

NICHOLSON CATHOLIC COLLEGE

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21 Oct. 2105

THE PUSH FOR CHANGE

Dear Joe and Marie,

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you again for coming to speak at Nicholson Catholic College a few weeks ago. When I, along with two other colleagues from the school, first saw Joe speak in May at a mental health and addictions workshop we were captivated by his story, message and frankness. We all agreed that his powerful message would be something that the school body should not only hear but would very much enjoy.

Dan Brennan made the initial contact and arrangements before I took over finalizing the assembly and I must say that the ease of getting information and your (Marie) accessibility and helpfulness was first rate. This positive relationship continues as we further our partnership with you.

The day you arrived, I appreciated the time Joe spent explaining his mission with me before meeting with the school community. He was even more captivating and motivating in our private meeting. Once the assembly started, I have never seen our students so engaged and attentive. An hour of sitting on metal chairs or old wooden bleachers usually means the students get restless, but this didn't happen. The message about not buying the "lie about getting high" was very well received and appropriate as students at this age are starting to experiment with illicit drugs and most don't really understand how easy it is to get trapped by a few poor choices early on. Joe, your "life lessons" struck a chord with students and staff. An average kid, in an average household who faces some challenges can end up in places he may never plan, skid row; however, it doesn't mean that there isn't a way out and that his life is lost. He can go from "skid row to CEO". Making yourself available after the assembly, before having to head to your next presentation, was also greatly appreciated by students. It wasn't hard to see that many of the students wanted to say "hi" or relay their story to you and felt comfortable enough with you to do that.

Introducing the "Push for Change" campaign and pitting us (our school) against our sister school, St. Theresa was a real motivator. The students and staff got excited. The next few days many of our staff were still talking about what we could do to help with the Push for Change campaign and since then our leadership class has taken it upon themselves to organize the "sleep out" and to look at other activities to get the school involved (not to mention beat St. Theresa). Marie, your assistance with this has been great and we are looking forward to see Joe in our NCC Spirit Wear when he comes through Belleville next October.

I know as we both continue our journeys, Joe on his cross Canada Push for Change and our Sleep Out, we will remain in contact.

Once again thank you so much, and best wishes.

Jeff Wood OCT, B.A. B. Ed
Guidance/Teacher

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