

PRESS RELEASE

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Renowned Educator Inspires Clifton Middle School Students

MONROVIA – An educator known for her unconventional classroom tactics brought more than 700 Clifton Middle School students to tears on Feb. 14 with stories of how her “unteachable” students have blazed paths to college and successful careers.

Erin Gruwell, a former Wilson High School teacher in Long Beach Unified School District featured in the film “Freedom Writers,” discussed the transformative power of education during a Freedom Writers Foundation assembly, leading students through activities demonstrating the impact of such obstacles as financial hardships, homelessness, and depression.

Audience members took part in a “line game” – an activity portrayed in the film in which students stand on a duct-taped line to attest to their experiences with such obstacles.

“When we did the line game, I felt sad, inspired, and shocked,” eighth-grader Natalie Nash said. “Seeing so many of my peers stand showing they have experienced horrible things in their life really made me think about how important it is to choose the right path.”

The line game had an immediate impact on students, who began talking to one another about their life experiences.

“Monrovia Unified School District continues to work closely with our parents, teachers, and community to provide enriching experiences for our students and teachers,” MUSD Board President Ed Gillland said. “We are grateful to Clifton’s PTSA for sponsoring this enlightening opportunity.”

After the presentation, students formed another line – this one to take photos, hug and thank Gruwell.

“We are very grateful that our students at Clifton Middle School were given the opportunity to learn from Erin Gruwell,” MUSD Superintendent Katherine Thorossian said. “Hearing Erin tell her story and share her students’ experiences is a moment they will never forget.”

PHOTO CAPTION

2-14-19_MUSD_Gruwell 1: Clifton Middle Schools students gather to thank Erin Gruwell, who is portrayed in the feature film “Freedom Writers,” after her motivational presentation on Feb. 14.

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OUR MISSION

Inspire students to engage in meaningful learning in a safe and nurturing environment that embraces diversity.

Challenge students to be ethical, productive members and leaders of the community.

OUR VISION

Our students will be ethical, compassionate individuals who:

- graduate from high school prepared for college and career,
- contribute and adapt to an ever-changing world by being resourceful and responsible citizens, and
- embrace diversity.