



# Local News

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## Ceremony in Anderson honors those who have championed diversity

By Titus Ledbetter III (Contact)  
Tuesday, May 5, 2009



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ANDERSON COUNTY — Taylor Fitch has made a difference at Belton-Honea Path High School by helping to create a program last spring that pairs mentors with students with disabilities.

Fitch, 18, of Anderson created the Seeing Others Soar program, which meets almost every week at her school for the purpose of pairing youth with disabilities with mentors from the general student population. She was recognized as the Outstanding High School Student at the 2009 Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards on Tuesday at the Civic Center of Anderson.

The fifth-annual awards ceremony recognized individuals and businesses that have championed diversity.

Fitch has also been on the Children's Miracle Network Ambassador since 2006 and is a spokesperson for Easter Seals. She said it meant a lot to be honored by a local organization after working on diversity issues throughout the country.

"It is more important to be recognized by your community," Fitch said. "This is where I live and where I go to school."

Fitch will graduate from high school this spring and plans to attend Wofford College as a pre-med major in the fall.

The Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards were sponsored by the Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg county chambers of commerce. Six awards and some honorable mentions were presented at Tuesday's ceremony.

David Moody Jr., the president and chief executive officer for C.D. Moody Construction Company, Inc in Lithonia, Ga., was the guest speaker. He encouraged people to avoid putting limits on themselves and to set lofty goals.

Moody said the election of President Barack Obama as the nation's first black president inspired him to realize that all people have the ability to achieve extraordinary things.

"There is no excuse not to go for your dreams," Moody said.

He also urged those in the audience to visit a local school at least once a year to talk to the youth.

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Danielle Tait, a senior at Furman University, was given the Outstanding College Student award for her role as president of the university's International Students Association.

The Outstanding Business award was given to the Greenville Hospital System for implementing a strategic diversity plan. The Outstanding Non-Profit Award was given to officials from the Bridges to a Brighter Future, a three-year enrichment program for underprivileged youth in Greenville County.

S.T. Peden, the president of the Minority Economic Development Institute, based in Greenville, was honored as the as the Calder D. Ehrmann Outstanding Individual. He help create the institute about two years ago. It aims to help minority contractors secure opportunities to work on local construction projects.

The Outstanding Contribution to International Diversity Award was given to the Alliance for Collaboration with the Hispanic Community. The organization builds relationships in the Greenville area between Latinos and the greater population.

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