

To whom it may concern,

My name is Sean Doobay and I was a grade 8 Virtual School teacher for LC3 in the Toronto District School Board during the 2020/2021 school year. I'm writing this letter in support of Sam Demma and his inspirational message.

As a Virtual School teacher in the wake of COVID-19, I found that many of my students were struggling with various personal issues. Some have become jaded either as a result of the lack of genuine socialization through Virtual School, the lockdowns that have left them stuck at home, or because they felt some sort of morbid disconnect with reality due to the pandemic. Additionally, as grade 8 students, they were about to embark on a new chapter in their lives as they transitioned towards high school in September. Many of them, on top of their personal struggles, were dealing with anxiety related to this new chapter laden with so many unknowns ahead.

I happen to know Sam personally as a member of a fitness club that I attend. I learned that he was a motivational speaker, who specializes in inspiring, sharing and spreading his message to youthful audiences. He learned that I happened to teach youthful audiences. We decided at some point that our paths should cross professionally.

As a class, we were entering our debate and persuasion unit for language. This is the time of the year where I would normally start preparing students for the annual Speech Arts competition. As we commenced the unit I felt it would be a great opportunity for the students to have an enthusiastic, positive speaker come in and share his journey with the class. The timing was right to contact Sam and ask him to share his message with my class this year.

Sam was incredibly professional and engaging. He opened their minds to the possibility that they had the power to change the world, one small, consistent action at a time. Some of them realized that they had the power to carry this simple, yet infectious message through to multiple facets of their lives. As an example, through small consistent actions, some of them realized that dedicating a small portion of their day to doing homework, could help to make them a more organized and responsible student. They realized that through making small, consistent attempts at difficult math problems, they could develop the resilience needed to tackle other large problems. Some of them were even considering connecting with Sam in the summer to start working on their volunteer hours!

If you are interested in having a guest speaker attend your school to deliver a positive message to your students, I highly recommend that you consider Sam Demma. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Doobay', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sean Doobay

Teacher Librarian / Special Education Teacher, Bliss Carman Sr. Ps., TDSB
LC3 Virtual School Teacher, TDSB.