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JRNL 337-Editing
Revelations of a Redneck Article

INDIANA – Quay Hanna is full of labels. Redneck, racist and college graduate. Overcoming the labels forced upon him has inspired many people across the country.

Hanna, 40, spoke to a crowd of approximately 140 students in the Hadley Union Building (HUB) Monday night. The speech lasted 90 minutes and he was available for questions and discussion after the presentation was over.

Hanna, dressed in jeans and a blue t-shirt, captivated the audience when he said “Some people call me a redneck, some people call me a hick, and some people go as far to call me white trash.”

Growing up in Strasburg Pa, Quay was used to the small town life. His mother was a bus driver and his father worked on a 66-acre farm.

After graduating high school, Quay headed to Bloomsburg University, majoring in English.

The racial ideals started to formulate as he continued college.

Hanna used racial slurs, jokes and stereotypes. He felt that he was superior because of his race.

Hanna was trying to fit in and started to conform to what others wanted. He made a decision to become a racist.

“I bought into it; I wanted to be a good redneck,” Hanna said.

A misconception about racism is that groups such as the KKK are the problem and that parents don’t do enough to stop it.

Hanna said that racism starts at an early age but parenting is not the only cause. Community, media outlets, school, culture and society all influence people.

Throughout his life, Hanna used the process of dehumanization or making people seem less human, usually through language.

“We, as a society, make it seem like words don’t matter,” he said.

In January 1993, Hanna reached the breaking point in his life.

He did the unthinkable and bought a ticket on a Greyhound bus. He wanted to see America outside of Lancaster. On the bus he met a black man and started talking and realized there was little difference between them.

“There’s nowhere to hide on a bus,” he said.

Hanna talked about the importance of conversation and how the interaction he had on the bus changed him forever.

Hanna continued to grow and change as the years progressed. He travels around the United States and speaks to high schools and universities about the importance of working together and communication.

He started talking with high school students 13 years ago at Penn Manor High School.

The club, known as “Quay’s Club,” has inspired many students and encouraged them to voice opinions. Hanna respected all of the students, no matter what was said.

In 1997, Hanna’s self-published book “Bus America: Revelations of a Redneck” was released. It’s available on www.Amazon.com and reveals the bus ride that changed his life.

The speech was followed by an informal question-and-answer session. For questions about the Six O'clock series, contact the Center for Student Life at 724-357-2598 or www.iup.edu/sixoclockseries/.