

MENTOR
Dinner and Reception
Wednesday, January 29, 2014
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Thank you. It is a great honor to receive this award. Of course by being here I represent the tremendous effort that is going on in the state of Washington, across many levels, to encourage mentor-mentee relationships.

Helping Kids Grow Up Healthy in Safe Communities with Opportunity has been the theme of my office since early in my administration.

The theme speaks to my passion about mentoring. A child or teen who has a mentor stands a significantly better chance of growing up healthy and becoming a strong member of his or her community.

There is proof that mentoring works. The Washington State Mentors organization initiated an extensive national study on mentoring a couple of years ago, which was published in 2013. WSM received a Bill and Melinda Gates grant to fund it.

A key finding of that study of 1,300 youth showed that a kid who has been mentored is at significantly lower risk of symptoms of depression. Findings also suggested gains in social acceptance, academic attitudes and grades. What this says to me is that having a caring adult in the life of a child is perhaps one of the biggest ingredients of that child's success.

Making sure every child is engaged in the right mix of healthful activities and has a strong adult guide is worth fighting for. This is an area where the public sector and private sector can happily join together and agree on strategies that make mentoring work.

We have an outstanding network of mentoring organizations in our state, including Washington State Mentors as an umbrella organization. But the job is never done.

I do not know what the numbers are nationally but we know that only about one in seven kids in our state who could use a mentor actually have one. We need to close that mentoring gap. Mentoring matters and each and every one in this room should be honored for all that you are doing to make a difference.

I will continue to do all that I can, both as chair of Washington State Mentors and as lieutenant governor, to make mentoring a priority in our state. Thank you again for this high honor.