

Students encouraged to live freely, love a lot'

by Sue Austreng Staff writer

An internationally known, award-winning speaker addressed assembled Anoka High School students Dec. 10.



Internationally-known, award-winning speaker Mark Scharenbroich engages Anoka High School's student body with a witty and entertaining presentation with two key points: Live freely. Love a lot. Photo by Sue Austreng

His message? Simple: Live freely. Love a lot.

His delivery? Comical and entertaining. Heartfelt and real.

The reception? Heartwarming and genuine. Eager and grateful.

"That guy was awesome!"

"That was good. That was really good."

"Live freely? Love a lot? I can do that."

An energetic echo of those words bounced around the hallways as students exited the fieldhouse and made their way to third-hour classes following the presentation.

"I just thought that was really good," said Chelsea Plumley. "He really knows what he's talking about, you can tell," said her classmate, Brittney DeMars, after the girls shook Mark Scharenbroich's hand and thanked him for coming.

Scharenbroich, billed as a "motivational speaker," is known for his ability to connect with an audience through his quick wit, powerfully inspiring stories and concrete ideas on how to improve a school's climate.

"You've been through a tough time," Scharenbroich said to the students the morning of Dec. 10. "But why is this time different than any other time in your life? Because this is the time you get to define who you are."

"Here's what you can do to get through: Live freely. Love a lot."

Using stories students easily related to, Scharenbroich described ways to live freely.

"Stop looking over your shoulder to define yourself. Just find your own true self," he said. "Who are you and what do you stand for?"

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Scharenbroich talked about how each step of the journey through a student's high school years reveals a new discovery. And it's all part of the trip.

Freshmen, he said, are uncertain. Sophomores are grateful. Juniors are going through a sort of mid-life crisis. And seniors are confident and self-assured.

"You learn a lot about yourself in your high school years," he said. "These are the years when change occurs. This is a good time."

Scharenbroich talked about how Anoka High School's students and staff, teachers and principals, cooks and custodians are a family, and how, as a family, they can all learn and grow together.

Finally, Scharenbroich said, "Don't wait until the last 30 seconds of your high school career to embrace your (Anoka High School) family," he said, urging the assembled Tornadoes to put aside prejudices and respect and freely accept each other.

Describing the second point of his presentation (love a lot), Scharenbroich encouraged students to "help, not hurt. Listen, not just talk. Share don't compare."

"You do that and I promise you're off to a great start," Scharenbroich said.

Scharenbroich also urged the Tornado students and staff to "take care of your (Anoka High School) house; take care of your brothers and sisters."

Share the love. Share the victories. Share the trials and the sorrows. Share life and celebrate together, Scharenbroich said.

After thanking the students for lending their ears, Scharenbroich led the assembled 3,000-member student body in an energetic cheer for the Anoka Tornado family.

"He's good. He's got so much good to share. This was really great," said District 11 Associate Supe-

rintendent Chuck Briscoe, on hand for the Dec. 10 presentation at Anoka High.

According to Briscoe, Scharenbroich will address District 11 staff members during their Jan. 18 Staff Development Day.

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