



ReVision

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

The Source For Knowledge On Gender & Orientation

Schools SOS - Send Over Support!



Parents and students at Pinecrest Preparatory Middle-High School participating in a YES presentation.

The beginning of the 2010-2011 school year marked a significant increase in the demand for YES education on gender and orientation from teachers, administrators, and parents working to address the rampant bullying taking place in schools.

Yvette Perdomo, a Guidance Counselor at the new charter school, Pinecrest Preparatory Middle-High School, was referred to YES Institute after voicing her concerns over gender and orientation slurs occurring at her school.

“I was aware of school bullying, but I had no idea the impact it has on all our children. This dialogue is so important for our community because it takes all of us – parents, teachers, and students – to spread the education and halt the bullying.”

- Parent, Pinecrest Preparatory Middle-High School

Perdomo invited YES to facilitate two dialogues with parents, students, and teachers from both the Middle School and the High School. During the dialogue, students were asked if they heard the word “gay” used as a slur on a weekly basis. Nearly every hand was raised. When asked if they heard this word on a daily basis, all hands stayed in the air. It was a powerful lesson for the hundreds of people in the room.

See **Schools**, page 2

Cambridge Scholars and Community Engage on Gender

Hosted by Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Boston, Massachusetts, YES Institute facilitated “Gender Continuum” for students and faculty from Harvard University, Lesley University, and other local colleges. As with many college towns, gender diversity was visible and prevalent, and the course provided participants the rare opportunity to examine the impact of gender in their lives and communities.

“Even in light of the recent suicides of so many young people, there is still a strong pressure to conform to the gender binary. When will we start listening to people’s experiences before presuming we already understand them?”

- Faculty, Episcopal Divinity School

Throughout the course, lively conversation and intellectual inquiry were the order of the day. In particular, dissecting the labels used in conversations about gender and orientation seemed to challenge the audience. “For me, I’m reluctant to let go of the labels because I have a strong connection to them. However, I’m walking away with a lot to think about and some new models to use in my graduate work.”



Participants in Gender Continuum at EDS in Boston, MA.

YES speakers and Boston residents Ren Pilinger and Nick Teich, founder of Camp Aranú'tiq - an overnight summer camp for transgender youth ages 8-15 - joined the dialogue to share their personal experiences of gender transitioning. One participant said, “The speakers made me aware of the growing number of people who are actively defining themselves beyond the binary. Now I feel more equipped to acknowledge people as they are without being so quick to assign them a label.”

Martha Fugate, co-founder of YES Institute, was also invited to participate on a panel of local leaders with expertise on gender. Panelists included Liz Monnin-Browder, an attorney with

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders and founder of Lawyers for Transgender Rights; Rev. Dr. Patrick S. Cheng, Assistant Professor of Theology at EDS; Sidney M. Trantham, Associate Professor in the Division of Counseling and Psychology at Lesley University; and Joanne Hermann, noted author and spokesperson for the transgender community.

A panelist noted, “I am transgender, and I think I know a lot about this subject. However, what I’ve learned is that I often begin with education and leave out communication. Now I see that if I’m really going to make a difference, I have to start with communication and relationship. I know this will be a huge asset for my future work.”

These programs are made possible by your generosity. To participate in keeping all youth safe, visit www.yesinstitute.org and learn more.

Receiving two **ReVision** newsletters?
Please contact tim@yesinstitute.org or
305-663-7195, ext. 1113

Long time YES supporter Rebeca del Cristo invited YES to lead an Introduction to Communication Solutions™ course for 25 high schools students at Miami Lakes Educational Center.

Intense emotions shook the whole room when students shared the hardships they faced with their families. They were struggling to see any alternative to arguing, fighting, and ultimately, resignation. "After a while, I just shut down. Our views are just totally different, so there's nothing else I can say to my parents. I usually just walk away," said a student.

The mindset was noticeably different by the end of the course. One student stated, "I see now that my parents are doing these things because



YES volunteers Roxy Cary-Sora and Rebeca del Cristo at Introduction to Communication Solutions at Miami Lakes Educational Center.



FIU students at a YES Institute presentation.

they love me, even if it doesn't look that way to me all the time." Another student shared, "I learned how to be generous with people. I was really missing that piece before. I think I'll be more comfortable approaching my parents, as well as making friends at my new school."

The suicide of Tyler Clementi in September of this year sparked a significant increase in demand for YES presentations from area colleges and universities. Looking to open dialogues about the impact of bullying on college campuses, multiple professors from Miami-Dade College (MDC) and Florida International University invited YES into their classes this semester.

