



***Impact & Outcomes***  
*January–June 2021*

***25 Years of Purpose***



**Our mission is to prevent suicide and ensure the healthy development of all youth through powerful communication and education on gender and orientation.**

YES Institute  
Tel: 305-663-7195 [info@yesinstitute.org](mailto:info@yesinstitute.org)  
5275 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143

# Celebrating 25 Years of Purpose

Dear Friends,

As an organization committed to learning and growing, we have found new ways to ensure our work is accessible during the pandemic. We are happy to share we are continuing to deliver our work via Zoom, and following public health guidelines, have begun to conduct in-person dialogues and courses.

25 years ago, YES Institute grew out of the stand that Connie Barden and Martha Fugate took to impact the conditions that exist whereby gay and transgender youth want to, and often do, take their own lives. Our work and reach today has grown exponentially and continues to serve families and organizations across the country including schools, hospitals, mental health agencies, religious communities, and workplaces.

As we look to the future, we carry with us the founding principles of YES Institute, working to bridge “us” vs. “them” divides so that all youth can have the opportunity to experience safety, welcoming, and belonging.

It is through the generosity of our donors, community partners, and friends who have remained inspired by the vision Connie and Martha had for what is possible, as we now embark on the next 25 years.  
–Joseph and Umut



*Joseph Zolobczuk, MS Ed., Executive Director and Umut Dursun, MA, Executive Director of Education*



*Connie Barden, RN, MSN, CCNS, Founding Board Chair Emeritus*



*Martha Fugate, Founding Director*



**25 Years of  
Purpose Campaign  
\$250,000 Fundraising Goal**

[yesinstitute.org/25](https://yesinstitute.org/25)



We welcome three new amazing leaders to the Board of Directors of YES Institute. Their lived experiences drive their passion and commitment to serve our community.



*Belkis Moreno*

Belkis Moreno came to YES Institute embarking on a journey of love and openness. A financial consultant and personal trainer, she has raised seven children with her husband. As one child came out as gay, and another as transgender, she took her first YES Institute educational course in 2019. This year she made a commitment to giving back to the community. She is a frequent parent speaker at our community dialogues, and offers peer support to English and Spanish-speaking parents with children.

Thomas has served as a volunteer speaker with YES Institute for over seven years and in 2021 joins our Board of Directors. Thomas is the CEO of 3T Fitness Lifestyle. The son of a well-known pastor in Panama, Thomas supports the work of YES Institute as he successfully navigated coming out as a transgender male within a religious family and community. He is passionate about opening authentic dialogue with many diverse groups of people so that everyone can experience peace, joy, and compassion with their friends and loved ones.



*Thomas J. Murrell, NASM*



*Michael Mio*

Michael Mio started his career in banking in New York City and was soon promoted to Regional Manager VP. Only months after the engagement of his first partner and soon-to-be fiancé, he was disconnected from his family after they learned of his orientation. Two weeks later, he lost his fiancé to suicide. Michael relocated to South Florida to restart his life and now is a Director for a logistics firm. Michael enjoys giving back to the community by sharing his experiences and helping others get through challenging life moments through YES Institute's communication tools and educational knowledge.



YES Institute education team presenting to participants through an Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade & Monroe-sponsored training session.

***“I always appreciate your trainings. They feel like a journey of self discovery and have helped me maintain relationships and communicate better with those around me.” –Early Learning participant***

YES Institute has provided training to over 380 participants during 15 Zoom sessions in partnership with the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade & Monroe (ELCMDM), addressing and preventing gender bias utilizing leading research-based diversity and inclusion best practices.

***“We all have a responsibility to recognize that bias exists, but it does not have to negatively impact the way we treat people. We can always be empathetic and open to having difficult conversations to ensure people feel heard and valued.” –Early Learning participant***

By allowing people to reflect on and identify their own unconscious biases, professionals are better able to examine how their behaviors might impact interactions they have with children and families under their care. These inclusive practices positively impact relatedness and services delivery.

***“Listen, be aware, adjust, change. Then do it again and again.” –Early Learning participant***

YES Institute also provided our signature Communication Toolbox and Leadership in Action courses to empower and enhance ELCMDM’s inclusion initiatives throughout their partner network.



