Our Dear/Deer Friends at Berry College

October 5, 2009 By Shawn Decker

Gwenn and I ended September with a long overdue trip to Berry College last Wednesday. It all started a couple of years ago, when a peer educator named Michelle saw us speak at a conference. Since then, she has been working to have us at her campus.

It’s always an honor to have someone remember your message. And want to help share it with more people. So, on Wednesday morning at 7 am, Gwenn and I got in the car, drove to the airport and hopped a plane from Richmond to Atlanta. No delays, nice weather and a good chunk of time to sleep in the hotel before driving to Rome, GA, where two frolicking teenaged deer greeted us as we drove into the very scenic campus.

When I was told by the educators that the campus was 70% female and that there was a newspaper article on campus that suggested that the males should change their behavior of staying in their rooms all evening, I went all Stephen King on them. I posed the thought that the “dark secret” of Berry might be that male students transform into deer at night.

Raised some eyebrows!

Besides my imagination running as wild as those deer, what’s funny about this particular talk was that I’d posted on Twitter about speaking that evening at Berry, and got a response on Facebook from a Bella Morte fan/Berry College alum, Raven, who was at Dragon*Con… she made the 2-hour drive all the way from Atlanta to hear us speak. Too cool!

Gwenn and I spoke in a church on campus, and a few times either I said something, or a student said something that had surely never been uttered in that building before. Also, it was the first time that we’d spoken together since an HIV/AIDS retreat in June, and I can’t get across how much I love educating with Gwenn. And also speaking to peer educators who will be spreading the message of sexual health on campus long after we are gone.

Here’s Gwenn with the crew from Berry, who were so kind as to take us out to the Olive Garden after the talk. We had a great time there; lots of love to the peer educators, students and Bella Morte fans who turned out to hear us speak.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.