

## Darrell Scott Inspires Delegates in Keynote Presentation

Darrell Scott—father of Rachel Scott, the first victim in the Columbine High School tragedy—inspired delegates as he shared specific challenges in which students can aspire to create a better world.

These challenges originated in an essay that Rachel wrote about six weeks prior to her death. In the essay titled, “My Ethics, My Codes of Life,” she stated, “I have this theory to use compassion to start a chain reaction of kindness that will ripple around the world.” She also shared in this essay that, “People will never know how far their kindness will go.” Shortly after her death, her parents found this essay under her bed.

They have since developed a series of school assemblies geared specifically for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools—each are sensitive and appropriate for the maturity of the audience. The programs do not dwell on the violence of the event in which Rachel died, but focus on the positive aspects of compassion and kindness that Rachel challenged the readers of her essay. In fact the elementary program does not discuss her death at all, but focuses only on improving moral judgments, friendships, and being kind. It encourages kids to do acts of kindness and make paper chains to circle the school that validates acts of kindness from the students.

The first challenge Scott shared with delegates is, “Look for the best in others to eliminate prejudice.” In other words, don’t judge people by the first or second impression of them, but instead, look for the good in all people.

The second challenge is, “Dare to dream—write goals and keep a journal.” Rachel was inspired by Anne Frank. In the *Diary of Anne Frank*, Scott pointed out that Anne wrote, “It’s a wonder I haven’t abandoned all my ideals—they seem so absurd and impractical.” He compared this to comments in Rachel’s essay, “My codes may seem like a fantasy that can never be reached.” The school assembly, Rachel’s Challenge, encourages students to develop clear, written goals. “Never stop dreaming, affirm those goals to move to make them a reality,” Scott said. He also encouraged delegates to dream big for their children and for themselves.

One example Scott shared that demonstrated Rachel’s ability to dream big was that a couple years before she died, she traced her hands on the back of her dresser and wrote, “These hands belong to Rachel Joy Scott and will someday touch millions on people’s hearts.” They found this several years later when they were moving some furniture.

Another challenge Scott shared with delegates is, “Choose positive influences—be a positive influence.” He shared the heart-wrenching story of Rachel’s brother, Craig, as he recovered from the Columbine tragedy in which he not only lost his sister, but also his two closest friends, and nearly his own life. For two years following the tragedy, he suffered from a roller coaster of emotions from fits of rage to deep depression. Finally he decided that he wanted to be a movie producer so he could have a positive impact on other people’s lives. Darrell explained that the two boys who killed those 13 people had filled their minds with violence through movies and music. They were even quoting lines from a violent movie as they were killing students, and they were dressed like characters in the movie as well.

Finally, Darrell challenged delegates to use “kind words. Little acts of kindness results in huge results.” Rachel wrote in an undated letter to her cousin, “Don’t let your character change color with your environment. Find out who you are and let it stay its true color.” Rachel brought this message to life by systematically reaching out to people who were disabled, new at school, or were being picked on or put down.

For more information on Rachel’s Challenge go to [www.rachelschallenge.com](http://www.rachelschallenge.com).