

Carlstadt students get a lesson on leadership and patriotism

By Alexis Tarrazi
Senior Reporter

CARLSTADT — “Leadership, Vigilance and Collaboration.” Those were the words Vincent J. Bove CPP — nationally-acclaimed leadership and security educator — wrote on the blackboard in front of the room for all students to see. Throughout the day on Dec. 6, Washington School students in grades 3 through 8 each came into the library, where they heard powerful presentations on leadership and patriotism.

Superintendent Frank J. Legato, Principal Steve Kollinok, Carlstadt Police Chief Thomas Nielsen and CPD Sgt. Walter M. Beese invited Bove to speak to the students because they had heard him speak previously and thought he was phenomenal.



“What schools need is character development. Character development is inseparable from patriotism,” Bove said.

Instead of having a large assembly where all the students would pile into the auditorium, Bove requested that each grade level be brought in separately.

He wanted to adjust the discussion of the topics for the appropriate age level for the students to understand best. “Interaction of students on each level was a tribute to school because they were receptive and involved. I purposefully stayed afterwards, and kids came up to me and thanked me. They asked me questions or shared information on what they had learned,” Bove said.

Throughout the presentation, Bove flipped through a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted books on George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Lou Gehrig, the Gettysburg Address, Iwo Jima’s Flag Raising, The Civil War, World War II, Winston Churchill, the Vietnam War and the D-Day Invasion to drive home the importance of patriotism. Each slide or book emphasized the importance of developing civic qualities of honesty, teamwork, dedication, gratefulness, character, hard work, perseverance, courage and community service.

Photo by Alexis Tarrazi
Vincent J. Bove spent the day speaking to Carlstadt students about leadership and patriotism.

One example Bove emphasized was how George Washington was betrayed by Benedict Arnold. “This is the power of a lie and the power of the truth. It is important to be up front and honest with people. To be honest enough to make a mistake and to admit that mistake. These are very powerful words,” Bove said.



Halfway through the presentation, Bove stopped to ask the teachers if he could continue and asked the students if they wanted him to. Every student in the room was waving their hands for him to stay and pleading with him to continue. “From the response of the class, you can see he was really right on with the presentation,” Legato said.

*Photo by Alexis Tarrazi
Carlstadt students listen to lessons about leadership and patriotism.*

Bove spoke about the importance of the American Flag and how it is a characteristic of patriotism. He urged students to be proud to be an American and to remember that they are the future of the country. “Hold your flags up high in your heart. Love your country, America is a great country. America needs you to be dedicated to it. This is sacred. People have died holding that flag.”

During each slide, Bove gave students a chance to answer questions, and if they answered one correctly, they received a business card with his Web site so they can remember the day and to contact him if they had any more questions. Each time Bove asked a question, all of the students would shoot their hands into the air anxiously, hoping to be the lucky one picked.

“Based on the reaction I saw, the students were terrific. They asked lots of good questions, and Bove made them feel good about their responses and even gave them a card to find out additional information,” Legato said.

Four youth secrets for success were revealed to the students to follow. Walk the talk — know who you are meant to be and be willing to perform admirably. Be 100 percent dedicated — vigilant, watchful and ready. Engrave on your heart — you and your life are important. Develop the right attitude — personal standards/awareness of the enormous ability to influence.

Fallen United States Marine Michael Schwarz was a topic in the presentation,

where Bove thought Schwarz's death was especially important to address. Bove discussed the importance of appreciating those who have served America and those who are currently in harm's way. Bove ended the presentation with a photo tribute to Schwarz, honoring the service of all making great sacrifices to serve America.

"I challenge you right here to carry one another and to support one another. Find it in your hearts to do something," Bove said.

Beese said that students were picking up things that they never knew before and were yelling things out from the presentation. Bove agreed that when he walked down the hallways, he would see students holding up his business cards and quoting from the Gettysburg Address. "You know you've made a connection when they were impressed and proud to be young Americans," Bove said.

Afterwards, teachers and students agreed that they loved the presentation and felt it was beneficial. "I thought it was absolutely exceptional. It was wonderful because he talked about patriotism. He talked about Michael Schwarz, about what a wonderful man he was, and brought it down to the kids' level, and it was very age-appropriate," Kollinok said. "It was absolutely worthwhile."

"I thought it was very good. He encouraged us to do kind deeds and to respect each other," sixth grader Abhifhake Shah said.

Bove is a board-certified protection professional, board-certified crime prevention specialist, certified law enforcement instructor and a certified community anti-terrorism instructor. In recognition of his achievements, he has received the following awards: Medal of Honor for Public Service, J. Edgar Hoover Gold Medal, Knights of Justice Medal, Patriotism Medal, Civilian Medal of Appreciation and George Washington Medal.

For more information on Bove, visit vincentbove.com.

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