

With Pride

Anderson Valley Unified School District
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Dear Colleague,

I wanted to write about a wonderful opportunity that the students in our school planned and experienced. As the advisor for the Youth Action Group, a student organization that came about in response to a drug problem in our community, I watched the teens search for an event that would unify and inspire the youth in our school to choose healthy options. They contacted Scott Greenburg, who had spoken to the school the previous year and was so well received that they wanted him to return to speak. It was Scott that proposed that he could partner with Susie Vanderlip, a friend and colleague, in order to address personal empowerment along with the problems associated with drug and alcohol use. The resulting performances were spectacular.

Scott offers personal narrative with large doses of humor to engage his audience whether they are teens or adults. His humility and life experiences touch and inspire. I am still hearing his statements and phrases repeated by students over a month later.

Susie presents an incredible drama and dance performance that illustrates the effect that drugs and alcohol can have on people's lives. She also enhances her remarkable performance with life experiences that brought real meaning to our school and greater community.

The combined performance of these two people was truly awesome. Their stamina and flexibility need to be noted as well, since they worked with a leadership group for an hour, then presented a 90 minute assembly to 6th through 9th graders, followed by an anger management group after school, and a parent and community presentation until 10:30 in the evening. Having a student-organized event meant things didn't run exactly as planned, however both Scott and Susie were gracious and willing to go with the changes. My only regret in regards to this event was that the schedule didn't allow time for students to interact and reflect on their feelings before they went home. It was a very powerful experience for our youth.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about Scott Greenburg or Susie Vanderlip. They are both very gifted and inspirational speakers!

Sincerely,

Donna Pierson-Pugh
Bilingual Coordinator