

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 97-4663, by Representatives Tokuda, Mason, Veloria and Cody

WHEREAS, The Seattle Community For Youth was founded in 1985 as a nonprofit organization to promote the use of mentors to prevent academic and social failures by positively participating in the lives of youth at risk. The focus of Steps Ahead is ninth and tenth graders identified by teachers and counselors as needing extra adult guidance to make a successful transition from middle school to high school. There is no other volunteer mentor program working in the Seattle public schools matching adults with high school students that offers this rigorous day-to-day support for youth nominated by teachers and counselors; and

WHEREAS, Students are given the choice to participate in this program, entering as ninth graders with the option of reenrolling each year. They know they are committing for an entire school year. They set their own goals for school performance, attendance, behavior, and relationships at home. The program works because these students want to succeed in school and in life but, simply, do not have all the skills to do so; and

WHEREAS, Many of these students are likely to drop out, get into trouble with the school or the law, or get pregnant. They have risk factors such as: Siblings who have dropped out of school, truancy, death of a parent or close relative, behind a grade in school, abuse, previously homeless, academic achievement significantly below ability level, or gang involvement; and

WHEREAS, During its first six years, two hundred thirty-five ninth graders enrolled. The program is now in its seventh year at Rainier Beach High School, fourth year at Cleveland High School, and third year at Garfield High School in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, The Seattle Community For Youth encourages the returning students to continue in the program as juniors and seniors in the Steps Beyond program. With mentors, these students work in monthly workshops learning leadership skills as they volunteer to work with other community volunteer groups. They continue to apply their learning in the areas of responsibility, commitment, and personal integrity; and

WHEREAS, Steps Ahead students do better than their statistical control group. Steps Ahead students have ten percent better classroom attendance, twenty-five percent fewer failing grades, and fifteen percent fewer dropouts, expulsions, and long-term suspensions. Over the course of the school years, more of the control group of students commit increasingly serious offenses and leave school while the Steps Ahead students receive fewer discipline referrals and the seriousness of the offenses diminishes; and

WHEREAS, Students from the Steps Ahead group graduated from the Rainier Beach High School in June 1994. One third of the graduates won scholarships and scholastic awards and one-fifth were on the honor roll;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the Community For Youth organization for its outstanding contribution to the state of Washington, the city of Seattle, and the community for which it was founded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the adult mentors of the Seattle Community For Youth for their dedication to the youth of today and the leaders of tomorrow; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the students voluntarily participating in this program and commend them for looking out for their own futures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Community For Youth should act as a model for others desiring to contribute in a positive manner for the benefit of the community to act as positive role models for the youth of the state of Washington.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of
Resolution 4663 adopted by the House of Representatives
April 22, 1997.

Timothy A. Martin, Chief Clerk