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“Faith, Goals and Life” tour brings Sean Fuller to area schools

Fuller visits Clinton County schools, Excel Bottling

CLINTON COUNTY — Sean Fuller, the drummer from the band Florida Georgia Line, has a campaign called “Faith Goals and Life,” where, while on tour with his band, he visits schools and meets local students during the day.

Fuller recently recalled how he came to that track in his life.

“Interestingly enough, I really didn’t know it was something I wanted to do until two things happened. One, an old high school friend and graduate of the same class, hit me up on social media a couple years back — when Florida Georgia Line was scheduled to play at the Ford Stadium in Evansville, Ind., which is my old stomping grounds and where I was born — asking me if I would be willing to come speak to the student body at my old high school, South Spencer High School, about the success I have had in the music industry and how I got there,” Fuller said.

“I loved the idea but was scared to death, as you put me in front of 10, 20, 30,000 to play music and I am ok. But you put me in front of 200 to 300 kids and I’m shaking in my boots,” Fuller exclaimed.

Fuller agreed to do the speech, not just for himself, but for the students he was speaking to, and for his daughter who will be coming of age for school.

“I ultimately decided to jump out of my comfort zone and do this, as at the same time I was raising my now almost four-year-old daughter, and between all of what I see on social media and in the news about bullying, gang fights, life-threatening pranks, depression, and some of the obvious threats relating to guns in school,” Fuller said.

“All I could do is think of my daughter growing up in these times and felt the need and passion to bring what I hoped was some sort of message to student bodies wherever I can, about how my dreams came true. What it took to get there. How what I do, though it is in music, can relate to anything one wants to do in life revolving around character, integrity and being humble. Being a servant leader. Help those that cannot help themselves. Bringing light to darkness. And not letting your current conditions dictate your future.

“Utilize the gifts and blessings we ALL have regardless. If you think you’re not talented, you have a talent. Reaching down deep inside and putting value on a world that seems to want to point a finger and say ‘you can’t’. You can.”

Fuller talks about how anything is possible once you start with a positive attitude. Everyone has a talent; they just have to believe in themselves.

"Letting parents, teachers, families know that love covers everything. No one should be left behind or feel they were left behind because of race, color, ethnicity, religious beliefs, all the way down to what a person wears to school, colors of their hair, etc.," Fuller said. "I want to cover these things in a fun way, and the only way I know how is through music and the gifts I have been blessed with.

Fuller also speaks out from a parent's point of view.

"I have added a couple of gentlemen to what I do, and we have been doing this as often as we can for the past couple years. What I have found, after doing this event for schools, is I always get an email from a teacher, principal, parent and student thanking me for this event. But the thing is, it's my heart, not the person looking for fame or social media likes or whatever," Fuller said.

"This is a parent of a child that has yet to deal with any of these things, but my concern and love for what children at this age are going through is greatly heightened, as she nears the age of going to school herself. I didn't come from a background of a silver spoon in my mouth nor did I have all the finer things in life.

"What we as youngsters think of as the 'finer things' changes as you get older, but what television forces down our kids' throats is how you should look to be liked, what you should wear, what you should post to get likes, what makes you popular.

"I believe we all fall into that trap, or have had that pushed on us, when all you really need to be is yourself and blaze a trail not only for you but for others. Be a leader, not a follower. Again, integrity, character, humility."

Fuller has visited schools in Clinton County and, in total, he said he would have visited about 20 schools. "After thinking about this, I would have to say to date, probably 20ish?" he said.

And Fuller isn't going for a specific audience when his visits are set up. Again, the stops are in conjunction with what his touring dates allow.

"We aren't targeting any specific school. We want to do this at every school if we could. We are trying to keep costs down by looking at schools interested, by the travel I do on tour with Florida Georgia Line," Fuller said.

"I wish I could say I could afford to do this all on my own and not charge anything, but the reality is it costs a little bit. We do try to show schools where they can find the money to do this, either through community services, local companies, or various other means to make it happen, even if that means bringing two or three schools together at one time to make it happen."

The school visits, to Fuller, are not about what it does for him, but what he can eventually give to the students.

"I am not one to make this about how much I can make off a school. We work off very little. After all is said and done, the schools that have done this program have had nothing but great things, of what it brought to their school, which is ultimately something every child in attendance will walk away with, at least a little more knowledge of who they are in my eyes, and hopefully changes the outlook of some that maybe thought no one loves them or could love them."

Again, Fuller will be stopping by Excel Bottling for a meet-and-greet at 6 p.m. today. It's something that Fuller is more than looking forward to.

"I'm pretty excited about this. The main reason, being from Indiana, my parents and grandparents always had Ski in their fridge. I am not the biggest soft drink drinker by any means but I did enjoy a good Ski as a kid.

"Honestly, I want to use that time for anyone with questions for me, my life, my upbringing, my faith, how they can get involved, etc. This is open-book time. It's not about me or Florida Georgia Line. It's about being a servant. It's about what can I do to help one child change his or her ways and be the best version of themselves and prove the naysayers wrong."

Excel Bottling Co. in Breese is hosting a public meet and greet with Sean Fuller, a drummer of country music group Florida Georgia Line. It is free to meet Fuller but the donation of a canned good for the Breese House of Manna Food Pantry will be accepted.

Fuller is visiting the Clinton County area again, as he has before, to speak about his "Faith, Goals, and Life" campaign.

"Sean is asking people who come out to the Excel Bottling plant on March 7 if they will just bring a canned item for the food pantry there," said Shawn McSparin, a friend of Fuller's and member of local band Shotgun Creek. "He just wants to give a little something back to the community. He is going to be at Excel Bottling at 6 o'clock and sign autographs with fans and take pictures with folks."

Fuller has been in Clinton County before, speaking at local schools about his "Faith, Goals and Life" campaign.

"He was out not this past fall but the [2016] school year in the fall," McSparin said of Fuller's previous visit. "He was at Aviston Elementary. The deal is, while he is on tour with Florida Georgia Line he tries to book events during the day at local schools where he comes and kind of gives them a motivational speech, giving back a positive message in a world that is not so positive."

While Fuller will be giving his speeches to two local schools in the area, McSparin thought it would be a wonderful idea to have a meet-and-greet at the local Excel Bottling Company.

"I'm a local guy, we know about Ski and love Ski. I work with him in different avenues with my local country band I play in," McSparin said of his history with Fuller. "They were more than happy to have him stop in, see the plant, and I figured since everyone in the county knows where to pick up their bottles of Ski, that would be just as good a spot as any to do a meet-and-greet. So we decided to book it there and we wanted to help the local food pantry. That was a perfect opportunity."

Those who will make it out to Excel Bottling on March 7 are encouraged to bring a canned good. The event is free to the public.