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Contact: Margret Graham, WDC
(206) 448-0474, ext. 3029
mgraham@seakingwdc.org

Local YouthSource center honored by Dept. of Labor as nation's outstanding youth employment program

SEATTLE—YouthSource Renton today received the U.S. Department of Labor's Recognition of Excellence Award in the "connecting America's youth to the workforce" category at the national 2008 Workforce Innovations Conference in New Orleans.

The award, annually given to outstanding programs in five categories, honors YouthSource for its innovative multi-agency education, employment and development center for at-risk youth.

WDC Youth Council chair and Seattle businessman Terry Seaman, WDC CEO Kris Stadelman and King County program director Jennifer Hill accepted the award today in New Orleans on behalf of the WDC and the King County Work Training Program, which runs and staffs YouthSource.

"We are delighted to be recognized for the strength of this collaboration that has helped hundreds of youth over the past 14 years," said Stadelman. "YouthSource is truly a national model that other areas are seeking to emulate."

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Brent R. Orrell presented the fifth annual Recognition of Excellence Awards. The youth category recognizes exemplary programs or initiatives that actively collaborate with businesses, educators and other partners to address the education, training, hiring and job-retention challenges facing youth.

"YouthSource's success is the result of working with multiple agencies to go beyond providing basic job training to youth," said Orrell. "Its collaborative approach is helping prepare at-risk youth in the Seattle area with the support necessary to embark on productive lives."

YouthSource served 276 youth ages 14-21 in 2006-07, 71 percent of whom completed the program and either entered the workforce or went on to further education and training. Of participants ages 19 to 21, 78 percent entered the workforce. Of youth referred to the program by the court system, 82 percent have not re-offended.

Located within WorkSource Renton, YouthSource offers a learning center through a community-college partnership; project-based learning through several innovative programs focused on computers, construction and manufacturing; mental health and chemical dependency counseling and treatment; links to jobs; and intensive case management.

YouthSource has also built a strong collaboration with the juvenile justice system—an innovation that is being replicated in two more sites here in 2008. A new DOL grant to the WDC expanded services for court-involved youth to downtown Seattle and Federal Way.

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