

AUTHOR BEN MIKAELSEN SHARES STORIES

By Christine Feltes
For the Plain Talk

A small crowd gathered Monday at the Edith B. Siegrist Public Library to listen to award winning author Ben Mikaelson speak of his adventures.

Mikaelson began by speaking of his youth in Bolivia and meeting a pilot who let him fly his plane.

"He sat me down in the seat of DC3 and it was so cool," Mikaelson recalled. "Up until that place and time in life I'd been at the bottom of the bucket. Everybody else was the one that moved the world, but I was just on protect mode. But here I was, I was moving the world."

Mikaelson recounted his experiences as a minority in Bolivia, the severity of his boarding school and explained his excitement when his parents told him that they were moving to Minnesota. Even in Minnesota, he was different from the other kids.

"Everything about me was different, I started to get a chip on my shoulder," he said. "By the time I started eighth grade, I had seen the inside of the principal's office more than the principal had."

Mikaelson's struggles to fit in make him resonate with his audience. Carla Kozak, a high school teacher and one of the event's organizers, said that her experiences teaching Mikaelson's book *Touching Spirit Bear* prompted her to schedule the author.



Author Ben Mikaelson keeps his audience spellbound as he tells of his adventures Monday at the public library.

CHRISTINE FELTES / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

"It touches lots of people," she said, noting that he inspires students because, "he tells them about all of the amazing things that he's done."

Mikaelson said that one day he went into the school library, prepared to make some mischief when the librarian approached him and helped him find a book. He had never read a book before.

"It took me more than a week to read my very first book," Mikaelson said. "But when I finished this book, I knew it was about a little creature on the planet that knew how I felt." Vermillion Middle School's

librarian and another of the event's coordinators, Sharla Krell, spoke of his presentation at the middle school earlier in the day, describing the audience as engaged and attentive.

"He fits our needs," she stated, "words on a page become stories. He's an amazing story-teller."

Mikaelson continued his life story, explaining how he struggled with his college English class, but received his professor's encouragement to become a writer.

"He assigned this one page essay," Mikaelson said, "I wrote the very best one page essay I could think of. He said, 'Your paper was the only one that made me laugh and cry.'"

Mikaelson told how he volunteered to raise bear cubs, an experience leading him to write his first book, *Rescue Josh McGuire*.

"I think that I could sit and listen to him all evening," said audience member Kandi.

Mikaelson shared his realization that adventures could count as research, displaying a slideshow of photos from his travels to space camp, Africa, South America, the Klondike, and even the North Pole.

"You talk about your dreams, someday you want to become this, someday you want to do that."

"Do me a favor and get rid of the word someday, because someday never arrives," he told the students in the room while he reminded the adults to encourage youths to follow their dreams.

District 10 Vermillion Youth Wrestling Results

Wrestling Results

Following are results from Vermillion Youth Wrestling's showing at the District 10 Championships on last Saturday. All 19 Vermillion grapplers advanced to the Regional Championships Saturday at Harrisburg.

Information courtesy of Vermillion Youth Wrestling.

Tots Division:
Ayden Clodfelter secured first place in the 46-pound tots division by winning both of his matches on the day. Clodfelter won his first match 2-0 and then went on for a major decision 15-2 in the championship match. Rylan Moran finished in third place in the 46-pound tots division and he scored two wins with one loss on the day. His first match was a second period pin and won the third place match with a pin in 39 seconds.

Bantam Division:
Vermillion had a strong showing in the bantam division. Connor Peterson won his 61-pound weight class and all wins were by pin. In the championship match, he pinned his foe in the first 30 seconds of the match. Also in the 61 pound weight class, Cooper Resier finished in third. Resier got off to a shaky start, losing his first match, but fought his way back through to the third place match and scored a pin near the end of the first period to claim the third place medal. Aaron Bingen and Hayden Christopherson represented the youth Tanagers well in the 53-pound division. They both ended up in the third place match with Bingen taking third over Christopherson by only one point. Bingen finished 4-1 on the day and Christopherson finished 3-2. Matthew Roob took sixth in the 44-pound division. Roob went 1-2 on the day, winning his first match 6-0 before losing two tough matches after the win. Jacob Emerson also grabbed 5th place in the 47-pound division. Nolan Nygren and Duke Job battled all day in a tough 50-pound weight class. Nolan would finish 3-2 on the day and took 7th place with a grueling decision over his teammate

Job. Job went home with eighth place and the final qualifier position in the bracket, finishing 2-2 on the day.

