

*Luminous voices
Limitless futures*

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



THE SOURCE FOR KNOWLEDGE
ON GENDER & ORIENTATION

“As a youth,
YES was a safe space
for me to grow.
As a young adult,
YES was a place
to give back.

**Whoever I am,
whoever I was
meant to be,
YES never said no. ”**

Allison Tinney

– YES Institute Youth Speaker



“Inviting the most resistant and hardened to our gatherings and sharing our purpose of **keeping ALL youth safe is the crux of this work.**”

– Martha Fugate

“Finding a way around the **“us vs. them” mentality to a win-win path** for everyone is at the heart of the work that *YES Institute* does.”

– Connie Barden



Founders


Martha Fugate & Connie Barden

Time seems to disappear when you are totally engaged in your purpose, so it’s hard to believe it’s been 30 years since *YES Institute* began. We knew from the beginning that for *YES* to thrive and flourish, it would need community support, committed volunteers, and individual donors who were generous and inspired. **That support allowed us the agility and freedom to have the most impact and go where we saw the most need.**

Our unique stance—inviting the most resistant and hardened to our gatherings and sharing our purpose of keeping ALL youth safe—is the crux of this work. **Making room for everyone’s ideas is an essential component that has taken us to the places where our youth had the least support.** People often fear discussing difficult topics and avoiding disagreement, which frequently halts communication. Finding a way around the “us vs. them” mentality to a win-win path for everyone is at the heart of the work that *YES* does. Once effective and encompassing communication happens, a natural inquiry occurs that can lead to education and healing.

There have been many gratifying outcomes resulting from the work of *YES Institute*. **Lives have been saved, families have healed, clergy have become allies, educators have been empowered, and young people have learned the joy and freedom of simply being who they are.** There are also great rewards from learning acquired when hearing many points of view and sharing a commitment to the same overarching purpose.

We are grateful, thankful, and aware that it is due to the generosity of all those who came to *YES Institute* that the organization thrives. A Board of Directors that stood up at an uncertain beginning, and the staff who came to work and never left. Interns who found us, taught us, learned from us, and then took *YES* all over the world. Committed volunteers and generous donors who keep *YES* thriving. All these have served our mission, and we thank you. That said, **the brave young people and families who brought their lives and their stories to this work are the ultimate heroes.** We honor and salute you.


Martha Fugate
YES Institute Co-Founder


Connie Barden, MSN, RN
YES Institute Co-Founder

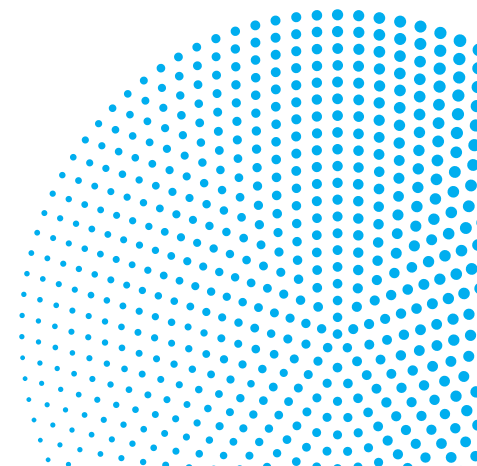
“ For years, **YES Institute** has been one of **The Our Fund Foundation’s most trusted partners**, and I hold their work in the highest regard. Time and again, they have stepped in with compassion and expertise to support people connected to Our Fund who were navigating complex questions around gender, orientation, and youth. **Their ability to create safety, understanding, and genuine human connection is nothing short of life-changing.** I am deeply grateful for the vital role **YES Institute** plays in strengthening families and helping young people be seen, affirmed, and supported. ”

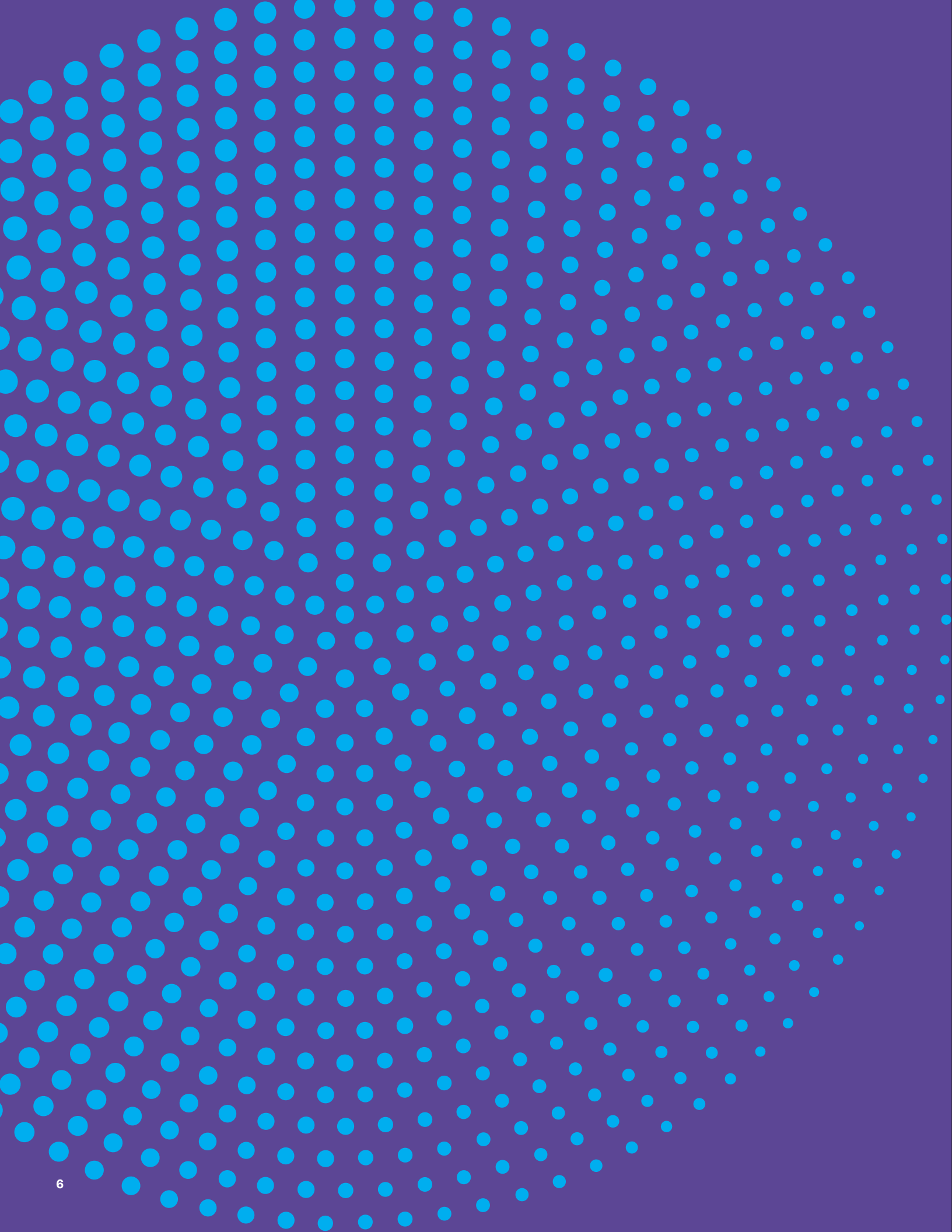
David Jobin

– David Jobin
President & CEO of The Our Fund Foundation



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WHY & HOW

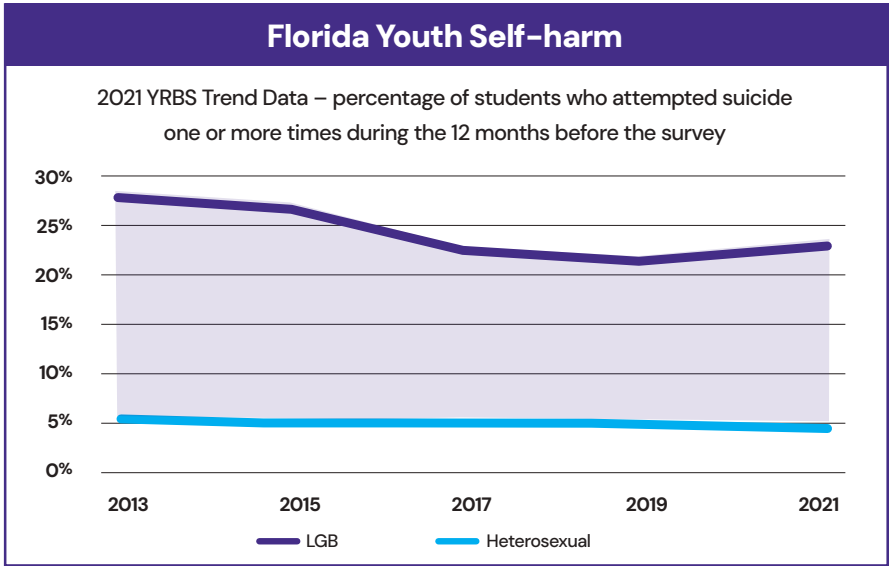
Why?

Every day, 20 youth in the United States die by suicide.

(Curtin & Garnett, 2023)

Parents lose their children, siblings lose their brothers and sisters, and classmates lose their friends. Communities are profoundly affected by the grief that follows such tragic losses—**everyone can agree that children should not kill themselves.**

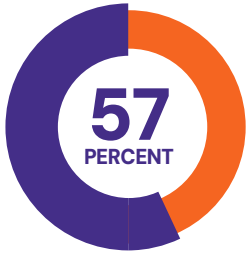
Since 2016, suicide is the second leading preventable cause of death among youth. Students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning their gender or sexual orientation are **four times** more likely to attempt suicide than their peers (CDC YRBS, 2021; Hedegaard, 2018).



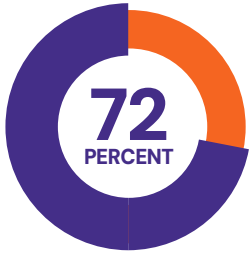
Florida High School Students (9th-12th Grade) CDC YRBS Results for Florida, 2021

“I learned how necessary it is to educate the public on these youth. I found it astounding, the statistics on middle and high school students hearing anti-gay slurs almost daily and witnessing anti-gay violence.”

