

Recent Reference

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To Whom It May Concern:

It is a privilege to recommend Susie Vanderlip's Legacy of Hope program. Her portrayal of youth and adults in emotional conflicts that result in addictive behavior is compelling and relevant to our lives today. It is impossible to walk away unaffected. Whether addictive behavior touches some aspect of your own life or a close friend or family member, you are certain to gain new insight and hope for the battle to conquer destructive drinking, drug use and sexual behaviors.

Susie captures the essence of the emotional hurts and betrayal behind the addictions of the individuals she depicts poignantly through drama and dance. The innocence, fear and confusion are so real that audiences young and old will relate to at least one of the stories Susie tells of the people she has actually met. In a gymnasium filled with restless high school students, the silence was palpable when Susie revealed the most heart wrenching story was her own. The impact was immediate and for some life changing.

Often the prevention speakers we bring in to our schools and community tell the stories without giving any insight into the causes or leaving any hope for learning to deal with the underlying issues. After the drama presentation Susie tells "the rest of the story" about the individuals she portrays and helps her audience understand the emotions they are trying to escape. Susie shares her own story of finding hope by reaching out to others. Her Legacy of Hope program has put many young people and adults on the road to healing and a life of giving to others. Each of our schools set aside time for Susie to meet with any student who wanted to talk to her. In a small community like ours it is difficult to get our students to seek help from human services or mental health agencies. The opportunity to talk about their issues with someone they trust was invaluable and Susie gets a list of resources in the community ahead of time for referral purposes.

Over the years I have had the privilege of working with a number of speakers in a variety of venues. Susie is, without a doubt, the most organized and prepared of any. She wants to know the community; the demographics of her audience; and any special needs she should address. She arrives early, makes sure her stage and sound system are ready, provides introduction material and has an extensive table of resource information prepared. In short, Susie Vanderlip's Legacy of Hope was everything we could have asked for and so much more. Her program will not disappoint.

Best regards,

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