

Olympic gold medalist to speak on success

By **AMANDA MORENO**

Staff Writer

It's all about the journey to success — at least that's the message Dominique Dawes hopes to bring during the Scenic Mountain Medical Center Healthy Woman event scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

Twice a year, the Howard College Foundation Speaker Series brings in an individual to inspire and motivate members of the community. The event is free, but a ticket is required.



Dawes

Dawes — an Olympic gold medalist and motivational speaker — will not only be speaking to the audience, but will deliver her speech in the form of a discussion in order to allow those attending to take even more from the experience.

“I want to create a forum for them to ask questions and

get involved in what I am saying and provoke thought so they can walk away with something positive. My hope is I am able to plant seeds of wisdom and motivation for those times they are stuck in a challenging situation,” Dawes said. “Hopefully, in those types of situations they can look back, think and use

some of what I said.”

It has been 15 years since her Olympic career came to a close, but Dawes continues to travel and deliver speeches to the world's youth as well as women and corporations. She began her motivational speaking in 1996 and has

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found a passion for it. Almost seven years ago, she realized where the true connection is when it comes to her speaking engagements — youth and women.

“I still speak to corporations, but I feel the place where I am most connected and those who get the most out of it are the youth and the women. We are moldable thinkers. We are constantly thinking.”

Speaking to colleges gives her the perfect platform to reach her target audience. College students are constantly being reminded about the soon to come “real-world” and Dawes wants to not only help with that entrance, but offer them a little bit of preparation.

“It’s all about being prepared, not only on the outside, but on the inside. You have to have that inner drive. At this point they are so eager to absorb and I like to let them know, even though the world will continue on without them, they do have

control and they can decide the direction their life goes,” Dawes said.

One of her coaches, who she credits with making a huge impact on her life, taught her the way of analysis paralysis — the understanding of what is going on in her mind.

“There are numerous times when we talk ourselves into doing something and there are those times when we talk ourselves out of doing something. We tend to create doubt and allow it to paralyze us,” she said.

“It’s about taking the time to think about what you are thinking about. It’s something I challenge everyone to do. What we think about truly does affect actions we take or don’t take, and our attitudes.”

All too often, people are seeking guidance, motivation and wisdom, according to Dawes, and that can be achieved by listening to one another, whether it be about triumphs or failures.

“A lot of people like to hear about my Olympic career and I do speak on that, but I also

speak on my other journeys as well. I tend to focus more on the obstacles more than the triumphs because it’s the adversities that have taught me more,” Dawes said.

The success she has gained was made possible through her passion, planning and perseverance. She knew where she wanted to take gymnastics and she stayed committed to that goal.

“There are always going to be hardships. I tell people if they aren’t experiencing hardships then they need to reach for a little bit harder goal,” Dawes said. You use the passion and go for it. Success is all about the journey, not a destination.”

To request a free ticket to the event visit howardcollege.edu or smmccares.com. Also, contact Laura Hughes at 268-5063, Kim Howell at 268-4842 or Anita Cline at 268-4721.

To find out more about Dawes visit her website, dominique-dawes.com or follower her on Facebook and Twitter.

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