

Black History month speaker: Each of us are star throwers

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Krista Allison challenged the audience Tuesday to find their inner star thrower as depicted in the parable adapted from the “The Star Thrower.”

The story goes like this: A man walking on the beach noticed a boy along the shoreline who picked up a starfish from the sand and threw it in the ocean.

“What are you doing?” he asked the boy.

The boy replied, “I’m throwing starfish into the ocean”.

“Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?” the man asked.

“The tide stranded them,” the boy answered. “If I don’t throw them in the water before the sun comes up, they’ll die.”

The man was scoffed, “There are miles of beach and thousands of starfish. You’ll never throw them all back, there are too many. You can’t possibly make a difference.”

The boy then picked up another starfish and threw it back into the water, saying “It made a difference for that one.”

Krista Allison, a longtime educator in Stark County, challenged an audience of 50 community members, Stark State College employees and students on Tuesday to find their inner star thrower as depicted in the parable adapted from the “The Star Thrower” by author Loren Eiseley.

Her speech was part of Stark State’s celebration of Black History Month. The event was sponsored by the college’s Office of Diversity.

Star throwers

During her hourlong multimedia presentation, Allison, now a consultant for the Stark Education Partnership, presented a few people she considers star throwers – those who use their talents, knowledge and generosity to impact others.

She noted how billionaire Robert F. Smith, founder of Vista Equity Partners, last year paid off the student debt of roughly 400 students at Morehouse College and called upon them to pay it forward. She applauded New York Times’ journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones for creating The 1619 Project, which

commemorates the 400th year of American slavery by examining slavery's modern legacy and reframing the way the history is understood.

Allison said her high school's former speech coach, Louie, is her star thrower because he encouraged her to find and use her voice at a time when she was searching for purpose at a predominately white school.

During her senior year of high school, Allison began to question why teachers barely focused on the importance of Black History Month.

"When we came to the chapter about Black History Month, it was maybe a short paragraph," she said. "My history teacher would glaze over it and we would move onto something else."

Frustrated, Allison used her voice to petition the school's leadership and the district school board to allow her and some friends perform a skit about Black History Month to each school in the district. The board agreed and even provided a bus to take them from one building to another.

And now, Allison continues to her voice as an educator to encourage students to become star throwers.

She referred to the "All In: Ensuring Success for All Students" initiative, where more than 100 youth from across Stark County and surrounding counties have initiated projects that help promote awareness and inclusion for all students within their schools.

"Each of us are star throwers and we have the ability to change lives each and every day," Allison said.

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