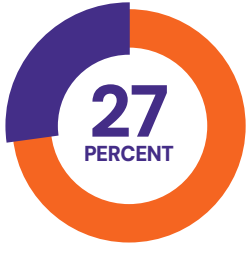
Maricela G.,
- Nova Southeastern University faculty



57% of gay youth are rejected by their parents



72% of students hear anti-gay slurs on a weekly basis



27% of students witness anti-gay physical violence

For many youth, rejection—particularly from parents—is a root cause of anxiety and depression that can lead to suicidal thoughts and self-harm (Fotti, 2006). Recent studies estimate that **57% of youth who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual experience parental rejection** (HRC, 2023) and rates are higher for youth of color (Richter, 2017). Rejection also happens outside the family; youth who do not express conventional gender and orientation expectations are twice as likely to be bullied either in-person or online (Trevor Project, 2021). A YES Institute study found that **72% of Florida middle and high school students hear anti-gay slurs** on a weekly or more frequent basis, and about **27% witness anti-gay physical violence** (McEwing, 2018). Social rejection activates the same region of the brain as physical pain, and over time, psychological injuries can lead to bodily harm (Eisenberger, 2003).

When youth who are in distress, or even in crisis, seek help, they are often met by adults who are uncomfortable about these topics and may also lack education. A 2017 study conducted by YES Institute in partnership with researchers at the University of Miami found that compared to three other professions such as teaching, therapy, and nonprofits, medical professionals reported receiving the least amount of training regarding contact with patients who do not fit traditional expectations of gender and sexual orientation (Sheridan, 2017). **Lack of training among caregiving professionals can lead to worse outcomes for youth in need**—outcomes that can have a devastating impact on their lives.

Since 2020, regional, national, and global events have dramatically escalated the need for support to address bullying, youth mental health, and youth suicide. **Mental health needs rose significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Legislative and policy changes in the mid-2020's halted certain protections and services that previously acted as a safety buffer for vulnerable youth.

These challenges drive our mission and work every single day. **YES Institute is committed to providing effective tools and a strategic approach to preventing suicide and ensuring the healthy development of all youth**—across school communities, medical and mental health organizations, workplaces, and faith groups—so that our young people, families, and communities can thrive and reach their fullest potential.

How?

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

The heart of our efforts is to prevent suicide by addressing the root of the problem: **that children do not feel that they belong.**



an analogy:

imagine you are standing on the shore of a waterfall.

Suddenly, a toddler comes falling over. We call for help, and jump in and swim the child to shore. We saved the day! Minutes later, three more toddlers come down the waterfall. And soon, even more kids come tumbling down. Now what? Unless someone goes up the hill to see how youth are ending up in the waterfall in the first place, we will be fated to eternal crisis and rescue. **YES Institute is building a safety net at the top of the waterfall by working with adults who can support vulnerable youth.** We provide whole family education, facilitate dialogue and training with educators, support clinical skills training for therapists and medical providers, and partner with faith leaders, community groups, and more to work toward healing at the root source.

“YES Institute provides incredible learning experiences, where everyone in the family can be their authentic selves, communicate powerfully, and be returned to love and belonging. **For our family, and for so many others, YES makes our world safer for young people.**”

Lucy H.

– Clinical Social Worker



Vulnerable young people are getting the message they are not lovable, need to be fixed, and cannot belong while being who they are. When youth realize they cannot and will not change, **what point is living if no one will love you?** This problem is not the young people themselves, but rather the messages they receive everywhere—home, school, religious institutions, care providers. These are the places that can most benefit from the work of YES Institute.

We provide education on gender and orientation in order to increase knowledge and reduce stigma. Once people have a fuller understanding, they still may be immobilized by an inability to communicate on topics they previously viewed as wrong or taboo. Education may lead the way, but it is always followed by the need for powerful communication. Once these two components come together, solutions can be found.

Respectful of all viewpoints, cultures, religions, and political backgrounds, **our dialogue model opens up possibilities for repairing communication breakdowns,** aligning previously opposing worldviews and beliefs, and centering a common purpose of keeping youth safe.

Left to right: Lucy Hernandez, LCSW, Brooklyn, and Malerie Sloschay



two
THE WORK

Our Purpose in Action

The core of *YES Institute's* work is our **Communication Solutions™ course**—
a model of communication that moves people beyond debates
over right and wrong so that they can work together, offering new possibilities
for powerful partnerships that can include many differing viewpoints.

Over the past 30 years, the **Communications Solutions™ course has reached many diverse groups:** clergy, counselors, families, police, first responders, medical and mental health professionals, students and faculty from Pre-K through graduate education.

Communications Solutions™ course is our flagship learning experience, offering continuing education for social workers, mental health professionals, and nurses.

Our approach has worked so well that other organizations engage with *YES Institute* to teach them how to handle situations where teamwork breakdowns occur over conflicting opinions. We offer customized versions to address specific situations. **The two-day**

Over the past 30 years, **more than 5,000 people have joined us to learn the tenets of the Communications Solutions™ model**—listening, re-creating, responding with generosity—profoundly enhancing their ability to acknowledge all viewpoints, foster more inclusive environments, repair relationships, and create safer communities.



When viewpoints differ, we typically withhold our opinions, or vigorously debate in an effort to change the other's position. **The more personal or divisive the issue, the deeper our determination is to "win" or prove the other person wrong.**



listening

While we hear others speak, how often do we genuinely listen?

Even in a typical conversation among friends, most people politely wait their turn to speak their thoughts, rather than engaging with real interest. It is doubly challenging to truly listen to someone you believe is wrong.

Above: Through *YES Institute* courses, staff and volunteers facilitate dialogues that explore the factors that lead to relationship breakdowns.

Right: Our communication model helps reunite families, create supportive mental and medical health environments, foster inclusive communities, and lay the foundation for lasting change.

YES In Action

Aligning Focus

In the mid-2010s, faculty at an independent religious school witnessed anti-gay bullying by their senior class sports team against another team's school. Multiple shrill warnings of "Stop! Don't bully! You'll be punished!" were having no effect. They contacted and invited *YES Institute* to lead a student learning dialogue. The school was concerned about their current behavior, while also fretting how to acculturate them for vast peer diversities they would experience at their university campuses. Before the scheduled presentation, another school leader called and asked hesitantly, "We would like you to conduct this student session... but, can you assure us that none of the presenters are gay or transgender themselves? And further, can you not mention your mission during the talk?" Through careful listening, we gleaned unspoken fears below the surface of the requests. Inviting them to share more about their concerns, we uncovered their real consideration—the session might conflict with their faith teachings on homosexuality. Once reassured the focus was on student safety, mental health, and reducing harmful behaviors and attitudes—not challenging religious beliefs—the school leader retracted all his conditions. The dialogue was successful, and *YES Institute* was invited back to address future graduating senior cohorts.

YES In Action

Building Trust

At a *YES Institute* course, one grandparent exclaimed, "I understand about gay and lesbian. I know that's 'real'—I have gay people in my family. But 'transgender'... I don't understand. This has to be caused by a teacher giving my grandchild ideas, all from political ideology!" Many of the other parents in the course with transgender children turned their heads, staring wide-eyed at the gentleman. The *YES Institute* facilitator listened, setting aside their own reactions, and said, "I hear you. You had a grandson, and suddenly, they are saying they are your granddaughter. This came out of nowhere, and you feel it was caused by someone giving them this idea." He responded, "Yes!" The facilitator continued, "I see how worried you are, and that you would do anything to protect them." He nodded his head. The course continued, and by the end, the gentleman shared, "I want to take the next course to learn more."

Truly listening is an act of will that requires you to set aside your own agenda to learn more about the other person.



re-creation:

having something be the way it already is.

What does this mean in your conversations?

Listening to someone speak without trying to fix, change, or resist them is a challenge, especially when their opinions may differ from your own.

When you re-create another's viewpoint, you hear it as simply that—their viewpoint—and allow it to be just as it is.

“The power of hearing people's stories and experiences and the connections with other participants had a very deep impact. **The affinity space was safe, welcoming, and authentic.**”

Gladys S.

– *Communication Solutions™* participant



listening and responding

with generosity and purpose.

Purpose is a common denominator of humanity, a desired outcome that is big enough to be shared by everyone. Greater than our individual points of view, it is large enough to call us all to work for good outcomes. When working towards a worthy purpose, such as keeping all youth safe, everyone wins.

When people work towards a purpose, there is no need to collect evidence that the other person is wrong, because you both seek the same thing.



Purpose does not require agreement.

Being connected to a purpose transcends differences, reconnects our relationships, and gives us the ability to put our commitment into actions that create worthy outcomes.

Our efforts to keep all youth safe are undeterred by differing viewpoints.

We work with individuals and groups that represent the entire spectrum of viewpoints. The context of purpose—keeping youth safe—creates a clarity that allows us all to work together in a space where even diametrically opposed opinions are included.

When people are upset and afraid, often they seem to attack that of which they are afraid. **When you believe in a person's inherent goodness, you can look beyond the bluster to find the fear and then clear the path to a shared purpose.**

YES Institute provides the Communication Solutions™ course in-person in South Florida, and we also travel to cities across the US and Latin America.

YES In Action

Antidote to Fear

In a *YES Institute* presentation, someone angrily declared AIDS was a horrible punishment deserved by “people who disobeyed God.” Attendees snapped their heads, pin drop silence now permeating the room. Listening carefully and having to dig deep for generosity, the *YES Institute* facilitator heard something else. They heard the tearing conflict this man experienced between his love of God and the punishing consequences God would deliver to gay youth in the form of HIV. Rather than facing just a hateful man, they realized such passion was a sign of someone who cared deeply about youth. Fears that his own son might be gay were now torturing this believer. At the end of the presentation, he volunteered to be a part of an ad-hoc workgroup to make recommendations to better serve clients whose children may be gay or transgender in their organization.

Generosity is granting people goodness they may not be demonstrating at that moment.

“He drew a circle that shut me out—Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But love and I had the wit to win: We drew a circle and took him in!”

— Edwin Markham

“When you give all your attention to another, it opens space for real conversations and relationships to occur. I now see that the

solution does not have to be that we agree or that I have to prove my point, but that we are partners for the purpose.”

