

MORRIS DAILY HERALD

Way beyond 'fine'

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This is going to be an incredible year for you, Mark Scharenbroich told area educators in opening the 2010-2011 school year Monday. "A fresh start," he said of the first-ever combined kickoff event of its type, which welcomed administrators, teaching staffs, board members, secretaries and custodians from all schools feeding into Morris Community High School District 101.

A motivational speaker from Minnesota, Emmy Award winner Scharenbroich based his keynote talk on rigor, relevancy and relationships to directly impact student achievement.

"The two greatest gifts you can give your child are roots and wings," he told the 200-plus member audience that packed the MCHS auditorium.

"You give them roots for a starting point, and you give them wings that can take them anywhere in the world."

Part motivational speaker, part thought provoker and pure entertainer, Scharenbroich told his listeners he loved Morris High. Such a cool building, he said, noting he has been in about 3,000 secondary education facilities.

"I love educators," he said. "I look for staff that's collateral. I look for schools that have it together."

Educators who want children to do something have to do it themselves, too, he said.

He said the first day of school is the most exciting day of school for all kids. Then, when asked afterward how school was, they say "Fine."

"I don't like the word, fine," Scharenbroich said. "I don't like the word, adequate. Grab your kids – show them what education really is. Show them they're way beyond 'fine' and 'adequate.' When you connect with kids, the most incredible things happen."

People have two basic needs, he said. One is the need to belong. The other is the need to hear, "Nice bike," which is the sincere recognition of what's really important.

"Learn how to acknowledge, honor, and connect," he said. "Know what's on the horizon and adjust your life to meet that change."

He warned educators that when they become complacent with their role, they will stop acknowledging what is on the horizon.

Scharenbroich also told his listeners that MCHS should feel really good about its 94 percent graduation rate.

"Everyone in all the (feeder) school districts should feel great because they earned that rate," he said.

He pointed out to the educators that kids "are made different ways."

"We need different teachers to get to them," he said. "These are kids. They deserve someone who expects more, not less."

Excellence becomes a habit, Scharenbroich concluded.

"When you take it for granted, you're taken for granted," he said.

MCHS Superintendent Dr. Pat Halloran believes the kickoff event was a good start to getting the current school year off on the right note. The feedback was phenomenal, he said, and extended well into Tuesday, the first day of student attendance.

"First and foremost was the quality of the presenter," Halloran added.

"He was very humorous, and his message — making connection with students and peers — was really on target. His other message was this was one more visible sign the districts are trying to work together for the betterment of students."

The three points — acknowledge, honor, and connect — was a message to all educators in working with their students, Halloran noted.

The kickoff led off with a couple selections by the high school band, including the MCHS loyalty song.

MCHS junior Maddie Flood wowed the audience with her a Capella rendition of the National Anthem.

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