

October 13, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dan Occhiogrosso, and my goal is to motivate kids to think about how their lives can change the world around them. I try to accomplish this by putting on motivational basketball assemblies in schools. Using dribbling drills and tricks that kids enjoy watching, I share with them how basketball has changed my life and inspired me to help others. I am currently setting up my schedule for the 2008-2009 school year, and I would definitely appreciate the opportunity of being in your district.

These presentations are a part of my website, Ballforlives.com, which uses basketball to benefit AIDS orphans in South Africa. Usually, the purpose of my shows is to make people aware of the gravity of poverty around the world, specifically what AIDS is doing in Africa. However, this purpose can be modified based on a school's needs. For example, I put on a program in Public School #4 in West New York, NJ and talked about the importance of fitness. I also was in Washington School in Union City, NJ for a Saturday GEPA program, motivating the students to do well on the test. Basketball is a great venue for inspiring kids to achieve excellence in any area of life. Whatever the specific topic is, the message of my show is always to see the opportunities that we have to do great things with our lives and then to use those opportunities to change the world.

The presentation begins with my basketball story. After introducing myself, I share with the kids why I started playing and how hard I worked to become better. As the story progresses, I show them harder and harder dribbling drills I practiced to improve. At some point I bring up a few volunteers to try some of the tricks. Once I end the story, I ask for ten volunteers to come on stage. I play "The Clap Game" with them, a contest where each person has to clap before catching the ball. This is very entertaining, and it really captures the audience's attention before I bring home my purpose. Usually I use the ten people to illustrate poverty statistics (e.g. the richest 2 out of 10 people in this world share 75% of the world's goods while the poorest 4 out of 10 people share 5%). However, as I explained earlier, I use these ten volunteers to illustrate statistics on whatever subject I am asked to speak on. For the Saturday GEPA program I used statistics that dealt with graduation rates across the country. After the statistics I wrap everything up by challenging the students to achieve great things and make a difference in their world.

In this final challenge to the students, I try to inspire them by mentioning the incredible opportunities basketball has given me. I talk about how I dribbled the 2007 New York City Marathon with a basketball, how I was in an article in DIME magazine, and even how I met NBA All-Star Gilbert Arenas and shared with him my mission for Ballforlives.com. My goal in sharing these things is to get the students to imagine the possibilities of where following their dreams can take them. The presentation then concludes with me dribbling to inspirational music.

The presentation can be done in either a gym or an auditorium and is geared toward whatever age group I am speaking to. If I were given 45 minutes, the schedule would look similar to this (the program can easily be modified to fill any period of time):

--Introduction/Basketball story with dribbling/Volunteers (15 minutes)

--“Clap Game”/Statistics (15 minutes)

--Challenge/Conclusion /Dribbling to music (15 minutes)

As far as cost goes, my policy is that I do not charge. What I do ask is that the students and faculty be set up to do a fundraiser that would benefit my cause. My favorite way to raise money is by putting on an instructional basketball clinic after school. The kids get charged a minimal amount (\$5 or less) and the proceeds go to covering my costs. This way the kids get a fun event, the school gets a free assembly, and I can pay costs for my organization.

I am excited about this year’s possibilities of motivating kids to achieve excellence in life. I would consider an opportunity in your school district a privilege. If you would like to see more about what I do with basketball to help change lives, feel free to visit my website, Ballforlives.com.

Thank you for considering this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Dan Occhiogrosso

Phone: (201) 952-5901

Email: occh@ballforlives.com