

National speaker motivates students

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JONESBORO — Professional speaker Paul Vitale told junior high students they were influencing him even as he spoke, and he encouraged them to channel their influential power.

"You're influencing me and my message by paying attention," he said. "I'm only as good as you."

On Tuesday, Vitale asked students of Annie Camp Junior High to dare to dream courageously; empower others to imagine; unite through a common bond and be resilient like none other.

The founder of Vital Communications and author of three best sellers led students through a series of demonstrations. A four-man push-up illustrated the point that "we can't do it alone."

Vitale told two eighth-grade boys who performed the push-up that they have a "big presence" at school. "That makes you role models," he said.

He emphasized the importance of education. "If you continue the process of education, then you will be successful," he said. "Your grades right now matter."

After the assembly Vitale visited with a select group of students during a break-out

session in which he listened to individual struggles.

"There are those who want to kick you. They'll tell you that you're not smart enough and you're not good-looking enough, but I think we all look pretty good today," he said.

critic is yourself. You may always want to be perfect, and even if you give it 100 percent, you will fall short sometimes," he said. "If you learn to breathe through the moment and cut yourself an ounce of slack, you might be better for it."

Arkansas before he graduated with a degree in mass communications and journalism.

Vitale's best sellers are *Are You Puzzled by the Puzzle of Life?*, *Sell with Confidence* and *Pass It On*.

The Russellville native developed "A Hero Within: Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Leaders," a program to help youth overcome obstacles and achieve success.

Crowley's Ridge Educational Cooperative of Harrisburg funded Vitale's engagement at Annie Camp Tuesday and in years past.

Vitale said he was encouraged Tuesday by student participation and their willingness to offer opinions.

"Their challenges range from fear of failure to dealing with stress, anxiety and loneliness...I think their optimism and the realization that they can overcome obstacles was really refreshing."

Vitale's clients have included ESPN, the U.S. Postal Service, the Washington Redskins, the Antiques Roadshow and the University of Kentucky, among others.



Students shared their biggest obstacles, among them anger, fear and lack of motivation.

Ninth-grader Rachel Gillespie explained that as a tennis player, she sometimes experiences anger when she doesn't perform as well as she wanted to.

Vitale said that more often than not, "your toughest

Vitale admitted, "I'm not the smartest crayon in the box."

He said that for seven years he was tutored for a learning disability. He took the ACT test four times, with a high score of 18 paving the way to college.

Vitale worked through several remedial classes at the University of Central