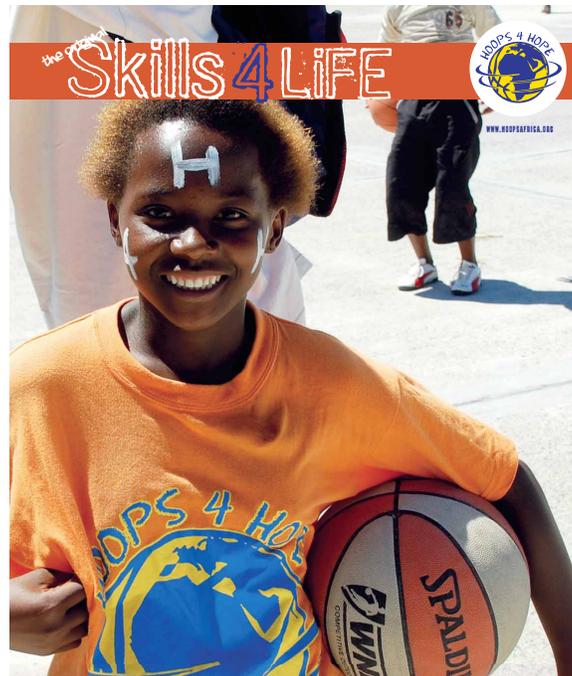


Literacy4Hope:
Sports, Community, & Writing With Youth
NCTE: The Intersection of Literacy, Sport, Culture, and Society
Potomac A
22. November, 2014
Washington, DC
1:15 - 2:30



Bryan Ripley Crandall, Ph.D.
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present



LITERACY 4 LIFE

Fairfield University Stags want to hear from you...

NOMINATE a mentor and WIN tickets to a Fairfield University athletic event!

WHO? any student, grades k-8

WHAT? an opportunity to recognize a mentor and score tickets to a Fairfield University athletic event

WHERE? on campus or at Webster Arena

WHEN? anytime during the 2014-15 academic year... in other words, now!

WHY? because we believe in student athletes and in athletic students

HOW? write us a letter telling us about your awesome teacher, coach, and/or mentor today!

Fairfield University Athletic Department and Connecticut Writing Project-Fairfield support youth who build **SKILLS FOR LIFE!** Together, we want to help youth in our community recognize their mentors on a grand scale.

We're asking students to nominate the teachers, coaches, and/or mentors who help them **focus**, work with **integrity**, take **responsibility**, become **self-aware**, build **self-esteem**, and keep a **sense of humor**, in and out of the classroom, and on and off of the court, course, or field.

Winning submissions will be awarded 4 tickets for themselves and 4 tickets for their mentor to a Fairfield University athletic event, where both individuals will receive recognition during the breaks in action.

Applications are available at cwpfairfield.org.



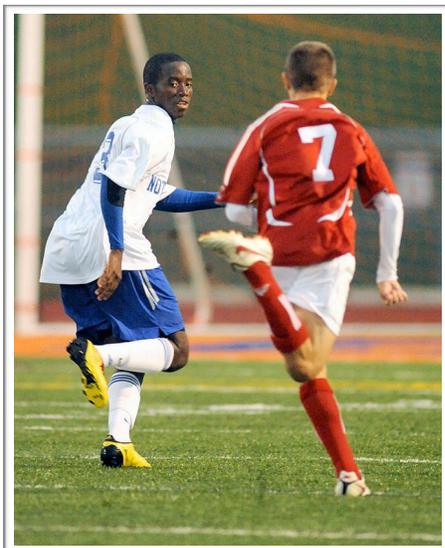
Soccer4Hope: Inspired for the Game of Life

Abu Bility

When my brother and I hear the word "HOPE" several things come to mind. Some people hope for a better life during each moment they have and look to the future with optimism because it is all they have. When we lived in Africa, first in Liberia, then in the Ivory Coast, and finally in Guinea, we hoped for many things. We hoped for the violence to end, safety for our family, an opportunity to visit America one day, and a way to live a successful life. When our lives were disrupted from the Liberian war we *hoped* everyday for 12 years that we would have the chance to go to a place where we would have opportunities to better ourselves. We moved to the United States 7 years ago through refugee relocation services and since then have been able to reflect on how *hope* has become a reality for us. When we first moved to upstate New York many people helped us to adopt the values of an American system. Organizations like Catholic Charities helped our family with housing, clothing, and enrolling in schools. They also sponsored youth programs, including soccer, so our friends and I could continue with the game that has always offered us a place to belong and to develop who we are as individuals. Each and every day we live in the United States we think about our responsibility to Africa and how we might help others like us to have similar hope. As sophomores in college, we have ambitions to bring such hope to others.