One student and future educator shared, "I had always been uncomfortable talking about these topics, but now I see that it's necessary, especially for elementary school kids." "I invite YES to my classroom because it's important for

“The impact of this course was really big. I realized just how hurt and mad I was with my family, and that fighting back and trying to change their minds wasn't doing anything but making it worse. Now I have a new appreciation for listening to the people I care about, and I know this will help me be a better communicator.”

- Student, Miami Lakes Educational Center

the students to stop and examine the impact of gender and orientation in every day life. It can be too easy to forget about the real world from the comforts of the classroom," said a MDC professor.

If you would like to invite YES Institute to your school or PTA, please call 305-663-7195 or contact us online at email@yesinstitute.org

YES Institute's Exemplar

ex-em-plar (noun) 1. one that serves as a model or as an example.



De Palazzo, a conflict resolution educator with a deep commitment to empowering young people, has worked tirelessly to

connect educators and administrators across South Florida with YES Institute, including Teri Williams, a Prevention Specialist with Broward County Public Schools.

De's efforts have paved the way for Broward and West Palm Beach teachers to access continuing education credits for participating in YES courses. Thanks to De, more and more educators are participating in the work of YES and building safer classrooms and communities for all youth.

See the video now:
www.yesinstitute.org/video

Global Communication Solutions

Traveling to YES from as far away as Cape Town, South Africa, participants in the October Communication Solutions™ looked into their lives and relationships as they practiced the YES model of communication.

Tears flowed freely as people shared their own struggles, as well as those of their families and communities, around gender and orientation. One father in the room shared, "YES helped me feel closer to my children, especially my gay daughter."

“This course let me feel my emotions freely. I was finally listened to, and it wasn't because people had to, it was because they truly wanted to hear me. Now I feel like my voice can really make a difference.”

- Participant, 11 years-old

Teachers from both Miami-Dade and Broward counties saw the model of communication as a new opportunity to create safer classrooms and schools. One teacher stated, "I was tired of taking courses about the FCAT test. I decided to come to YES to learn about being human. I cannot wait to apply the model of communication, at school as an educator and at home as a mother."



Rowan Smith in Communication Solutions™.

Rowan Smith, retired Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral in Cape Town, South Africa, shared the following about the course:

"The invitation to take part in the YES programme was a rich blessing in many ways. The Anglican community is struggling with the issue of orientation in particular, and recent media reporting about bullying and suicide only highlights the urgency of finding solutions. Anyone who has a strong commitment to listening to others and remaining together would be both enriched and empowered by the YES programme. It has given me much to think about and much to take back to South Africa.

Thankfully, Rowan Smith"

To register for January 15 & 16 Communication Solutions™, call 305-663-7195.

Kiaora Society Membership

We are very grateful for our dear friend Howard Kurzweil, Kiaora Trustee, who initiated the "Doug DeBoer Challenge Match" in memory of his partner and former Chairman of the Board of YES Institute, Doug DeBoer. Howard's generosity and Doug's commitment to the work of YES will support the continuation of YES education on gender and orientation for teachers, counselors, youth and families in Miami-Dade County. All contributions received before the end of this calendar year will be matched by Howard up to \$50,000.

Visionary Tom Blount has responded with great generosity to the "Doug DeBoer Challenge Match," joining long time supporter Visionary Lynn Leverett in making additional contributions to YES. We thank them all on behalf of the youth we serve.

We are grateful for the continued support of Visionaries Tina and Jon Kislak, and for Jon's enduring support and guidance to the YES family. We thank Paula Morabito and Maria Yip for renewing their membership at the Visionary level.

We thank Leader Sherri Hankal for renewing with a generous match from her employers at Chevron. We also appreciate the ongoing support of Mentors Olga and Ignacio del Valle, Virginia Dunn, Larry Hyer, Joseph Krauss, Richard Milstein & Eric Hankin, Howard Perry Rothberg, II & Paul Scolieri-Rothberg, Richard Shannon, Mike Syers, and Patricia Woodson.

We welcome and thank new Kiaora Mentors Thomas Grimshaw & Luis Reyes, Ira Leesfield, Kim Sorondo, Victor Vianello & Joe Cross, and Patricia & Milton Wallace. We also thank the Ruth Anderson Foundation, The Miami Foundation and the Aqua Foundation for their support of YES programs.

For the past 14 years, YES Institute's Kiaora Society of donors has formed the lifeblood of our work.

Ninety-two percent of every dollar directly supports our educational programs in the community, allowing us to take our work where it is needed most.

