

# Project CDA receives 2009 Governor's Brightest Star Award



JEROME A. POLLOS/Press First Lady Lori Otter discusses the Idaho Meth Project to the student body of Project CDA following a presentation Tuesday where the school received the Idaho Brightest Star award.

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By MAUREEN DOLAN/Staff writer | [http://www.cdapress.com/news/local\\_news/article\\_e4f4578c-a219-59e4-ab42-27c9e2e37cb3.htm](http://www.cdapress.com/news/local_news/article_e4f4578c-a219-59e4-ab42-27c9e2e37cb3.htm)

COEUR d'ALENE - They call it "Project Pride," and it was running high at Project CDA Tuesday.

Idaho first lady Lori Otter paid a visit to students at the Ninth Street alternative school to personally present them with the 2009 Governor's Brightest Star Award.

Otter told the students their school was chosen for the award because of the enthusiasm and compassion they have shown by identifying and addressing needs in the community.

"You know you have a service heart, when you go someplace and you see something that needs to get done, and you don't have to ask, 'What can I do to help?'" Otter said. "When you look at something and see that there's a need, and you step forward with a happy heart to fill that need, that's truly what the Brightest Stars Award is about."

The school's award was one of 67 announced last November. Many of the recipients, individuals, businesses and schools from communities throughout the state, including Lakeland High School, traveled to Boise to receive their awards last fall.

"We had over 600 nominations for this award," Otter said. "It's a huge honor to get through and be one of the 67."

Otter said 110 Project CDA students and 12 teachers completed 450 hours of service work within a year.

Some of the organizations that benefited from Project CDA's efforts are the Women's Center, St. Vincent de Paul and Head Start.

"You are considered the brightest of the bright," Otter told the students. "I'm humbled by your enthusiasm, your commitment to your community."

Senior Jared Doerr said, "This is pretty exciting for me because students at our school have a reputation that's not always positive."

The 18-year-old said he helped stuff animals for orphans and helped design shirts they sold to raise funds for children in Uganda and for St. Vincent de Paul.

Otter told the students she hopes they're ready to move on to their "next big challenge."

The first lady encouraged students to participate in Paint the State, a public art contest hosted by The Idaho Meth Project.

"Help us promote the 'Not Even Once' message," Otter said. "There is no age limit on stupidity, so there are a lot of adults out there who need this message as well."

Launched in Idaho in 2008, the Idaho Meth Project is patterned after a successful program in Montana. The project is a media campaign that blends public service messages and community action to reduce first-time methamphetamine use in the state.

It appears to be making a difference.

Otter said meth use by Idaho teens has dropped 52 percent since 2009.

In neighboring Montana, a similar Paint the State art contest resulted in 660 pieces of public art.

"Our goal is to surpass that," Otter said.

The contest is open to 13- to 18-year-olds in all 44 of Idaho's counties.

There's a cash incentive with \$3,000 in prize money being offered in each county, and one \$5,000 state prize.

To be eligible, each entry must be an original work of art, be displayed publicly, and have a strong anti-Meth message. This can include the "Meth: Not Even Once" logo, tagline or any other anti-Meth theme.

Registration for the contest is online at <http://www.PaintTheStateIdaho.org>. The deadline to register is June 18.

All artwork must be on public display from July 12 through at least July 18, although entrants are free to keep up their artwork for as long as they wish.

Winners will be announced at an event Aug. 6, with the governor and first lady at the Idaho state Capitol.

Additional details are available at <http://www.PaintTheStateIdaho.org>