

Graham to LV youth: Be better students

By Kanika Vann

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Stedman Graham recently spoke with Valley High School students about improving academic performance. Graham spoke on February 7 as part of the G.E.A.R. U.P. — Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. It is a national program that aims to teach middle and high school students to stay in school, study hard, maintain high expectations, and strive to gain a college education.

Graham — author, businessman, and longtime companion of Oprah Winfrey — lectured students about keeping positive attitudes, implementing formulas for personal and academic growth, improving their current academic performance, and discussing each student's academic potential. Graham also focused part of his message about maximizing academic effectiveness for teachers.

"By visiting the school, I hope to teach the students how to take in information and make it relevant to personal development, based on memorization. They have to learn to be better students, and learning how to be better students teaches them to be better people," Graham said.

After school, in the newly annexed Valley Theater, Graham spoke with Valley High School faculty and staff. He passed out copies of his new book, "Diversity Leaders Not Labels: A New Plan for the 21st Century."

Graham said that students can't be great unless they are taught.

"Teachers, you have the greatest jobs in the world. Every day, you are blessed with the opportunity to mold young minds," he said.

"You transfer knowledge to those who don't have it. It doesn't get any better than that. You give people power. But are you prepared for that challenge? Every moment in the classroom is vital. Every day of learning is important. I know that there are some days that are extremely difficult. But no matter how hard those days may be, you have to remember your purpose. You must teach. Your ability to build is determined by your strength."

Graham, who serves as CEO of S. Graham & Associates, lectures all over the country 70 to 80 times a year, training companies and lec-

turing adults and teenagers to find their passions. Graham was brought to the Las Vegas area by Wells Fargo Bank, co-sponsor of G.E.A.R. U.P.

"I teach people to find who they are," said Graham. "I've written 10 books on these topics. I introduce team programs and Internet education to help others improve their performances at all lev-

els."

During the latter part of his lecture, Graham discussed his visions and nine steps for better education: "First, you must know yourself. Second, create your vision. Third, prepare for the future. Fourth, know your guiding principles. Fifth, overcome your fears. Sixth, be flexible. Seventh, create a support team. Eighth, make

good choices. And the ninth step is to commit to your vision and stay focused. Keep negativity out of your life, because it is designed to destroy you. Whatever you focus on, expands."

He added a warning: "One drop of fear cripples you."

Graham's motto, "Don't get stuck in the box," was targeted to teachers and staff.

"Find a way to teach children that doesn't always rely on conventional means. All children don't learn that way. You have to think outside of the box. Like your students, every day that you walk into that classroom, you have to make a conscious decision to be better."

Las Vegas was part of Graham's regional tour with planned stops in San Diego,

Palm Springs and Los Angeles for team program development before returning home to Chicago.

In Los Angeles, Graham mentors at the Muhammad Ali Center for Men and Boys, an \$80 million facility around improving the performance and potential of African-American males.

Graham makes it known (See Stedman, Page 8)



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