

BIG WIN FOR MENTORING PROGRAM

Eugene's Committed Partners for Youth was awarded as the "Oregon Mentoring Program of the Year" at a ceremony in Portland last week with Oregon secretary of state candidate Sen. Kate Brown and Greg Oden of the Portland Trail Blazers among the award presenters.

Founded in 1991 by Llew Wells, a local mother and psychologist, Committed Partners for Youth was designed to enhance youth development with proper mentoring from adult volunteers. Wells was struggling with the challenges of adolescence in her own children and needed a way to make a difference in their lives. Ultimately, Wells made it her mission to create CPY, a local nonprofit mentoring agency serving ages 6-17.

"All of our mentors start the relationship wanting to give back to the child. Our mentors walk away with a better understanding of the complexity of the issues facing children and families today," says Susie Walsh, executive director of CPY.

"Maximizing our collaborative relationships with other organizations, in particular Big Brother Big Sister," is one of the agency's main goals says Walsh. She also says that right now is the biggest season for recruiting mentors.

Earlier this year, CPY received two national Mentoring Excellence Awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration of Children and Families and also gained national recognition at the 2008 Helping America's Youth conference in Portland.

"We have been working tremendously hard to be the best mentoring program in the state and the nation," says Walsh. "We have such an unbelievably dedicated staff and board. We have successfully created a sense of family."

For more information, visit www.committedpartners.org — *Courtney Jacobs*