By Joanne Webster

Contributing Writer

HUGO — Sen. Judith Eason McIntyre from District 11 spoke at the 17th Annual Washington Community Center Banquet on the theme of "motivated to meet the challenge."

"If we don't support our young people in navigating this complex society, as we have been supported, what will our future look like?" McIntyre said.

Guests were challenged to work to change one life at at time. Members were encouraged by the connections the community center has worked to maintain.

During the style show, participants talked about what made them grateful. Guests raised their hands in a show of support as each young person spoke. The youth were encouraged to remember the support they received as they travel onward in life.

Bright and Shining Stars were honored for their academic acheivements by alumnus Ron Jones. The 2009 Bright and Shining Stars are Carlos Henderson, Willie McAlester, Ashlyn Stafford, Kristen Holiday, D.J. Shanklin, Shanice Holman, Angelique Mosley, Raven Jeffers, Michael Daniels, Sedrick Frierson and Taquiya Wright.

Music was provided by pianist Miriam Costilow, with a moving solo of "Glory, Glory Hallelujah" by Pamela Adamson. Sen. Jerry Ellis and his wife were special guests.