



## **San Mateo County Times - Opinion**

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### **Spencer Holeman earns kudos for schools outreach**

If it's true that democracy depends on an educated populace, then Spencer Holeman is doing much to advance the cause of democracy in Daly City.

Appalled that half the freshmen entering Jefferson High School read below a sixth-grade level, Holeman, a businessman, took it upon himself to do something about it and help those who needed it most. Through the organization he founded, Children's Empowerment Inc., Holeman set up homework centers at Pollicita Middle School and Jefferson High School, where failing students can get tutoring.

Holeman said that as a boy growing up in a struggling family of six, there always seemed to be someone there to lend him a helping hand. After he earned a college diploma and went on to run a successful import business, he decided it was time to give something back to the community. He started about 25 years ago, and initially he helped single-parent families send their children to private school, paying for tuition, books, clothes and whatever was needed.

In 2000, a teacher suggested he help public schools, and soon after, Holeman began targeting public schools through his organization. Children's Empowerment was started with Holeman's own money, and although he works full time as the organization's executive director, he earns no salary there.

The first year, the organization took on 12 high-school seniors who were not scheduled to graduate. After intensive tutoring and arranging for them to attend summer school, all of the students graduated and 10 went on to junior college. Last year, 40 students in the program at Jefferson ended up among the district's top scorers on the PSAT.

The key to the program is that older advanced placement students tutor the younger ones. Holeman believes it's important that young people have role models, both among their own peers and successful adults with whom they can identify.

When he talks about his work, it's obvious Holeman is passionate. He has dedicated his time and money to improving lives and giving kids the tools to make a brighter future, when he could have expanded his business and increased his personal income.

What's so remarkable about Holeman's sacrifice is that he has no children of his own. His commitment stems from a belief that the United States is the greatest country in the world and that, to remain that way, it needs an educated population.

We salute Holeman for his hard work and willingness to reach out to others. It's worth noting that while Holeman has put so much effort into finding role models for students, he himself has become a worthy example to the next generation.