

Henry Wallace knows firsthand the profound pain of losing his mother in an incident of domestic violence. When he learned that two young boys in his community of Hugo had experienced the same tragic loss, he reached out to them by becoming their mentor through the Passport to the Future Mentoring Program.

Wallace, who has been matched with the boys for over a year, has been named recipient of the 2010 David and Molly Boren Mentoring Award, which recognizes an outstanding mentor in Oklahoma. The award will be presented in conjunction with National Mentoring Month in January and is sponsored by the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and its David and Molly Boren Mentoring Initiative.

Wallace and his mentees will be featured in a television commercial airing statewide. The television spots are made possible with support from Cox Communications and can be seen on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLAIGSEmvkl.

Wallace will be honored on national Thank Your Mentor Day, Jan. 21, at the State Capitol. The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence will present Wallace with a plaque and will donate \$500 in his honor to benefit the Passport to the Future Mentoring Program. The mentoring program, which is administered by Hugo's Little Dixie Community Action Agency, serves youths ages 4 to 18 who have an incarcerated parent. The program serves more than 300 children in a three-county area in southeast Oklahoma.

"When Henry was young, his mother was murdered by her boyfriend," said Tonya Finley, who matched Wallace with 9-year-old Charles and 8-year-old Marquelle. "Henry was the first person we thought of to mentor these boys. He's a really caring person and can understand and sympathize with all these boys are going through."

Wallace said he enjoys taking the boys to the park or playing games at the Boys & Girls Club, where he works part time running the game room. He also talks to them about school work and encourages them to apply themselves in school. Wallace's favorite memory is taking the boys to the county fair, where they played on tractors. "Most kids would want to ride the rides, but they wanted to play on the tractors. They love machines," he said.

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