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Corporate Marketing Whiz, Aspirations Expert Are Wit and Wisdom of New Syndicated Column for Dads

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ORONO, Maine -- The serendipitous meeting of two kindred spirits -- a new-product marketing guru with corporate clients around the world and a professor in Maine trying to spread the word about the link between student aspirations, attitude and achievement -- launched a friendship and a nationally syndicated newspaper column.

Doug Hall, founder and CEO of the invention think tank Richard Saunders International Eureka! Ranch in Newtown, Ohio, and Russ Quaglia, director of the three-year-old National Center for Student Aspirations (NCSA) at the University of Maine, have a new title they hope will soon be a household word -- the "Two Dads."

The two teamed up under that moniker to write a weekly column filled with parenting challenges and ideas from a dad's perspective. After only a month on the market, "Great Aspirations! by Two Dads," being distributed by Universal Press Syndicate, is appearing in newspapers of all sizes from Seattle to Staten Island.

Both Hall and Quaglia are fathers of three children, ranging in age from 6 to 13.

While tinged with humor, the column takes on tough parenting issues such as "A bully has my son's number" and "My daughter's fashion statements give me the willies." All are based on the eight conditions that NCSA research shows positively influence the development of aspirations when present and practiced by educators and parents.

Hall, a 1981 UMaine graduate, learned about Quaglia and his track record in changing students' attitudes and performance in an alumni magazine article. Quaglia's work and high-energy level struck a personal and corporate chord with Hall who recognized the need and potential for expanding the professor's research and successful techniques with students. So, he founded a charitable corporation, "Great Aspirations!, dedicated to adapting Quaglia's school-based efforts into practical ideas and tools that parents can use to help inspire their kids, with all profits donated to aspirations education and research.

In addition to the newspaper column, the pair poured their complementary talents into the production of an interactive Parents' Audio Workshop. The kit consists of four audio tapes, featuring Hall and Quaglia, and a 40-page guide with more than 150 ideas for raising "confident, happy, motivated" children, as well as a self-scoring inventory to help parents understand what they are doing right and where they need help.
The kits are being marketed nationally for $49.95, but Maine's 277 public libraries will each receive two kits as a gift from Great Aspirations! Hall is a Portland, Maine native with deep family roots in the state and the University of Maine.

A creative entrepreneur, even as a student at UMaine, where he also started a juggling club and performed as a magician, Hall believes success merits sharing resources and expertise. He deals with a lot of non-profits but says Quaglia's aspirations message immediately stood out. It's non-political. It works. It's just good, basic stuff for kids," he says. And now, the author of "Jump Start Your Brain" has come up with some complementary inspiring ideas for parents.

The National Center for Student Aspiration's eight conditions to encourage aspirations form the basis of Quaglia's work in schools and Hall's ideas for parents. They include: a Sense of Accomplishment, having Real Heroes, a Sense of Belonging, a Spirit of Adventure, Curiosity and Creativity, Fun and Excitement, Leadership and Responsibility, all leading to the Confidence to Take Action.

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