

## Peter Mayer Delivers Message of Non-Violence at CETAV Gala

It was so tragically senseless that Cameron Ebel lost his life on that terrible, fateful evening in 2001, the victim of bullies who took it upon themselves to persecute him and judge him for what they perceived as "different."

But what the Gary and Laura Ebel have done since losing Cameron to work toward de-escalating teen violence is anything but senseless, and they have given their heart and soul to creating the CETAV (Cameron Ebel Teens Against Violence) organization to combat stereotypes and teach tolerance and diversity. Close to 300 supporters came out to the Wildlife Experience on Monday evening to aid in this cause that, in one way or another, touches everyone's lives. Every day, 22 teenagers lose their life to teen violence and 14,000 are victims of violence.

Part of CETAV's mission and path to getting the message out is to hold educational summits, so that participants can go back to their schools, friends, churches and neighborhoods and promote the tenets of tolerance. Kristine Turner, Ph.D., Director of Youth Leadership for Douglas County took the stage to introduce K.C. Schmeits from Rocky Heights Middle School, Andrew from Castle View, Corrie Hitchens from Mountain Vista and Kathleen Howell from Castle View. They all told stories of why they have participated in the summits program and why they are doing their part to eradicate teen violence. 7th grader K.C. was especially impressive, talking directly and succinctly to the audience without a trace of nervousness to deliver the message that "bullying is not cool."

The program then moved into the musical portion of the evening, when Peter Mayer and his band charmed the audience with memorable lyrics, beautiful harmony and upbeat rhythm. Peter spends some of his time as a Coral Reefer for Jimmy Buffet, but has excelled independently as well as a talented guitarist, vocalist and songwriter. In his unassuming way, Peter expressed his pride in participating at the CETAV event, telling the audience "I am honored to stand up at this event." He has a voice that is ethereal, coming from realms not readily stereotyped. He spent part of his childhood in India, and he brings that worldliness and earthiness to his music.

After the Peter Mayer Band played their first set, there was a break to watch a poignant video about CETAV and teen violence and listen to some remarks. Bob Mordini spoke about why his company, Mordini Watters Capital Partners, chose to be a gold sponsor of the event. "Kids are the most important parts of our lives," he said. "When it occurred to me that what happened to Cameron could very easily happen to me and my family, I realized I have to do something. Bullying happens to everybody, and together, I think we can do something about it." You could have heard a pin drop after Mordini spoke, as everyone realized that this indeed is not "someone else's problem."

CEO of CETAV, David Jensen, also spoke to the crowd with some props he brought on stage, including crayons, and was joined by some special friends in attendance, including former Bronco Ed McCaffrey and the Reverend Leon Kelly, a saintly icon in his own rite in working against gang and teen violence in Denver. "Everyone has crayons," Jensen began. "You can draw a picture of when teen violence isn't as rampant. You can get involved."

Guests were also able to enjoy a great silent and live auction, with sportscaster Vic Lombardi taking the helm as auctioneer, and top off the evening with more of Mayer's music. It was a great evening in which everyone took home the clear message that it is up to us to get involved and act, and perhaps together we can eradicate the senselessness of teen violence in this country.

CETAV is an organization that works with local schools to provide Youth Leadership Summits which equip students to take the message of non-violence into their schools and community. Since CETAV began, more than 2,000 Douglas County students have attended a CETAV Summit which in turn, has touched a student population of nearly 36,000. Kids mentor other kids within their own school by taking

the tools they've been equipped with at CETAV Summits to stop the violence through tolerance and respect.