

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 8, 2011

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***The Governor's Prevention Partnership
Honors CT Corporations for Successful, Progressive Mentor Programs***

Technology Education Seen As Key To Future Mentor Program Success

FARMINGTON, CT – (April 5, 2011) – More than 120 Connecticut businesses were recently honored for their commitment to mentoring and named to the Connecticut Mentoring Partnership's Mentoring Corporate Honor Roll, during an award ceremony held in Farmington earlier this week. (A list of winners is attached.) David Fusco, President of Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield and Vice Chair of The Governor's Prevention Partnership welcomed colleagues, thanked them and asked for their needed support to help the nearly 190,000 Connecticut students still in need of mentors.

The event, entitled "The Evolution of Mentoring...From The Playground To The Classroom" included a panel discussion surrounding the topic of mentoring and how it has evolved over the years and become a vibrant piece of fabric woven into communities statewide. Panel participant John Motley, Partner at MotleyBeup, and former Executive Director of External Affairs for Hartford Public Schools, recalled his childhood where mentoring was simply "older kids helping those in the grades below." Today, as Rick Misenti, Principal of Guilford High School pointed out, "a mentor can be a huge help in navigating a student through the dangers of the online world. Those mentors who understand the dangers and implications of Facebook, Twitter and other online venues and who learn to share that information with their mentees will emerge as our mentors of the future."

Other corporate panel participants included John Jahne, Vice President of Human Resources and Operations, Webster Bank and Cynthia Forbes, Manager of Community Relations, Hamilton Sundstrand. Both agreed that companies, through their technology expertise and the right tools from organizations like The Governor's Prevention Partnership, can play a role in the future landscape of corporate mentoring. Presenting sponsors for the event were Webster Bank and Pitney Bowes.

Ranging from Fortune 500 corporations to small companies, Honor Roll companies mentor students in more than 100 communities. They earned the recognition as business leaders in mentoring by providing employees release time from work to volunteer as mentors, who often include top managers. Many of the companies have formed mentoring alliances with a local school, or school district.

Jill Spinetti, President of The Governor's Prevention Partnership urged corporations to continue to evolve their mentoring programs. "Mentoring strengthens Connecticut's economic and social well-being by helping young people fulfill their potential while helping maintain healthy families and promoting more vibrant communities. Connecticut employees are making a profound difference every day in the lives of our young people by serving as mentors, but we are still in need of corporate and community investment, partnerships, and volunteers ready to make a difference in a child's life."

Research has shown that programs that rely on volunteer mentors can play a powerful role in reducing drug abuse and youth violence while greatly enhancing a young person's prospects for leading a healthy and productive life.

A highlight of the event were visits from The Bristol-Eastern Jazz Band who performed as event participants mingled before the event started, and from The Kinsella School for The Performing Arts Choral Group who sang during the event. "This is what it's all about, said Roland Harmon Director of Program Planning and Development at The Governor's Prevention Partnership. "These young people showed such enthusiasm for the art of music and for our cause today...mentoring."

Adding to the spirit-filled event was student mentee Talan Daigle of Bristol and his mentor, Patty Murphy of Webster Bank. The two read an emotional, brief poem about their fondness and respect for one another. Gabrielle St. Cyr, of Aquarion, spoke of the warmth surrounding the growth of the relationship with her mentee, Melissa Berrios of Bridgeport. This warmth was only reinforced by a few words of support and gratitude from Jeff Hubbard, Regional Vice President, TD Bank.

Harmon continued his remarks, offering an overview of mentoring in Connecticut, "Currently, there are 12,000 youth being served by 9,000 mentors and I think it is important to point out in this setting that a significant number of these mentors come from the corporate world. In addition, we work to support a network of more than 150 mentoring programs in our state through trainings, guides, and general guidance. But, there is still a need...there are still thousands of young people who need mentors."

For more information on MENTORING IN CONNECTICUT, please contact Roland Harmon, Director of Program Planning and Development or Diane Raffanello, Interim Program Manager, Connecticut Mentoring Partnership, 860-523-8042.

Celebrating more than 20 years of keeping Connecticut kids safe, successful and drug-free, The Governor's Prevention Partnership is a statewide, nonprofit public-private alliance, building a strong, healthy future workforce through leadership in mentoring and prevention of youth violence and bullying, underage drinking, and substance abuse. The Partnership is the only statewide organization focusing exclusively on prevention issues affecting youth.

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