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Youth Program Honors Bus Company for Outstanding Service

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Selected News Releases

Youth Program Honors Bus Company for Outstanding Service

ORONO, Maine — Champion of Maine was honored recently for outstanding service to the National Youth Sports Program at the University of Maine. The community-based NYSP Advisory Board presented a special Corporate Appreciation Award to the Old Town school bus contractor, recognizing six years of dedicated, safe service and for "going the extra mile" for the more than 200 area youngsters participating in the summer program.

NYSP, a free, six-week skills development and educational program for income-eligible children ages 10-16, is funded by a partnership between the U.S. Government, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, selected universities and colleges around the country, and local communities. The UMaine program, one of 175 nationally, is the only NYSP in northern New England.

A major benefit provided by the program is daily transportation of children living in four Maine counties, according to project administrator Stephen Butterfield. With pick-up points from Lincoln to Hartland and Guilford to Ellsworth, the program serves a geographic area roughly the size of the state of Rhode Island.

Champion drivers do more than transport the students from their communities to camp and back every day. Some of the youngsters travel an hour and a half one way, and the drivers serve as extended coaches, making sure the time on the road models the supportive, teamwork atmosphere of the program, as well as its high expectations and goals of personal and social responsibility. Two of the drivers stay on campus and serve as team leaders for a group of NSYP campers.

"We are committed to NYSP because we see the positive difference it makes for young people of this area, from day one," said Laura Sanborn, one of the owners of Champion of Maine. Her husband, Harry, and Ralph and Audrey Street are the other owners of the company, which has offices in Old Town and Hampden.

"Champion is an outstanding example of a socially conscious community business," said Butterfield.

Champion of Maine Drivers/NYSP volunteers for the summer of 1999 were: John McDevitt, Corinna, Hartland, Palmyra, Newport run; Gerald Forrest, Bucksport, Ellsworth, Brewer run; Deanna Rudge, Lincoln, Milford, Old Town run; Stacey Middlebrooks, Hermon, Bangor West side run; Jeannie Bachelder, Bangor, East side, Veazie, Orono run; and Galen Shannon, Guilford, Dover-Foxcroft, Milo, Bradford, Hudson run.

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