

MEDIA RELEASE

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Photo Cutline –National Youth speaker Kyle Quilausing will speak to area high school students in September.

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DECH and CCH to Bring National Youth Speaker to Washington County Students

Machias and Calais – DECH and CCH is once again bringing in a national speaker for Washington County students. This will be the third speaker event for Washington County youth coordinated by DECH and CCH. Previous sessions were held in the Fall of 2023 (grades 9-12) and Spring of 2024 (grades 6-8). The events this Fall will once again focus on students in grades 9-12. Three days of presentations will take place Sep 12-16 across Washington County. All area high school students are invited, and we hope they seize this invaluable opportunity.

Assisting us in bringing this opportunity to our area's youth are Sponsors Woodland Pulp and Machias Savings Bank. The support of these area businesses will assist DECH and CCH in their efforts to continue to host these events.

How this came about – In developing long range Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) plans for 2023-2025, Calais and Down East Community Hospitals set a goal of reaching out to the youth of our communities about some of the tough topics that are prevalent in our area – mental health, substance abuse, suicide, etc. While we really wish our children were not aware of these issues, we know they see it, some live it, many experience it every day. Our plan is to support organizations that are already working with youth on these issues, as well as looking at new avenues to reach our youngest community members. One of the projects we decided to take on was to bring a youth speaker to the area to provide a message of hope, be candid on these tough topics, and leave teens with some tools for dealing with such things in life. It is our plan to repeat these activities next school year as well with a speaker in the fall for high school students and another in the spring for grades 6 through 8.

The speaker – Kyle Quilausing is living proof of the power of your choices. Born in Hilo, Hawaii, Kyle's upbringing was ideal. He describes being brought up by his grandfather with wholesome family values and strong morals and ethics. After his grandfather introduced him to golf at the age of 5, Kyle quickly fell in love with the sport, dedicating every waking moment to perfecting his craft and becoming a six-time state golf champion, winning 16 titles, coming 4th in the world, and playing alongside Tiger Woods at ten years old. But after allowing his relative success to make him arrogant and prideful, Kyle was expelled from high school in his senior year, which became the catalyst for a downward spiral that eventually led him to become a 98-pound crystal meth addict, labeled Hawaii's most wanted and a menace to society.

Kyle's addiction ultimately led him to spend a decade behind bars. At what might be considered his rock bottom, he dedicated himself to his sobriety (Kyle is over fifteen years sober.) He committed to doing everything in his power to better himself so he could build a legacy of youth empowerment and education upon his release.

As a motivational speaker, Kyle is engaging and charismatic; it's impossible not to smile when encountering Kyle's lighthearted nature. He shares a powerful and poignant message that you are always one choice away from a different life. As a Top Youth Speaker with a powerful story of adversity, regrets, and, finally, triumph, Kyle is on a bold mission to use his real-life experiences to educate and empower the youth in making healthy, wise choices for a productive life.

Today, Kyle, a successful businessman, and motivational speaker, champions the importance of every choice we make. He's spoken at over 200 schools in the past five years and continues to educate the youth on the life-changing power of their choices. With a vision to become the positive mentor figure that his grandfather was to him, he helps students avoid the same pitfalls that he experienced. Kyle teaches students to embrace life's possibilities, change negative behaviors and patterns, and achieve freedom through deciding to make positive choices for their present.

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