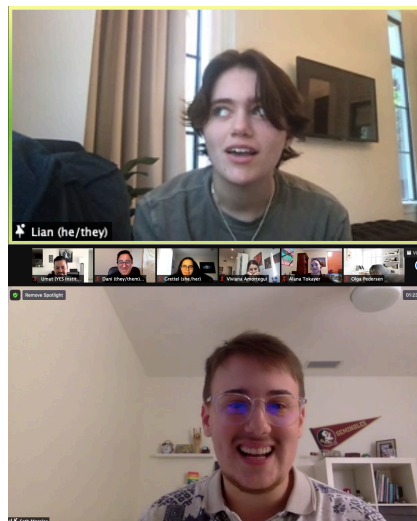
Contact YES Institute at 305-663-7195 or [info@yesinstitute.org](mailto:info@yesinstitute.org) to discover what we can provide your organization or school community.



The Youth Advisory Leadership Council (YALC) provides opportunities for South Florida youth leadership, communication, and public speaking skills development. YALC gives a voice and a platform for youth to interact with their peers and educate teachers, mental health specialists, and medical providers about their experiences and how to improve communities and organizations that serve all youth.

*“I’ve always dreamed of speaking to teachers about what I wish was different in schools, and YALC made this dream come true for me.” –YALC Member*

YALC members recently co-presented along with YES Institute education staff to University of Miami mental health and Miami-Dade College students.



YALC Leaders Lian and Seth

*“I’ve always felt so out of place. When I attended my first YALC meeting, being in this community has helped me find that sense of relatability that I was lacking.” –YALC Member*

Details will be forthcoming about an innovative gay and lesbian historical preservation art exhibition project led by our YALC members in collaboration with HistoryMiami Museum and Miami Beach Pride.



YES Institute board, staff, and YALC graduates at Wynwood Pride community booth.

*“The top three things YALC made an impact on my life are experience, leadership, and community. When I assist at YES Institute dialogues, courses, and conferences, I gain real life work experience which has been extremely useful. –YALC Member*



# Palm Beach & Martin County Expansion

YES Institute's *Inclusive Futures* supports positive youth development by increasing awareness and communication around difficult topics, empowering families and community groups to powerfully advocate for youth, thereby reducing bullying and self-harm. We are deeply thankful to the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties for this initiative which funds 40 educational sessions through June 2022 for Early Learning, K-12, and college classrooms, as well as medical, mental health and religious communities.



Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach participating in an employee and customer awareness training for Pride month. Workplace presentations allows YES Institute to reach parents and families who otherwise might not have discovered our tri-county services.

*“I liked hearing YES Institute board member Belkis' story. A lot of similarities to my experience as a parent. It was emotional for me to hear.” –Florida Power & Light employee, Juno Beach*

We also thank The Irving & Barbara Gutin Charitable Foundation, the first investor to propel our Palm Beach County-specific expansion. Their contributions have funded nearly a dozen medical and mental health trainings, including Palm Beach County Youth & Family Services as well as community resource meetings for families, and K-12 schools for the fall.

The graphic for 'Tech Hub Community Coffee' features the event title at the top. Below it, a quote reads: '“Intersectionality of Underrepresentation in Tech”'. A list of speakers includes: Dani Dominguez | Equity &amp; Inclusion Specialist @ Yes Institute; Kyle Maharika | Ecosystem Manager @ aire ventures; Erick Gavin | Sr. Program Manager @ Center for Black Innovation; and Mark McGuire | Deaf Accessibility &amp; Inclusion Specialist @ The WAG Group. The graphic also includes logos for sponsors: SEBW, Beth Wagmeister @ The WAG Group, Center for Black Innovation, and The WAG Group. It also notes 'ASL interpretation by Beth Wagmeister @ The WAG Group'.

Tech Hub South Florida Palm Beach featured YES speakers during community webinars.

Schedule YES Institute for your Palm Beach or Martin-based organization at 305-663-7195.

*“I’m so happy this organization exists for all. I wish there had been something like this for my brother decades ago.” –Baptist Health Bethesda nurse*



*“YES Institute speakers were the first time gender and orientation topics were included in our curriculum studies.”*

*–University of Miami mental health student*

The Trevor Project released findings from its 2021 National Survey on Youth Mental Health representing the experiences of nearly 35,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth:

- **80%** of youth stated that COVID-19 made their living situation more stressful.
- **66%** stated that they were now living in an environment that was not affirming.
- **42%** of youth, including half of transgender and nonbinary youth respondents, seriously considered attempting suicide.

YES Institute is available to assist families navigating community mental health and medical resources for young people, who greatly benefit from gender and orientation inclusive and affirming providers. Since January, we conducted five Communication Toolbox courses and three Deciphering Gender & Orientation courses on Zoom, empowering hundreds of youth and parents to forge new relatedness and understanding with one another, and conducted resource navigation and support meetings for over 60 families in English and Spanish.



