

# TEACHING KIDS CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP



“We need to tell kids what they can do instead of what they can’t,” said Mark Hoog at PIN’s first presentation of the school year. “Conscious leadership means choosing to interact positively with our kids to help them think, stretch and grow,” said Hoog. “It means encouraging kids to live life to its fullest, to live purposefully, and to expand our kids’ world around them.”



Hoog is author of the award-winning *Growing Field* series of children’s books on leadership, and founder of Growing Field International. In his inspirational message to CCSD parents, he explained one of the greatest influencers of his life: his close friendship with Captain Jason Dahl, pilot of United Flight 93 which crashed in Pennsylvania on the morning of 9/11.

As a mentor to Hoog in his position as an airline pilot, Dahl challenged him with a simple but profound question: Why should you get to stay in your position? Dahl caused Hoog to think more intentionally about the value he was adding in his career—a concept that led Hoog to reevaluate his life, purpose and relationships as well.

Hoog explained one of the key challenges facing our youth today: “If you ask third-graders if they have big dreams for the future, most kids can’t wait to raise their hands. But by middle school, that number is diminished, and by high school, only a few kids have their hands up.” His advice for parents is to grab hold of the unique position they’re in to influence their kids’ outlook for their future by:

1. **Teaching Kids to Freestyle.** By this, Hoog means showing children how to be the captains of their own lives. “The first step is to help kids see their gifts and to claim them,” said Hoog. “Help them discover what their talents and treasures are. What was given to them that they’ve talked themselves out of?” To emphasize the point, Hoog quoted Mark Twain, who said, “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”
2. **Embracing a Leadership Paradigm.** Parents can encourage their children to make an impact anywhere they go. Hoog recommends starting by pushing aside the negatives. “Instead of thinking of all the reasons why your dream isn’t possible, ask why you *could*, *would*, *should* and why you *will* achieve your dream,” said Hoog.
3. **Making a Contribution.** “Our young people are waiting for an invitation into the game of life—for someone to see their unique gifting and potential and to show them how to live it out,” stated Hoog. “It’s starts with a belief that each child has value and letting them know it,” he said.

“It all comes down to making a choice to breathe life into those around us and to invest in what’s meaningful, in what matters most,” said Hoog.

Visit [www.growingfield.com](http://www.growingfield.com) to see Hoog’s leadership resources for kids, or go to [www.theS2.org](http://www.theS2.org) to find out about the Leadership Summit for America’s Youth where Hoog will be speaking on 9/17 in Loveland.

**Next at PIN:** Join us on 10/6 to hear pediatrician Marianne Neifert, a.k.a. “Dr. Mom,” speak about *Raising Siblings, Raising Friends*. Visit [www.PINccsd.org](http://www.PINccsd.org) for our full line-up of speakers.

By Bobbie Turner, PIN Publicity.