

# Program motivates Johnstown students

**M**ichael Vuckovich, principal at Greater Johnstown High School, believes one of the greatest benefits of his school's involvement in The Challenge Program Inc. is the increased confidence he sees in his students.

"The Challenge Program Inc.'s notion of caring has allowed students to build confidence and raise their self-esteem," Vuckovich said. "You would be amazed what can happen when someone takes an interest in the life of a child."

The Challenge Program provides \$250 cash incentives to students for achievement in four areas - community service, academic excellence, academic improvement and attendance - in the sophomore, junior and senior grade levels.

Vuckovich said that he has seen the benefits of The Challenge Program's four award categories. With the attendance award incentive, he said that he has seen an increase in student attendance, and because of that, an increase in achievement.

Due to this success, Greater Johnstown High School has recently been awarded a bronze medal from the U.S. News and World Report, being identified as one of America's best high schools.

"This award is a great accomplishment for our school and community," Vuckovich said. "The Challenge Program played a role in this accomplishment."

Vuckovich also noted that



**ROSE WAGNER**

The Challenge Program

students have become more involved in the community, attempting to win the community service award.

"Students have dedicated several hundred hours of service in our community," Vuckovich said. "The Challenge Program has renewed a spirit of community among our students."

This year, The Challenge Program is spreading the message for students to market themselves globally once they enter the work force. Vuckovich said that students are listening and preparing themselves accordingly.

"In today's global economy, students are required to compete with students across the world for employment opportunities. Schools must analyze their current structures in order to raise student achievement," Vuckovich said.

"I am proud to say that The Challenge Program has played a significant role in our efforts in developing young adults who are prepared for both college and the work force."

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Challenge Program has had a definite positive impact at Greater Johnstown High School. The program has helped raise attendance, achievement, community service and involvement. But most importantly, Vuckovich believes that students are thankful for the interest in their future.

"Students have learned that people do care for them and place their best interests first," Vuckovich said. "This gift from The Challenge Program is truly priceless and will have a lasting impact on the students at Greater Johnstown High School."

The Challenge Program at Greater Johnstown High School is sponsored by Mount Aloysius College and Wal-Mart.

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*The Challenge Program Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose dual mission is to provide high school students with financial incentives for success and to build business-education partnerships.*