



NEWS RELEASE

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Speakers, student awards reflect education theme at annual YorkCounts Summit; group also elects new chairman

York, Pa., Apr. 17, 2008 – A member of the pioneering ‘Little Rock Nine’ and a Midshipman with a remarkable story keynoted the Annual Summit for YorkCounts, York County’s community-wide quality-of-life coalition. The event, which carried a theme of “Educational Opportunities for All,” provided YorkCounts with the opportunity to present Citizen-Student Awards to 42 civically engaged York County high school students.

Also at the Summit today, YorkCounts:

- noted the election of a new chairman of its board: Eric Menzer, Senior Vice President of Wagman Construction;
- released its annual report, “YorkCounts 2008: Turning Points,” which puts retirements from and additions to the YorkCounts board in a broader context of leadership succession in York, reviews the year’s activities and introduces young voices; and
- provided an updated list of groups that have applauded the efforts of participants in the Metro-York initiative, which produced eight recommendations for municipal prosperity and educational improvement.

The Summit took place at the Yorktowne Hotel in downtown York.

Keynote speakers

Speaking at the Summit were Dr. Terrence Roberts and Midshipman 1st Class Zerbin Singleton.

Roberts is co-chairperson of the Master’s in Psychology Program at Antioch University (Calif.). In 1957, Roberts, then a 15-year-old high school junior, was one of the first nine African-American students enrolled in previously all-white Little Rock (Ark.) Central High School. The integration of the school took place over the objection of segregationist residents and Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus, who had deployed the Arkansas National Guard to stop it. It came as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared public school segregation unconstitutional, and the moment is considered a milestone of the Civil Rights movement.

Singleton is currently Brigade Commander of the senior class at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. Despite an unbelievable set of life challenges, Singleton has excelled as an aerospace engineering major at one of the world’s most rigorous institutions of higher learning; he will graduate in May and will report to flight school afterward, aspiring to be an astronaut.

“In a person such as Terrence Roberts, you are able to see and hear first hand from a person who others wanted to deny a decent education because of the color of his skin. But, in the end, despite the closed minded nature of others he pushed on in a determined manner, holds a Ph.D. and helps others to achieve their educational dreams,” said YorkCounts Director James DeBord. “Zerbin Singleton is a remarkable young man who has shown through sheer determination that you can achieve your dreams even when you have to overcome what seem to be insurmountable obstacles.” For more information on Roberts’ and Singleton’s remarks, contact YorkCounts.

Citizen-Student Awards

YorkCounts presented 42 York County students – three high school students each from 13 different York County school districts and York Catholic High School – with the first YorkCounts Citizen-Student Awards. School administrators identified honorees who are substantially engaged, both in school activities and in the community; are known for leadership, especially in the area of bringing different groups together to accomplish meaningful goals; and are good students (although a 4.0 grade point average was not a necessity; the awards are meant to recognize more than academic excellence). Sophomores, juniors and seniors were eligible.

“These students come from many different social and economic backgrounds. What they have in common are commitments – to high achievement and to community service, even at their young age,” said Maria Royce, chairwoman of YorkCounts’ Communications Committee, who introduced the students. A complete list of award-winners is the final page of this press release and is available in electronic form from YorkCounts.

New chairman

The YorkCounts Board of Directors announced the effects of a planned leadership transition through the election of Eric Menzer as its new Chairman. Menzer replaces Larry Miller – president and CEO of PeoplesBank, a Codorus Valley Company – whom Menzer thanked for his “outstanding service and tireless work.”

Menzer is Senior Vice President of Wagman Construction and manages Wagman’s *Urban Group*, which specializes in consulting, development, pre-construction and construction services for urban redevelopment, historic renovation, and adaptive reuse projects. Menzer is currently leading Wagman’s efforts on redevelopment projects in York, Lancaster, and Elizabethtown. He is also the Chairman of 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, a statewide policy-research and advocacy organization; he also serves on the boards of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, the York County Community Foundation and on the Executive Committee of Better York. Menzer is a graduate of the University of Maryland and lives in the City of York. [A photograph of Menzer is available; e-mail Beau at dbougham@ycp.edu.](#)

“Close to a decade after the first discussions that preceded the founding of YorkCounts, there’s still a lot of work to be done to make our community better and stronger. To be more precise, there’s a lot of work for us – you and I – to do. That’s what being a citizen is all about. We’ll do it together. I’m looking forward to it,” said Menzer.

