

(This is an article written by students to be printed in their local newspaper under community news and was sent to me to edit—our edits were in red)

Ben D. Anderson said he had three goals. He wanted to begin a non-profit organization, he wanted to write a book, and he wanted to earn a degree. Those goals led him Gettysburg High School last week as he spoke to the students and staff about the seriousness of bullying and disabilities. Anderson was born with cerebral palsy and grew up in the small North Dakota town of Kenmare. He graduated from Minor Senior High in Minot, North Dakota. He attended college at Lake Region Junior College and Golden Valley Lutheran College. He then attended college at the University of Wisconsin-Stout where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Rehabilitation with an emphasis in community-based rehabilitation. He now lives in Amery, Wisconsin from where he travels from state to state with his wife, Dee, to speak about bullying and disabilities through keynote presentations. He is currently on a South Dakota tour and has spoke and presented to many area schools such as Mobridge-Pollock, Agar-Blunt-Onida, and Redfield. Anderson is sponsored by the **Developmental** Disability Council of South Dakota.

Anderson began public speaking in his early twenties, and in 1978 he started Break Through Incorporated. Break Through is a non-profit organization that provides leadership training to churches, community civic groups, schools, universities, businesses, and professional groups. The training enables them to build a new awareness of and sensitivity towards persons with disabilities. The message motivates people to face their discomfort and opens the door to better interpersonal relationships.

Anderson says he started speaking because of a superintendent named E.C. Johnson and because of his personal experience with cerebral palsy. He was bullied because of it and realized that students need to understand how their actions can affect other people, very seriously sometimes. He has written five books and booklets on faith and disabilities, such as, "IQ of 63, So What! *Going Beyond Everybody Else's Expectation*" and 'Last One Picked, So What! *We can turn it around*". He believes problems with bullying are just getting worse because of technology such as Facebook, and it is now easier to bully without facing the victim. Anderson said his goal "is to help students understand disabilities and help them understand that they need to stop bullying." More information can be found about Anderson and his work at www.bendanderson.com.