

Divya Yadavalli

The Houston Food Bank's Morality

Brian Greene has a lot of courage. As president and CEO of the largest food bank in the country, he effectively oversees projects that feed 800,000 people a year; however, the bravest thing I have seen him do is to apologize to a large group of students and adults when he was late to his talk. Leading a world-renown institution in unprecedented growth must have taken a lot of courage, but acknowledging his mistake in front of sixty tired high schoolers on a Saturday morning took a lot of courage. All jokes aside, Brian Greene easily captivated the YLDP audience with his expertise in running 3 Food Banks, leadership advice, and the most important, the differentiation of courage during the October 20th's discussion at the Food Bank.

The motif that ran through Greene's presentation was moral courage. After a didactic lesson from the quote "It is curious that **physical courage** should be so common in the world and moral **courage** so rare." (Mark Twain), he broke down how truly important it is to have moral courage in the nonprofit sector. Physical courage, he argued, was easy; of course, anyone would save a child from drowning in a river because it is human nature, but very few people would report an instance of bullying they saw. This distinction between being physically courageous and morally courageous was his subtle lead into how his nonprofit is doing so well: they practiced moral courage.

The differentiation from physical and moral courage was what intrigued me the most from Brian Greene's talk. As president of my school's Key Club, moral courage is something I have trouble dealing with because it's hard to call out one of my officers if they aren't doing their job. Seeing how important practice of this essential skill is in adulthood and the workforce, practicing moral courage is my prerogative. My peers were also fascinated with Houston Food Bank's ability to feed so many as a nonprofit. While we took a tour, their jaws dropped at the sheer size of the warehouse, and Greene's discussion established that the size was only acquired through overcoming cowardice.

Brian Greene's lecture about the Food Bank was insightful but also highly applicable to daily life. Moral courage is something that anyone can possess. Although not everyone can establish an institution as successful as Brian Greene, his story inspired YLDP to enact change and prove Mark Twain wrong.