



Press Release

For more information contact
Barbara Esteves-Moore
292-5134, ext. 272 or
estesmooreb@dominicancampus.org

Dr. Wes Ely speaks on faith and service to the St. Cecilia community

Story written by St. Cecilia Academy journalism student Hannah McClure, class of 2013

Faith, hope, and charity. While we have all heard these three words in religion class, it seems that many of us forget to apply these concepts to our daily life. For Dr. Wes Ely, however, embracing these ideas and sharing them with others is part of his mission as a doctor, father, husband and Catholic.

Dr. Ely is a professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine with subspecialty training in pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine and a particular passion for care of older critically ill patients. He is also a St. Cecilia Academy dad and spoke during this week's Women's Leadership Forum. The forums serve to assist St. Cecilia Academy students in finding what their true passions are, and how they hope to succeed in the future.

In his presentation, Dr. Ely began with the three words "faith, hope and charity." His talk centered on his mission work in Haiti and how it brought those words to life for him. He encouraged SCA students to set priorities and build service work into their lives – whether it is mission work or simply praying for others.

Dr. Ely explained to the students the inspiration he received from the Haitians, telling them how faith-based the Haitian community remains. It was amazing, he said, how the people of Haiti never gave up in times of distress, and how they constantly had a smile upon their faces. Even though many families were broken due to the earthquake, the people of Haiti continued to worship God the Father through prayer and song.

During his speech, Dr. Ely invited his daughter Taylor Ely, an SCA senior, to the stage to talk about how much her visit to Haiti with her father changed her as a person. Taylor truly struck the hearts of the St. Cecilia community through her description of Haiti and all of the optimistic children.

Fellow SCA student Isa Aparicio came away from the speech feeling inspired and ready to serve others.

"My favorite part about the forum today was when Taylor talked about Haiti," she said. "It was really inspiring to me because Taylor actually experienced these events first-hand, I could fully comprehend how a person could be influenced by experiencing a trip to Haiti.

“You always hear about people visiting Haiti, but when you actually know someone personally who visited and served there, it means more.”

Dr. Ely’s visit struck a chord with the St. Cecilia girls. His advice on life and how to conquer it, and his advice for the students to reach out to those less fortunate, helped all to better understand how they can shape their lives around the faith.

St. Cecilia Academy is Nashville’s oldest private high school, founded in 1860 by the Dominican Sisters of the St. Cecilia Congregation. The Academy has been named to the Top 50 best Catholic high schools in the U.S. list five times since 2004. Ninety-one percent of the Class of 2011 earned college scholarships totaling \$7.1 million.

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This story was written by SCA junior journalism student, Hannah McClure. Hannah is a liturgy and retreat ambassador, an MBA wrestling cheerleader and is also involved in pep club and the Forensics team.