



ReVision

re (ri) *n.* I. anew, again **vision** (vizh'ən) *n.* I. the manner in which one sees or conceives of something

Miami to Georgia in One Second



Health and Natural Sciences Building, NGCSU.

After 3 youth suicides occurred in Lumpkin County, Rev. Frank Colladay called YES on behalf of the rural Ministerial Association of Dahlonega Georgia. Their concern led to our first visit and training effort for ministers and educators at North Georgia College & State University in April of 2000. Thus began a long-standing relationship and since then, yearly visits have provided YES training to students, faculty, and local residents.

Miami is 730 miles away from North Georgia. It usually takes a two hour flight and one and a half hour drive to get to Dahlonega and the NGCSU campus. This year our travel time will be minimized to one second - the time it takes our T1 Internet line to connect to the distance learning classroom at North Georgia.

“We are extremely excited with the possibilities.”

- Dr. Bob Michael, Dean of Education NGCSU



Travel to Dahlonega, Georgia in one second.

“We are now at a point where we want to "institutionalize" our success with YES and their educational workshops into a graduate course and professional learning units for our educators”

- Dr. Bob Michael, Dean of Education

Every Tuesday and Thursday beginning June 7, YES Institute will conduct the Gender Continuum, expanding our eight hour CEU workshop to a full 3 credit hour graduate course over eight weeks. The course will be offered to graduate students in the School of Education at both NGCSU and nearby Piedmont College.

Dr. Donna Waddel, Professor of Nursing at NGCSU, said; "we are developing a graduate level program for nurse educators. I would like to see this course approved by the Board of Regents and included in that program down the road."

We thank Jonathan Lewis, once again, for believing that education will make a difference in forging the social changes necessary to accomplish full equality for all youth. He backed his belief by issuing a \$50,000 challenge grant to YES to begin making distance learning a reality. Thanks to Jonathan and other supporters we have almost reached our goal (see page 3). When fully funded and implemented, the technology developed for this effort will be used with other courses. One of the first areas to be expanded will be innovative online courses for parents.

UM Med Students Open Up On Orientation

For the first time in the history of the University of Miami's medical program the medical issues, psychosocial beliefs, and physical realities impacting the health of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender patients was openly discussed. Virgilio Sklar met with the YES staff, asking that we facilitate the dialogue that was initiated by the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) and endorsed by the Senior Associate Dean of Medical Education.

Joseph Zolobczuk and Marie Ortiz led the discussion in an auditorium packed with medical students interested in learning about clinical and personal aspects of gender and sexual orientation. The inquisitive med students felt the conversation was long overdue.



UM Medical students.

Communication was quickly identified as an awkward area; how do we talk about these things, and what words do we use? Even simply, do you prefer to be called gay or homosexual? They questioned how to put gay patients at ease and make them feel comfortable enough to open up and share about their lives. We thank the young leaders of AMSA for their bold steps that have begun dismantling the long silence.

“We cover all sorts of diversity issues in our classes about various patients, Haitian, Hispanic, non-English speaking, etcetera; but they never cover sexual orientation.”

- Medical Student



Virgilio Sklar (at left) with UM Medical Students and YES Speaker Marie Ortiz.

Visit www.yesinstitute.org to access upcoming speaking engagements, educational workshops, and make online donations.

Gender Identity: Who Am I?

Miami is now the most diverse city in the United States. Fifty-nine percent of it's population is foreign born. Discordance over one's gender identity was introduced to future school and mental health counselors as another adaptive challenge for some youth. Joseph Zolobczuk led the discussion on gender in Dr. Diane Simon's FIU graduate class. The reactions showed the students were open and eager to learn about this emerging topic.

“Excellent. The material stimulated much thought and discussion. My students will certainly be more personally and professionally sensitive to gender in the future.”

- Diane Simon, FIU Faculty

One student commented, "Great education. Students and professionals at all levels should get this". They were especially grateful for examples of intervention strategies for parents whose children do not fit the rigid gender ideals and expectations of their native cultures.



FIU students with Professor Diane Simon, LMHC.



Martha Fugate speaking to over 80 faculty members at Centennial Middle School.

