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Speaker shows character education is vital

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Contributed by: [Diane Tomasik](#)
on 12/11/2007

Thanks to the collaboration of 18 sponsors, children, parents and community members of all ages had the opportunity to hear presentations by Paul Vitale, a national speaker on character education.

The major highlight of Vitale's visit to Martin County was a free presentation at the Lyric Theatre on Dec. 4, attracting more than 300 people from the Treasure Coast and Okeechobee County.

Vitale's presentation, "Building Bridges ... Changing Lives," focused on how individuals have control over their attitudes and destiny. He stressed the importance of character education, the Six Pillars of Character, and the power of the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets -- increasing the positive experiences and personal qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible.



Paul Vitale and a Hobe Sound Elementary School Student at the Lyric Theatre Dec. 4
Provided by: Holly Laiben

In addition, during the day, Vitale addressed about 500 middle school students at Indiantown Middle School and David Anderson Middle School. His topic, "The Hero Within," gave students the roadmap for making sense of issues that they face every day. Vitale told students that within every person there is the capacity for heroism. He told the students about how he left a secure corporate job at the age of 26 to travel alone across the country to promote his book, "Are You Puzzled by the Puzzle of Life?" Through his experiences with people from the corporate boardroom to homeless shelters, Paul encountered the seeds of heroism.

These free community events were made possible by a joint venture between CHARACTER COUNTS!; Shared Services Network; Safe and Drug Free Schools; Children's Services Council of Martin County; Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County; the Martin County Interagency Coalition; Tykes and Teens; United Way of Martin County, the ARC of Martin County; Planned Parenthood of Greater Miami, Palm Beach and the Treasure Coast; Circuit 19 Department of Juvenile Justice Council; Martin County Department of Juvenile Justice Council; Project Northland; the Boys and Girls Clubs of Martin County; Martin County School District; the Whole Child Connection; the Lyric Theatre and Jean Strickland.

More information about CHARACTER COUNTS! can be found at www.charactercounts.net. More information about Paul Vitale is at www.paulvitale.com. For more information about the Search Institute and 40 Developmental Assets visit www.search-institute.org.

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