



# ReVision

re (ri) *n.* 1. anew, again vision (v'izh'ən) *n.* 1. the manner in which one sees or conceives of something

## Challenge, Change, Celebration!

The unprecedented event of Obama's presidential inauguration filled YES Institute's annual Winter Education Week with optimistic determination about generating change. Participants came from Alabama, New York, and Massachusetts to learn our unique education models, and take them back to their communities.



Joseph Zolobczuk leading Communication Solutions™.

Dollie Hambrick and Ed Wilson from Alabama are committed to breaking the silence on gender and orientation that has persisted in Alabama way too long. Ed Wilson, PFLAG Dad, said, "It breaks my heart to think of all the kids in Alabama who are suffering. The pretense



Education Week participants engaged in discussion.

surrounding our lack of knowledge on gender and orientation is a dangerous trap. Life is more important than maintaining appearances."

Nick Teich, a graduate student from Boston College, is starting a summer camp for youth who get labeled as "transgender." After participating in our courses, he shared,




YES speaker J. Lopez practicing new communication skills.

**"I feel like I'm fighting in a world that keeps trying to change me. Now I feel empowered to let myself—and others—just be."**

-Kyle Leverett, student at Florida International University

"I clearly see that *none* of the labels we use on a daily basis fits perfectly for any individual. In starting Camp Aranu'tiq, this is a valuable lesson. It will allow me to celebrate the wonderful display

"I have a strong desire to contribute to the quest for ALL people to be themselves. Speaking with a united voice for truth and justice is our hope for the future. YES has renewed my faith in that vision, and given me new skills to take a more active part in that process. I plan to use the gifts I received at YES every day of my life. "



- Dollie Hambrick, social worker, Montgomery, AL

of diversity—and to honor people however they self-identify."

Teachers and counselors from public and private schools throughout Miami-Dade County participated in Education Week. At the beginning of the Gender/Orientation Series™, a teacher shamefully admitted that he had harassed students labeled as gay or transgender for many years. At the end of the course, he exclaimed:

See **Celebration**, page 2

## Cultivating Ethical Action in NY School

Last fall, YES Institute returned to Ethical Culture Fieldston School in New York for the third time. Principal Luis Ottley invited us to again provide training to faculty, parents, and students in our unique communication model, and to open a dialogue on gender and orientation. Head of School Mark Stanek participated in the first day of Communication Solutions™.

**"This model will change the school! It's the foundation we need for achieving results related to diversity and classism."**

-Fieldston parent

Fieldston is founded on principles of equity and inclusion, and members of the school community consistently identify different pathways for achieving their shared vision of a democratic, pluralistic, and progressive school.



Dr. Luis Ottley in Communication Solutions™.

"My tendency to lecture or give my answer is completely ineffective," offered a parent. "If I can avoid 'fixing' or being 'right,' I have a chance to really communicate powerfully. I think this course should be required for everyone—parents, teachers, and our children."

See **Ethical**, page 2

These programs are made possible by your generosity. To participate in keeping all youth safe, visit [www.yesinstitute.org](http://www.yesinstitute.org) and learn more.

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Please contact: [tim@yesinstitute.org](mailto:tim@yesinstitute.org) or  
305-663-7195, ext. 1113

A teacher stated, "This course was awesome! It gave me great insights, and I see many actions I can take to encourage dialogue rather than shutting people off."

YES' Gender Continuum course opened parents and teachers to new reflections on the impact of gender on their students. A parent expressed, "Gender is everywhere! Expectations for masculinity and femininity surround us at every moment, yet we are virtually silent on this topic at school. Every Fieldston student should see this course."



Fieldston faculty engaged in Communication Solutions™.

"I got to see the ineffectiveness of win/lose debates, and learned a totally different way to respond to opposing views and intense emotions. The hands-on practical training was incredibly useful, and shifted my perspective of 'them' against 'me' to 'us, together.' Keeping my purpose alive is the key. Thank you, YES!"  
  
-Vincent Lebrun, Fieldston teacher



Fieldston parent Marcia Cohen with Luke Jude.

Middle school students participated in Communication Solutions™. An eighth grader commented, "I now can handle my problems a lot better. I won't snap or get mad. Instead I can calmly communicate." A seventh grader shared, "My classmates always tease me that I'm too pale, or too fat, or that my clothes are weird. I think I can resolve this problem now. I already feel much more comfortable talking to people."

**"I heard this course was life-changing, but I didn't really understand until I experienced it myself. Now I can prevent conflicts in all my relationships."**  
-8th grade student

Our next trip to Fieldston is for parents and faculty at the Ethical Culture School in Manhattan, serving 500 children from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade.

