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Karen Sundell: Buffett, Osborne celebrate mentors

November 11, 2008

More than 1,000 people attended the TeamMates "Magic of Mentoring" event Friday evening at the Embassy Suites in LaVista. Guests gathered in support of the TeamMates Mentoring Program's mission of inspiring youth to reach their full potential.

Tom Osborne and Warren Buffett at the TeamMates Gala, "Magic of Mentoring." The highlight of the evening was a guest interview with Warren Buffett, Berkshire Hathaway president and chief executive officer, and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Athletic Director Tom Osborne about the mentors in their lives. Kim Robak, TeamMates board member and former lieutenant governor, conducted the interview.

Buffett cited his father, Howard, and his longtime business partner, Charlie Munger, as having significant influence on his life.

Osborne talked about his uncle and Bob Devaney as significant mentors. Osborne's uncle became influential while his father was gone for five years to fight in World War II.

"My uncle filled the void of my father being gone and taught me how to hunt and fish," Osborne said. "The experience of my father's absence was significant as it gave me empathy for the more than 22 million fatherless children in our country."

Honorary chairmen Bruce and Debra Grewcock and the Peter Kiewit Corp. were honored for their support of mentoring. More than 80 Kiewit employees actively mentor each week in schools across the Omaha area.

The TeamMates Mentoring Program was founded in 1991 by Osborne and his wife, Nancy. The TeamMates Mentoring Program serves more than 3,200 youth in 111 communities across Nebraska and Iowa.

To become a mentor or to support the TeamMates Mentoring Program, go to www.teammates.org or call 877-531-TEAM.

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The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans held a special concert event to promote and celebrate Horatio Alger scholarship winners at the Holland Performing Arts Center on Friday evening.

The Charles Durham family, Suzanne and Walter Scott Jr., and Peggy and David L. Sokol sponsored the event to benefit the association's scholarship program for at-risk youth.

"We are delighted to hold another special concert in honor of our Horatio Alger scholars and alumni," said Sokol, president and CEO of the Horatio Alger Association.

"These students have exceeded our expectations with their goals and determination, and we are thrilled to celebrate their early achievements and success in life. To have the concert in Omaha at the Holland Performing Arts Center is very exciting."

The Sokols and Scotts hosted a private dinner reception prior to the concert. Walter Scott Jr. is Horatio Alger chairman emeritus.

Internationally renowned tenor Mario Frangoulis headlined the concert, performing with the Omaha Symphony Orchestra, conductor Ernest Richardson and soprano Sarah Lawrence.

The event featured several current and previous Horatio Alger scholarship winners from Nebraska including Horatio Alger National Scholars; Ak-Sar-Ben state scholars and scholarship alumni.

A few of the winners shared their "Horatio Alger stories" with the audience and spoke of how the association's programs have allowed them the chance to achieve the American dream through higher education.

The Horatio Alger Ak-Sar-Ben Scholarship Program, created in 2000, was the first Horatio Alger state scholarship program. With support from its members and friends, the Horatio Alger Association has awarded more than \$63 million in need-based college scholarships to deserving young people.

The 2008 winners are listed on Omaha.com.

To learn more about the Horatio Alger Scholarship Programs, visit <http://www.horatioalger.org/scholarships/index.cfm>.



Specials guests at the concert event were, from left, soprano Sarah Lawrence, tenor Mario Frangoulis, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and Virginia Thomas.



Mario Frangoulis with Peggy and David Sokol, co-sponsors of Friday's event at the Holland Performing Arts Center.



Mario Frangoulis with the Durhams and Yanneys.



David Sokol and Mario Frangoulis.



Mario Frangoulis with Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Clarence Thomas.



Horatio Alger Chairman Walter Scott with Suzanne, his wife, and family.



The Charles W. Durham family, with Mario Frangoulis and Sarah Lawrence.