

## August 14, 2006 Murtha Lands Education Grant to Help Region

For Immediate Release

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Johnstown, PA - Congressman John Murtha announced today the awarding of a Department of Justice grant for The Challenge Program, Inc. The grant will enable the program to expand its efforts to reward and inspire high school students.

The Challenge Program motivates high school students by rewarding them for their successes in school and in their communities.

"This program helps stem the brain drain and contributes to regional economic development," Murtha said. "The Challenge Program connects business leaders and high school students and enables young people to discover value in their community."

Within each participating school, students compete for cash awards recognizing significant academic achievement and community service.

Dan Perkins, Johnstown native and founder of The Challenge Program, Inc. said "This grant enables us to build upon a program born in the greater Johnstown community. Our immediate plans are to expand in the region to include Fayette, Greene, Washington, Westmoreland, Indiana, Armstrong and Allegheny Counties. The long term goal is to make The Challenge Program a national program."

The Challenge Program began with one local school distributing \$2,500 in the 2003-04 school year. The program has grown dramatically to include 33 schools and last year distributed more than \$100,000 in cash awards to students.

For additional information, contact Barbara A. Grandinetti, Executive Director of The Challenge Program, Inc. at (814) 533-7403.

The Challenge Program was developed by Dan Perkins, President and CEO of MTS Technologies and is designed to provide students with incentives for success. The program partners with businesses to educate students on entrepreneurship while also motivating them to excel in the classroom and their communities. Students are rewarded with \$250 for their excellence in community service, school attendance, most improved grade point average, and highest G.P.A.

