



Greg Mortenson draws record crowds at Squaw Valley Institute presentation

Talk about the energy of the Ever Ready bunny: Humanitarian Greg Mortenson, co-author of "Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time," flew into Reno Sunday morning, drove up to Incline Village, Nev. where he gave a talk and slide show at the Hyatt Regency to a sold out 2 p.m. matinee, signed a zillion books, attended a private dinner with VIP event sponsors, followed by yet another 7:30 p.m. sold out talk and slide show and more book signing. Whew! The big guy from Montana was going strong until after 10 p.m. that evening, truly energized by the 1,300 plus devotees who went to see him. Monday morning he was off to the Bay Area to speak to school children in Fremont.



Mortenson, whose book has been a New York Times bestseller for more than 140 weeks, has built 131 schools in remote areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan (without any government assistance) and even been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. When asked his reaction to not winning it, he commented "I have too much work to do right now anyway!" Mortenson's story, which emphasizes the importance of human relationship building with the Muslim world, is now required reading at many U.S. schools as well as for top U.S. military commanders. "Politics will never bring peace," Mortenson told the crowd. "People will bring peace."

Mortenson also talked about his other foundation, Pennies For Peace, which educates American school children about how they can make a positive impact on a global scale, one penny at a time. Clearly Mortenson has inspired not only adults but many children, some who have in turn set up their own global-changing foundations.

Mortenson is a likable guy. Upon arriving at the sponsor dinner (late due to overwhelming response for book signings) he warmly hugged and shook hands with guests. Then he answered questions and talked during dinner to the point where guests had to insist he take time to eat his dinner! "I'm just a simple guy," he said. Remarkable, humble and genuine are a few words to describe him. Mortenson loves being a family man and talked about his children, his wife Tara, and showed slides of them in his presentation. After completing his presentation, Mortenson took questions from the audience. His new book, "Stones Into Schools," will be released Dec. 1.

Spotted in the audience at the evening event were Christy and Paul Curtis, Alice and Paul Arthur, Walter Nelson, Dave Ferrari, Lorna and Paul Leyton, newlyweds Mary and TCDA director Justin Broglio, Linda Brown, Dale Chamblin, Ruth Anne Kocour and Bob Hall, Cindy Gustafson and Wally Auerbach, Lois and Andy Skaff, Wendy Wood and Gary Spohr, Betty and Mark Simpson, Kevin Wightman, Brady and Bob McClintock, Joan and Mark Lowenstern, Carol Savary and George Koster, Theresa May Duggan, Elizabeth and John Eaton, Betty and Roger Peterson, Luanne and Greg Parker, Terry and Ken Yagura, Jimalu and Gary Davis, Ellen Petteroe and Dave Clohessy, Patsy and Larry Sevison, Ardith and Howard Marguleas, Linda and David Brown, Carol and Jon Shanser, Fred Ilfeld, Ann and Rick Tavan, Judy and Dick Lingle, Kathleen Eagan and Jim Duffy, Marianne and Jim Porter, Beence and John Loomis, Julie Maurer and David Schotzko, Nancy and Jerry Ives, Barbara and Fred Kreitzberg, David and Kathy Welch, Judy Howes and Linda Danto.

The Squaw Valley Institute has future speakers scheduled, including best-selling authors Michael Pollan, "In Defense of Food" and Khaled Hosseini, "The Kite Runner," as well as its upcoming event "A Toast to Tahoe Skiing" on Nov. 7.

For more information visit www.squawvalleyinstitute.org.

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