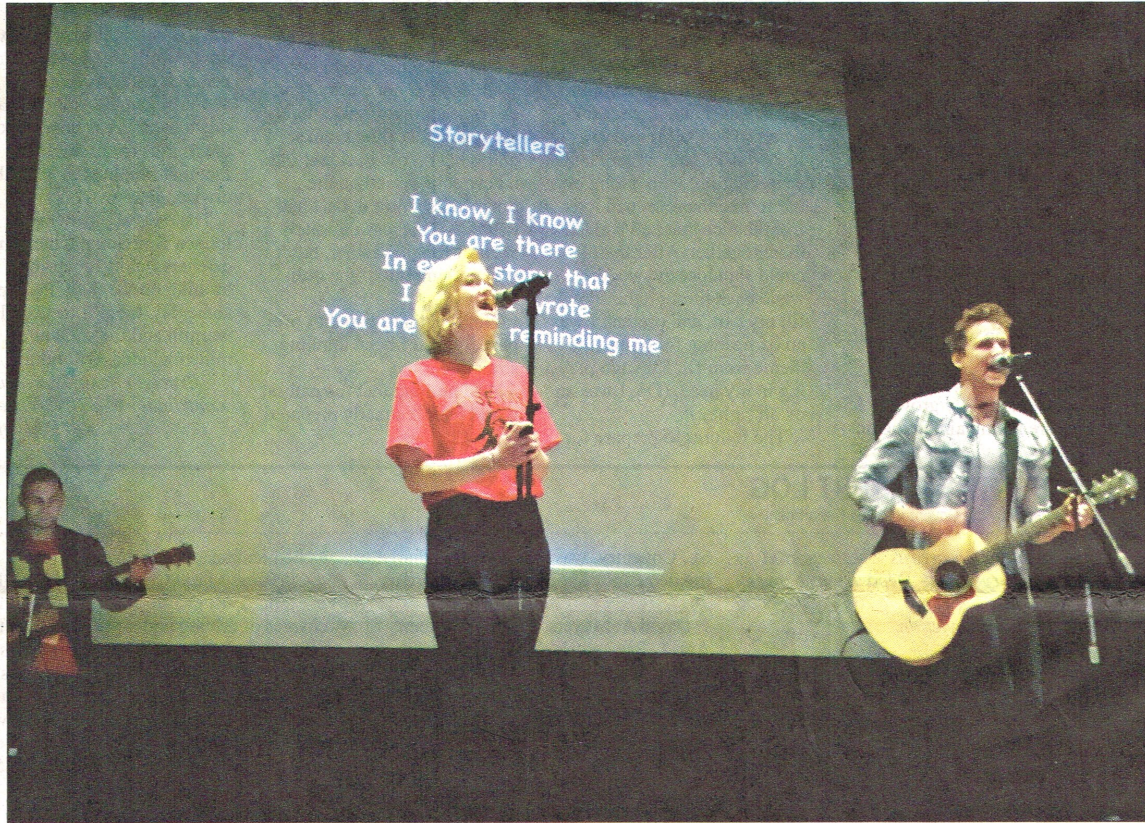


# Falcon Pride Gets Call Back



Kendra Leigh Miller • Daily Times

Singer-songwriter David Place (far right) performs with a little help from his friends at Feinstein Middle School on Friday. His second trip to the school in the last few weeks provided students with advice on how to handle relationships, stress, and influences in their lives.

## Singer-songwriter returns to Feinstein

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COVENTRY — Singer-songwriter and former bass player for “Phone Calls from Home,” David Place offered his words for friendship, being true to yourself and anti-bullying to the students at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School during three presentations Friday to round out Falcon Pride

Day.

Two weeks ago, the performer was at the middle school to kick-off a week-long activity to help students see their potential and the importance of effort, motivation, failure and perseverance in their academic life through his motivational speech, called “This is Your Life — Are You Who You Want to Be?”

This time he returned and shared his

knowledge of how each student can be their best by how they handle relationships, stress and the influences in their lives.