Midget Division:
Rollie French and Michael Roob took home gold medals in the midget division. French sealed the deal by winning all three matches by pin fall on the day in the 104-pound weight class. His first pin was scored at 30 seconds and his pin fall win in the championship match came at 45 seconds into the match. Roob won all three of his matches as well in the 56 pound class. Michael won his first two matches by technical fall 15-0. Not to be outdone, he battled his Yankton opponent tough in the championship match, sending it to overtime after the third period. Roob ended up winning in overtime with a great take-down to score two points to claim the gold. Newcomer Ethan Kerkhove scored a third place finish in the 104-pound weight class. He finished 2-1 on the day and won the third place match with a 4-3 decision. Joaquin Dominguez took fourth in the 63-pound weight class. He finished 2-2 on the day which included a first and third match pin.

Novice Division:
Jack Kratz won both of his matches on the day, taking first in the 117-pound weight class. Kratz won his first match due to injury to his opponent and seal the first place with a close 5-4 decision in the second match. Caleb Emerson was the only other Vermillion wrestler in this division and he took fourth in the 77-pound weight class. He battled hard in the third place match but his opponent took the match with a very close 5-3 decision.

Schoolboy Division:
Lucas Anglin, Kobe Culver and Nicholas Roob were the only Vermillion wrestlers in the division. Anglin won his only match by technical fall 17-2 to take first in the 95-pound class. Culver would also take his only match of the day by fall at 2:36 to claim top spot in the 130-pound class. Roob finished in third place in the 70-pound division.

■ READY

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originally began as an online store from the inspiration of Nielsen's taste in fashion has now morphed into a full on storefront, with big intentions.

"I kind of spend all of my time here," Nielsen said. "I like making people happy, so when I see people come in here I want them to leave satisfied and have something in their hand that makes them feel happy and makes them feel good about themselves."

After giving the old liquor store space a bit of a makeover, the atmosphere is welcoming. There are racks of clothing appealing to a wide range of personal styles and types, just begging to be sifted through.

"I've always been interested in fashion and trends," Nielsen said. "Once I have started this it has changed my perspective a little bit. Now I realize it's about people feeling good about themselves."

Bright colors and patterns adorn the garments hanging on racks in the store front. There are many different textures, styles and sizes available.

"I think it's a good resource for women in Vermillion," Nielsen said. "It's just easier for people to shop in town and I think it's going to be good for the community."

Opening the boutique has been exciting for Nielsen, but challenging for the Vermillion High School senior as well.

"It's kind of eye opening, all of the responsibilities," Nielsen said. "It's not easy."

Chloe has been able to accomplish opening the store with the help of her mother, Tamie.

"Over here we will have accessories," Tamie Nielsen said. "And next to that a big mirror so you can see how you look."

Dressing rooms with character make the boutique feel welcoming and enhance the shopping experience, putting it on a fun, fresher level.

Chloe wants to make sure that all budgets and personal tastes are represented in the clothing she creates her inventory from.

"We have clothes ranging all the way from 20 dollars to something like these shoes that are 220 dollars," Nielsen said. "We try to fit a wide variety of pricing so people have a choice."

Tamie Nielsen has enjoyed spending time with her daughter while working on making the boutique dream come true. Working together as a mother-daughter duo has been a learning experience

for both of them.

"It's about sourcing and buying and doing that together," Tamie Nielsen said. "We want to be able to offer something for everybody, and that applies price-wise, too. We recognize that there are certain people that want to buy expensive jeans, for example, but also that some people don't. It's really about having the store be open to anybody; we even carry a certain amount of plus sizes. It's more about how we want to be able to help anybody."

The boutique carries a wide variety of brands, most of which are less known labels that focus on quality. Brands such as these are boutique brands and bring a distinctive experience to the shopper.

"I think we try to stray away from a one certain kind of clothing or a one certain kind of style just so people have a choice when they come in," Nielsen said. "We want people to be able to come in and find

something they like and have something on the complete opposite side of the spectrum for somebody else."

In addition to clothes and footwear, Chloe has joined forces with other young women who are designing accessories. Some of them represent a twist.

"These headbands are very special," Tamie Nielsen said while delicately touching some pretty floral headpieces. "From each headband that is purchased, money is donated to a local children's cancer hospital."

Also on display are necklaces that go beyond costume jewelry. Chloe and Tamie Nielsen travel across the U.S. to find the right pieces for both their physical and online store. Inventory is hand selected by the duo. Necklaces and bracelets are laid out waiting to catch the eye of a shopper.

"These stones are semi-precious," Tamie Nielsen said. "The girl who makes these is also a young entrepreneur."

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Please include phone number.

A regular meeting will be held March 30th - please attend.
Jane Simons, Clerk
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