

## **Special Assembly Motivates Students to Become More Active in School Community**

Fewer athletes playing sports and clubs and organizations finding it increasingly difficult to attract new members.

While these challenges aren't necessarily new for the Richfield Springs Central School District, Richfield Springs is not alone.

It's a "sign of the times."

However, the Richfield Springs Central School District is not accepting changing times as an excuse.

On April 12, the high school journalism class hosted a "Motivation Assembly" for students in grades 6-12 in the elementary school gym, specifically designed to motivate students to become more active in our school community.

The assembly featured a presentation from some of RSCS' seniors and words of encouragement from Mr. Piatti, current superintendent of schools, and Mr. Barraco, former superintendent of schools. The presentation also featured a video created by the high school journalism class containing interviews with local veterans. Carson Hula, a senior journalism class student, conducted the interviews, while the entire journalism class edited the interviews, producing the necessary clips for the video.

Mr. Lehmann, who teaches the journalism class, hopes the veterans' inspiring words and the video's tagline - - "What is your legacy?" - - will effectively serve as a "call to action."

"There are stories that are being lost to time and some of those stories we are really proud of, especially those of our veterans," said Lehmann.

"Our veterans volunteered to make the ultimate sacrifice - - potentially giving their life for our country," added Lehmann. "When we look at our own school, our students need to make some sacrifices, too. By becoming more involved, a student becomes well-rounded, allowing them to better contribute to our community inside and out of school."

The video produced by the journalism class was submitted to the Fourth Annual IWitness Challenge. The challenge, spearheaded by the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education, first presents students with selected testimonies from survivors who demonstrate what is possible when we make the courageous choice to act. Then, the challenge takes students through the steps necessary to identify a problem, determine how to contribute to solving that problem and how to create a video that captures their efforts and impact on helping to solve a problem in their community. For the Richfield Springs Central School District, the problem is declining participation in extracurricular activities. The

solution is heeding the words of wisdom from local veterans, who were highlighted in RSCS' video.

The student or group of students who produce the winning video nationally will receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Second place will receive a \$1,000 scholarship; third place, a \$500 scholarship.

The educator associated with the winning video will receive a \$1,000 grant to be used to implement change in his/her school.

The school or organization that hosted the IWitness group/class associated with the winning video will receive a \$2,500 grant to be used to implement change in their community.

The IWitness Challenge is one of the more than 70 activities found in IWitness, USC Shoah Foundation's free educational website ([iwitness.usc.edu](http://iwitness.usc.edu)), which brings the human stories from the Institute's Visual History Archive - - the world's largest repository of testimony from survivors and witnesses to the Holocaust and other genocides - - to teachers and their students via engaging multimedia-learning activities.

Immediately following the Motivation Assembly, the high school journalism class distributed a survey to students in grades 6-11 asking them what they are involved in now, would like to become involved in and what ideas they may have.

Good luck to the journalism class on your video submission, and we hope that everyone feels motivated to get involved and make a positive difference in our community!

To watch the video produced by the high school journalism class, click [here](#).