## Inclusion at Baptist Health

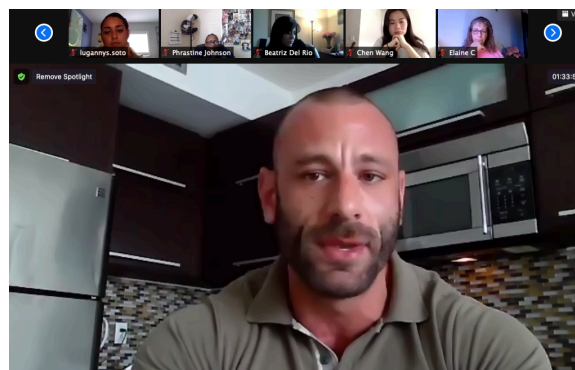
We applaud the leadership of Baptist Health South Florida (BHSF), who offered a system-wide YES Institute webinar on transgender awareness, and the nurses at BHSF Bethesda Hospital, hosting a gender and orientation inclusion CE session during National Nurses Week.



*University of Miami Miller School of Medicine students with YES Institute.*

*“I learned specific ways to have my future clinical practice be more inclusive.”*

*–Nova Southeastern University mental health student*



*Board member Mike Mio addressing Village South behavioral health staff.*

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Inspired? We invite you and your friends to contribute to our work.

[yesinstitute.org/give](https://www.yesinstitute.org/give)



Our 2020 financial audit is completed. Copies are available upon request.

Generous Giving Makes Our Work Possible

# Connecting Across Communities

We thank the Leslie L. Alexander Foundation for a \$30,000 award supporting our mission and community work. Our dear friend Dr. Karen Raben, a longstanding Board Member of YES Institute, generously provided a \$25,000 gift to our work. We also thank Patricia McKay Verbeeck, who who increased her annual contribution to \$21,000 this year, in loving memory of Hope Eric Verbeeck. Consider donating to our 25 Years of Purpose Campaign: [yesinstitute.org/25](https://yesinstitute.org/25)



*We thank the Miami Marlins for ticket donations for volunteers and staff.*

**Communication Solutions™**  
at YES Institute contingent upon  
public health guidelines  
Sat & Sun, September 11 & 12,  
Noon–6pm ET

**Communication Toolbox (Zoom)**  
Sat, September 25  
Sat, November 6  
10am–1pm ET

**Deciphering Gender &  
Orientation (Zoom)**  
Sat, October 23  
10am–5pm ET

**Unconscious Bias in Learning  
Environments (Zoom)**  
Fri, October 29  
10am–4pm ET

[yesinstitute.org/register](https://yesinstitute.org/register)  
305-663-7195  
CE hours available



*Participants from South Florida and other cities across the US experiencing Communication Toolbox on Zoom.*





Members of Riviera Presbyterian Church, a loving community housing YES Institute Education Center and staff offices since 1996, celebrated with us as their Sunday in-person services resumed in June. Their Mission Committee generously donated to our 25 Years of Purpose campaign. We are thankful for their enduring welcome and inclusive kindness that has allowed the “engine room” of our nonprofit mission to function, grow, and expand in both the physical and virtual spaces.

Instagram Live hosted by Affirming Youth provided an accessible and novel way to connect and educate our community.



A limited number of in-person educational dialogue trainings have resumed including Child Protective Investigators with the Florida Department of Children & Families, as well as First Star Program students with the University of Miami School of Law.

*“I learned how important the conversation is about the joys of loving, embracing, and accepting who you are. One of the most valuable dialogues I have ever had the pleasure of being a part of.”*  
–University of Miami student



**3RD  
ANNUAL  
FUNDRAISING  
TOURNAMENT**



## **GOLF WITH A PURPOSE!**

**BENEFITTING YES INSTITUTE**

**Sunday, August 29, 2021  
11am – 1pm**

Topgolf Doral 11850 NW 22nd St, Doral, FL 33182

**\$500 Birdie** sponsorship provides golf bay for up to 6 participants from your workplace or group.

**\$750 Eagle** sponsorship includes golf plus social media shoutouts, swag bags, annual donor event invitations and more!

**\$100 per person** for individual tickets.

**Join us for golf, brunch, and a great opportunity to demonstrate your support and commitment to our mission.**

- Participate in team-building activities while supporting your local community and having fun.
- Lunch buffet and beverages included; cash bar.
- Partner with a reputable nonprofit with 25 years of service.
- Social media shoutouts for Eagle level sponsorship.
- Invitation to our yearly donor events.
- Opportunity to bid on silent auction items and win raffle prizes!

**[yesinstitute.org/golf](https://www.yesinstitute.org/golf)  
Call 305-663-7195**