"This was a real eye-opener! This should be a mandatory course for all beginning teachers." Another teacher shared, "I see so many kids in my school (K-8) who are in pain. I want to bring this education to all the teachers and parents there." Another participant sent us the following response:

"Before today, I can honestly say that I felt uncomfortable, uneasy, maybe even scared, definitely biased, and quite clueless as to 'transgender.' I can now say that my heart has been transformed and my way of thinking has been literally turned upside down. I think I can now share the knowledge I gained at YES to help others connect with our shared humanity. Gender affects everyone."  
  
- Linda Lathroum, graduate student, Florida International University



Isabella Carrasco, middle school student, with Ed Wilson, PFLAG Dad.

## Eye on Alabama



YES staff working with Alabama community leaders via distance learning.

Videoconferencing technology brought 30 Alabama parents, educators, clergy, and community members virtually into our course room to participate in Essentials of Orientation™. Many had never heard the words "gay" or "transgender" in open discourse, and spoke tentatively at first. As the course progressed, people shared from the heart about real situations in their lives. One parent said, "My fifth grade son is tormented with 'faggot' and 'homo' on the bus everyday, but I don't know what to do." Many people expressed their fear that supporting students labeled as gay or transgender conflicts with their religious beliefs.

**"This education is key to addressing the enormous fear in this community surrounding these topics."**  
-Dr. Letha Maxton, Director of Student Services, Montgomery Public Schools

**"Now I see how gender and orientation affect youth as soon as elementary school. This gives me clarity about how to discuss these topics in our school and church."**  
-Episcopal priest

YES Founding Director Martha Fugate assured them, "Making the community safe for all youth is something we can do together—without anyone changing their beliefs." This is a new conversation for polite company in Montgomery, where community leaders are now forging new ground in keeping their youth safe. Two public school teachers plan to coordinate in-services on bullying at their schools. YES Institute will be providing another course via videoconference for our Alabama partners in the next several months.

## Homestead Police

Officer Tony Aquino invited YES Institute to train the entire cadre of Homestead law enforcement officers in an introductory course on gender and orientation. Many lingered after the course to privately express their appreciation for bringing this education to their department.

**"My friend's son just came out as gay. I know he doesn't see me as a safe person in his life, but I'd like to change that."**  
-Homestead police officer



Homestead police in YES dialogue.

**"Until today I never knew what I could do for kids kicked out of their homes for being gay, and I see that a lot."**  
-Homestead police officer

# Kiaora Society Membership

Rev. Marta Weeks, longtime supporter and exceptional community leader, has again demonstrated her steadfast commitment to transforming environments where harassment and discrimination persist. We are profoundly grateful for her phenomenal generosity as Kiaora Philanthropist to ensure the work of YES continues.

We thank our dear friends Jon & Tina Kislak and Lynn Leverett for renewing their memberships as Kiaora Visionaries. We salute Paula Morabito & María Yip for increasing their contribution to become Kiaora Visionaries. We thank Doug DeBoer & Howard Kurzweil, Thomas Gellman & Carlos Yudica, and Thomas Blount for renewing as Leaders. We are grateful to Jahn Kirchoff for increasing his contribution to the Leader Level, and to all YES Board members for their support.

We also thank renewing Kiaora Mentors Patrick Abuzeni & Angela Patt, Maria Alonso & Alex Montague, Jorge Centurion & Dan Nichols, Hugh Gallagher & Cesar Nivar, Jim Gross & Justin Bolinger, Ralph Lutrín & Alan Lewis,

Dr. John Martin & Forrest McSurdy, Dean Mealy & Peter Barbatis, Richard Milstein & Eric Hankin, Jim O'Connor & Carlos Cuartas, Carol & Ed Williamson, Trae Williamson & Daniel Carter, Connie Barden, Bruce Christensen, Sherri Hankal,



Mayra Vide Perez of Key Biscayne Kiwanis Club with Eva Leivas-Andino.

Larry Hyer, Joseph Kraus, Scott Prosan, June Raben, Don Sadler, Gary Stross, Thomas Taylor, and Laura White. We welcome John Cooney & Julio Fernandez, Deli Lane Café & Tavern, David Cole, Madelaine Doyle and Rosalind Ludwig

Children's Foundation as new Kiaora Mentors. We also appreciate the continued support of the Kiwanis Club of Key Biscayne.

