

This is Bob Judevine filling in for Erin Dunn with community comment

I had the privilege of presenting a financial literacy course with the folks from the Decade of Difference last week. If you have not heard of the Decade of Difference, it is a community initiative designed to prepare local youth to be contributing and productive members of our society, community and economy.

I was presenting to incoming juniors and seniors at the Academy of the Redwoods. This is a Fortuna High School District Early College High School. They have an accelerated and college prep program where students can earn a high school diploma and up to 2 years of college credit in their 4 years of high school.

They are located on the College of the Redwoods campus and attract students from all over the county. They were one of the first accelerated high schools in California and appear to be doing a great job!

There were 4 groups of students that rotated through my course for a total over 80 students. This group of young people were as bright, engaged, and articulate as any I have seen from any generation, and I have been around the block a few times. The sessions were 45 minutes long and included discussion and a competition- with small groups competing to build the tallest towers with time, and other constraints. I was impressed at the level of conversation, and the innovation and humor they brought to the question and answer, and building activities.

And the thing is, I didn't see a cell phone all day. . really. Maybe it is a media invention that texting and social media are wrecking our young people's ability to interact in meaningful ways, or maybe it is just the human condition that each new generation looks strange as we grow older. I definitely remember hearing that videos were going to ruin my kids, and that TV was going to turn my brain to mush . 20 years ago at a North coast Employers Advisory lunch meeting an employer was sort of going on about the appearance and poor work ethic of the kids he was hiring. That was definitely not what I experienced with the high school and college students who worked at our ice cream parlors in Eureka and Arcata. I don't know his story, but that is when I started thinking at least some of the gap in generation gap was in the eye of the beholder.

As my kids have grown into adults I don't get the chance to see a lot of young people. Last week was a refreshing reminder that this generation has a lot of promise.

The Decade of Difference program provides educational programs to children all over the county. It is a smart approach to improving our community at the source to increase the standard of living and reduce poverty and crime.

You can connect with Decade of Difference at decadeofdifference.org and click "Get Connected" for volunteer opportunities and more.

This has been Bob Judevine filling in for Erin Dunn with community comment