Abu, between classes



Lossine, on the field

We come from Liberia, located in West Africa, and while growing up we had many struggles. Liberia's long time civil war affected families, including ours, and we faced tremendous hardships before arriving to the states. Liberia was our home and we still think of it as our foundation. We loved Liberia and it is our dream to go back when we have a chance to do so and to help wherever we can. We have many memories of playing soccer in the streets there with our friends. Running after a soccer ball became a way for us to get away from the many struggles that were, and still are, going on in Africa. Soccer offered us hope in a world that sometimes seemed hopeless.

When we first arrived to the United States as middle school students, graduate students from Syracuse University interviewed us about our life stories and helped

us to create posters so we could teach others about the refugee experience. After the interviews ended, however, we became good friends with one of the graduate students who continues to offer us mentorship while we're in college. Knowing our love for sports he took us to a Syracuse lacrosse game and began to drive us to sports facilities in the suburbs where we could play indoor soccer during the winter and keep our athletic skills at their best. He also introduced us to his cousin's organization, *Hoops4Hope*. We immediately fell in love with the program and saw how we might one day be able to give back to the world.



Twins, High School graduation
Abu (left) and Lossine (right)

Hoops4Hope began as an organization that collected basketball equipment to send to kids and offered recreational programs to counter poverty, violence, and AIDS in South Africa and Zimbabwe. We wondered, however, if the organization did anything with soccer - anyone who knows anything about relocated refugee youth knows that soccer, to us, is like breathing and eating. Soccer is life. To know we could advocate for soccer in the U.S. to benefit programs in Africa made us work harder in our classes and on the field.

Mark Crandall, founder of *Hoops4Hope*, sent his cousin several *Soccer4Hope* bracelets. Being refugees from Africa and experiencing the struggle of abandoning our home country, relocating to camps, and worrying about basic needs, we survived on *hope*. *Hope* gave us a chance to dream beyond the world we lived. To us, *Soccer4Hope* is more than a bracelet that we wear with pride. It is a reminder of a better tomorrow, a gateway to remind us what we need to accomplish our dreams. We wear our bracelets during every soccer game even when the referees tell us to take them off. We always respond to the officials, "We can't. It's a part of who we are." We kiss our bracelets before every game for luck and do our best on the field to represent everything we've been through.



Our family in Linea, Guinea

Hoops4Hope and *Soccer4Hope* help kids both in and outside of school. They offer sporting activities to young people of South African and Zimbabwe and promote 7 life skills: *integrity, responsibility, self-esteem, Ubuntu, sense of humor, self-awareness, and focus*. As we found achievement in a U.S. high school and had a dream of getting into college (where we want to be academically successful and play soccer), we realize how important these life skills are.

Whenever we see our friends wasting opportunities in the United States we get upset. Being from Liberia, we know a life that is very different than what is provided young people here. People struggle everyday. Mothers do whatever it takes to put food in the

bowls for their kids to eat. When the chance to do something with life is handed to you and you choose not to do something with it, it makes us angry. We know of many stories in Liberia where families have needed to make tremendous sacrifices in order to survive, feed their families, and have shelter. Our mother, in fact, traveled with us to many countries during the war selling clothing so we could have food to eat. This was a struggle everyday.

Soccer, however, was one way for our friends and us to get away from everything. We've been playing soccer since we were eight and it remains the sport that helps us to build integrity, self-esteem, a sense of humor, self-awareness, focus, Ubuntu, and responsibility. These are life skills that we've been able to carry into our academic work. We've played soccer in every condition possible: rain, mud, snow, sleet, and ice, and loved every minute of it.



from our Facebook home pages

We've played soccer on dirt fields in Camp Linea of Guinea, on the beaches in Ivory Coast, on the concrete streets of Monrovia, Liberia, and on numerous fields in the United States. We've played soccer on organized teams, in pick-up games at the park, and in club

teams at college. When we first came to the U.S., though, we were kicked out of leagues because we were not "good team players." We didn't have Ubuntu. Although we loved the sport, we had not mastered the life skills that go with it. As we matured, we began to learn more about soccer and life through playing on teams with other African kids from Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, and all over the world, and interacting with American students in school. We played soccer in middle school and went undefeated the first season. We also played in high school, which was the highlight of our four years there. Our high school team consisted of players from 8 different countries, but we all had one thing in common, which was playing the "beautiful game" together.