“This is for the kid who isn’t the best in academics or who might not have the perfect home life,” he said. “Last time we talked about challenging yourself and taking risks. This time it’s about influences and how to turn the negative around.”

Some of the examples of stress the sixth-graders offered were homework, arguing with siblings and parents and peer pressure from friends.

“You have teachers, coaches, parents, siblings and family who all have an influence on you and they all set the stage,” he said. “All of those people have an influence on you and set the stage for your life and give you your basis so when you grow up, whether you like it or not, your family is your biggest influence.”

Place pointed out that other factors, including an unstable home life or social media, are also serious influences in that they can try to tell a person how to act or what to wear, or can make them feel like they’re not pretty or good enough and that needs to be turned around — and can be through a



Place stands onstage before a screen showing him performing as part of the band Phone Calls From Home. Whether playing in front of handfuls of people or thousands, Place said, he was doing something he loved.

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# Falcon pride on full display Friday at Feinstein

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change in perspective, but it's up to the person to change it.

"When I used to tour and some crowds were 3,000 while others were 20 people, I used to get bummed out and think, 'Why was I doing this for only 20 people?'" he said. "Then, I shifted my perspective and said, 'Well, I'm still doing what I love.'"

Place was honest with the students when he shared some pointers, including not everyone will be a fan of you but what young people have to understand is that tomorrow is another day; worrying is both a friend and foe; everyone needs to slow down and take a break and be with friends and others who love them; take care of themselves and share how your feel with those you love.

"You can worry about grades and that kind of thing but you can't worry about things you can't change, and you've got to let the rest go," he said. "There are people in this building who

are awesome and they're here to help you with whatever you have going on, not just if you're in trouble."

During his performance and presentation, Place admitted that he didn't have the best upbringing with parents who split up.

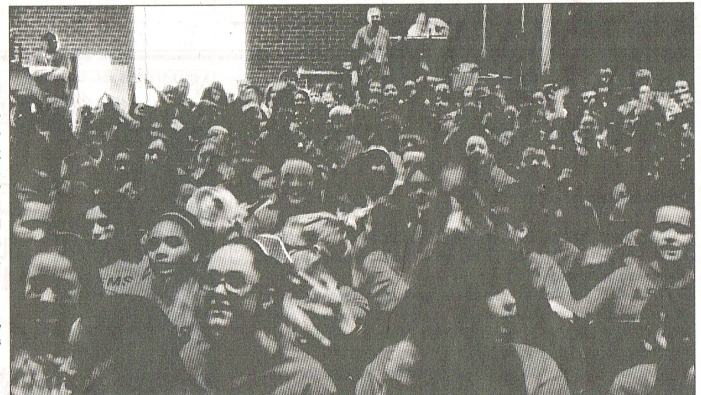
"My parents weren't always easy on me," he remembered. "My mother had anxiety and other issues and I was often accused by my mother of being mentally abusive when I was, in fact, trying to help her so this talk is for people like me where the one place I could feel safe and be myself was school. School was special to me."

Place said writing songs is the way he reduces his stress and shared how losing his father suddenly then writing a song about their experiences together helped him cope with his grief.

"The more stuff you go through, the more you can be empathetic with others," Place said, "because you'll know exactly what they're going through. My dad used to say 'Don't ever say something bad about someone because if it's

Falcon Pride Day included a pep rally and the assembly that featured David Place's presentation Friday before Feinstein Middle School students embarked on their week of vacation.

Kandra Leigh Miller/Daily Times



the truth, someone else will let them know. Why be the bad guy?" and treat everyone the same no matter who they are."

Middle School Assistant Principal Joe Pirraglia said the performances fit

in perfectly with Falcon Pride Day.

"We have t-shirts and an all-day pep rally so the different grades are either at the performance or the pep rally," Pirraglia said. "We had the pep rally planned anyway but wanted to add

David Place's message of how to be the best person you can be to yourself and others. We want to teach them that instead of being a bystander, take a stand and be a strong, productive force in the community."