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'Dare to Dream' event to feature wounded warrior

Hillary Gavan
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Hillary Gavan/Beloit Daily News (From left): Hendricks CareerTek interns Kat Evans, Liz Kelly, Elizabet Sanchez and I have been helping to plan the Second Annual Dare to Dream Event.

BELOIT - Four interns at Hendricks CareerTek are helping to set up a special event for business people and students featuring retired U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Travis Mills.



One of five surviving quadruple amputees from the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, Mills will speak about overcoming obstacles and defying the odds at the Eclipse Center from 1-3 p.m. Oct. 18.

On April 10, 2012, during his third tour in Afghanistan, Mills stepped on an improvised explosive device or IED. Since his recovery he lives each day by embracing the motto: "Never give up. Never quit." Mills is a recalibrated warrior and best selling author of a New York Times best-selling memoir, "Tough as They Come."

As a signature sponsor, the Hendricks Family Foundation will be welcoming high school students, veterans and business leaders to the inspirational event. To give area students real-world event planning experience Hendricks CareerTek has its interns preparing press releases and helping to set up arrangements for the big day. They will also have key roles during the event, including introducing the speaker.

In an interview with the *Beloit Daily News* Liz Kelly, Gisell Acosta, Elizabet Sanchez and Kat Evans shared some of the latest updates on the upcoming event and their experience with CareerTek.

The interns said 600 students from Beloit Memorial High School, South Beloit High School and Turner High School have been invited as well as 200 business people. As part of the event, attendees will have water, coffee and select desserts made by four local businesses.

The interns are super excited about the speaker coming to Beloit.

"He has his own book, called as 'Tough as they Come,' and he's a really good speaker," Kelly said.



This year, proceeds from sponsoring organizations, which currently include Alliant, Kerry, Frito Lay, The Morse Group and Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce will go to supporting the Hendricks CareerTek scholarship fund. Scholarships will be awarded to eligible high school graduates working with Hendricks CareerTek to advance their career goals and pursue learning opportunities beyond high school.

Businesses interested in attending or supporting the event can sign up at hendrickscareertek.org.

The interns said their work organizing the event is part of a 10-week internship to gain experience in event planning and is a great example of what CareerTek has to offer area students.

The interns said they have greatly benefited from services at CareerTek, from tutoring to shadowing opportunities.

Kelly, for example, interned with Beloit City Manager Lori Curtis Luther last year through a co-op program with the school, and Acosta was part of the Craftsmen and women with character over the summer.

"CareerTek gives the students so many opportunities to find their career paths and help with filling out scholarship and financial aid forms as well as with resumes. It gives kids the opportunity to succeed," Evans added.

The interns all have ambitious future plans. Sanchez said she wants to be a doctor; Acosta, an interior designer or a surgeon; Kelly, a business or public relations professional; and Evans, a psychologist.

Last year's Dare to Dream event featured Mike Rowe, former host of "Dirty Jobs," who spoke about the myriad of job opportunities in the skilled trades.

The Dare to Dream events are designed to inspire young people and get them thinking about how to be successful in the future.