



By Carolyn Lee
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Reach for effort, education and excellence, students at Chase County Schools were told last Wednesday. The students listened, because the speakers were two very large former National Football League players.

Keith Davis and Devin Wyman visited CCS through a Migrant Education Program grant from ESU #15. They spent three days in Southwest Nebraska speaking to students, targeting Hispanic youth.

Their message drilled home the importance of education. “Readers become leaders,” Davis shouted. “You are not born a winner or a loser, you’re born a chooser.” Choose to win in life and education, he cheered.

The assemblies resembled a pep rally. Davis and Wyman had the students cheering for the Nebraska Cornhuskers, then their teachers and administrative staff.



Davis is a 6 foot one inch, 265 pound former New York Giant. He owns two Rose Bowl championship rings from his days at the University of Southern California (USC), where he graduated with a degree in Business Finance, and possessed the team’s highest grade point average.

He can bench press 515 pounds and leg presses 1,800 pounds. He can do push ups with a 550 pound man standing on his back.

He and wife Sara, a former NCAA All-American sprinter at UCLA, and their two sons, live near Dallas.

But Davis told the students that he has worked hard for everything he’s achieved.

His dad was involved with drugs and committed suicide when Davis was four years old. His mother became an alcoholic, and they lived in a rough area of Los Angeles.

By the time Davis was in the 10th grade he’d attended 19 schools. But he wanted to go to college. Hard work made that possible.



Wyman, a 6 foot 8 inch, 335 pound former New England Patriot, Minnesota Viking and Kansas City Chief, can run the 40 in 4.6 seconds. He’s called the “Big Machine.”

However, Wyman's "first half" of life, wasn't all that great. He had lots of athletic honors in high school, but "didn't participate in the classroom." He was afraid to let people know he didn't know the answers to questions.

He earned a scholarship to USC. While the signing press conference was being held at his mother's house, with major networks covering it, the police also arrived at the door.

Wyman didn't go into detail at the assembly for K-6 students, but said that through wrong choices and friends wanting to pull him down, he ended up in a place he never wants to revisit. He also lost his scholarship.

"Hard work pays off," he said, as he held up his two championship rings. He did attend USC, he did achieve his dream of going to the NFL, and he has a wife and children he's proud of.

On his locker door, while playing in the NFL, Wyman had taped the following saying: If I'm trying I'm flying. If I don't, I won't."

Davis told students they may be tempted to quit school in the eighth grade to help their parents earn a living. "You're not going to earn much. Keep up with your education," he admonished them.

Wyman added that even though he made it to the NFL, the average NFL career is three years. "Finish school," he stressed. He was the first in his family to go to college.

Davis, who has spoken in 3,000 schools worldwide, said "I want kids to be world-class students, not just world-class athletes."