For information about joining our Kiaora Society, or to structure your contribution, please contact Eva at 786-301-3940 or eva@yesinstitute.org

Dear friends,

We are humbled to announce that Howard Kurzweil has initiated the "Doug DeBoer Challenge Match," to honor his partner of 23 years. Howard suffered the incomprehensible loss of his partner, Doug DeBoer, who died suddenly this year. Doug was the former Chair of the Board of YES Institute, and he and Howard have been longtime supporters of our work.

Howard asked that his donation go towards ensuring that YES Founding Director, Martha Fugate, can continue developing and leading innovative courses that place YES on the forefront as "The Source For Knowledge on Gender & Orientation." In his letter, Howard said,

"I invite you to join me in contributing to the invaluable work of YES Institute. I am continually inspired by Martha's commitment to getting to the source of problems, then creating and presenting educational programs where the need is greatest to keep youth safe. This is my opportunity to reflect upon the impact Doug had in my life, and in his memory, support programs that he would be proud of. Join me in contributing to YES' groundbreaking education and keeping them at the leading edge of creating new understandings of gender and orientation. I will match every contribution made to YES Institute through December 31, 2010 up to a total of \$50,000."

We thank Howard for his generosity as well as all of our Kiaora Society members. They are the true heroes of YES Institute. Over 35% of our operating budget is met by annual Kiaora contributions. We count on that support to ensure that we can create the work that needs to be done, regardless of the priorities of foundations or fluctuations in other types of giving. There have been many youth this year who took their own lives rather than suffer the torture of feeling unsafe or unloved. These tragedies underscore what is at stake and why we must continue this work. Thanks to the partnership of the entire family of YES friends, our work will continue, lives will be saved and families reconnected. We could not do it without you!

We invite you to consider making a contribution as part of "The Doug DeBoer Challenge Match," that will allow us to maximize this generous offer. This is a great opportunity to double the impact of your gift of any amount. Donations can be made online at www.yesinstitute.org/donate, or call the office at **305-663-7195**. Give now and give what you can; every contribution makes a difference.

On behalf of the staff and Board of YES, thank you for your gifts and for your partnership. We wish you and your families a very happy holiday season and a magical and fulfilling new year.

Warmly,




Rachel Sottile,
Executive Director



Kiaora Society

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

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Howard Kurzweil, in Loving Memory of Doug DeBoer

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Making Breakthroughs in New York City

Ethical Culture Fieldston School (ECFS) continues to share YES education with a growing community of parents, students, educators, and administrators. During a recent trip to ECFS, YES facilitators lead Communication Solutions™ and two student communication courses.

Many participants in the room reviewed the course for a second or third time. "I'm only just now beginning to realize how revolutionary this model can be. I am leaving here today challenging myself to apply this model in all of my relationships."

During the student course, two participants were given the opportunity to use the model to address a conflict that was impacting their friendship. After working with YES co-founder Martha Fugate, the



Student participants in Introduction to Communication Solutions at ECFS in New York City.

audience saw a new way to approach breakdowns and disagreements. A student shared, "The problems that were baffling me this morning make so much more sense now! After today, I'm inspired to try to communicate with people I had given up on."



305-663-7195
www.yesinstitute.org

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 all youth through powerful communication and education on gender and orientation.

Statistics

- **50%** of elementary & middle school bullying incidents are based on gender and orientation slurs.
- **80%** of high school youth harassed as gay actually identify as heterosexual.
- Youth who identify as gay or lesbian, and rejected by families, are **8 times** more likely to attempt suicide.
- **32%** suicide rate for youth identifying as transgender.

Research citations:
www.yesinstitute.org/resources/statistics.pdf

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Accreditations

YES courses are accredited to provide continuing education for Florida mental health and nursing professionals, and professional development points for MDCPS employees.

Psychologists Pursue New Knowledge



Dr. Terilee Wunderman takes questions from participants.

Mental health professionals often have limited training on the topics of orientation and gender transitioning. Yet, a survey of clinical psychologists revealed that over 56% see clients with orientation concerns in their weekly practice (Murphy, Rawlings & Howe, 2002), and an increasing number of therapists are now requesting continuing education on these topics.

In partnership with YES, Miami psychologist Dr. Terilee Wunderman facilitated workshops for nearly 100 mental health professionals on gender and orientation with an additional focus on exploring sensitive ethical concerns in clinical practice with gay and transgender clients and their families. Dr. Wunderman shares, "It's my pleasure to work with YES in developing workshops for my fellow mental health professionals! Our field needs this important information now more than ever."



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www.yesinstitute.org/podcast

See where we've been and who we've reached in recent months. Includes footage from YES Institute presentations and interviews with participants.