Middle Schools Opening Dialogue

The bell had rung, the kids had left, and spring break at Centennial Middle School had begun. The teachers buzzed around in the faculty lounge, laughing and talking about their plans for the weekend. The counselor who invited us to speak to the faculty said, "You better make this very entertaining, because most of us are already on vacation and counting the minutes until we get to leave."

It didn't seem like the ideal time to speak to middle school teachers about gender and orientation. However, ten minutes into our talk, hands started waving followed by a flurry of questions.

"How can you tell who is really gay or maybe just going through a trendy stage?. How much can we say and not have parents upset with us?." Several questions kept returning to one sticking point, revealing a commonly held misconception - that sexual orientation equates to sexual activity.

We reminded them that being harassed as "sissy" starts early in elementary school, long before kids even know what sex is. They were surprised to learn that the average age gay males report being aware of being gay and 'different', is five years old. Slowly the dialogue began to unravel many of their preconceived notions.

The focus moved and centered on how to make the school safer. Questions shifted to "what can we do?" and "how can we help?" A new clarity entered the room and with it renewed energy.

“Terrific - enlighting! Needed in every school”

- Centennial faculty member

Everyone was fully engaged and as we were wrapping up, the faculty requested we return and provide additional training. We will return, but for now, it was time to go. Spring break had begun.

Opening Eyes and Changing Hearts

Seated side by side in a row, facing a classroom full of graduate students, two young panelists shared their life experiences with future counselors in Dr. Carol Clark's graduate human sexuality class at Carlos Albizu University (CAU). While most people would shudder at the idea of speaking to a crowd, Richard and Adrianna jumped at the chance. The counseling students were interested in understanding the concerns of our young panelists and their experiences in dealing with their families and schools, particularly as members of the Hispanic

community. The young speakers opened their hearts to the class and talked about the harassment they face in school and their everyday lives. When asked why they want to talk about something so painful, Richard responded, "What better way to open people's eyes to the life of a gay teenager?"

“Excellent dialogue. This was very insightful for future counselors to hear.”

- CAU Student



YES Speakers at Carlos Albizu University.

Broward County Library Hosts Gender Continuum



Sydna Wexler

If you haven't visited your library for a while, erase from your mind any images of sleepy, quiet corners and stacks of heavy books. Broward County library pioneered an anti-bullying workshop with YES, and we were then invited to return for a youth preview of the Gender Continuum this spring. Given the opportunity to address these issues in an educational, non-judgmental setting, teens began to open up and eagerly share their feelings and questions.

“YES delivered a vast amount of knowledge in such a fun and interactive way. The teens loved being part of this, so different from classroom lectures. I really want to bring this to other libraries and schools.”

- Sydna Wexler, Youth Services

Kiaora Society Membership

Our Distance Learning Initiative inspired both new and longtime friends to make generous contributions. We welcome and thank new Visionary John Devaney and long time friend and Champion Rev. Marta Weeks. We also thank Mentors Kirk Landon and Larry Luing & Dario Espinosa for their contribution to our innovative initiative. We share our appreciation with the Gill Foundation for their contribution towards the Jonathan Lewis Challenge Match.

We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support of renewing Visionaries Ed McAmis & Gerson Gonzalez, Champions Carol & Ed Williamson and Leaders Kevin Veilleux, Doug Deboer & Howard Kurzweil.

We welcome new Mentors Michael G. Epstein, Cali & Carmen Garcia Velez, Robert Cole, Audrey Finkelstein, and Retta Logan & family. We thank the generosity of renewing Mentors Magda Pantaleon, Patricia & Milton Wallace, Dennis Edwards & Mark Steinberg and Harry Rimm. We are grateful for the extraordinary commitment of all our wonderful supporters.

For their financial support of our work we would also like to thank Coldwell Banker Cares Foundation, Communion Foundation, Citigroup Foundation, as well as a new funding partner for YES, the Women's Community Fund. To join the Kiaora Society, please call 305-663-7195 or go online to yesinstitute.org/donate.



Kiaora Society

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

Visionary \$10,000 or more

Lang Baumgarten
Tim & Meredith Birrittella
John Devaney
Jonathan & Tina Kislak
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Vegas FUNdraiser ... Spectacular Too!



A beautiful, tropical evening.

