

FALL RIVER

SMILES program honors advocates of mentoring

FALL RIVER — In February, Fall River and New Bedford-based mentoring program SMILES, in conjunction with Mass Mentoring and the Massachusetts Service Alliance, honored Sen. Joan M. Menard, D-Fall River, and Rep. Patricia A. Haddad, D-Somerset, with the "Advocate of Mentoring" award.

Menard and Haddad have championed support for the expansion of quality youth mentoring programs to benefit positive social, emotional and cognitive development of the commonwealth's youth.

SMILES executive director Jim Mathes said, "By advocating for mentoring programs, Senator Menard and Representative Haddad made it possible for hundreds of students to be matched with SMILES mentors. Both of these legislative leaders are professional educators, and their commitment to mentoring is rooted in their own professional experiences.

"As the Senate Assistant Majority Leader, Senator Menard was tireless in her efforts to provide leadership on behalf of mentoring. She understands how a mentor can help a child do better in school, and in life.

"Representative Haddad, now the Second Assistant Majority Leader in the House, is widely recognized as one of our state's public education leaders. She has witnessed first-hand how the SMILES mentoring program has benefitted students at Kuss Middle School in Fall River and worked hard to provide resources to make it possible to bring the program to more schools and more students."

