

# ReVision



P R O J E C T

YES

re (ri) *n.* 1. anew, again **Vision** (vizh'9n) *n.* 1. the manner in which one sees or conceives of something.

*Making our world safe for ALL youth*

*The mission of Project YES is to prevent suicide and ensure the healthy development of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth by initiating dialogue, providing information and creating support systems.*

## Raised \$53,000 New World Symphony Benefit Hollywood YES

### A Message from Martha, The New Look

The core of our work is initiating dialogue. We begin discussions about something people may be uncomfortable with, or have never talked about, and present new ways to look at it. Our purpose is fulfilled if after that conversation, people never look at this subject the same way again. We are creating a re-visioning of our youth and their families for the community in which they live.



Communication Course for Catholic clergy and lay ministers in Jacksonville, FL.

We hope you will like our newly named, formatted, and graphically produced newsletter.

These changes are a gift from Paula Black & Associates, who contributed the new logo design for Project YES. They have offered to do the graphic production of ReVision each month as an expression of their commitment to our youth and our purpose.

For me, there are two areas of complete exhilaration doing this job. One is the realizing of our purpose. The other is the privilege of engaging in such a purpose with the extraordinary people who step forward to contribute to making this vision a new reality. This newsletter is full of the names of these champions, each finding their way to express themselves as a contribution.



Revelers at the pre-concert reception



Carol Williamson and Martha Fugate



Centerpiece by Flowers & Flowers

We hope everyone met a stranger across the crowded room March 25 at our New World Symphony benefit concert, because it was 'some enchanted evening!' Beautiful people with magnanimous hearts ate, drank, and were merry and gay beneath a clear azure Miami sky. The new Project YES Logo, sculpted in a tower of ice, reflected crystal hues of glittering light. Soft, billowy fabric enclosing a private garden designed by Jim Cox enveloped WAMI Television Studios setting the stage for the celebration. An angel named Bob Larson of Martin Gardens created our garden setting.

The generosity of everyone who attended, volunteered, and contributed to this glamorous night was apparent, as a spirit of giving



Handsome Trea Williamson

surrounded the celebration. A red carpet welcomed our guests as beacons of light roved the sky.

We were blessed to have Trea Williamson as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening. His handsome

face and charming wit combined, with his stage presence, added both humor and warmth to our program. We would like to thank the entire Williamson Family for their incredible support of Project YES.

A special gift came from Jason Morale who courageously declared his intention to have Johnson & Wales competition club and culinary students in partnership with the GLBA cater this event. This was more than catering, this was food so delicious and so beautiful people are still talking about it. Thank you Jason, Chef Jack Kane and the incredibly talented professionals at Johnson & Wales University.

Project YES Kiaora member Kevin Miller obtained the winning bid in the hotly contested auction item of two round trip tickets on Lauda Air to Vienna or Munich. Congratulations to Kevin, and a big thanks to Lauda Air.

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**Bob Oldakowski**, Board Chair, **Loren Dominquez** of *Lauda Air* and **Kevin Miller**.



**Jan Kirchoff** of *Deli Lane* and **Marty Schildhouse**, Event Producer



**Joseph Zolobczuk**, Community Liaison and **Marie Ortiz**, Office Assistant



**Jason Morale**, Special Events Coordinator with *Johnson & Wales University*.



**Arthur Post**, Conductor for *Hollywood YES*

We would like to acknowledge some of the special heroes of this event.

**Marty Schildhouse** – Who won his own Oscar for "Best Performance" as our event producer.

**Jan Kirchoff** – Project YES Guardian Angel

**Rick Rubin** – Graphic Designer extraordinaire. Rick IS mitzvah. (But don't tell anybody.)

**Marty Harris** – SCP Commercial Printing – making it possible for Project YES to have the image of a billion dollar company.

**Paula Black & Associates** – for their commitment to making the world safer for youth, and the gift of our new logo and newsletter design.

**Ernest Gonzalez** - Graphic Finishers – champion of Project YES and Chair of the New World Symphony Out Reach Committee.

**William Vaughan, Carol Phillips and Dana Bagliebter** – New World Symphony – for their outstanding professional work.

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## Safe Schools, Healthy Families for Teachers



**Dr. Carolyn Garwood**, Educational Liaison for Project YES and Workshop Leader

Last year, Project YES conducted the Safe Schools, Healthy Families (SSHF) Workshop in five Miami-Dade County Public and Private Schools reaching 100 teachers. This year, since we did not have funding which would allow

us to provide the workshop in the schools, we offered it on a Saturday at the Project YES office. We were surprised and delighted that over 50 teachers from public and private high schools, middle schools and elementary schools attended.