Monica V.

— Communication Solutions™ participant

YES In Action

Safety Matters to Everyone

YES Institute was invited to present for a corporate Pride Month employee resource event. One man repeatedly stood up and interrupted the talk. His indignation towards Pride celebration was obvious, and he talked about the teasing and humiliation he was now receiving from his male friends at the billiards hall for working at a “gay company”. The facilitator acknowledged him for the courage it took to stand up for his views, and was thanked for expressing them so honestly. This heterosexual man, now being harassed as “gay friendly,” provided a perfect illustration for the point of the session. If bullying and othering is unaddressed, anyone can become a target. Keeping everyone safe from bullying and discrimination, connected to a larger purpose of employee well-being and belonging—is a unifying goal everyone can get behind. At the end of the talk, the employee reached out and shook hands and thanked the *YES Institute* presenter for including his concerns in the session.

YES Institute continues to innovate new communication and educational courses that

meet the needs of the families and communities we serve. We incorporate the latest research with practical exercises to offer new ways for people to discover and view youth suicide prevention, gender and orientation, being and belonging, and other dimensions of human experience, all while introducing a new context for people to relate to each other.

Our signature learning experiences include:



Communication Courses

- Communication Solutions™
- Communication Toolbox
- Introduction to Communication Toolbox

Our two-day in-person, and five-hour virtual formats of our communication and listening distinctions allow you to learn and practice mastering shifting “us vs. them” debates into “all of us” possibilities and win/win solutions that center relatedness.

“ I think what impacted me the most is knowing that people are talking and caring about the future, knowing that if I ever had kids and they came out, I know where to turn, and even how to react.”

Charmaine H.
– Parent

Gender & Orientation

- Deciphering Gender & Orientation
- Essentials of Gender & Orientation
- Masculinity Distinguished
- New Thinking on Concepts of Gender
- Reclaiming Machismo, Boy’s Don’t Cry

“ I found this presentation to be applicable in all relationships, especially with the difficult challenge of gender and orientation; topics many stay clear of. **As a nurse, I need to be a competent communicator in order to meet the patient’s needs. I feel empowered to educate and re-create by dispelling fear, anger, hate, and stereotyping.** ”

Carlos T.
– Nurse

Bullying Prevention

- A Communication Called “Bullying”

Why do children, and even adults “bully”? Who taught us these behaviors? What payoff does bullying provide? We’ve tried to “stop” bullying—why hasn’t it ended? Could a whole new insight on the bullying phenomenon lead to meaningful and lasting solutions?

“ I learned that bullying has a certain context in society that prevents us from actually putting an end to it, only treating the symptoms. We need to re-evaluate this context and see it instead as a communication—one that sees both sides as human and hurting, and listening to what the actions are saying.”

Robert F.
– DCF Staff



Additional Topics

- Essentials of Well-Being
- Leadership in Action™
- Mental Health & HIV Stigma
- Neurodiversity Awareness & Best Practices
- Well-Being in Times of Uncertainty
- Tourism, Hospitality, and Customer Service workshops

In addition to our educational courses, YES Institute also provides coaching and consultation services on topics including organizational and individual communication, teamwork, and leadership.

“ I was a Special Ed teacher for 40 years. I expected to learn nothing or not much when I saw this on our training schedule. But after, I learned things I didn’t get to learn in all my 40 years of teaching about neurodiversity. **I learned so much, and told my supervisor they should make this mandatory for other staff departments.** We encounter all walks of life. I found this so valuable and helpful.”

Yumiko O.
– Museum docent

Continuing Education

Continuing Medical Education (CME)

YES Institute partners with medical schools and hospitals to propose and co-present CME sessions on bioethics and patient-centered care with subject matter physicians.

Continuing Education for Psychologists (CE)

YES Institute partners with the Florida APA to propose and co-present CE sessions with clinical experts.

Board Approved CE Provider

- Florida Board of Nursing #50-1652 valid through 10/31/2026.
- Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling #50-1652 valid through 03/31/2027.

Florida Certification Board

#5292A valid through 12/31/2027. We offer continuing education hours for case managers, peer specialists, behavioral health, recovery, child welfare, and other certified professionals.

Recent Accolades

The courses we provide are widely recognized for high caliber content, innovative program design, engaging and interactive learning approaches, and the positive impact on participants.



2024 Florida Blue Foundation Sapphire Award (lower right)
2nd Place Statewide Mental Health Program category

2023 NBC Universal Foundation
NBC6 Telemundo South Florida Impact Award

2021 Guidewell Health Innovation Award
1st Place South Florida Regional "Growing Resilient Communities" Challenge

2019 NHL Florida Panthers Foundation (upper right)
South Florida Nonprofit Award

2018 Florida Association for the Education of Young Children (lower left)
Member Advocacy Award

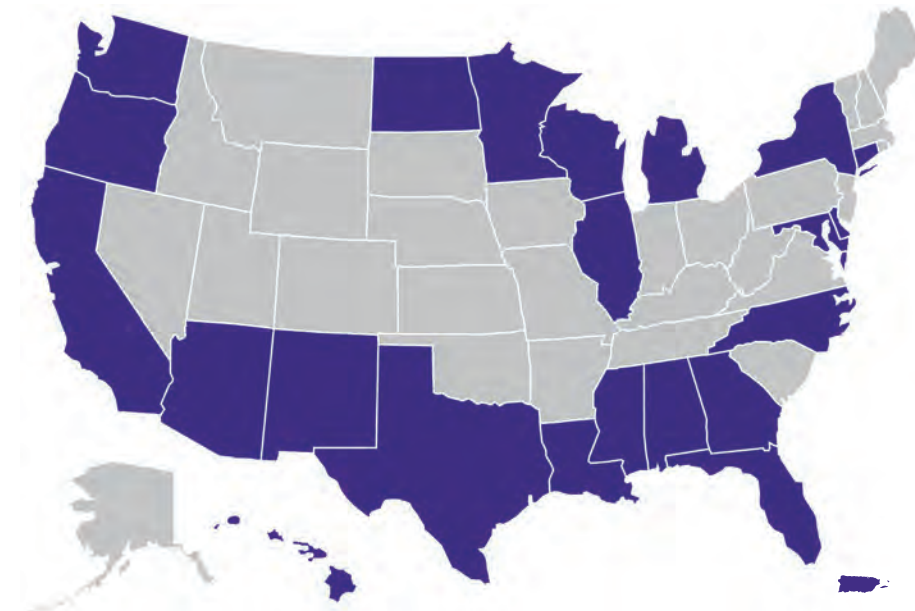
2018 Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (upper left)
Non-Profit of the Year Award

2016, 2018, 2019 University of Miami School of Nursing & Health Studies
Appreciation of Service Awards

Accessibility & Reach

We are committed to ensuring our programs are accessible to all communities. **We have translated our materials into Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Greek.** Our Spanish-speaking staff members interpret our presentations and meet with Spanish-speaking families and community members. **We provide sign language interpretation (ASL) as well as Closed Captioning** for people who are Deaf / Hard of Hearing, **and adaptations are available for low vision attendees.**

As we build bridges across languages and communities, we are also using technology to deliver our programs farther than ever before. In the past 30 years, **YES Institute has delivered programs in more than 24 states and 5 countries,** including:



States & Territories

Alabama, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin



Countries

Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Cyprus, México



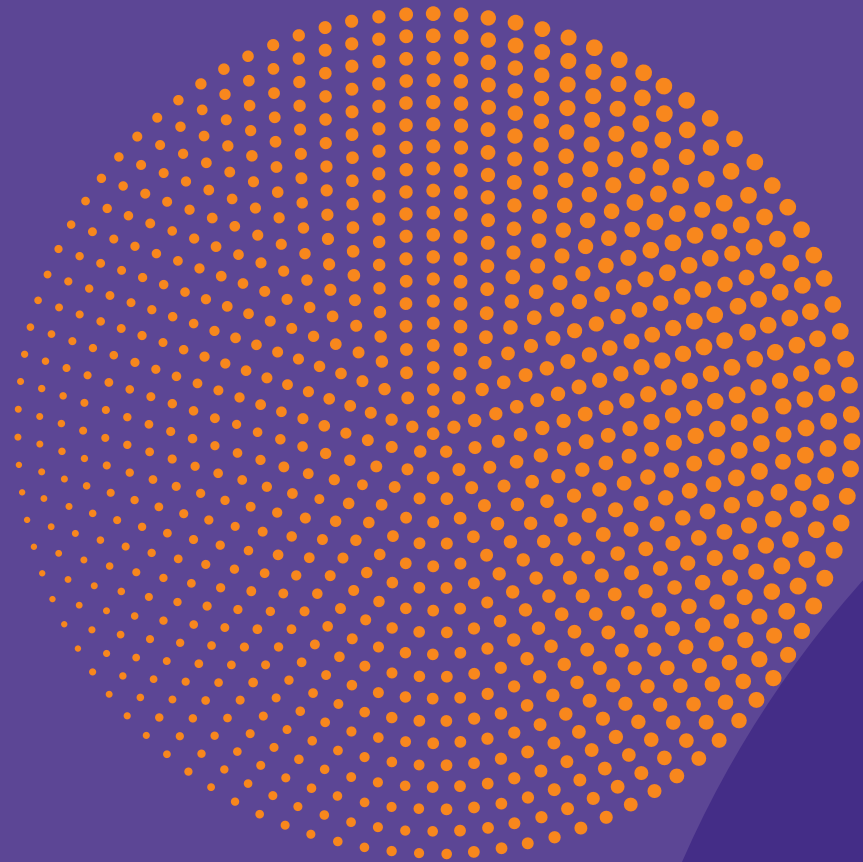
IREX – International Nonprofit Exchange with the US State Department

YES Institute hosts leaders for 3-month duration experiences, visiting from **Fiji, Malta, North Macedonia, and Tajikistan.** These NGO leaders are working on gender, youth mental health, and non-profit development in their home nations, adapting YES Institute models into their cultural contexts and program goals.



