

*I.M.P.A.C.T. Lights On Rally*

*6:00 p.m. 10/9/03*

Good evening! Thank you for that warm welcome and for your invitation to be here. It is a pleasure to be here with you tonight for IMPACT's Lights on After School Rally.

More than 5,000 communities across America are holding rallies just like this one to celebrate their afterschool programs.

I want to say "Thank you" to Martha Gentry, Dr. Polk, Mr. McIntosh and others

who work so tirelessly for the students of the Indianola School District.

I'd also like to say thank you to the parents, business owners and community leaders who are here tonight to show your support for our students.

I was in Washington DC yesterday at a High School Leadership Summit sponsored by the US Department of Education. The Summit discussed different means of supporting and improving our high schools.

Community support for all of our schools, not just our high schools, was mentioned over and over as being critical to a school's success. Your presence here demonstrates just such support. You know that good schools equal good jobs which build good communities. Programs such as IMPACT are critical to our schools, but more importantly, they are critical to our communities.

Now I'd like to speak directly to the students here tonight. I want to say thank you to you for wanting to participate in IMPACT and to improve your work in school. I know it isn't always easy.

I'm here tonight to tell you that the Governor and I believe in you and that we are doing all we can to ensure that you have the opportunities and the resources that you deserve to achieve and to pursue your dreams.

You – the youth of today – make up a 1/3 of our population...but you make up all of our future. If we want Indianola, our state and our country to succeed in the future, we have to prepare you and support you today.

Don't give up. Keep participating in IMPACT. Keep asking questions and keep believing in yourself.

Thank you again for your invitation. On behalf of the Governor, please allow me to

offer best wishes for IMPACT's continued success and for its continued dedication to service.