

“Act With Respect Always” Assembly Inspires Students

By Allison Havens

“Act With Respect Always” something we are always told to do, but many times it is easier said than done. In November, former coach Rich Johns came to Argyle to share with us his experiences and his message. He spent the day spreading his ideas to others in the hope that we would walk away with a new insight into what we do.

The idea behind Coach Johns’ idea is that we can be better people. Every day we make a choice. These choices that we make influence how we act and treat others. The idea for “Act With Respect Always” came from his days of coaching on the Saratoga Springs High School tennis courts. Tennis is a game where you need to be honest. You could call a ball out if it were in, because everything happens so fast. Coach Johns taught his players that you need to be honest and call the ball for what it is. Many times he had seen it happen, and that is where the idea for AWRA came from. You need to respect yourself, the person you are playing against, the rules of the game, and playing fair.

Coach Johns stopped teaching and put all of his efforts into this campaign. Now he travels all over the United States and talks about his idea to high schools and colleges. He shares stories about people whose lives he has impacted, and how they continue to change the world.

Part of his program deals with how we view our actions and what good character percentage we think we are on a daily basis. We should all strive for 99%. Coach Johns encourages everyone to increase their number so they can be a better person. There are many simple signs that we can do to increase our numbers. It could be as simple as smiling at someone you past in the hall or saying good morning to a person that you see. Simple things like that can make you feel better and that will raise your percentage number.

Another part of Coach Johns’ program was that we should not judge a person based on their appearance. Many times people will judge a person based on their looks, but we need to see people based on their personality and who they really are. We need to learn how to respect each other and get to know someone for they truly are.

During Coach Johns’ presentation he mentioned a book by Jay Asher. The book was entitled, *‘Thirteen Reasons Why’*. It is about a girl who commits suicide, but before she dies she sends thirteen tapes to thirteen people. She records her story of the events that led to her demise. This book shows us that we all have an effect on everyone. Not matter how small, the impact is there will always be a reaction. We need to understand that and know that we can help people, and one way to do that is to just be nice. It is not much, but the effect can be life giving.

Coach Johns started off on this journey with an idea in mind. He wanted to show everyone that we all have a responsibility to ourselves and others. He has made a difference in other people's lives.

“Coach Johns was a reminder to all, to think before we speak and respect each other.”