

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Monrovia Unified Students Inspired to Boost Leadership, Interpersonal Skills Through Motivational Speakers

**MONROVIA, CA** – Students from Monrovia High, Santa Fe Computer Science Magnet and Clifton Middle School joined more than 1,000 of their peers from across Southern California at Monrovia High to learn how to become leaders in a digital society as part of the Josten’s Renaissance’s “Find Your Grind” Tour.

The assembly on Jan. 16 was one of 47 stops across the nation that gathered leadership students from 24 area schools, including Monrovia High senior Mariah Helm. She was a seventh-grader at Clifton when she first joined Renaissance, a student-led team boosting recognitions for their peers’ academic achievements and personal endeavors.

“I wanted my life to be about other people and I found that Renaissance was the best program to do that,” Helm said. “I just knew from the first day I joined that everything we were going to do was going to be so powerful.”

Mike Smith, founder of two nonprofits that empowers youth to contribute to their community, and Dr. Phillip Campbell, an educator focused on strengthening school culture and climate, shared personal stories during the assembly to inspire students to take action and follow their passion – regardless of their background or educational level.

Helm follows Smith’s online video series, “The Harbor”, in which he interviews celebrities, teachers and students on life topics including healthy relationships, social media, and stress and pressure. She combined the interpersonal skills she learned from Smith with the leadership skills she gained in Renaissance to help her in other school activities.

For example, Helm mentors a group of Monrovia High freshmen to help them transition into high school life, including one autistic student. She connects with him every day to ensure that he has academic support and is also enjoying his new environment.

“I started to think in other people’s shoes and consider their situation apart from my own,” Helm said. “In the past, I would get angry and sad, but now I put myself in their position and that would change my perspective.”

**MORE**

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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.

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UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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Smith also met with Monrovia students in small-group discussions about his book, *Legacy vs. Likes*. The book describes Smith's life and how he created his nonprofit organization with a high school GPA of 2.4, but with a strong drive to serve his community. Each chapter poses questions that challenges the students' way of thinking and provides a space for them to write their responses.

"Thank you to Josten's Renaissance for hosting this leadership event at our District," Monrovia Unified President Terrence Williams said. "Our students were able to connect with influential community leaders, and in turn, learn how to be stronger leaders at their schools."

Teachers and advisers also broke off into educator workshops with Dr. Campbell on what it means to be a Renaissance school, while also learning how to support student leadership on campus.

"Monrovia Unified offers an abundance of opportunities that bolsters the education of our students and empowers them to become key members of their community," Monrovia Unified Superintendent Dr. Katherine Thorossian said. "Renaissance is embedded throughout our schools, helping guide our students in developing the strength of character necessary to lead."

### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**012918\_MONROVIA\_RENAISSANCE1:** A Monrovia High Senior (left) talks about his ambitions with Mike Smith, a motivational speaker at Josten's Renaissance's "Find Your Grind" tour that made a stop at Monrovia High on Jan. 16.

**012918\_MONROVIA\_RENAISSANCE2:** More than 100 students from Monrovia High, and Clifton and Santa Fe middle schools were inspired to become leaders in their passion at Josten's Renaissance "Find Your Grind" tour stop at Monrovia High on Jan. 16.

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