

Inspiring Youth Through Wrestling!

By Olympic Champion Ben Peterson

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I have written various articles encouraging my readers to plan special meaningful events for our youth. There are so many ways to do this. I have been involved in many that have included wrestling and many that didn't.

Last week I experienced several special events in the Ludington, Michigan area. Twice Kurt Trucksess brought his 2 grade school boys, David & Daniel, to our Father/Son wrestling camps. He went home with a desire to bring a God honoring, patriotic, wrestling promotion to the schools and wrestlers in his area. So he called and asked if someone from our Camp of Champs staff was available. After discussing it briefly we agreed I could fit the need.

Kurt wanted first to have a Saturday clinic for all the area wrestlers. He informed all the area teams and distributed fliers at every tournament his boys attended all winter and spring. He also had the flier posted on the State Wrestling Association website. 85 wrestles and coaches enjoyed an intense 6 hours of instruction and motivation. I was assisted by my son Andy and a special guest, Justin Zeerip, who just finished as a 4 time undefeated Michigan State Champion.

Next, Kurt went to work contacting schools for assembly programs. Eight area school districts were contacted. Four agreed to have me do full assembly programs. I also was part of "show and tell" in David and Daniel's classes. Through those assemblies 2,000 students saw Olympic Medals and heard the story of how John and I were encouraged and influenced by so many. I related wrestling stories about the ups and downs of schooling, training, winning, losing and competing that was our road to becoming Olympic Champions. Brief wrestling demonstrations using a couple students/wrestlers made a big impression on the student body. I often start these assemblies by telling of having world renown, long distance runner Glen Cunningham speak in my high school when I was a Junior. Glen's story has repeatedly come to mind. I pray my talks stay with the students and teachers as long as Glen's has for me.

Through the years I have developed the following basic outline for assembly programs. It includes many issues that students, teachers, administrators and parents request. Here it is for you to see.

Building Good Memories for Tomorrow!

1. Set Right Goals.
2. Work to Achieve Those Goals
3. Dare to Be Different.
4. Do your Best for Someone Else.

Using this outline and the experiences John and I have had both on and off the mats has been a help to thousands.

I enjoyed myself at Ludington as I met some special people. The Price's, who opened their home to me and Kurt's church family, were extremely gracious. Being an ambassador for wrestling, America, Camp of Champs Wrestling Camps and the Lord has a lot of fun combinations and benefits for all involved. Thank you Kurt Trucksess, your family and everyone else in Ludington, Michigan who made the weekend special for so many.

May I also take this opportunity to thank people all over the country who arrange such events? I know it is a lot of work to organize award banquets, clinics, assemblies, and other events. But you will not be disappointed when your youth are encouraged to strive to new heights. I have conducted and been a part of many memorable events and hear regularly of others who are asked to do the same. Almost always it is with great appreciation.

There are many speakers available. Think who could inspire the youth and adults in your area to new heights. Contact us if you desire our input. We would be glad to assist you.

*Ben & his brother John now run Camp of Champs Wrestling Camps. Contact them at: Camp of Champs, PO Box 222, Watertown, WI 53094; Phone: 800-505-5099; E-mail: info@campofchamps.org; Web: www.campofchamps.org