

# Students find inspiration in motivational presentation

By Kathy Yanchus  
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Sparsh Kapar didn't realize how much suffering there was in the world. Breanna Dark was moved by a speaker's personal account of overcoming adversity.

Shahan Mansoori felt bad he wasn't doing anything to help a hurting world.

Amrita Lally came to the realization that if her generation takes action, the world might be a better place.

Those personal revelations surfaced among an inspired group of Grade 7 and 8 Bruce Trail Public School students earlier this month following a motivational presentation by Live Different, "a movement about passion and compassion," facilitated by the Canadian charity Absolute Leadership Development.

For 11 years, Absolute Leadership Development has been bringing its Think Day message of positive change to young teens from coast to coast.

The energy-charged multi-media presentation, which included inspiring personal stories, live rock music and videos, presented the opportunity for students to realize the power within them to bring change to the world, said road team manager Brett Dyrland.

Inspiring kids to get involved in the community and think globally was the objective, a goal that will continue and evolve throughout the school year, said Bruce Trail's Tanya Taylor, special education resource teacher for grades 6 to 8.

Live Different targets pre-teens and young

teens because they're easily influenced, whether that be good or bad, said Dyrland.

Each presentation is designed to open teenagers' eyes to the world around them, to their ability to live differently and make changes in their life, which can lead to bigger things in their future, said Dyrland. "I have a heart for youth. I believe in change. I've seen change happen."

Presenters didn't just talk about change, they gave students tangible ways of making it happen in their own lives. Absolute's Hero Holidays are student humanitarian adventures to Haiti, Dominican Republic, Thailand and Mexico to build school and homes, distribute supplies or work with kids at risk.

Mexico is where Shahan wants to head when he is old enough to make the trip next year, "but you can start at home too," said the Grade 8 student. "Don't be afraid to do something. You can inspire others to do something too. We should all care about each other. You shouldn't be scared to make a difference in the world."

Sparsh also wants to travel to his home country of Nepal to help in its development.

"You should make the decision not to be a couch potato," said Sparsh.

Both Amrita and Breanna felt the guest speakers who spoke of turning their lives around showed great courage.

"There have been other presentations but they haven't been as inspiring as this one," said Breanna. "(The speakers) changed their whole life around and that's hard to do if you're bullied, hard to tell everyone how you

feel and how you still feel."

The presentation was the kick start to the school year, designed to motivate students to get involved in helping others, said Taylor. One school-based opportunity will be the Leadership Council, which organizes both local and international fundraising efforts.

"Awareness is the key to making a difference," said Amrita. "I want to make a differ-

ence, even doing little things makes a difference."

There's no disconnect with students once the Live Different entourage is on the road again. Students can check out Live Different.com to sign up for challenges, both big and small, said Dyrland.

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