We thank Tim Birrittella and his partner Meredith Birrittella, for once again hosting YES Institute's Las Vegas Spectacular II fundraising event in their beautiful home in Pinecrest. This is the second time Tim, Chairman of YES, presided over the planning of this exciting and very successful event.



Mayor Robert Oldakowski with Key Biscayne islanders.

Airfare packages, jewelry, exquisite art and hand-blown glass, as well as restaurant and theatre packages, were also scooped up. Special thanks to sponsors Tim & Meredith



Martha Fugate with St. Thomas Episcopal friends.

Birrittella, Peter Pilotti & Joseph Rodano, Carlos Cuartas & Jim O'Conner, Bill Ross, Tim Wagoner & Victor Garcia, Connie Barden & Martha Fugate, Marty Harris, Robin Wheatley & Jeff Newton, Richard Milstein, Michael Kravitz, and Cesar Nivar. After the gambling, casino-dollars were redeemed for raffle tickets. The lucky winner Ken Sormani received a trip for 2 to the real Las Vegas, Nevada.



Board member Marty Harris with the dancing girls.



Azucar! Let the dancing begin.

While Lady Luck reigned over the event, casino tables and croupiers provided the backdrop for Black-Jack, Roulette and other games of chance. Open bars and a delicious dinner catered by Deli-Lane Café, feted our loyal and festive supporters. Roving 'Showgirls' sold "Surprise Grab Bags", as partygoers danced and chanced the night away. Las Vegas without Elvis is like Liberace without a piano, so of course he was there too!



Our hosts Tim & Meredith surrounded by beautiful women.

The main temptress of the evening was the Silent Auction. Magnificently orchestrated by the phenomenal Cathy Cline, it included magical trips to a Caribbean spa, St. John, Virgin Islands, Nevis, Key West, Las Vegas and a Cape Cod getaway in a luxurious private home.

Where's my picture?

Over 100 event photos available online:
yesinstitute.org/vegas

Foundations & Corporations

Bank of America Foundation
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Disappearing Distance

See inside...



Vision

A community in which ALL youth develop as healthy individuals free of suicide, violence, and discrimination.

Mission

To prevent suicide and ensure the healthy development of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and ALL youth by initiating dialogue, providing education, and creating support systems.

Educational Accreditations



TEC-Accredited by the Dade-Monroe Teacher Education Center for Master Plan Points (MPP)



Florida State Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling

Colorado Mountain College

Colorado Mountain College



Florida State Board of Nursing providing continuing education to LPNs, RNs, and ANRP Professionals



North Georgia College and State University Professional Learning Units (PLUs)



Roaring Fork Valley School District (RE-1) Teacher Education

Accredited courses for counselors, nurses, teachers, and parents.



Communication Solutions
April 22 & 23 - 12 CEU / TEC
Fri & Sat, Noon - 6PM

Gender Continuum
May 7 - 8 CEU / TEC
Saturday, 9AM - 5PM

Deciphering the Matrix and Being & Belonging
May 14 - 4 CEU / TEC (Each)
Saturday, 9AM-1PM, 2PM-6PM

Essentials of Orientation
June 11 - 4 CEU
Saturday, 9AM - 1PM

Register at yesinstitute.org/register
or call 305-663-7195

Women Take on Communication

For the second consecutive year, the Women's Fund of Miami-Dade has awarded funding to YES Institute to increase the participation of women and girls in our Communication Solutions course. This local organization is a catalyst for social change, creating a community where all women and girls reach their full potential. We are grateful for the vote of confidence.



Women's Fund recipients with Eva Leivas-Andino.

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Statistics

Gay/Lesbian Youth:

- 33% of all teen suicides
- 50% rejected by their parents
- 28% high school drop-out rate

Heterosexual Youth:

- 80% of youth harassed "as gay" actually identify as heterosexual and are 5 times more likely to commit suicide
- 97% of all students hear anti-gay comments

Boys Trapped By Masculinity



Feeling their masculinity challenged, school shooters act out their frustrations using what they perceive as unquestioned strength - a loaded gun.

- 90% of school shootings involve boys taunted with anti-gay epithets
- Gay slurs and attacks on manhood have been part of all major school shootings