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LIFE | Thursday, August 23, 2007

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## Ridgeway to demonstrate his CreateAskate program

By [Dave Lavender](#)  
The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON – The skateboard scene in Huntington just got about 30 degrees cooler.

Fresh from his West Coast home base, Huntington native Bryan Ridgeway, long-time associate and friend of skateboarding legend Tony Hawk, is sharing his latest skateboarding project with the community today at the Fairfield East Community Center, 2711 8th. Ave.

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Submitted photo

Huntington native Bryan Ridgeway is the managing director for the national non-profit organization CreateAskate.

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Ridgeway, who's been involved with every aspect of skateboarding for more than 30 years, is doing a free CreateAskate workshop from 4 to 6 p.m. at the center, which is home to a soon-to-be-built skatepark.

During the workshop, Ridgeway will demonstrate the program that will be taken around the country to high schools giving junior high and high school kids a chance to create their own personal skateboard deck using an internet-based curriculum provided through the CreateAskate.org program.

The non-profit CreateAskate program has been developed as a hands-on experience to demonstrate how a skateboard has applications for mathematics, science, language skills, and design and engineering opportunities, all wrapped into a cooperative learning experience.

Ridgeway, managing director for CreateAskate, said the program was designed by his buddy Paul Schmitt, who is considered by many within the billion-dollar skateboard industry to be the "Godfather" of modern-day skateboard deck manufacturing.

In 2005, his companies reached the milestone of producing its 10 millionth skateboard. His companies still make more than 4,000 skateboards a day; 200 per hour; nearly three per minute.

Ridgeway, who left in the early 1980s to go skate in California, said he's stoked to bring the cool project here to Huntington, and to hopefully light a spark of interest with some of the area youth for skateboarding, for learning and for enjoying life.

"I want to show these kids what can happen – that anything can happen," said Ridgeway, who skates and is friends with a wide circle of well-known

folks including actor Jason Lee from the hit NBC-TV comedy "My Name is Earl."

Ridgeway said in the shortened workshop he will go ahead and do some of the work ahead of time to give the kids a taste of the program.

Normally, the program could occupy five to 10 days of classroom time when presented for 40-80 minutes each day. The entire curriculum is easily adapted to a teacher's individual schedule and ability (No, teachers do not need to be accomplished skateboarders or woodworkers themselves).

Ridgeway, who has managed several skateboarding companies, said he hopes to get his home school system in Huntington as well as other area schools, to be some of the first to sign up for the unique program.

Bob Martin, director for the community centers in Huntington, said it's a great honor to have back one of Huntington's own who has made such a mark in the skating world.

Already, he said that Ridgeway, who has been home part of the summer visiting his family, has helped consult with program director Chris Hillen at Fairfield East, on some of the different options for the skatepark at the community center.

The center was awarded an \$83,000 grant earlier this year to put in a skatepark at the center.

"He's really keen about coming back and helping the skateboarding scene in West Virginia and to help us keep up with the national scene," Martin said. "We're getting as many kids as possible to come out and trying to get the whole neighborhood and as many as we can in the whole Tri-State to get up there and to enjoy the presentation."

Martin said he hopes today's session will help get even more support for the park and the skate scene here.

"This is just part of our on-going efforts to get that skatepark ball rolling," Martin said. "The good thing about it is he's not only a guy that rides but he's informed about the whole West Coast scene where it is going full bore. We're just trying to catch up, and we're trying to get the most info to make the best decisions about the skatepark. We want to make it not only as safe as possible, but as fun as possible."

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LIFE | Saturday, August, 25, 2007

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## Kids learn how to create and build their own skateboard decks

By [Dave Lavender](#)  
The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON -- Back in the '70s, Bryan Ridgeway was in seventh grade and out playing basketball when he saw someone skateboarding.

It's been all downhill, and then, back up the other side of the half-pipe ever since.

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Chris Harris/The Herald-Dispatch

From left, Deon Jackson, John Brown, and Jeffrey Howard look over the details of an uncut skateboard during a demonstration from Bryan Ridgeway of CreateAskate at the Fairfield East Community Center on Thursday, August 23, 2007.

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He was mesmerized, threw himself head-long into the brand-new, then-outsider sport and the rest is skateboarding history.

Ridgeway, who's been involved with every aspect of professional skateboarding for more than 25 years and is now living in California, was back home Friday doing a CreateAskate workshop at Fairfield East Community Center, which is home to a soon-to-be-built skatepark.

A room jammed with about 40 kids got to see first-hand how skateboards are made as Ridgeway and his dad let the kids sand the seven maple veneer layers that were then glued and pressed into a mold to make the deck.

And they got to see a cool video in which Ridgeway's partner in CreateAskate, Paul Schmidt, who is considered by many within the billion-dollar skateboard industry to be the "Godfather" of modern-day skateboard deck manufacturing, explain how skateboards are crafted.

Schmitt would know.

His companies still make more than 4,000 skateboards a day; 200 per hour; nearly three per minute and in 2005 reached the milestone of producing its 10 millionth skateboard.

Ridgeway, a good friend of many of the main pro skateboarders and industry leaders, said he wanted to share his love with the kids back home.

"It's just such a great, progressive sport," Ridgeway said. "There's now more than 12 million skateboarders in the U.S. and another 4 million around the world in just about every country. I think it's unparalleled because you can just dream up a move in your room, step outside your house and try it. That's an incredible feeling."

Paul Taylor, 12, of Huntington, said it was cool how it was all pressed together to give it that shape.

"I thought all they did was just cut it out of wood," Taylor said. "Now, I want one of those."

Around for the past year and a half, CreateAskate is being introduced around the country giving mostly junior high and high school kids a chance to create their own personal skateboard deck using an internet-based curriculum provided through the CreateAskate.org program.

The non-profit CreateAskate program has been developed as a hands-on experience to demonstrate how a skateboard has applications for mathematics, science, language skills, and design and engineering opportunities, all wrapped into a cooperative learning experience.

Normally, the program could occupy five to 10 days of classroom time when presented for 40-80 minutes each day. The entire curriculum is easily adapted to a teacher's individual schedule and ability (No, teachers do not need to be accomplished skateboarders or woodworkers themselves).

Charlie Blac, a Marshall University student who works at A.D. Lewis Community Center, brought a number of kids who were fascinated by the afternoon workshop.

"The fact that he's coming back to help us when he doesn't have to come back, that says a lot about him," Blac said. "I know that a lot of these kids have never touched a skateboard before."

There were also a number of Huntington's skateboarders there including Evan Tolley, 15, and Megan Longfellow, 14.

Tolley's dad, Dave, used to skate often with Ridgeway at the old Falcon skatepark in Huntington back in the day.

"Now I want to go skate with him," Evan said as Ridgeway's workshop was ending.

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