

8/07/15

To Whom It May Concern:

Gisborne Boys' High School recently had the pleasure of hosting Mike King. He came to our school to talk to a group of our choosing, and we selected all of our year nine and year ten students. Being the school Guidance Counsellor, it was my job to decide on the target group, and also to consider the suitability of the speaker. Although Mike came highly recommended, I was initially a little worried about having him as a speaker. Firstly, I was concerned that the chosen topic of depression is not one which I would usually talk about with such a large audience, and secondly, because I was unsure about whether Mike King was qualified to speak about this subject.

I was wrong on both counts.

Although he was unknown to many of the boys, Mike immediately captured the audience and held them enthralled for well over the allotted hour. He connected with the boys at their level, and they loved him. His message was right on target. The boys totally got it. Not only were they thoroughly entertained for an hour plus, but they absolutely drank up the message. They showed concern for Mike's past, but also rejoiced in his wisdom about how he got himself sorted.

Mike used material that I found to be in line with the work that I do in one on one sessions. He successfully delivered his message, and at the same time re-enforced my work as school counsellor. The staff members listening to Mike speak benefited from his narrative as much as the students did. He clarified the modern philosophy of openly talking about the once taboo subject of self-harm and depression, and left the students in no doubt about the wisdom of seeking help from others. Despite his undoubted confidence and apparent strength, Mike also showed himself to be a vulnerable man who had endured many difficulties in his life, and as a guy that had 'manned up' to his problems by recognising that he needed help and by seeking it.

I am so glad that Mike found time to include Gisborne Boys' High in his busy life. His generous and giving manner was impossible to miss. He is clearly a man that is 'walking the talk', and exactly the sort of role model that our young men need to see and to feel. My one regret about Mike's visit is that only half of our school were given the opportunities to listen to him speak.

On behalf of Gisborne Boys' High School, I wish to sincerely thank Mike King for visiting us and to wish him and the 'Key to Life Charitable Trust' all the best for the future.

John Griffiths

School Counsellor

Gisborne Boys' High School