

## Congressman Working to Create Safe Schools and Break the Cycle of Violence

Mahoney Addresses Luncheon on Youth

Violence

(May 5, 2008)

(West Palm Beach, FL) - Today, Congressman Tim Mahoney (FL-16) addressed the Palm Beach County School District's Do the Write Thing recognition luncheon to honor local students who stepped up to the challenge to address the impact of youth violence on their lives and offer their suggestions on what should be done to reduce it.

"If our children are going to be successful, it is our responsibility as parents and community leaders to ensure they have a safe learning environment. We are being called to step up to the challenge and do the right thing to make our schools safe," said Congressman Mahoney. "I commend our Palm Beach national finalists, Madeline and Nicholas, and I look forward to spending time with them when they travel to Washington."

Across America, students are recognizing the prevalence of youth violence and are responding to this problem as part of the Do the Write Thing Challenge. By encouraging students to make personal commitments to do something about the problem, the program ultimately seeks to empower them to break the cycles of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods.

Madeline Keye and Nicholas Galarza were selected as national finalists from Palm Beach County Middle School students for their essays on what they see as causes and answers to youth violence here in Palm Beach County. The two winners will travel to Washington, D.C. to take part in a prestigious recognition ceremony where they will have the chance to present their views to national leaders such as the Secretary of Education, the Attorney General of the United States, the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Members of the Congress. In addition, their writings have been published and placed in the Library of Congress.

Congressman Mahoney is committed to address youth violence problems in Florida:

Mahoney secured \$564,000 in funding for the Palm Beach County School District to provide gang awareness training to school police officers;

Mahoney secured \$728,500 for the ARISE foundation, a locally-based life skills training program for at-risk youth and adults;

Mahoney joined Congressman Alcee Hastings to co-sponsor the Path to Success: Gang Prevention through Community Partnership Act (H.R. 3168), which established an educational mentoring pilot program for at-risk youth through community partnerships that provide life, social, academic and vocational skills necessary for youth to become productive law-abiding citizens;

Mahoney supported last year's resolution supporting the goals of National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week

In the last 15 years, the number of gangs in Palm Beach County has risen from one to over two hundred. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department estimates that there are 7000 gang members in Palm Beach and that the majority of gang members are of school-age and use schools to recruit and display their gang identities.

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