

World Merit Day Is Finally Here

World Merit Fellowship Program Day 4 - 24/07/14

The big day has finally arrived! The World Merit Day “What Matters Concert and Conference.” This event promised to be a great day of inspiration and entertainment for young change makers and it did not disappoint. You could feel the energy in the room as the participants entered the building. This was arguably the most exciting day of the program, a whole day dedicated to World Merit, putting our organisation in the public eye and showing the world what we stand for.

As registration desks opened the convention centre began to fill up. People from all over the Liverpool had arrived to hear the speakers and music. It could have been the first day of the rest of their lives and they were going to make a change.

The crowd piled into the auditorium ready for the first sessions on the stage. Parker Liautaud was first to speak. At the age of 19, Parker is the youngest person to visit both the north and the south poles. He spoke in length about the research he has been undertaking in the Antarctic and the importance of protecting the environment. Next up was Andy Bounds, an expert in communication. He emphasised the importance of being clear about the benefits to the other party when selling an idea. This is key to effective communication and persuasion.

Passionate young Felix Finkbeiner shared his story on how he has grown his idea, “Plant For The Planet”, from a school project to a global organisation that now has official ownership of the international tree count worldwide. At only 16 years old, his achievements have also led him to create the best selling fair trade chocolate in Germany. He is a true inspiration to the younger generation.

Sir Ken Robinson delivered an incredible speech about harnessing creativity in the education system. He believes that many education systems focus children to think in a way that rejects their individual talents and passions instead of embracing them. “It is a catastrophe that arts are not taught properly in schools.” Ken’s passion for education has led him to conduct the most viewed Ted talk of all time.

After a short break attendees had a choice of workshops and seminars to attend ranging from a talk by prison rehabilitators to a panel with Katie Piper, from an inspiring seminar by artist manager Marc Marot, to stories of ‘The Backpacker Intern’s’ travels. There really was something for everyone. That’s without mentioning the ongoing music throughout the day from a range of various bands and artists, which kept energy levels sky high between speakers.

Before long, the afternoon keynote session commenced first on stage was Lord Michael Hastings, KPMG’s Global Head of Citizenship and Diversity. Lord Hastings spoke about striving for goals and fighting for your dreams, regardless of what think of your path. “You’re biggest competition in life is you”

Margaret Aspinall, chairman of the Hillsborough family support group discussed the disaster which marked a dark day in the city’s history. Losing her son at this event encouraged her to become an activist for truth. She now shares her message and encourages others to stand up for what is right, even if the world seems against you. Determination is what brings change.

Next up, Katie Piper takes to the stage to discuss confidence in the face of adversity. After being raped and attacked with acid, Katie still has the courage to speak up against injustice. “Those that don’t scar, die. I wear scars on the inside and out, because I am a survivor. People’s negative reactions motivated me. Why did I let them imprison my mind and my body? When something stops you in your tracks think is this a problem or an opportunity? Once you have identified it, you can make it work for you.”

Finally, it was time for the headline speaker to grace us with her presence. At only 17 years old Malala already seems so wise and dedicated to her cause. She was shot by the Taliban for her determination to gain an