Jeff Donnelly, a Teacher at Miami Day Country School writes:

"To me, the goal of Project YES, a safe environment for young people of every sexual orientation in every school, is both critical and realizable. It is critical because of the evident damage done to students of all sexual orientations by hateful words and actions based on actual or perceived sexual orientation. It is realizable since it is the first responsibility of every teacher to keep students from harm.

Because of Project YES, I am convinced that I can do my part to make my school a safe place for all

youth and to help other school faculty understand what they can do to meet the needs of lesbian and gay students in our schools. Miami Day Country School is a safer place for all students because of Project YES."

Jackie Dale, a teacher working with special needs students, wrote:

"I attended the workshop and it was a wonderful experience. Some of the issues that were brought up in the workshop were very troubling to me – I hate to think of kids hurting because of something they cannot help.

I brought back the Welcome Poster and gave it to the TRUST counselor and she put it up in her office. The most important thing that I came away with that day was the Welcome Sticker that I was given. I placed it on my grade book on my desk."

## Diversity Conference

by Joseph Zolobczuk



On March 10, Project YES was contracted to present a workshop for the 8th Annual Minority Issues and Multicultural Education Concerns Conference held in Jacksonville, Florida. This event is sponsored by the Florida Teaching Profession-National Education



**Joseph Zolobczuk**, **Stephanie King**, Florida PTA Teacher of the Year, and **Martha Fugate** at the Diversity Conference. Association, The Florida Education Association/United and the Florida Department of Education.

Our workshop consisted of 35 teachers from school districts in every county across Florida. It was sobering to realize how progressive Miami-Dade County is compared to other districts throughout the state.

"Even though we share differences in terms of our beliefs, I think Project YES can be effective. The discussion was open and frank which allowed us to share ideas. I would welcome this group in my community because we are responsible for the safety of all children."

"I've learned a lot of things about this population of youth – I had no idea the suicide rate was so high among these kids."

**"I think all faculty across Florida should have the opportunity to participate in this workshop."**

This conference was a learning experience for us, and the participants must have enjoyed it as well. We just received an invitation to participate again next year.

# Eva's Report

By Eva Leivas-Andino



**Eva Leivas-Andino,**  
*Hispanic Coordinator*

Joe and I recently spoke to a group of 35 youths. When asked if they had ever witnessed any type of abuse against gays and lesbians, they all agreed this was a prevailing occurrence in ALL

the schools. A 15-

year old told us how he had changed schools twice because of the persecution he had been subjected to, resulting from a rumor that he might be gay. He stated he was not gay but he shared that he had contemplated suicide several times.

Another 17-year old said he was afraid to "hang out" with a former friend that turned out to be gay... he didn't want people to think he was gay also. All of them agreed that fear of being perceived gay was great and abuse against gays and lesbians was a common practice in all the schools, which is a topic that is not addressed.

Near the end a 19-year old college student said, "people say they are not gay and don't deserve the abuse... in reality no one should be abused, whether they are gay or heterosexual."

As I left I was energized and filled with hope; the conversation had begun... the space to speak about these issues had been opened. For some kid feeling lonely, abandoned or perhaps contemplating suicide, a discussion like this could have meant everything.

“ For all who ask what they can do for Matthew and the other victims, my answer is to educate and bring understanding where you see hate and ignorance, bring light where you see darkness, bring freedom where there is fear and begin to heal. ”  
- Judy Shepard

# American High School

By Raul A. Perez, 12th Grade Govt. / Econ. Teacher

The forum at American Senior High School with Project YES proved to be the realization of a social studies teacher's dream. Not only was it a unique, but unprecedented experience – a first-time event where students, faculty, community groups and parents participated in an open and frank discussion about safety and quality of life for gay and lesbian students at school. This forum provided students with the opportunity to voice diverse points of view and in some cases to reveal to their classmates and teacher insights about how they feel and who they are.

This is the kind of event where we must be able to bridge the void of misunderstanding and ignorance. The people from Project YES, TRUST Counselor Ellen Fike, and the GSA Club at American High School solidly built that bridge.

# Kiaora Society



Save The Date - Wednesday, May 3, our special guests will include artists and Board Members of the New World Symphony. If you have friends whom you think may wish to support Project YES at the Kiaora Level, send us their names to invite to our next Kiaora event hosted by Shed Boren and Jose Valdes Fauli.

