

MEDIA RELEASE

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DECH and CCH Bring National Youth Speaker to Washington County Students

Machias and Calais – This past week Down East Community and Calais Community Hospitals had the pleasure of once again bringing another Top National Youth Speaker to over 1200 high school students in Washington County. This is the fourth occasion a speaker was brought to the area by the local hospitals. Six presentations were held throughout the county for 9th through 12th grade students. Many thanks to Bar Harbor Bank & Trust for being a generous community partner of the event as well.

Plans for the DECH/CCH Youth Speaker Series started in 2022. In developing the long-range Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) 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 plans included support for organizations that are already working with youth on these issues, as well as looking at new avenues to reach our youngest community members. The Youth Speaker Series was developed to provide a message of hope, be candid on the 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.

The 2025 speaker – David Edward Garcia is a published author, stand-up comedian and public school teacher. A former “at-risk” student who failed high school classes, David went on to earn three Master’s degrees, speak five languages and travel across every continent sharing his inspirational message to over 1 million students and educational staff. David helps students take ownership of their lives, rewrite their narratives, and move toward a future filled with purpose and possibility.

Whether students are struggling or thriving, David spoke to them with encouragement they can relate to and strategies they can use. He encouraged students to find their superpower and where their genius is – because as David said, “every one of us has a super power. You just have to find yours.”

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