PANDEMIC PIVOT

In March of 2020, our institute joined millions of others in closing physical locations to slow the spread of COVID-19, halting in-person interaction for about fifteen months. We quickly resumed services online, adapting our digital delivery to be able to continue to serve families and organizations near and far. Virtual meetings and webinars opened up new possibilities to reach graduate students, workplaces, and organizations in states including **Connecticut, Hawaii, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Illinois, Mississippi, and Louisiana.**



three
RESULTS

“The first interns who found *YES Institute* came from Australia, Cyprus, Italy, England, as well as many states across the US.

When I asked them, **‘Why here? There must be organizations closer for you? Why *YES Institute*?’** From them, I learned how education was unique on our topics. They answered, **“*YES* is the only one doing this kind of work. We want to change the world, and education is the only way.”**

Education and communication has brought the brightest and the best young people from around the world. 🎵

– **Martha Fugate**
Cofounder of *YES Institute*

Results

“OPENED MY MIND.
TOUCHED MY HEART.”

– *Social Worker*

“FIVE STARS!”

– *Police Officer*

“A ONE-OF-A-KIND
RESOURCE.”

– *Pastor*

“BROUGHT MY FAMILY
BACK TOGETHER.”

– *Grandmother*

“CHANGED THE WAY
I COMMUNICATE.”

– *High School Teacher*

“LIFE CHANGING.”

– *Mother*

“EXTREMELY
WORTHWHILE.”

– *Communication Course Participant*

“INCREDIBLE.”

– *Nurse Practitioner*

Over the past 30 years, *YES Institute* has been invited by the leadership of thousands of organizations—including schools, universities, medical and mental health providers, corporations, faith communities, civic associations, and more—as well as families to **reach more than 100,000 community stakeholders for youth safety.**

In each setting, we utilize our communication model to establish shared purpose, build connections, and foster meaningful dialogue. Sessions open with *YES Institute* facilitating role-appropriate conversations engaging participants to share attitudes and beliefs that contribute to unsafe or unsupportive environments. Volunteer speakers share their personal experiences to help the audience connect with the principles of suicide prevention and healthy development.

Our speakers share the heartfelt impact of rejection and harmful messages that resulted in actual or near tragedies. The authentic

and powerful sharing of our trained volunteers sets our presentations apart—**people are moved to action by their luminous voices.**

These efforts increase awareness and communication around difficult topics, empower families and community groups to powerfully advocate for youth, and thereby reduce bullying and self-harm in communities we serve. This effectiveness is one of the many reasons that **consistently for more than 25 years, 90% of participants have rated *YES Institute* education as “Worthwhile” and “Extremely Worthwhile.”**

RESULTS IN Families

Parents and caregivers who reach out to *YES Institute* are often in a state of fear for their children—they have learned about potentially harmful experiences or behaviors, and are looking for resources to help them prevent a disastrous outcome. **Our goal is to create a welcoming setting for families to express anything and everything, so they can receive the resources they need to support their child's well-being.**

Families are often referred to *YES Institute* through a friend, mental health therapist, or by searching online. We meet with them to determine how we can best support their needs, including: inviting them to participate in our education and communication courses, referring them to our trusted list of community providers, or facilitating opportunities for them to build community with other families who have shared their experiences (*see more about these opportunities on page 20*).

Working with families calls us to deeply engage with nuances of culture, religion, political beliefs, and more in order to reduce and repair rejection and support healthy futures for youth and families. Requests increased dramatically during the post-pandemic period and following changes in health-care and educational policies; **between January 2020 and November 2025, we received 931 calls from families and caregivers.**



Sky & Isabelle

Sky was a young Haitian-American student when he learned about *YES Institute*. He attended a workshop on gender and orientation and, for the first time, met someone who reflected his own identity.

Sky knew he wanted to transition to male and shared this with his mother, Isabelle. Her immediate response was, "No way!" Devastated, Sky attempted suicide. He was rushed to Miami Children's Hospital, and as he recovered, our staff met with Isabelle to help her understand and process what both she and her child were going through. This conversation marked the beginning of her journey toward unconditional love. Determined not to lose her child, Isabelle began taking our courses, and over time, she embraced Sky's transition from Sole.

Today, Sky is a thriving young man and a volunteer speaker for *YES Institute*. Isabelle, also a parent speaker in English and Haitian Creole with *YES Institute*, authored her biographical journey in "Sole's Mom" in 2024. She mentors other families navigating similar journeys.



Eva Leivas-Andino & Paolo Andino & Family

For Eva Leivas-Andino, a new life began when she realized that she had not been there for one of her sons, Paolo, when he was a child and struggling on his own to understand that he was gay. "I left this child totally alone and abandoned while he was going through this," she says. "I realized that day that I had failed my son." Years later, Eva discovered *YES Institute*, and became a passionate speaker and staff member for many years. "*YES Institute* has made a difference for me, Paolo, and our whole family in an incredibly powerful and transformative way."

Manu, Patricia, & Eduardo

Few parents feel prepared for their child to share that they are another gender, especially when their children are still toddlers. When Manu announced at age 4 that she was a girl, not a boy, Patricia and Eduardo came to *YES Institute* to learn how to best support their child. Today Patricia is one of our guest speakers and supports other parents in Spanish, and Manu is a member of our Youth Empowerment Council and is a guest youth speaker for psychology and nursing classes.

"Through sharing our story, we hope that less parents and children experience the pain of uncertainty we went through. We know it will not be an easy path for anyone, but to know that you are not alone is a great comfort."



Eduardo Salazar, Manu's dad, Rachel Sottile, former Executive Director of *YES Institute*, Patricia Caicedo, Manu's mom, Manu, and Sandra Peebles, Univision Reporter/Anchor.

Jose Luis Pere & Trae Williamson

Jose Luis first saw Trae when he emceed a New World Symphony concert benefitting *YES Institute*. They met a few years later at one of the famous “Casino Night” fundraisers in the home garden of the Birrittella family. Over time, their friendship blossomed into a loving relationship, partly through their shared commitment to *YES Institute*, including serving on the board. Trae shares, “My parents were actually involved with *YES* before I was. I was living out of town for school, but when I moved back, *YES* became my first and favorite community involvement. When Jose Luis joined the board, my heart always skipped a beat when I saw him at meetings. Eventually it became obvious that we would take the next step. We’ll always credit *YES* for our relationship, which is rich with *YES* values—authenticity, clear communication, and of course, love.”



Naomi & Ry

“When my child came out as transgender 10 years ago, *YES Institute* was there to guide me through one of the hardest – and most transformative—times of my life. Their education and unwavering support gave me the tools to understand, advocate, and love more deeply. Being invited to serve on the board has been an honor, allowing me to give back to the organization that gave so much to me and my family. I’m forever grateful for the work *YES* does to build a safer, more compassionate world for all of us.”



Belkys Moreno & Family

“Our family came from a close-knit community where most people shared very traditional, conservative views. From the start, I have always cherished my children exactly as they are, but when two of them discovered they were part of the gay and transgender community, I wanted to be sure I had the right words and tools to support them fully. The *YES Institute* helped me build understanding and confidence, so even when the wider community didn’t always embrace them, my home was a place where love, safety, and pride were never in question.”



Tim & Meredith Birritella

Tim and Meredith Birritella are donors and contributors to *YES Institute* since 2002, with Tim and Meredith each serving on the *YES Institute* Board of Directors from 2002 to 2010. The Birrittellas opened their beautiful South Florida residence to host exquisite Kiaora Society of Donor events, holiday celebrations, and “Casino Night” fundraisers that brought *YES Institute* family, friends, and philanthropists together. We all grew and learned—while relishing in the privilege of serving as a village of care—on the courageous journey of two fathers growing their family. Their wunderkind, talented daughter Emma, brings tears of joy to our eyes. We remember her as a newborn at her baby shower in 2004, and see her today as a thriving, maturing young woman. Emma recently graduated from Sante Fe College majoring in Zoo Animal Technology and is looking forward to a rewarding career as a zookeeper. We celebrate their love, their joy, and their beautiful family.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Requests increased dramatically during the post-pandemic period and following changes in healthcare and educational policies.

We answered

931 calls

between 2020 and 2025

from families and caregivers.

Tori, Tom & Damien

“Our son’s journey to living life authentically was a turbulent and heart wrenching ride. Without the help of the *YES Institute*, he probably wouldn’t be alive today. The support that he received and WE received as a family, has allowed us all to grow and thrive through unconditional love and acceptance. Today he is living his best life and we are annual Kiaora Society donors and proud to name the *YES Institute* in our will.”



RESULTS IN **School & University Communities**

To ensure the healthy development of all youth, *YES Institute* builds strong partnerships with communities where they spend significant time. After their homes, most youth spend the majority of their time in schools. **Classrooms make a significant impact on youth development from their youngest years all the way through college**, which is why we have developed programs to serve professionals in pre-K through university settings. School districts across the country have requested *YES Institute's* training to address concerns in their communities.

Approximately **83%** of the education staff we have trained have reported that they feel better equipped to handle a situation that could arise regarding gender and orientation. Approximately **81%** have reported a willingness to speak up when someone is

bullied with anti-gay or gender-based slurs. With a greater understanding of the challenges that youth face regarding gender and orientation, education professionals have an increased willingness to advocate for youth in their care.

Teaching the tenets of healthy communication can prevent bullying. Our work in classrooms has helped youth and educators alike learn tools to create more welcoming environments.



YES Institute has been invited to work with PTAs (left), high schools (center), and elementary schools (right) to support safe learning environments for all students.

Education Highlights

Delaware

In 2012, the State of Delaware experienced a high number of middle and high school student suicide attempts and suicide deaths. Reports revealed that 18% of the students who took their lives during this period were known to have concerns about sexual orientation rejection as a contributing factor.

In September 2015, the **Delaware Department of Children, Youth and Families** requested our programs be brought to the state. *YES Institute* worked with more than 2,800 school professionals, mental health providers, and other system of care stakeholders in New Castle and Kent Counties to address gender and orientation-based suicide and bullying prevention. Among the feedback we received, teachers said "I will make sure to be more available to my students who need support," and "this dialogue really got me thinking about how I can help students in school." One of the schools formed their first student support group as a result of our work.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

83%

Feel better equipped to handle a situation that could arise regarding gender and orientation.

81%

Reported a willingness to speak up when someone is bullied with anti-gay or gender-based slurs.