Both Miller and the previous chairman – Dave Meckley of Strategic Advantage, Inc. – remain on the YorkCounts Board. Miller had chaired the board since 2006.

Annual report

Summit attendees received copies of “YorkCounts 2008: Turning Points,” the organization’s annual report. Among other themes, the report puts generational leadership in context. It reprints a York Sunday News editorial on the traditionally robust role of the private sector in York County civic leadership and contains excerpts of a conversation between a new YorkCounts Board member, attorney Carl Anderson of Barley Snyder, and a retiring member, attorney Reed Anderson of Stock and Leader.

“I’m encouraged. There is a potential pool of talent that does bring a fresh, progressive perspective,” Carl Anderson said, commenting on generational leadership issues. “The question is whether or not we can get them committed.”

During the Summit, Miller recognized both Reed Anderson and Ernie Waters of Met-Ed/FirstEnergy. Both men are retiring from the YorkCounts Board after having served on it since its inception as the organization’s Steering Committee. “Truly, without their efforts, there might not have been a YorkCounts at all,” Miller said.

The annual report also reviews the year’s activities and highlights a February meeting in which students shared their views on the future of education in York County. Copies are available free from YorkCounts; contact e-mail yorkcounts@gmail.com or call 717/815-6430. Annual report errata: On page 23, James M. Debord should be James W. DeBord.

Supportive groups

Since the November 2007 presentation of its Metro-York recommendations – eight clear, concise recommendations for improving municipal prosperity in the heart of York County – YorkCounts has been gathering resolutions of endorsement or general support from respected York County community institutions and enterprises.

The list so far includes Better York, Codorus Valley Bancorp, Inc., Community Progress Council, Crispus Attucks, Family First Health, G.A. and F.C. Wagman, Inc., Housing Alliance of York, Leadership York, PeoplesBank – A Codorus Valley Company, RAYAC (REALTORS Association of York and Adams Counties, Inc.), United Way of York County, Wagman Construction, Inc., Wellspan Health, YWCA of York, York City Dollars for Scholars, York County Bar Foundation, York County Chamber of Commerce, York County Commissioners, York County Economic Development Corporation, York County Industrial Development Authority and York Jewish Community Center.

Several other boards were expecting to consider the Metro-York recommendations in April and May.

YorkCounts Citizen-Student Award Winners

Central York High School

- Megan Eline
- Madelyn Krug
- Rita Sharma

Dallastown Area Senior High School

- Denisha Brown
- Jordan Derk
- Toni Lozzi

Eastern York High School

- Anna Miller
- Garret Otterbein
- Sadie Winship

Hanover Senior High School

- Ashley Brown
- Olivia Ecker
- Matt Storm

Kennard-Dale High School

- Dalana Mormann
- Ashley Pietra
- Eric Ruth

Northeastern High School

- Brittini Garvin
- **Alivia Kramlick**
- Mark Sollars

Northern High School

- Nick Grasseti
- Emily Harlacker
- Jordan Rutherford

Red Lion Area High School

- Frances Greek
- Shane Sarver
- Stephen States

Southwestern High School

- Sarah Cashdollar
- Brynn Seidenstricker
- Tracy Shipman

Spring Grove Area High School

- Tia Monet Cook
- Jake Smeltzer
- Elizabeth Walker

Susquehannock High School

- Matthew Detter
- Hannah Mistovich
- Laura Sullivan

West York Area High School

- Alyssa Dodson
- Kari Inners
- Samuel Miller

William Penn High School

- Davis Giadoo
- Latisha Murray
- Brandon Walker

York Catholic High School

- Michael Bucher
- Meghan McGowan
- Frances Menzer

York Suburban Senior High School

- Tristalyn Bixler-Kint
- Kaila Lehr
- Bradley Simon

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YorkCounts is a community-based coalition working to assess, sustain and enhance York County's quality of life – building alliances, introducing partners, spotlighting issues and facilitating conversations on education, economic development, health and safety, diversity and more. Partners include Better York, the United Way of York County, WellSpan Health, York College of Pennsylvania, the York County Chamber of Commerce, the York County Commissioners, the York County Community Foundation and the York County Economic Development Corporation. Learn more at yorkcounts.org.

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Count me in