

Good Morning delegates, teachers, and facilitators of the Model United States Senate Program. My name is Michael Ross Boone. I am 18 and I am a senior at Kaiserslautern High School, home of the mighty Division 1 Raiders. I express my sincerest apologies for not being unable to attend this morning, but I am most honored to be standing before you via camcorder as the 2009 United States Senate Youth Program #1 DODEA delegate.

I would first like to say, Thank you your continued dedication and excellence to educating and empowering youth through the legislative process of the United States Senate.” We cannot be apathetic to such an important body, our national government, for we are surely strengthening our nations’ and world’s next generation of leaders. This morning I would like to talk to you about character, vision, and public service, three important concepts that the United States Senate Youth Program fosters.

My first question to you is: **What defines your character? Who are you and where are you going?** You are driven by your passion. **What moves you?** Find what motivates you. You are only limited by your own imagination. The blessing of the American Dream is yours.

Work hard; challenge yourself. What will you do in the face of adversity? Certainly, you will not deter from your goals. Your aspirations are not deferred. Surely, you are empowered by the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. “Even though you face the difficulties of today and tomorrow,” have a dream, a vision for yourself to rise above, to overcome your situation to reach your full potential.

Persevere through your challenges. In the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Fight ardently for what you believe in like Susan B. Anthony and Rachel Carson, encourage like Ghandi, explore like Lewis and Clark, inspire like John F. Kennedy, and believe like the Wright Brothers, for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us something far more resplendent that far outweighs them all.

Your challenges are what define and attune your character. But, remember: **instill candid, ethical values** in your decisions, set standards for yourself and lead others to do the right thing by example. Do not compromise your integrity. General Selva, Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told me at the United States Senate Youth Program that “your reputation, your honesty is all that you have. He is right.

That is one thing **no one** can take away from you.” Your word is your bond. Let the truth endure, if nothing else. Honesty, although sometimes it may not be popular, **honesty** shows that you respect yourself, that you have self worth, and that you value your integrity. Honesty is genuine and trusting; it is an unwavering commitment to character. The measure of a man is truly the profundity of his character as Dwight Eisenhower once said.

Strive for excellence. Be driven by hope, your faith, to achieve and fulfill your potential. Do not be afraid. Nelson Mandela once said, “We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, handsome, talented, and fabulous? He responded, “Actually, who are you not to be...your playing small does not serve the world.” Exude confidence, yet be appreciative and humble.

Each of us is only one paycheck away from poverty. Think about it. A month ago, during my trip to the United States Senate Youth Program, I had a truly humbling experience. After meeting and being inspired by such meritorious individuals as the President of the United States, Barack Obama, Supreme Court associate justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, CEO of C-Span Brian Lamb, and the Director of National Counterterrorism Michael Leiter, I walked the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery.

There, rest more than 300,000 individuals who gave to a cause greater than themselves. Someone's mother, someone's daughter, Someone's brother, Someone's father died in something they believed in, stepping out on faith, displaying unparalleled courage and patriotism...[March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009][2X] is a day forever engraved in my mind...It is an inspiration, a testament to the nation's strength and ideals. I believe we should all give to something more than ourselves.

Volunteer; give the most valuable resource, time. A youth once wrote and questioned all 100 U.S. Senators asking how can one live a fulfilling life? What is the key to happiness? I believe Senator Thomas Carper of Delaware put it best. He responded simply with two words, "Serve Others." Give of yourself; make an ardent commitment to public service. Make a difference; stand up for change in your life. Believe in yourself because no one else has to. Do something meaningful, something that matters to you. Change begins with you, not always necessarily with someone else. Learn from others, willingly applying constructive criticism in everything that you do.

That is what makes you better. I believe in what President Obama once said, "We are the change that we have been waiting for." Remember to make the world better in whatever you do, make a difference. And as another wise man once said, as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others. Thank you and God Bless You!

**Michael Boone - DOD**