Education Highlights

New York

During the 2023–2024 school year, **Trevor Day School** in New York worked with **YES Institute** to engage their entire school community including parents, faculty, alumni, board of trustees, and students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Through large group assemblies, virtual meetings, individual classroom workshops, and professional development training for faculty, students, parents, and staff, we conducted age- and role-appropriate sessions to help them better understand gender stereotypes and bullying.

One high school student shared, “Today we learned about gender as a concept and about some of the ways that sexism impacts everyday life. It was really interesting to get to hear other people share experiences that were either similar to mine or dramatically different.” A faculty member added, “I really appreciated the amount of evidence-based practice and research included in this. Most content was backed up with clear specifics. Lots covered in only a couple hours.”



Education Partners

In South Florida and beyond, **YES Institute** has worked with dozens of public and private schools, universities, and professional groups for faculty including:

Miami-Dade County:



MDCPS Division of Student Services – Fathers in Action Week, School Counselors Conferences



Gulliver Preparatory School



Miami Country Day School



Parents Association for Teaching at Home (PATH)



United Way Miami-Dade Early Learning – Professional Development

Broward County:



NSU University School



BCPS Professional Development Conferences



Gardens School of Technology Arts Charter Faculty & PTA



Palm Beach County School Psychologists



St. Andrews School Boca Raton



Turtle River Montessori

Palm Beach County:

Additional Education Partnerships:



Trevor Day School NYC



Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter Eugene, OR



Ethical Culture Fieldston NYC



Polytech High School DE



St. Martin's Episcopal Atlanta, GA



St. Paul's Academy MN

Colleges and Universities:



University of Miami School of Nursing & Health Studies



University of Miami School of Education & Human Development



University of North Georgia, College of Education – Faculty Professional Development



Nova Southeastern University College of Psychology – Faculty Professional Development



University of Connecticut – School Psychology Program



Northeastern University Counseling & School Psychology PhD Program Boston



Louisiana University School (LSU) Psychology



Mississippi University School (MSU) Psychology

RESULTS IN **Medical and Mental Health**

Medical and mental health care providers have opportunities to support patients during some of their most vulnerable moments, particularly for youth and their families who are in crisis. Care can be life-saving. When providers lack understanding or comfort in working with patients who do not fit traditional expectations of gender or orientation, it can also be devastating. **All youth deserve quality care**, which is why *YES Institute* partners with large-scale health institutions, independent and small medical and mental health providers, and university programs to provide training and education on gender and orientation.

For care communities, we have produced video-based materials that facilitate learning and engage participants in both in-person and online interactive training sessions. Recorded interviews with youth and adult patients sharing about positive and negative interactions with providers deliver important patient care knowledge and best practice examples. Patient testimonies, and live guest speakers when available, enrich clinical knowledge through case studies and helps build empathy, comfort, and provider familiarity with these patient populations. **Our curriculum is approved for providers**

to receive Continuing Education credits when they participate in our training. Participants who complete and review two of our courses every two years, while maintaining positive client feedback, become part of our referral network of trusted providers.

In 2017, a study conducted by *YES Institute* in partnership with researchers at the University of Miami found that compared to three other professions, medical professionals reported receiving the least amount of training regarding contact with patients who do not fit

traditional expectations of gender and sexual orientation (*Sheridan, 2017*). We have worked with thousands of physical and mental health care providers, along with college- and university-level medical students. As a result of our programs, **more than 83% have reported decreasing their stigma** and increasing their comfort level with people perceived as gay or transgender. Additionally, **73% have reported feeling equipped to handle a situation that could arise regarding gender and orientation.**

We are moving the needle in improving care for vulnerable youth.



Bascom Palmer Eye Institute nurses and allied healthcare personnel discuss and learn during a CE training facilitated by *YES Institute*.



Partnerships with mental health providers such as South Miami Psychology Group, pictured here during a client-centered care training with *YES Institute*, are one way we are working to increase access to welcoming professionals.

Case Study

South Florida Behavioral Health Network

From 2012–2018, **Thriving Mind South Florida** (formerly South Florida Behavioral Health Network) engaged *YES Institute* to reduce gender and orientation stigma within the **Miami-Dade System of Care** in a formal and systemic way, starting with open dialogues and educational training for providers. Over the next five years, this partnership expanded to enhance cultural competency work nationally. Key outcomes included:

- System-initiated dialogue and awareness sessions on the topics of gender and orientation, bringing heightened focus to inclusion of these topics for professionals and parents.
- First training for the **Florida Department of Health** supervisors was conducted, as well as the **Miami-Dade Family Court Services**.
- *YES Institute* presented at the **Our Kids Fostering & Adoption Summit**. We also developed a training specifically for Case Managers in the System, which 50% of professionals completed.

- *YES Institute* staffed the **Youth Gang Resource Center** in 2014, a Miami-Dade County funded grant program, in collaboration with the **Institute for Child & Family Health**. The program provided youth gang and violence prevention across Miami reaching 1,238 participants, including detained youth at the **Dade Juvenile Detention Center** and youth housed at the Miami Bridge.

As a result of this engagement, *YES Institute* became a national consultant with **SAMHSA's Technical Assistance Network** under their **Cultural & Linguistic Competency (CLC)** hub, providing consultation and training to **Systems of Care** in Mississippi, New Mexico, and Puerto Rico, and was invited to join the **National Workgroup on LGBTQ Youth** in Maryland.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

83%

Have reported decreasing their stigma and increasing their comfort level with people perceived as gay or transgender.

93%

of participants rated *YES Institute* dialogues as "worthwhile" or "extremely worthwhile".

Training the Next Generation of Providers

YES Institute regularly works with the University of Miami, Nova Southeastern University, and more training schools to provide education to medical and mental health students. Their feedback has included:

“ I think today’s session did a great job of describing some of the health impacts affecting those who identify as gender- and orientation-diverse, those who have HIV, and other groups, and **I found it helpful to learn how I can care for these groups as a future physician.** ”

“ I think it’s really moving to hear personal experiences and discuss how **we can be better and more welcoming physicians for our future patients.** ”

“ The stories shared gave personal perspectives on how to approach, understand and overcome different hardships and challenges. **I love the perspectives shared and specifically, how important it is to bring an open mind and consider different perspectives.** I know I’ll take these experiences and lessons with me to help make myself and my communities more open and strong together. ”



Nursing students during a YES Institute presentation.



Faculty with Benjamin León School of Nursing at Miami-Dade College RN to BSN program.

Case Study

Citrus Health Network

In 2017, **Citrus Health Network** was experiencing a high number of complaints from patients who identified as gay and transgender. After one year of YES Institute training and consultations, independently audited metrics scores by **Thriving Mind South Florida** for gay and transgender patient adaptations increased from 49% to 70%. YES Institute provided continuing education to 150 of their 1,000 clinical and non-clinical staff, and created a customized on-boarding video for new hires about appropriate patient care best practices. Citrus implemented nearly all the consultation recommendations from YES Institute: Updating patient intake forms, electronic health records, and made updates to patient care policies and procedures. In 2026, **Citrus Health Network** is still utilizing the video-based training we created for their staff.

Medical and Mental Health Partners

YES Institute has provided Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions in co-partnership with physicians and Nursing Continuing Education (CE) for healthcare providers at a variety of institutions on health outcomes and best practices in patient-centered care:



Baptist Health South Florida Bioethics CME



Baptist Health South Florida Nurses Week CE



Cleveland Clinic Hospital CME



Nicklaus Children's Hospital CME



Joe DiMaggio's Children's Hospital Psychiatric Nursing CE



Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine Faculty CME



Nova Southeastern University College of Pharmacology Faculty Professional Development



Miami VA Hospital and VISN-8 Region CE

Healthcare organizations and professional membership groups who have engaged with YES Institute for educational development, research studies, and consultation:



Baptist Health South Florida



Buxani Counseling Care



Care Resource



Chrysalis Health Florida



Citrus Health Network



Florida APA Palm Beach & Miami-Dade Chapters



Latinos Salud



Thriving Mind South Florida



University of Miami CHARM Center for HIV and Mental Health



PhiDE Medical Fraternity



ViiV Healthcare



VITAS Healthcare



Westcare Village South



University of Miami CFAR Center for AIDS Research



FIU & UM CLARO (Latino Health) Community Advisory Board

RESULTS IN Workplaces

YES Institute’s leadership and communication training provides teams with tools to enhance individual leadership and work more effectively together as a group. Our Communication Solutions™ model can build a team’s understanding and communication skills and help them discover powerful pathways to collaboration and effectiveness, even in moments of disagreement.

As an authority on gender and orientation topics, we bring workplaces to the leading edge of these discussions by providing information, resources, and ongoing leadership coaching and support to those wishing to implement actions in their communities that result in safe environments for youth. This includes language coaching to support

organizations in creating written and online communications (e.g. intake forms, reports, assessments) that reflect awareness around gender and orientation as well as training and technical assistance.

In addition to helping workplaces resolve disputes, collaborate more,

and become more supportive, working in environments where parents and caregivers spend so much of their time—at work—has helped us extend our reach. Today, a significant number of our family referrals and follow-up conversations stem from our programs in workplaces.

Creating a More Welcoming Miami

In 2019, YES Institute partnered with the **Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau** to present live in-person and online anytime virtual courses that provide a certificate for hospitality and tourism. Designed for multiple levels of hospitality professionals, as well as interested community members, these trainings offer best practices for providing welcoming experiences for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender nonbinary visitors and their families to the Miami region.



Staff with the Center for Children, Youth & Justice (Seattle, Washington) after a YES Institute Communication Solutions™ course.



Educational dialogue for the Town of Bay Harbor Islands police department and the education and community services programs team.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

A significant number of our family referrals and follow-up conversations stem from our programs in workplaces.

Sony Music US Latin






















In 2021 and 2022, **Sony Music US Latin SOMOS** invited YES Institute to work with their employees across North & Central America to examine their own lens of machismo, ask themselves how they experience masculinity, and hear from one of our volunteer speakers, **Noah Pantaleon**, who vulnerably shared about his gender transition within a Cuban family and how he managed internal and external expectations. Participants redefined macho similarly to the ways artists and celebrities push beyond the gender binaries in their expression of clothing, emotions, and interactions.



