 10th grade.

■ Attendance: David Rock, 12th grade; Chastity McKnight, 11th grade; Cassandra Franklin, 10th grade.

■ Highest GPA: Christopher Rock, 12th grade; Tyler Basinger, 11th grade; Sammi Jo King, 10th grade.

Receiving awards at Mt. Pleasant were:

■ Community service: Jill Mott, 12th grade, Amanda Hostetler, 11th grade; James Hontz, 10th grade.

■ Most improved academically: Richard Garris, 12th grade; Nick Sholock, 11th grade; Kaitlin Reese, 10th grade.

■ Attendance: Caz Bejger, 12th grade, Matt Prinkey, 11th grade, and Jessica Shaffer, 10th grade.

■ Highest GPA: Christina O'Neal, 12th grade; Amber Cesario, 11th grade; Julie Bearer, 10th grade.

Recipients at Connellsville Area Senior High School were:

■ Community service: Brent Lint, 12th grade; Tyler Doppelheuer, 11th grade; Kasey Anderson, 10th grade.

■ Most improved academically: Sara Kessler, 12th grade; Britney Malone, 11th grade; Brandi David, 10th grade.

■ Attendance: Nicholas Zurawski, 12th grade; Matthew

Kiselich, 11th grade; Jared Bauriedl, 10th grade.

■ Highest GPA: Kinley Sepkovic, 12th grade; Lyndzi Flanders, 11th grade; Shane Daugherty, 10th grade.

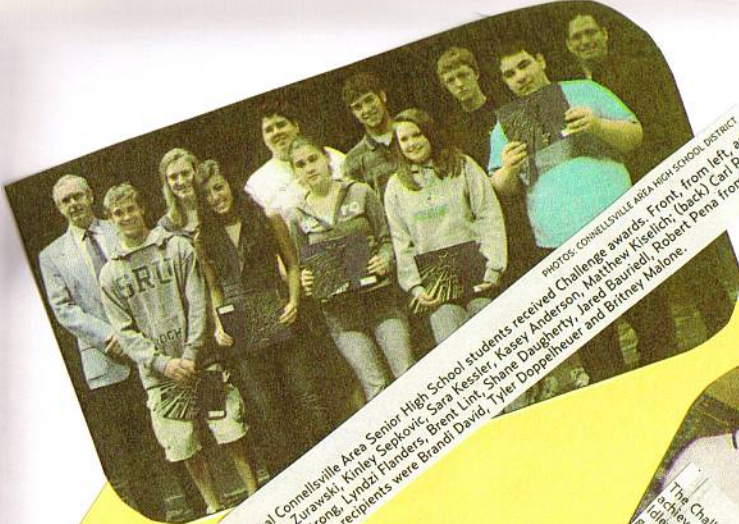


PHOTO: CONNELLVILLE AREA HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
 Several Connellsuille Area Senior High School students received Challenge awards. Front, from left, are Nicholas Zuravski, Kinley Septovic, Sara Kessler, Kasey Anderson, Matthew Kisselick; (back) Carl Rose from Armstrong, Lynzyl Flanders, Brent Lint, Shane Daugherty, Jared Bauriedl, Robert Pena from BAE Systems. Also recipients were Brandi David, Tyler Doppelheuer and Britney Malone.

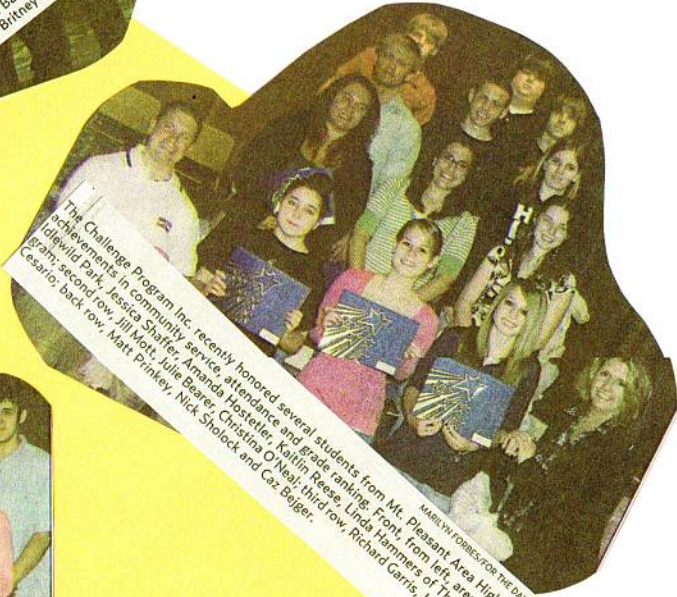


PHOTO: THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM INC.  
 The Challenge Program Inc. recently honored several students from Mt. Pleasant Area High school for achievements in community service, attendance and grade ranking. Front, from left, are: Ken Repp, of Cesario; back row, Matt Prinley, Nick Sholock and Caz Bejger.



PHOTO: THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM INC.  
 Connellsuille Career & Technology Center students also received Challenge awards. Front, from left, are Moe Moreland from Nemacolin Woodlands Resort; Danielle Switzer, Barbra Lilley, Heather Smith, Mike Mountain, Mary Dreliszak of The Challenge Program Inc.; back, David Rock, Christopher Rock, Tyler Basinger, Christina Hindman, Cassandra Franklin and Samuel Basinger. Also presented awards were Chastity McKnight and Sammi Jo King.