

The Civics of Civility: The art of the question

Young people can teach us about ourselves

“The man who never changes his mind is like still water and breeds reptiles of the mind.” – William Blake

Socrates, the most famous of teachers, was not renowned for what he taught but how he taught. He did not just focus on the question, he dwelled on it.

In the wake of a question lies a natural place of silence, a new space for pause, and hopefully, the room to think. And when there is room to think, there is room to stand in another person's shoes, enhance empathy and understanding, coop-

erate, or collaborate, perhaps even open a space – and a way – to navigate negotiation between different points of view.

In 2007, a handful of philosophy students at Souhegan High School challenged their visionary teacher Chris Brooks to create something that would allow them to take their questions outside the classroom, thereby birthing the first Ethics Forum at Souhegan High School in 2009. The Ethics Forum began with students meeting after school and during the summer. This first forum mushroomed into the first HYPE (Host-



D. QUINCY WHITNEY

ing Young Philosophy Enthusiasts) student-led philosophy conference held in 2010 at Souhegan with 110 students. Each year the Forum chose a new topic. As interest in HYPE grew each year, the conference eventually moved to St. Anselm's College.



Staff photo by QUINCY WHITNEY

Souhegan High School philosophy teacher and HYPE founder Chris Brooks offers the microphone to a student during a January training session.

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