Image: Starr Sariago Photography

Corporate and Organizational Partners

Over the past 30 years, YES Institute has worked with hundreds of workplaces around the world, including:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  Banco Santander International |  Best Buddies International |  Circana |  Center for Children and Youth Justice Seattle |  Danone Group Miami |  Equinox Coral Gables, Brickell, NYC |
|  Family Resource Center |  Four Seasons Hotels – Walt Disney World® Resort, Palm Beach, Brickell |  Getaround Rideshare |  Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau |  HealthStream |  HistoryMiami Museum |
|  Hyatt Regency Miami |  Kaufman Rossin Miami |  Magic Leap |  Mastercard Brickell |  National Parks Service Big Cypress, Biscayne, Everglades |  Praxity FLVS – CPA Legal Conference |
|  SAP Miami |  Turner Construction Miami |  United Way of Miami-Dade |  Vizcaya Museum & Gardens | | |



Members and visitors in the sanctuary of Riviera Presbyterian Church.

RESULTS IN Faith Communities

Rooted in our commitment to being inclusive of all religions, beliefs, and viewpoints, *YES Institute* works closely with many faith communities.

We are one of the few organizations in the United States that successfully engages people of faith with conversations about gender and orientation that honor diverse religious beliefs and produce positive action for youth and family safety.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Faith-based organizations regularly invite *YES Institute* to engage with their families and other groups within religious communities.

Faith Community Partners

YES Institute has worked with a variety of religious organizations, including:



Episcopal Diocese of South Florida



Greater Miami Congregational Rabbis with Jewish Federation



Iglesia Episcopal en Colombia



Iglesia Episcopal en México



St. Mark's Lutheran Church



St. Timothy's Lutheran Church



Temple Beth Am



Temple Beth Or



United Church of Christ Coral Gables & Pinecrest

Latin America Summit on Gender & Communication

In 2011, Bishop James Ottley invited *YES Institute* to participate in the 1st **Latin America Summit on Gender & Communication** in Cuernavaca, Mexico. One participant shared, "I've been a priest for 13 years and I noticed that people would come to me for advice, I would tell them what to do, and they wouldn't do it. I've learned that I need to listen, see what's at the root of what they are saying, and empower them towards finding their own solutions."

Riviera Presbyterian Church

Early dialogues with **Riviera Presbyterian Church (RPC)** led to the faith community aligning to become a **More Light Presbyterian Congregation**—dedicated to advancing and ensuring the full participation of all people within the **Presbyterian Church USA**—and inviting then *Project Y.E.S.* to establish an office within their facility. RPC has graciously served as the physical location of *YES Institute* for 30 years, and church leaders including Rev. Laurie Kraus, Rev. Martha Shiverick, and Rev. Melanie Marsh, have all participated in various initiatives with *YES Institute* during their leadership.



Rabbi Rachel Greengrass of Temple Beth Am, along with members of the Rabbinical Association of Greater Miami, and Irene, a *YES Institute* parent speaker.

RESULTS IN Youth Empowerment

Building community is a cornerstone of healthy social development. As our reputation has grown, youth and families have increasingly asked us to facilitate opportunities to work directly with youth to help them practice the skills we teach through our classes and connect with peers who have shared their experiences. In response, **we have developed programming—our Youth Empowerment Council—to empower and coach youth** to lead YES Institute’s education to support its vision of a community where all youth are free of suicide, violence, and discrimination.

Below: YES Institute’s Youth Empowerment Council members at the HistoryMiami Museum.



“The course I took on “re-creating” arguments greatly improved my communication with both supportive and unsupportive peers. **Youth Council has improved my confidence tenfold**, and my public speaking skills along with it.”

Raymon S.

– Youth Council member



“Youth Council has brought a sense of community that I had a lot of trouble finding anywhere else. It feels like we’re all one big family and that I can really express myself at any time without shame or regret.”

Celia J.

– Youth Council member



Top two images: HistoryMiami Museum hosting Youth Empowerment Council members in creating an expressive art installation about their life experiences in the main lobby during the 2019 QueerMiami historical exhibition.

Bottom two images: Parents and Youth Council members engaging in purposeful fun at our annual summer Bowling Tournament fundraiser.

RESULTS IN **Research**

Another aspect that sets *YES Institute* apart from many organizations is our contributions to **original research on topics related to gender and orientation**. In the past 30 years, our staff and board members have partnered with researchers at South Florida universities to contribute knowledge to nursing, mental health, and public health fields, and have coauthored five research publications, including:

Research Publications with Staff & Board Members



2023 (In Press.) Lozano, A., Estrada, Y., Scott, D., Tapia, M.I., Santos, H.P., Carrico, A.W., Zolobczuk, J., Manker, A., & Prado, G. **Familias con Orgullo: Study Protocol for an efficacy study of a family-based intervention for Hispanic sexual minority youth.** PLOS ONE.



2022 McEwing, E., Black, T., Zolobczuk, J., & Dursun, U. (2022). **“Moving Beyond the LGBTQIA+ Acronym: Toward Patient-Centered Care.”** *Rehabilitation nursing* : the official journal of the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses, 47(5), 162–167.

2021 McEwing, E., Zolobczuk, J., Dursun, U., & Black, T. (2021). **Building Awareness of the LGBTQIA+ Community.** *Rehabilitation nursing* : the official journal of the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses, 46(5), 245–246.



2018 McEwing, E., Zolobczuk, J.M., Huynh, K.D., Gonzalez, A.A., & Lee, D.L. (2018). **Incidences of school-based anti-gay and gender-related bullying: Differences across levels of education.** *Florida Public Health Review*, 15, 25–35.

2017 Sheridan, D.J., Zolobczuk, J.M., Huynh, K.D. & Lee, D.L. **Workplace Harassment and Attitudes towards LGBT People: Differences across Human Service Occupations in South Florida.** *Florida Public Health Review*, 14, 1–12.

***YES Institute* also serves as an integral partner for community research and IRB-approved participant studies, including:**

- Santisteban, D.A., Czaja, S.J., Nair, S.N., Mena, M.P., & Tulloch, A.R. (2017). **Computer informed and flexible family-based treatment for adolescents: A randomized clinical trial for at-risk racial/ethnic minority adolescents.** *Behavior Therapy*, 48(4), 474–489.
- The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (June 2024). **Culturally Informed and Flexible Family-Based Treatment for Adolescents (CIFFTA)** by Santisteban, D.A.
- De Santis, J.P., De Oliveira, G., Iriarte, E.S., Castro, J.G., & Cianelli, R. (November 7, 2025). **Adaptation of the SEPA (Salud/Health, Educacion/Education, Prevencion/Prevention and Autocuidado/Self-care) intervention for transgender women.** Oral presentation given at the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC) Annual Conference. Philadelphia, PA, USA.

RESULTS ARE **Driven by People**

***YES Institute’s* mission thrives because of people who give their time, voices, and hearts to this work.**

Interns & Fellows

Starting in 2017, *YES Institute* partnered with an international exchange program connected with the **US Department of State** called **IREX** and their **Community Solutions Program (CSP)**. This program underwrites nonprofit and NGO community leaders from other nations to visit and live in Miami for three months, working alongside *YES Institute* staff. The CSP Fellows and *YES Institute* staff each learn from one another to benefit from cultural and knowledge exchange—new community frameworks, implementation strategies, and promising practices in human and social development—on complex global concerns. Our IREX fellows have hailed from Tajikistan, North Macedonia, Fiji, and Malta.



Young community leaders at a YES Institute networking event.



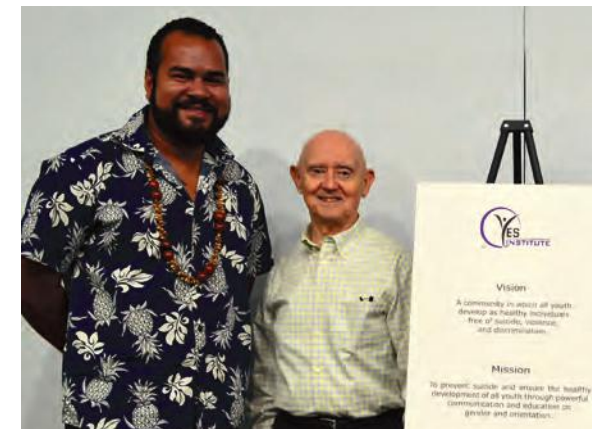
Speakers Bureau

Our Speakers Bureau is at the heart of our program’s success. Volunteers share their lived experience and passion for safer communities during every dialogue we lead. In doing so, they humanize the need for communication and understanding and help our audiences connect with the principles of suicide prevention and healthy development. More than 480 volunteer speakers have helped us deliver more than 3,400 dialogues over the past 30 years to create understanding, inspire new possibilities, and transform tens of thousands of lives.

