

(5-10 minutes)

I'd like to welcome all of our distinguished guests who have come together today for the Minnesota Student Service Awards.

If there's one thing that I've learned being Governor – it's that the best way to learn is by *doing* something.

Of course, you can learn from books – but I assure you – no book contains the real story of how government actually works.

You have to get involved to truly understand.

That's the idea behind Service Learning.

I'm proud to say that each year more than 200,000 Minnesota students get involved in service learning projects.

That means they participate in their community, or in other neighborhoods.

Some students even go overseas to lend a hand.

Service learning is a two-way street.

The students give of themselves to provide a service – using their brains, their hands, and maybe even working up a sweat.

But at the same time they get something back:

First, there's the good feeling that every volunteer gets from doing a good deed, Plus they get a lesson they'll never forget – a lesson about people, a lesson about how organizations work, and a lesson about other things that need to be done.

And you know what's really great about it? They get credit for it in school.

That's right – many service-learning projects are tied in with the Profile of Learning.

I wish they had that when I was in school – a way to get credit without being in class.

But I think the best thing about service learning is that if students get more involved in their communities, they may want to get more involved in their government.

Everything important starts at the grass-roots level.

I see service learning as a way to achieve the kind of democracy that Thomas Jefferson dreamed of – where everyone steps up to do their service – whether it’s at a neighborhood organization, or running for elected office.

I would like to congratulate all of our students and programs that are receiving awards today.

This sort of leadership gets you ready for when your generation inherits the world.

I have full confidence that you will keep up this excellent work!

Thank you!

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