

Tour Brings Message Of Following Your Dreams Through Education



(NAPSA)—Vince Papale has spent a lifetime beating the odds.

Papale's story is now the subject of a Disney movie starring Mark Wahlberg. Titled "Invincible," the movie is about how football coach Dick Vermeil (played by Greg Kinnear) wanted to infuse new life into a lackluster Philadelphia Eagles team in 1976. He invited "free agents" to compete for a roster spot with the Philadelphia Eagles. At the time, Papale was a 30-year-old schoolteacher by day and bartender at night. He had played only one year of high school football and no college football.

In true underdog fashion, Papale was signed as a wide receiver for the Eagles, becoming the NFL's oldest rookie, excluding kickers, to make a team.

Fast forward 25 years to June 22, 2001. Papale, then 54, is diagnosed with colon cancer. Eighteen inches of his colon ultimately had to be removed. Today, he is cancer free.

"It has been a remarkable life," says Papale, an executive with The Sallie Mae Fund. The Fund serves as the charitable organization of the nation's leading provider of education funding, Sallie Mae.

According to Papale, his work with Sallie Mae is a "natural extension" of what he has always enjoyed doing—helping young

people. It is a position for which Papale is uniquely qualified: He knows adversity, is driven by passion and is intent on seeing dreams become reality.

Following your dreams is the message that Papale hopes will resonate with today's youth. To coincide with the August release of his movie, The Sallie Mae Fund and Walt Disney Pictures are launching a five-city tour called "Hold Fast to Your Dreams," which will spotlight education and its role in fulfilling one's goals.

The "Hold Fast to Your Dreams" tour will also award \$50,000 in scholarships to students who are selected based on economic need, college potential and personal traits that demonstrate overcoming the odds.

"The honor that Disney has given me is beyond comprehension," says Papale. "I truly am so proud that this story is being told—not from an ego standpoint but because the story itself has meaning for today's youth. It speaks to the power of remaining true to your dreams—to never let failure deter those dreams and, instead, allow it to strengthen your resolve."

For more information on paying for college, visit Sallie Mae's award-winning www.CollegeAnswer.com Web site or The Sallie Mae Fund at www.salliemae.org.