Our hope was to play in college, but we didn't make the traveling team. Disappointed, we persevered, and began working with other athletes across our campus to create an intramural league. We got approved and started the school's first ever club soccer program. So, now we both play soccer for the school club team and we wear our *Soccer4Hope* bracelets with pride. It took hope and dedication plus the life skills promoted by *Hoops4Hope* to begin making a difference on our college campus.

We have not finished fulfilling our American dream yet, but we are on the beautiful ride to become successful. We have more schooling to complete, but we've proven we are able to overcome obstacles. We've had to study hard, practice a lot, focus on our goals, and work with others to make it as far as we have. We continue to *hope* that we will accomplish what we've set out to do. Why *hope*? Because if we do not hope, we will not be able to fight hard for what we believe in and want with our lives. As Americans from Africa, *hope* matters tremendously. Our achievements provide additional *hope* for others. It is always our intent to have a better future and an easier life than the one we had while growing up. We see the possibilities in life.



Ubuntu Academy participants (l-r): Kaitlyn Kelly (teacher), Remy Kalisa (Congo), Louise Dobson (teacher), Arcadius Takinda (Benin), and Tyler Nelson (student athlete).

CONNECTICUT WRITING PROJECT HOSTED UBUNTU ACADEMY FOR IMMIGRANT TEENS

The Connecticut Writing Project-Fairfield (CWP), based at the University, welcomed 15 Bridgeport teens who have recently arrived in the United States to Ubuntu Academy, a new, free,

“Fairfield helped me to open the doors to a population of youth that is often overlooked.”

BRYAN RIPLEY CRANDALL,
Connecticut Writing Project Director

literacy institute, part of CWP’s popular summer labs for young writers.

Inspired by the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* — “I can be me because of who we are together” — the Academy offered English-language learners, including refugee youth with limited or interrupted formal education, 10 full days of literacy learning through graphic novels and digital storytelling.

Ubuntu Academy came about after CWP Director Bryan Ripley Crandall offered a daylong workshop for an English as a Second Language (ESL) class at Bridgeport’s Bassick High School last winter. After he left, some of the students, who represent all grades at the school, wanted to keep in touch with him.

“The students found me on Facebook, which I thought was amazing,” said Dr. Crandall, who has more than 18 years of experience working with urban schools and students. “They really want to learn. Seven of them are honor roll kids.”

Dr. Crandall designed a special lab for these students who hail from Afghanistan, Congo, Vietnam, Rwanda, Iraq, and other nations. “Many American-born students are coming to write their first novel and to take part in poetry slams,” Dr. Crandall said. “Fairfield helped me to open the doors to a population of youth that is often overlooked.”

CWP-Fairfield/
Fairfield University Athletics
Dialogue Book
*This is meant to get you
talking – to have a conversation.*

What's your relationship with school?
Love it? Hate It? Why? Any books you
really like? Which ones?

Tell everyone in your group your
name, where you're from, and where
you go to school. Describe your school.

Question: Does playing a sport or
being involved in extracurricular
activities make you a better student
and human being? Why?

Describe the neighborhood where you
grew up – are you like others in your
neighborhood or different?

Free question: You make one up for
your group – some of you are
teachers, some of you are students,
some of you are new to America, some
of you are coaches. Ask what you want
to know.

How do you define *Superhero*? Who is
your favorite superhero in the
movies? What about in real life? Why?

Some argue that to be successful, one
needs *Skills4Life: Focus, Integrity, Self-
Awareness, Self-Esteem, Sense of
Humor, Responsibility, and Community*.
What do these words mean? Which is
most important to your success?

Comic relief: Go around and make the
funniest face you can. It's okay to be
silly.

Is there a relationship between being
athletic, being academic, and doing
more for the world we live in?

What's your relationship to sports?
Like them? Hate them? Why?

Last one: Decide on one thing you
want to share with everyone about
your conversation. Decide who will
say it and what they will say.