We invite you to become a Kiaora Society member by contributing \$1,000 or more in one year, or a YES Sustaining Member by donating \$100-\$999 in one year. For more information, or to structure your contribution, please contact Eva at **786-301-3940** or [eva@yesinstitute.org](mailto:eva@yesinstitute.org)

## Welcome Jahn and Meredith!

We are thrilled to have Jahn Kirchoff as our new Board Chair. His committed leadership and unshakable stand for productive dialogue pave a clear course for our work to flourish.



Jahn Kirchoff.



Meredith Birrittella.

We also welcome Meredith Birrittella to the YES Board of Directors. His stellar business acumen and passionate commitment to the well-being of youth are a remarkable contribution to our work.

### Featured Exemplar Video

Emilio Vazquez, YES Board member and Vice President of Coconut Grove Bank, has taken a powerful stand to bring education on gender and orientation to Hispanic families and the business community.



Emilio Vazquez.

See the video now:  
[www.yesinstitute.org/video](http://www.yesinstitute.org/video)

Dear YES institute Supporters,

As I review the contributions YES has received lately, it is heartwarming to read the following:

- "My accountant told me not to contribute this year. I'm doing it anyway."
- "I have a new business. It is really tough, but I will continue supporting YES."

I continue to be inspired by the amazing people who make our work possible by going the extra mile, and making a supreme effort to ensure the continuation of all our programs. On behalf of all the staff and Board of YES, I thank you. As always, you can count on us to maximize your contributions by being extra judicious with the funds you have entrusted us.

- Eva Leivas-Andino, Director of Finance & Development

### Communication Solutions™

Josh M., American High School

Now I will be able to hear all the things my parents say in a completely different way, and actually start talking to them, which hasn't happened in a very long time. Sharing my ideas and feelings instead of shutting down will allow me to be more loving in situations where I've been really hateful. Nothing will stop me now!



Brittney Hoffman in Communication Solutions™.

## Kiaora Society

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

### Philanthropist \$150,000 or more

Jonathan Lewis  
Rev. Marta S. Weeks

### Luminary \$25,000 or more

Adrienne Arsh

### Visionary \$10,000 or more

Jonathan & Tina Kislak  
F. Lynn Leverett  
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Paula Morabito & María M. Yip  
Hon. Katy Sorenson, County Commissioner

### Champion \$5,000 or more

Greg Baldwin & José Castro  
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Douglas DeBoer & Howard Kurzweil  
Thomas Gellman & Carlos Yudica  
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### Mentor \$1,000 or more

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**“The great aim of education  
is not knowledge but action.”**  
- Herbert Spencer

## Safe in School?



Faculty at St. Andrew's Episcopal School engaged in discussion about gender and orientation.

Unexamined beliefs about gender and orientation limit the freedom kids have to express themselves. We ask, “Are you gay or straight?” as if the answer tells us who someone really is. The set of expectations and meanings accompanying these words makes the labels toxic. YES educational courses reached 400 teachers and students last month, giving participants access to seeing past

fears and beliefs to discover new possibilities for self-expression.

**“ Made me feel different about the words ‘gay’ and ‘faggot.’ Now I will really think before I call anyone a name that could hurt them. ”**

- 8th grader, Miami Country Day School



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### 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.

### Statistics

#### Gay Youth:

- 33% of all teen suicides
- 50% rejected by their parents

#### Heterosexual Youth:

- 80% of youth harassed "as gay" actually identify as heterosexual

#### Impact of Gender Ideals:

- 57% of girls list "appearance" as the biggest concern of their lives
- 25% of boys diet; 33% vigorously exercise

### Education Partnerships

Ethical Culture Fieldston School, NY  
North Georgia College & State University  
Episcopal Diocese of Colombia, South America  
Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida  
Phi Delta Epsilon International Medical Fraternity  
Teaching Tolerance - Southern Poverty Law Ctr, AL  
The Alliance for GLBT Youth, FL

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### Accreditations



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Florida Board of LMHC, LMFT, LCSW BAP #50-1652

## Bold Leaders



Luke Jude leading Communication Solutions™ at Killian High School.

Students in Communication Solutions™ at Miami Killian and Miami Sunset Senior High Schools underscored the critical importance of our work. Two students at Sunset who came out to their parents as lesbians were forced to undergo psychotherapy in an effort to “fix” them.

**“My sister came out last year, and my grandparents shut her out from the family. Now I see how I can help bring the family together again.”**

-Student, Killian High School

Another student ran away from home rather than endure another day of abuse for her gender expression. Killian students declared their commitment to starting a speakers bureau in their school to educate the entire student body on gender and orientation.