

## Welcome to Our Sixth Speaker's Series Written by: Josephine Virgilio

### Saint Jane Frances Catholic Elementary School

Let's begin with a prayer.

God our Father, we thank you for our learning power, our ability to love, to work, to laugh. Let us enjoy these gifts as we use them. Let us use them to help others as you helped us. God our Father, we thank you for the talents you have given our parents, our teachers, and all those who help us learn. May we give thanks for the privilege of coming to Catholic schools. Let us pray that we may grow as a community of brothers and sisters through friendship and faith in God.

Good morning everyone and welcome to our sixth Annual Speakers Series. Its wonderful to see so many people committed to education in one room. My name is Ms. Josephine Virgilio and welcome to our sixth Annual Speaker's Series. You know when I started this six years ago, I didn't think it would last this long. However, here we are today better than ever (cheers from audience). It's only with your support and encouragement that we are standing before you today.

What makes Catholic schools like St. Jane so distinct, it's not just about doing the sign of the cross, but living and breathing the faith everyday of our lives. Our Speakers' Series today focuses on Catholicity and Character Development.

The concept of "it takes a village to raise a child" is never more important than in the context of developing character. Character education has always been a responsibility shared among parents, teachers, and members of the community. Character education also teaches children how to live and work together as families, friends, and neighbors, and most importantly how to be contributing and responsible citizens of the nation and the world. Developing character at a young age helps students to care about and develop core values such as respect, civic awareness, fairness and justice, and responsibility for self and others.

The purpose of our Annual Speaker's Series is to bring forth outstanding and exemplary citizens to talk about your own career experiences and education with grades 3-8.

Motivational speakers like Mr. Justin Hines, Mr. Spider Jones, Mr. D.O. and Mr. Errol Lee addressed the importance of developing character education. Character education involves teaching children about basic human values including: honesty, freedom, equality and respect. The goal is to raise children to become morally responsible, self-disciplined citizens. Problem-solving, decision-making and conflict resolution are important parts of developing moral character.

Our first guest of honor Mr. Justin Hines. In talking about his music, singer-songwriter Justin Hines says, "Honestly, I don't remember wanting to do anything else, period." That sense of it being something as essential as breathing emanates from every track on his soul-searching debut album, *Sides*.

Justin absorbed his musical gifts from his family – "My dad plays a mean folk guitar," he says, "and my mom has a great voice." Justin's been told that as a baby, he was carrying a tune before he was talking, and remembers that, "My grandmother Margaret always had this thing that I was going to be a singer. She had me singing in church and for relatives, so any stage fright left me early."

There was also the influence of an inanimate – but equally musical – fixture of the household, a jukebox of his dad's, loaded with old 45s. He'd sit in front of it for hours, listening to every song, note for note. It's still in his basement, and it still inspires Hines with classic recordings by artists including James Taylor, Willie Nelson, Cat Stevens, Jim Croce and Harry Chapin.

## **his first gig**

**was in front of**

# **17,000 people**

Competing against hundreds of entrants, 14-year-old Justin won a radio contest to sing the Canadian national anthem at a Toronto Raptors game. His first gig was in front of 17,000 people.”

Possessed of an unflagging spirit that’s remarkable under any circumstances, Justin copes with a rare genetic joint condition called Larsen Syndrome, that keeps him wheelchair bound. “Sometimes people find it hard to understand why I would be so positive,” he explains. “I was born into my situation, I don’t know any different, and I feel very fortunate for my family and all the support that I have. I know my physical situation is a bit of an attention grabber, but as an artist and performer, it is my job to hold the audience’s attention, and let the music speak for itself.”

## **his views**

**about the**

# **environment**

From a very early age, his creative mind was emanating poetry about universal love, the soul and other such global topics. His charitable works are so numerous it’s hard to even begin to list his performances at fundraising events that began at the age of 10. His love and concern for humanity, not just the disadvantaged gradually became his focus of attention. To learn more about his fundraising endeavours please visit [www.JustinHines.org](http://www.JustinHines.org).

Please welcome everyone singing “Say What you Will” and “Courage” Mr. Justin Hines.

Thank you for those inspirational songs. What makes your songs unique is that you sing from the heart and soul of your very being. Your message is clear: You have to believe in yourself to achieve. You’re my hero. I am telling you from the bottom of my heart.

Our next guest Mr. Duane Gibson is a Hip Hop Artist, writer, professional speaker and entrepreneur. He set a Guinness World Record by freestyle wrapping for 8 hours and 45 minutes. He graduated from University and has been inspiring hundreds of thousands of youth since 2001. Mr. Duane Gibson has also released several chart topping songs on the radio and had six videos that played in rotation on Much Music.

What I like about D.O. is that he reaches out to youth, instilling in them positivity and self-pride. Thanks so much D.O.

Our next guest, Mr. Spider Jones has become part of the Saint Jane Frances School community.

Charles “Spider” Jones was born on April 20, 1946 in Windsor, Ontario. He is a Canadian author, Journalist, and former boxer. Jones is a former three-time Golden Glove Champion and was inducted into the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame in 1996. Raised in Windsor, Ontario and Detroit, Jones is an avid community activist and spends his life as a positive role model for both youth and adults alike. He is also an honorary member of the Guardian Angels. He is currently broadcasting as a weekend and fill-in-talk show host on CFRB 1010 in Toronto.

Thank you Spider for sharing your inspirational stories. Often it is through the stories of others that we see ourselves.

Our next guest, Mr. Errol Lee is the son of music producer Bunny Lee and singer Merlene Webber and consequently was exposed to the music industry at a very young age. At the age of 21, Errol was offered a chance to go to England and negotiate a recording contract after producers saw him perform, "Don't be a Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde" on Much Music's Electric Circus.

Today, Errol continues to be a successful singer, dancer, recording artist, performer and motivational speaker. Please welcome everyone, Mr. Errol Lee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Justin Hines, Mr. Spider Jones, Mr. Duane Gibson and Mr. Errol Lee for their awesome performances. You mesmerized everyone here today with a clear message, Believe in your dreams and you can achieve anything.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Alati, our school principal and our Co-principals Ms. Mancini and Mrs. Vittorio in their ongoing encouragement and guidance in making today a success.

Remember to FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS and BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!! Thanks you for being a respectful audience.