BIOLOGY OF MEMORY

Stanford professor, baboon researcher to give talk

By TERRI MORGAN
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APTOS — Three private schools along the Central Coast have joined forces with Cabrillo College to bring an internationally renowned neuroscientist, researcher, educator and author to the community college to present a lecture on education.

Robert Sapolsky, a Stanford University professor who divides his research time between field work with baboons in Africa and neurological research inside laboratories, will discuss “The Biology of Memory” Thursday evening.

The presentation is hosted by Gateway School, Mount Madonna School, York School and Cabrillo College. The speech is the fourth annual lecture in the series launched by Gateway School to help teachers and parents better understand how people learn.

“The purpose of the speaker series is to bring together parents, educators and civic leaders to learn from leading scholars and researchers about the best practices in teaching and learning,” said Percy Abram, who is the head of school at Gateway School. “It’s a great opportunity to foster a rich discussion about our current sciences, teaching practices and child development.”

Originally, Gateway School partnered with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education to host the lectures. They have since collaborated with the other independent schools in the region to host the talks.

Selecting Sapolsky as this year’s speaker was a no-brainer after local educators listened to a presentation he made in Santa Barbara.

“We heard him speak in June at the annual business meeting of the California Association of Independent Schools,” said Mary Supriya McDonald, head of the Lower School at Mount Madonna School. “We all looked at each other and it was pretty clear he was so dynamic and spoke about such a hot topic that we wanted him for this year’s presentation.

Sapolsky has published several books, including “Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers: Stress Disease and Coping” and “The Trouble with Testosterone” along with numerous scientific papers. The New York Times has called him “one of the finest natural history writers around,” and novelist Oliver Sacks described him as “one of the best science-writers of our time.”

Sapolsky’s extensive research, combined with his common sense approach especially appealed to McDonald.

“He decodes the scientific research and makes it so accessible,” she said. “He looks at how to make it practical.”

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IF YOU GO

WHAT: Public lecture on education series
WHO: Robert Sapolsky
SPONSORS: Gateway School, Mount Madonna School, York School and Cabrillo College
WHEN: 7 p.m. Thursday
WHERE: Cabrillo College’s Crocker Theater
TICKETS: Sold Out