# FIAC Dinner

By Tony Prado, Project YES Board Member

Project YES attended the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center (FIAC) Dinner. Keynote speaker was Congressman Barney Frank, pictured with Robert Oldakowski, Project YES Board Chair. Congratulations to Cheryl Little, the Executive Director, for the wonderful work of FIAC.



Congressman **Barney Frank** (D, MA) pictured with **Robert Oldakowski**, Council Member for Key Biscayne and Project YES Board Chair

# Letter to the Editor

By Judy Bachay, Ph. D., St. Thomas University

Dear Project YES,

I wish you had been in our class for discussion after your visit. It was clear that everyone became acutely aware about issues facing anyone who is "different" – the pain inflicted on students in schools cannot be tolerated. These are acts of violence because they attack the dignity of the individual. Put-downs, verbal insults, discrimination and exclusion have no place in a learning environment. Thank you for making us aware of our roles as counselors – for making us aware of our mandate to advocate for respect and compassion, in the schools and our greater community.

- **Judy Bachay**, Ph.D., St. Thomas University



St. Thomas University

### Needed and wanted for Project YES office:

- New full time office assistant
- New laser printer

Call 305.663.7195

# Kiaora Society Members

Kiaora Society members donate \$1,000 or more to Project YES annually.

## Visionary

\$10,000 or more

Colin Higgins Foundation  
Health Foundation of South Florida  
Ittleson Foundation  
Ed McAmis and Gerson Gonzalez  
Jonathan Lewis and Roberto Posada  
Ruth Anderson Foundation

## Champion

\$5,000 or more

Dade Human Rights Foundation  
Espirito Santo Plaza  
North Dade Medical Foundation  
Roblee Foundation  
Carol and Ed Williamson

## Leader

\$2,500 or more

Kate Adler and Pam Reynolds  
Greg Baldwin and Jose Castro  
Connie Barden and Martha Fugate  
Nellie Barrios  
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Bob Cole  
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Karen Raben and Andrea Pernick  
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Robert Oldakowski and Luis Mendoza  
William Vaughan

## Mentor

\$1000 or more

Nancy Allen  
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Shed Boren  
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City National Bank of Florida and the Abess Family  
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**William Vaughan**  
**Jason Walker**



## Upcoming events

### April 15 and 16 - Project YES Community Voices Communication Course Weekend

To register for the course, please call Joseph at 305-663-7195 or log onto [www.projectyes.org](http://www.projectyes.org) and register online.

### May 3 - Kiaora Society Event

May 11 - Project YES Community Meeting, at 3:30 - 5:00 PM

Everyone welcome

## Special announcements

### Congratulations Martha!

Martha Fugate has been named Woman Of The Year by the American Cancer Society of Miami.

The new Project YES website is up and running! Visit us at [www.projectyes.org](http://www.projectyes.org) and enjoy new features like signing up for courses and newsletters online and making secure donations, right over the web. Our website began with the incredible technical expertise of **Jim Tavs** and **Jonathan Glassman**, who initiated not only our new website but assisted us in technological upgrades for our office systems. We heartily thank **Brian Dorniny**, our new webmaster, for jumping on board with us at the last minute to help us complete our site. We also thank the indispensable **Rick Rubin** for all of his artistic as well as technical talents, and **Juan Jover, Ph. D.**, for his innovative concepts in the new site.

April 2000

## College Presentation

By Marie Ortiz



On February 28, I attended my first speaking engagement for Project YES at Miami-Dade Community College, Wolfson Campus. It was an Intro to Education class and probably one of the most important groups of people we need to reach - future teachers. I was nervous at first and unsure what the classes' reaction to the topic would be. My goal was to connect with them and share my story and experiences about growing up and going to school as a lesbian teen.

I found that once I opened up to them they too began to share their stories, fears, concerns, doubts, and the desire to learn more on how to help the youth of today. I really felt I made a difference for other gay and lesbian teens by going into that class and being boldly driven to speak openly about my experiences. My purpose in being there was not to change people's beliefs but rather to get them focused on the issue of youth and how to keep our schools safe and our kids healthy.

## Hollywood YES

continued from page 2

*The final tally is not yet complete. It has already exceeded our target for this event at \$53,000 to benefit the programs and work of Project YES.*



*Paul Kahn and Rick Hauley from the Pink Palm*

*William Vaughan, Beth and Chris Dunworth, and Connie Barden*



*Johnson & Wales culinary students preparing a feast*