GREENWICH READS TOGETHER

at

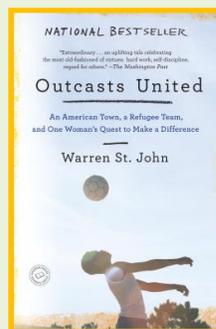
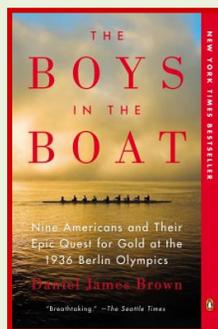
Greenwich High School

The Boys in the Boat / Outcasts United

Discussion Day

Tuesday, October 28, 2014

Program of Events



GRT Discussion Day at GHS Program Committee:
Alexandra Stevens, Susan Morris, and Kim Steinhorn

**Mr. Brown's author talk will be held in the GHS Auditorium.
All other programs will be held in Media Center Meeting Rooms 1 and 2.**

We greatly appreciate all of the wonderfully helpful people who made this program possible, including Dr. Winters and the administration, Mr. Foster and the tech staff, Mr. Rende and the custodial crew, Mr. Bobkowski and the security staff, all of the fantastic speakers, and the Greenwich High School PTA.

To reserve seats for your classes at any of the following events, please complete the online registration form: [GRT Discussion Day Registration](#). As seating is limited at these events, requests will be honored on a first come, first served basis. Confirmation will be sent via e-mail. Please note a student (or a parent) has the right to opt out of any of the programs and alternate arrangements must be made if a student/parent chooses to do so. Thank you for supporting these programs.

Block 7: Daniel James Brown Author Talk in the GHS Auditorium

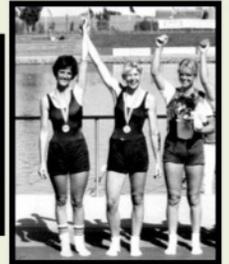
Against the grim backdrop of the Great Depression, *The Boys in the Boat* celebrates the 1936 U.S. Olympic eight-oar rowing team – nine working class boys who stormed the rowing world, transformed the sport, and galvanized the attention of millions of Americans. Drawing on the boys’ own diaries and journals, their photos and memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, *The Boys in the Boat* is a portrait of an era, a celebration of a historic achievement, and a chronicle of one extraordinary man’s personal quest.



Raised in San Francisco, [Daniel James Brown](#) attended Diablo Valley College, U.C. Berkeley, and UCLA. He taught writing at San Jose State University and Stanford before becoming a narrative non-fiction book author. *The Boys in the Boat* has been on bestseller lists across the country, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and NPR.

Block 1: Balancing Act: Athletics and Life

GHS welcomes former U.S. Olympian rower [Jamie Koven](#), National Rowing Foundation Vice President and U.S. Rowing Team Physician [Dr. Jo A. Hannafin](#), and GHS seniors and Greenwich Crew captains Sylvie Brounstein, Andrew Hoffmeister, Blake Manca, and Isabel Meskers to discuss some of the themes raised in *The Boys in the Boat* – teamwork, mentoring/coaching, balancing sports with other obligations, handling internal and external pressure to succeed, and the science behind becoming a successful athlete (nutrition, health, equipment, etc.).



Blocks 5 & 6: Leading Global Change Workshop

Since 2001, Dr. Bryan Ripley Crandall has worked with relocated refugee populations as a teacher, mentor, researcher, and advocate. Most recently, Crandall coordinated [Ubuntu Academy](#), a summer workshop for immigrant and refugee youth in Bridgeport where he promoted Literacy4Life, a curriculum based on the work of [Hoops4Hope](#), an international organization committed to providing children and young adults in challenging environments with a safe, nurturing place to develop athletically and intellectually.

Director of the Connecticut Writing Project and Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions at Fairfield University, Dr. Crandall will engage the audience with a workshop on changing demographics of the United States and ask attendees to consider their local and global responsibilities to humanitarian issues.

After School

GHS Headmaster Chris Winters and English Program Head Brigid Barry will lead a book discussion on *The Boys in the Boat* in the Media Center for faculty, staff, and retired faculty and the GHS student book club Cover to Cover will also discuss *The Boys in the Boat* book in the Media Center. Both events start at 2:30 p.m. and will offer refreshments and great conversation. Please register [HERE](#) for the faculty/staff book discussion.

