

Young Harris COLLEGE

Author Adam Shepard Speaks at Young Harris College as Part of New Freshman Initiative

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YOUNG HARRIS, Ga. – Young Harris College hosted Adam Shepard, author of *Scratch Beginnings: Me, \$25, and the Search for the American Dream*, for a special lecture on Monday in Glenn Auditorium of the Clegg Fine Arts Building. The event was sponsored by the Young Harris College Arts & Assemblies Committee, Campus Activities Board, Student Government Association and First Year Experience Committee, and included a question-and-answer session and book signing.

As part of Young Harris College's new First Year Experience initiative for incoming freshmen, the College recently adopted a campus-wide reading program, the "Ship of Thought: Common Reading Program." *Scratch Beginnings* was selected as the inaugural book for Fall 2010.

"The First Year Experience Committee made a recommendation of a first-year reading program based on a need for student preparedness for entrance into higher education," said Niki Fjeldal, director of orientation and first year experience. "Assigning this reading allows for moderated discussion of the reading during a student's first semester and can bring the diversity of student viewpoints to the forefront and provide an occasion for modeling intellectual engagement with different ideas that are expected in college."

The common reading program is designed to provide an opportunity for students coming from different backgrounds to share a common experience as well as bring members of the campus together as a community by creating common ground for academic discussion. Small group discussions between students, faculty, and staff concerning *Scratch Beginnings* were held during Opening Weekend in preparation for Shepard's lecture.

Scratch Beginnings chronicles Shepard's attempt to make something out of nothing to achieve the American Dream. With a sleeping bag, the clothes on his back and \$25 in cash, and restricted from using his contacts or college education, he headed to Charleston, S.C., with one objective: to work his way out of homelessness and into a life that would give him the opportunity for success. His goal was to have, after one year, \$2,500, a working automobile and a furnished apartment.

During the lecture, Shepard credited his outlook on life as what allowed him to achieve this goal, and encouraged students in the audience to share his positive attitude. "You either go 100 percent or not at all," he said. "This applies to everything in your life, and it's a very important lesson as you go into these next four years. You have the opportunity to do some incredible things, and I hope you realize you can."

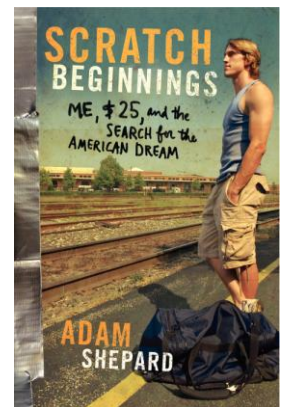
Shepard also encouraged students to try to make a difference in the community, whether by simply volunteering for one hour each week or tutoring a child in need of assistance. "The question is 'What are you going to do now?' What is it in these four years that you can do to make a difference in your life and in someone else's life?" Shepard said.

To facilitate the Ship of Thought program, events will take place on and off campus throughout the semester that will give students the opportunity to volunteer in the local community and beyond. These events include a special day of service in collaboration with the Towns County Food Pantry in Young Harris, Ga. and a fall break trip to Charleston, S.C., that will allow students to visit a number of the locations discussed in *Scratch Beginnings* and conduct volunteer work at non-profit organizations in the region. A special chapel service will also be held that will encompass the themes of *Scratch Beginnings*.

For more information about the Ship of Thought program, call (706) 379-5109.

About Young Harris College

Founded in 1886, Young Harris College is a private, baccalaureate degree-granting college located in the beautiful mountains of north Georgia. Historically affiliated with The United Methodist Church, Young Harris College educates, inspires and empowers students through the highest quality liberal arts education. Long known for nurturing students during the first two years of college, Young Harris College received accreditation in 2008 to grant bachelor's degrees. The College currently has more than 800 students across four divisions—Fine Arts, Humanities, Mathematics and Science,



and Social and Behavioral Science—and plans to increase enrollment to 1,200 over the next few years. The historic campus in Young Harris, Ga., is currently undergoing major campus improvements to accommodate the College's growth. For more information, visit www.yhc.edu.

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Author Adam Shepard (second from left) with Young Harris College START Orientation student leaders (from left to right) senior Janelle Morris, sophomore Josh Stroud and junior Kathleen Layton.