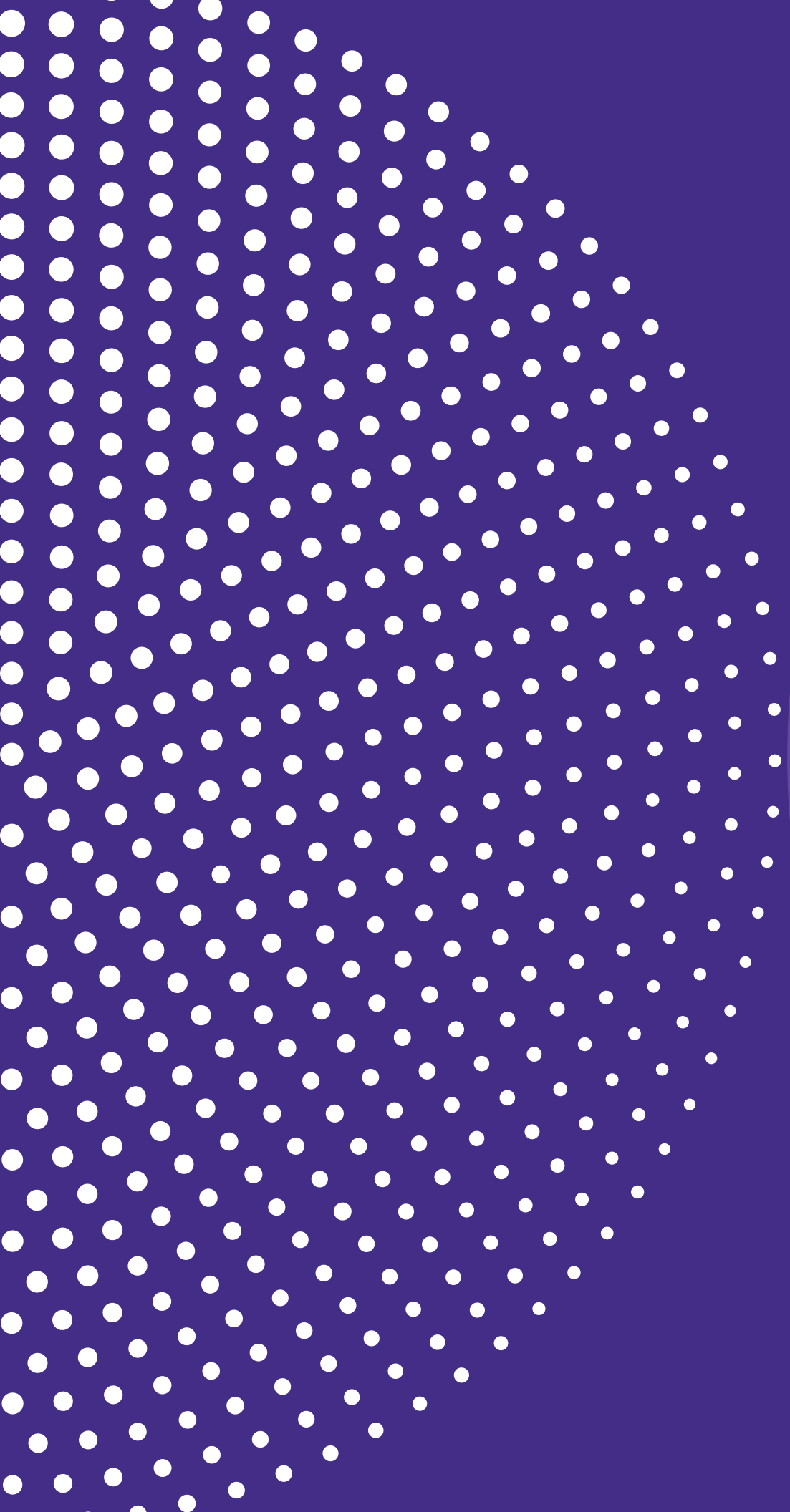
Speakers Bureau members are at the heart of our dialogues.

Volunteers

YES Institute’s volunteers support our mission in our offices and in the community. Their service allows our small staff to have a big impact year after year. From staffing at events to helping with administrative tasks, we truly appreciate the time and talent they share to ensure that our communities are safer for all youth. Our interns and volunteers embody the spirit of *YES Institute*—creating belonging, sparking dialogue, and helping youth and families thrive. We are endlessly grateful for their partnership and belief in this mission.



Lionel Rogers, a Community Solutions Program Fellow, and Bill Dewald, donor, speaker, and course volunteer with YES Institute.



four
DONORS & FINANCIALS

The Power of Support

Over the past 30 years, *YES Institute* has made powerful strides in preventing youth suicide, reducing bullying, educating medical professionals to provide equitable care, and more—

all made possible by the generous support of our donors.

Whether you have recently given for the first time or are a longstanding friend and champion of our mission, we are grateful for your partnership!

For many families, supporting the *YES Institute* is an annual tradition—in fact, many of our donors have contributed consistently since the organization’s inception. **The donors listed here have contributed \$10,000 or more to our mission, either through cumulative gifts over several years or through larger gifts made over a shorter period.** We are honored by their trust in our work and their enduring generosity.

- Opposite page (left to right from top)**
- Lynn Leverett, Meredith Birrittella, Katy Sorenson, Trae Williamson, Jose Luis Pere, Kevin Veilleux
 - Eduardo Moreira, Bruce Wolfe, Mark Henderson, Dennis Edwards
 - Forest McSurdy, Jahn Kirchoff, Christine Kirchoff
 - Dennis Edwards, Mark Steinberg, Eva Leivas-Andino
 - Edward McCutcheon, Allison McCutcheon, Joseph Zolobczuk, Dan Heining
 - Reneé Burwell, Sam Barone, Viktor Frengut, Naomi Canning, Rich Leitner





\$10K PLUS*

Left to right from top
 – Iris Alvarez, Lee Osaison, Virgin Vandervlugt, Lane Park, Joseph Zolobczuk
 – Eva Leivas-Andino, Randall Gluss, Rachel Sottile
 – Michele & Jonathan Drucker
 – Bill Dewald and Jim Gross
 – Naomi Canning, Joseph Zolobczuk, Carol Williamson



* Cumulatively contributed \$10K or more since our inception.

THANK YOU

FOR STANDING WITH US TO MAKE COMMUNITIES SAFER FOR ALL YOUTH

Donors & Financials

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- | | | |
|---|---|---|
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| Mel Heifetz | Katia & Tony Prado | |
| Stephen Herbits | Dr. Karen Raben/Pernick Family Fund | |
| Scott Huizenga | | |

\$5K PLUS*

FOUNDERS AND CORPORATE PARTNERS—\$5,000 OR MORE

YES Institute is grateful for the many **foundations and corporate partners** who have invested in our programs. Whether through one-time grants and sponsorships or through sustaining support, each has made a commitment to supporting safety and well-being for all youth.

We applaud these community partners for working with us to reunite families and save lives—they have **each contributed \$5,000 or more towards fulfilling the vision of a safe and healthy world for young people.**

* Cumulatively contributed \$5K or more since our inception.



Allegany Franciscan Ministries



CitiGroup Foundation



The Dade Human Rights Foundation



Florida Power & Light



Howard Greenfield Charitable Foundation



The Leesfield Family Foundation



Micky & Madeleine Arison Family Foundation



Colin Higgins Foundation



Dunspaugh-Dalton Foundation, Inc.



Gibraltar Private Bank & Trust



Huizenga Family Fund



The LGBTQ+ Equity Fund



Osiason Educational Foundation



Rosie O'Donnell Foundation



The United Way



Badia Spices



Comcast NBC Universal



Elinor G.W. & David E. Jackson Fund



The Gill Foundation



The Jack Kagan Foundation



The LOVELOUD Foundation



Osaic Foundation



Sain Orr Royak DeForest Steadman Foundation



University of Miami



Bank of America




The Community Foundation of Broward




Elton John AIDS Foundation



Gilead Pharmaceuticals



James G. Pepper Fund of the Stonewall Community Foundation



Margaret McCartney and R. Parks Williams Charitable Foundation



The Our Fund Foundation



Shepard Broad Foundation



ViiV Healthcare



The Batchelor Foundation



The Community Foundation for Palm Beach & Martin Counties



The Enterprise/Taylor Charitable Entities




Grove Bank & Trust



Jonathan D & Mark C. Lewis Foundation



Matthew Shepard Foundation



OUT Miami Foundation



Southeast Florida Episcopal Foundation



The Walter and Adi Blum Foundation, Inc.



Boca Rio Foundation



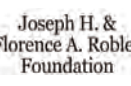
Coral Gables Community Foundation



Floatarama



Gulfstream Philanthropic Foundation




Joseph H. & Florence A. Roblee Foundation



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The Thomas Jackson Family Foundation



The Warten Foundation



Children's Service Council of Palm Beach County



Coral Gables United Church of Christ



Florida Blue Foundation



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The TOBY Lewis Fund



The William R. Watts Foundation, Inc.



The Children's Trust



The Dade Community Foundation



Florida Panthers Foundation



Health Foundation of South Florida



The Knight Foundation



Miami Shores Foundation



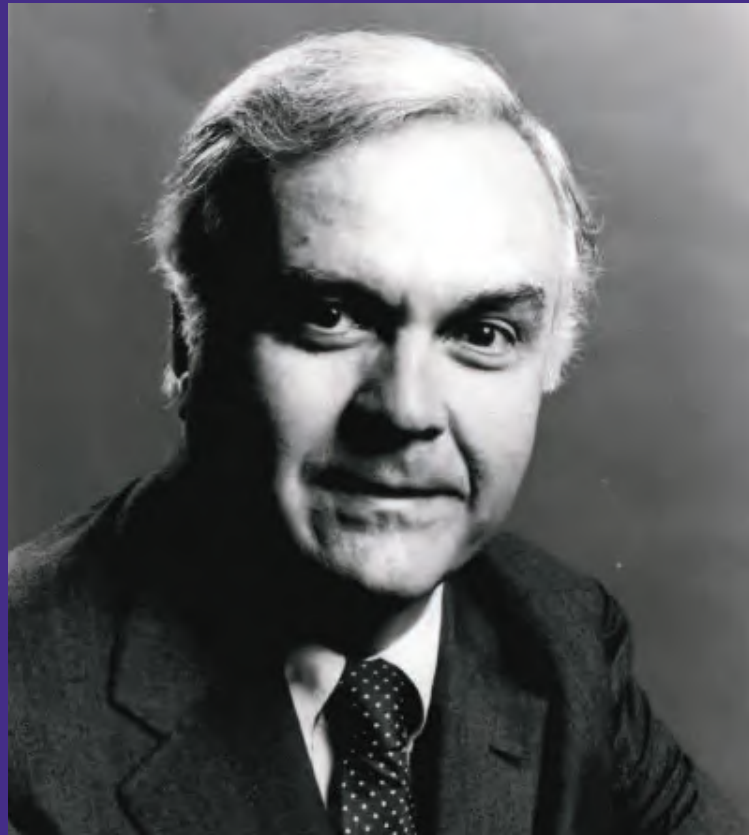
Raymond Bravo Foundation



United Capital Markets, Inc.



The Women's Fund



Ed McAmis, August 8, 1934 – June 3, 2023. His spirit lives on at YES Institute and in the community made safer and more inclusive by his warmth, passion, and generosity.

Kiaora Society

Our Kiaora Society is an esteemed group of donors who give \$1,000 or more annually to empower us to take our education programs where they are needed most.

This group is named in honor of Ed McAmis, who was an attorney, philanthropist, and the very first private donor to YES Institute. To honor Ed and his legacy, we named our donor society after the street on which he lived, Kiaora Street. “Kia ora” is a Maori word that literally translates to “be healthy” or “have life”, and is often used versatily as a greeting or expression of gratitude. Kiaora is a uniquely fitting name for a group dedicated to ensuring that everyone feels included.

