

# From Student to Book Signing:

## The Story of Dr. Kozhi Makai

**Jamie Wood – The North Star News (the online independent student newspaper)**

**4/15/06**



Adjunct professor and former North Harris College student, Dr. Kozhi Makai, signed autographs for his first book, *How Can I Come Up?* at the Spring Fling on March 29, 2006.

*How Can I Come Up?* reveals Makai's story about maintaining faith and motivation despite his struggle to complete an education. Makai initially came to the U.S. from Zambia when he was 18 to try out for a basketball scholarship at the University of Houston. He'd played basketball on the national team in Zambia and thought the sport might be his only chance for an education.

"One of the reasons why I wanted to play basketball was because I couldn't afford college without a scholarship," Makai said.

Makai was denied the basketball scholarship but returned to Houston the next year to stay with a friend in Spring, Texas, when he found NHC. Makai began taking speech classes when he realized that's where he needed to be.

"During my time at North Harris, my goals had a chance to crystallize," Makai said, "I began pursuing my dreams to be an inspirational and motivational speaker, helping people who are seeking to find who they are and what they want for their lives."

Makai left NHC to continue his education at Sam Houston State University and has now completed his PhD and published his first book. He now teaches speech at NHC, the place where his educational path began.

Wade Hescht, Director of Forensics and Chair of the Speech, Drama and Humanities Departments, hired Makai as an adjunct professor for the speech department in 2002. Professor Hescht also taught Makai when he was a student at NHC. Hescht said, "Makai is something of an old soul in a young man's body. His poise and confidence stood out among the other students in the class."

Hescht has been working with Makai for about four years now and believes that Makai is kind, caring and generous, especially when it comes to students. He also said that as a student, Makai was always professional, responsible and organized, which are all signs of a good instructor.

Makai shook hands with NHC President Dr. Sam on March 29 at the annual Spring Fling. He sold and autographed his new book for students and faculty members and discussed his motivation behind writing the book.

"My book is about finding your place," he said, "Some people stop with wanting to achieve certain goals. Because they don't know how to overcome weaknesses and capitalize on their strengths, their forward progress stops. If we can find out who we are, we can go after the things we want. Until then, we spend our time hoping, searching and dreaming, but we are never able to put any action behind those dreams."

On March 30, the district announced that Makai has been awarded the NHMCCD Writing Award for his new book. The awards are given annually to faculty members who submit a published work to the competition.

NHC Library Director Maryann Readell served as the chair of the writing award committee this year. "The submissions are judged on scholarship involved and writing style," Readell said, "And it has to be a published work." Readell also added that of all publications that were reviewed by the committee, about 23 were chosen for the award.

"When I did my master's, I conducted a feasibility study for building such an institution," Makai said, "One of my dreams is to provide opportunities for Zambian students like those I was provided. In fact, I would like to bring North Harris to them."

Makai is continuing to speak motivationally and teach at NHC, and he is also working to establish an internationally accredited university in Zambia. Dr. Kozhi Makai's book can be purchased at Barnes and Noble and Borders bookstores or online at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or [authorhouse.com](http://authorhouse.com).