

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

General Colin Powell Encourages Adults to Volunteer as Mentors

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (January 19, 2009) – January is National Mentoring Month and General Colin Powell is asking every caring adult to serve as a mentor to help today’s youth prepare to lead productive and fulfilling lives. The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (MPM) joins General Powell in this effort by announcing an innovative call to action for Minnesotans to address the need for more mentors through an exciting public engagement campaign called **Wired for 2020-*Spark Their Interests, Expand Their Possibilities.***

In collaboration with the Minnesota Business Partnership (MBP), the Science Museum of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota High Tech Association, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the City of Minneapolis, MPM is leading the effort to recruit more mentors to support approximately 250,000 young people in Minnesota who could benefit from a quality mentoring experience.

“We know mentoring works,” says Charlie Weaver, executive director of the Minnesota Business Partnership, whose members include chief executive officers of more than 110 of Minnesota’s largest employers. “When we collaborated with MPM 11 years ago, we knew of a handful of companies that had strong mentoring initiatives. Today, there are approximately 9,500 employees from 70 companies mentoring about 27,000 youth. Mentoring is a low-cost, high-impact way to help students on a path to success.”

Wired for 2020 will feature a website, wiredfor2020.com, that makes the case for mentoring and highlights an exciting public event on April 18th at the Mall of America. The event will feature interactive exhibit, and the youth will experience a high-tech look at the future along with tools to help 1) find their passion 2) build a toolkit and 3) map their journey to postsecondary success.

“The power of mentoring happens when mentors share their personal experiences with young people, says Joellen Gonder-Spacek, MPM Executive Director. “Ultimately, all mentors want to help young people succeed. To grow quality mentoring in Minnesota, we are building tools to help mentors provide greater counsel around helping young people discover personal strengths and interests, understanding what skills they need to contribute to the future workforce, and developing a path to their future. When mentors feel better equipped to guide young people on their journey, they can make a bigger impact.”

“Minnesota employers are solving important challenges every day,” said John Righini, Chief Marketing Officer for GE Capital Solutions Fleet Services. “When we tell our stories to students, we help them see the relevance of school to their futures. It’s exciting to help them understand the options made possible when they develop strong skills and take steps to study beyond high school.”

Wired for 2020 is presented by GE. Additional sponsors include the Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation, Federated Insurance, Qwest, Best Buy, Emerson Process Management, Thomson Reuters, Peggy Lauritsen Design Group, Sierra Bravo Corporation, On Impact Productions, ZerOw ReDesign, and Brite Media.

The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota was formed in 1994 as a community initiative to promote mentoring for Minnesota youth. Its mission is to lead the state in building and sustaining quality mentoring for every child. For more on **Wired for 2020**, visit www.wiredfor2020.com

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