

Website Launch Event for GoodKidsGoneGreat.com  
Speech for Owner/Operator

Thank you, Mary, for that wonderful introduction. And thank YOU, ladies and gentlemen, for coming out to the launch of GookKidsGoneGreat.

Many of you know that the Justice Department recently reported the results of a survey on our youth's exposure to violence. According to the report, over 60% of youth surveyed had been exposed to violence in the past year—either directly or indirectly. It's an ugly story---with staggering numbers on beatings, bullying, and sexual attacks. I agree with Attorney General Holder that this, "epidemic of violence" as he put it---is unacceptable. But while these numbers are astounding, they shouldn't surprise us. After all we see and hear stories of youth violence every day. Sometimes ALL day, if you watch enough 24 hour news television.

Well I don't know about you, but I'm sick of ALWAYS hearing about the bad stuff. Yes, I know it's necessary to report the news. To talk about the problems so that we figure out ways to solve them. But aside from the occasional positive news story, we really don't hear enough about the good things kids are doing. The GREAT things they continue to accomplish.

When I first decided to launch GoodKidsGoneGreat.com, I did so to remind myself that there are plenty of noble youth out there. Including my own daughter, Clarice. At one point I was taking my parental responsibilities WAY too far. In my quest to raise a responsible citizen, I was often too critical of her, and nit-picky on things that didn't really matter. In the process, I failed to recognize—or soon forgot---the small but GREAT things she did every day.

So, I started paying closer attention. Complimenting her more—and letting her know how proud she makes me. The next thing I knew, I was blogging about my new outlook on parenting. My audience cried with me, when I wrote an emotional account of how Clarice quit basketball to help take care of me when I was sick. I invited my readers to tell their own Good Kids' stories.

So what will you find on the "Good Kids" site?

Articles portraying the great things kids are doing in the community, in school and at home. I'll write some of these articles, but I invite and encourage all of you to submit material as well;

In our "Teeny, but Tall" section, you can post success stories on your children's small, but great accomplishments—those accounts that don't make the "hero" section of the newspaper. Like the busy teen who decides to do MORE than his usual chores because Mom is having a hard week at work. Or the kid who volunteers to do the yard work after his Dad broke his arm.

We'll have two columns: "The Great Kid", written by noted child psychologist and community leader Billie Sticker. Billie will give sometimes humorous, sometimes poignant advice on bringing out the greatness in your already good kid. I'm happy to say that Clarice has FINALLY agreed to write a quarterly column. In "How we can help" she will give tips on how kids can serve others.

I will continue to pose questions and share my opinions on the blog. This time, I will talk less about myself because I'll want to hear from all of YOU.

You know, GoodKidsGoneGreat is not a place to talk about the "perfect" child. We're not sticking our heads in the sand, we know that young folks growing up in this society are making mistakes. But we're about forgiving those mistakes, recognizing that our young people are a work in progress.

That's why I am so excited about our Transformation section. Oprah Winfrey once commented, "I know a transformation when I see one," in praising a musical artist who had found her way back from drug and alcohol abuse. If you know of a child who has turned over new leaf—tell us about it! Whether they turn away from drug abuse, bullying or some other form of negative behavior---we want to applaud their efforts toward change and honor them when they make good decisions.

End of Excerpt