

It's Your Life....

Rains High School Senior Class Conference

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, along with the Emory Development Corporation, recently held a program for the Rains High School Senior Class titled "It's Your Life." The day-long conference was held at the Emory Centre for approximately 90 of the graduating students. This program was planned by the Rains Family & Consumer Sciences Program Area Committee, which consists of Keeley Roan, Sue Gowin, Kathy Lucas, Toni Threadgill, and MayBeth McMahan. The focus of the day was to prepare the graduating students for life after graduation in several key areas.

The morning began with the key-note speaker, David Hira. Business leader, magician and inspirational speaker David Hira brought his message through laughter, wonder and breakthrough "A-Ha!" moments. Mr. Hira has entertained at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, on cruise ships on the Mediterranean, at The White House for two sitting Presidents and on television 43 times. As a business leader, Mr. Hira helped grow a U.S. electronics sales company from \$600 million annually to over \$4.3 billion in annual sales. Having birthed and owned dozens of businesses from a Japanese restaurant to a luxurious day spa and medical spa to dozens of retail jewelry locations and more, Mr. Hira shared his secrets to help the students succeed. His parting words were "*One of life's greatest joys is doing what others say cannot be done!*"

The students then rotated through four different break-out sessions. Toni Threadgill, Vice-President, First National Bank of Emory hosted a session entitled "*It's Your Money, Take Charge!*" Mrs. Threadgill shared her expertise on money management in the areas of debit and credit cards, establishing credit, and how to create a monthly spending budget.

Representing Madix was Morris Brown, Human Resources Manager and Casey Wiley, Treasurer/HR Services. Their presentation was "*You got the job....now what?*" They covered a wide range of topics including proper use of company time and resources, computer usage, social media consequences, and other areas of importance that all successful employees should practice in the workplace.

Retired Vice-President of Operations of Jason's Deli, Pete Verde, shared his wealth of knowledge on how to be a successful business owner. His presentation on "*What is an Entrepreneur?*" gave the students an in-depth, yet practical, insight on how to start and grow a thriving business in today's competitive market.

Onin Staffing Regional Manager, North Texas, Diana Wolfe rounded out our break-out sessions with her presentation, *First Impressions....What does it say about you?*" It focused on how to

prepare to secure and retain a job in today's workforce. She explained how to create a resume, how to follow-up on job prospects, the proper way to dress and conduct yourself for an interview, and how your activity on social media outlets can affect how prospective employers view your employment possibilities.

The Emory Development Corporation hosted a lovely sit-down luncheon for the students. Denita Young guided them through an etiquette class while volunteers served each course to them. A special thank you to Kay Chastain, Kaye Pressley, Cindy Pollard, Margie Carpenter, Brenda Hooten, Michele Potts, Stephen Gowin, Sue Caruana, Jennifer Hammonds, Angie Allen, and Amber Hall for assisting with the serving of lunch.

After the etiquette class, Luncheon Speaker, Tyler Jones, shared with them his words of advice on how to leave the classroom and find success in their lives, wherever their paths may lead. Tyler played football at Southern Methodist University. His band, Tyler and the Tribe, is currently traveling around the state promoting a new album.

The students were given a survey at the end of the day, which reflected an over-whelming positive response to the program and the knowledge they acquired. It is the plan to continue to develop this program in the future to meet the ever-changing needs of our graduating classes and work with the local business and education leaders to help provide these opportunities and education.