

# Conemaugh gears programs at high school level

**S**cott Becker, president and CEO of Conemaugh Health System, said that businesses should serve as "connectors" and "mentors" for the young people in their communities.

"Kids are going to change the world," Becker said. "It's our responsibility to create bridges and mentorships with our future, the young people of today."

Most notably, Conemaugh has established programs at the post-secondary level - including Conemaugh School of Nursing, Allied Health Programs, and Graduate Medical

Education - to train employees in medical-related professions.

But Conemaugh also is getting involved at the high school level, in particular through its partnership with The Challenge Program Inc.

Becker says The Challenge Program Inc. is a good match for Conemaugh because they share a common mission:

Retaining youth to the Johnstown area.

Becker is a Johnstown native, although he left the area upon graduating from high school to obtain an undergraduate degree



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from Washington and Jefferson College and master's degrees in public health and business administration from the Uni-

versity of Pittsburgh.

His experience includes positions with Butler Hospital, UPMC and Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield, yet he was excited to come back when the opportunity presented itself at Conemaugh.

Becker says that Conemaugh seeks employees just like himself - "talented recruits" from Johnstown, "who already know the benefits of living here" - but in order to attract potential employees, Conemaugh must look for more vehicles of communication to connect with students.

In particular, Conemaugh is slated to participate in a pilot run of The Challenge Program's Winners Club, a social networking site designed to provide a direct connection between students and the business community.

Becker says that, for Conemaugh, the bottom line is assisting students in choosing the career that best suits their interests.

"We all have to work," he said, "but the least we can do is to match up people with their passions. We want young peo-

ple to be able to talk to PTs (physical therapists), pharmacists, radiologists."

"Whatever they (the students) want to do, let's let them go explore it," he added.

*The Challenge Program Inc. is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Johnstown that has a dual mission - to award students financial incentives for successes they achieve while in high school and to build a bridge between high schools and the local business community.*