Donor Society Members Appreciation Events

We are grateful to members of our Kiaora Society who generously open up their homes and businesses to host our donors as a thank you for their giving—and invite new guests to be a part of the future YES Institute is creating for youth.

We thank these hosts for their gracious hospitality and underwriting, which allows the proceeds of the donor events to go directly to the mission and work of YES Institute.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Lewis Aaron & Nigel Stirk | Larry Hyer |
| Floriano Alencar & Maria Menendez | Maria Elan Torano |
| Greg Baldwin & Jose Castro | William Jones & Reinaldo Hernandez |
| Lang Baumgarten | Tina & Jon Kislak |
| Tim & Meredith Birrittella | Joseph M. Kraus |
| Joseph W. Blount | F. Lynn Leverett & Lane Park |
| Sam Blum | Jonathan Lewis |
| Sergei Boissier | Esteban Londoño |
| Patricia Caicedo & Eduardo Salazar | Ed McAmis & Gerson Gonzalez |
| Naomi Canning | Northern Trust Bank |
| Marina Davis & Kevin Veilleux | Karen Raben |
| Rosa & Carlos De La Cruz | Joan Schaeffer |
| John Devaney | Mark Scott & Joseph Falk |
| Dennis Edwards & Mark Steinberg | Roxana & Efrain Sora |
| Carlos Garcia-Velez & W. Kent Davis | Jose Valdés-Fauli & Shed Boren |
| Gibraltar Private Bank & Trust (IberiaBank) | Carol & Ed Williamson |
| Dr. Isabel Gomez-Bassols & Eric Vasallo | Dr. Michael Wohlfeiler & Robert Eldridge |
| Grove Bank & Trust | Patricia Woodson, Dr. John J. Martin, Jr. & Forrest McSurdy |
| Don Hayden & Brian Thompson | |
| Dan Heininger | |

Right, top to bottom

- Jose Castro & Greg Baldwin.
- Jose Luis Pere, Trae Williamson, Carol Williamson, Laura White, and Ed Williamson.
- Juan Salazar, Patricia Caicedo, Manu Salazar, and Eduardo Salazar
- Meredith & Tim Birrittella



Donors & Financials



JOIN US

IN CREATING A SAFER FUTURE FOR ALL YOUTH

How you can donate to YES Institute

Mail a check payable to:

YES Institute
5275 Sunset Drive
Miami, FL 33143

Donate online:

yesinstitute.org/give

For more ways to give,
please call our office 305-663-7195.

Legacy Giving Society

YES Institute's Legacy Giving Society is an opportunity to create a lasting endowment of change, in your name (or in honor of someone dear to you) to sustain our vital mission and programs into the future. By designating YES Institute as a beneficiary in your estate plans, you can make certain that the wealth you have accumulated over your lifetime goes exactly where you want it to go. When you engage in Legacy Giving, you can also minimize possible estate taxes and costs, and provide direction and clarity to make things easier for your loved ones. Joining the Legacy Giving Society today will ensure that your loved ones are able to celebrate your values along with their memories.

We invite you to uphold our life-saving suicide prevention and education initiatives by making a legacy gift.

Learn more at yesinstitute.org/legacy-giving

We would love for YOU to join us in creating safer communities for all youth! A gift to YES Institute is an investment in our work with schools, medical and mental health providers, families, and every place where youth can thrive with the support of caring adults. Your generosity helps ensure every young person is met with understanding and compassion, and that professionals and care providers have the tools and education they need to deliver life-saving support. Together, we can break the silence, build connections, and prevent youth suicide.

87¢ of every dollar we receive goes directly to our programs. Truly, every donation—whether it is large, small, one-time, an annual contribution, or made through an estate plan—makes a difference in our community and in the lives of vulnerable youth and families.

“Our son’s journey to living life authentically was a turbulent and heart wrenching ride. **Without the help of the YES Institute, he probably wouldn’t be alive today.** Presently, he is living his best life.

We are annual Kiaora Society donors and are proud to name the YES Institute in our will. ”

Tori & Tom
— Tori & Tom Gabriel



Jonathan D Lewis

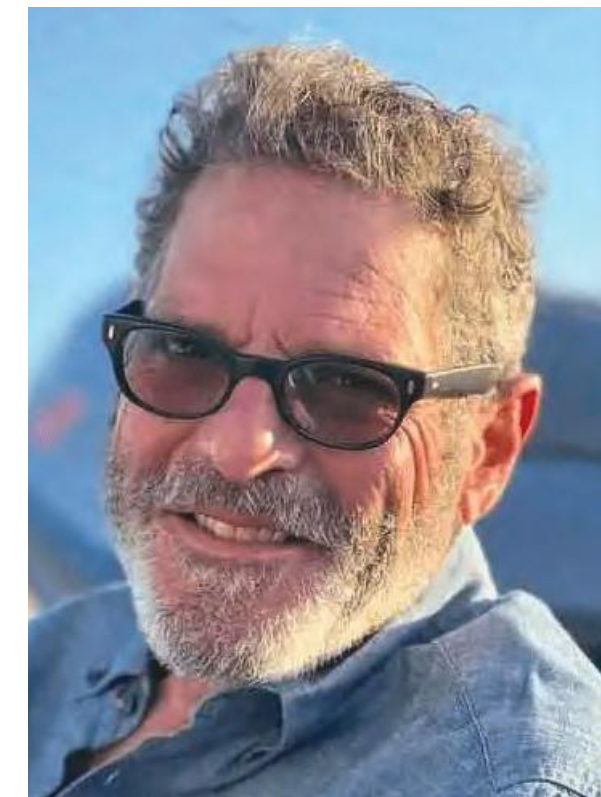
November 1, 1958—July 5, 2023

We mourn the loss and celebrate the incredible legacy of Jonathan D Lewis, visionary entrepreneur, social equity leader, and philanthropist, who passed away on July 5, 2023.

Through the Jonathan D+Mark C. Lewis Foundation, he contributed nearly \$980,000 to the work of YES Institute since 2001. His remarkable generosity played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of our nonprofit mission. His contributions not only raised awareness but also significantly enhanced our community profile, particularly with regards to our programs focused on education and preventing youth suicide.

Jonathan’s unwavering belief in the power and voice of young individuals, along with his deep understanding of the significance of prioritizing and investing in youth development and empowerment, stands as a cornerstone of our mission. His commitment to our vision of a world where youth are free of suicide, bullying, and discrimination remains a driving force in our work today.

Our board members and staff consider ourselves profoundly fortunate to have had the privilege of collaborating, working alongside, and seeking guidance from Jonathan for numerous years. Beyond his generous financial support, Jonathan lent his expertise, extensive network, strategic acumen, and invaluable wisdom to ensure the best outcomes for the youth, families, and communities we serve.



“ This is an organization with a vision and a track record of making a real difference in the world for gay youth. Political victories will mean little if hearts and minds of parents, clergy, and teachers do not change. **We must invest in the long, but permanent path of education to achieve this.** ”

Jonathan D Lewis
— Philanthropist

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Sound fiscal responsibility and financial management have been cornerstones of our organization since we were founded in 1996.

We are committed to allocating as much of our resources as possible to serving our community; in 2024 (our most recently completed fiscal year), **87% of our budget was dedicated towards our programs.**

Our Board of Directors meets monthly and reviews our budget and current expenses at every meeting. **To ensure the accuracy and integrity of our accounting practices, we have undergone a financial audit every year since our inception.** Our tax returns are publicly available on our website.



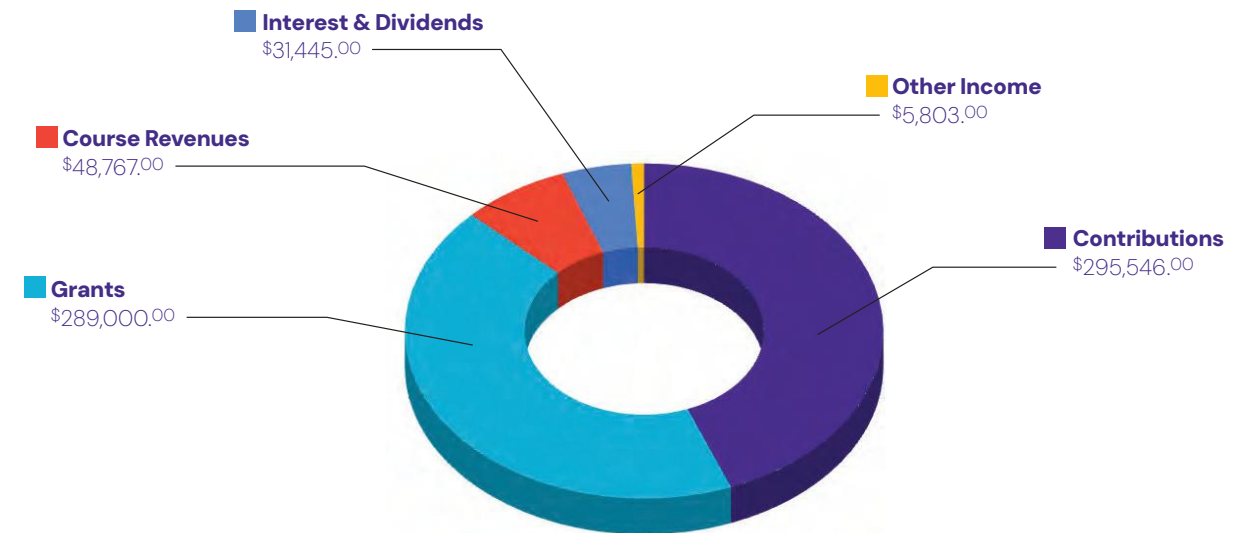
“Organizations like *YES Institute* play a vital role in strengthening communities by creating space for education, dialogue, and connection, especially for those who need it most. Everyone deserves to feel safe, supported, and understood. The impact extends far beyond any single program or moment, and it continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals, families, and the broader community.”

Leticia Carrazana
– Leticia Carrazana
TD Bank Senior Talent Acquisition Partner
YES Institute Volunteer

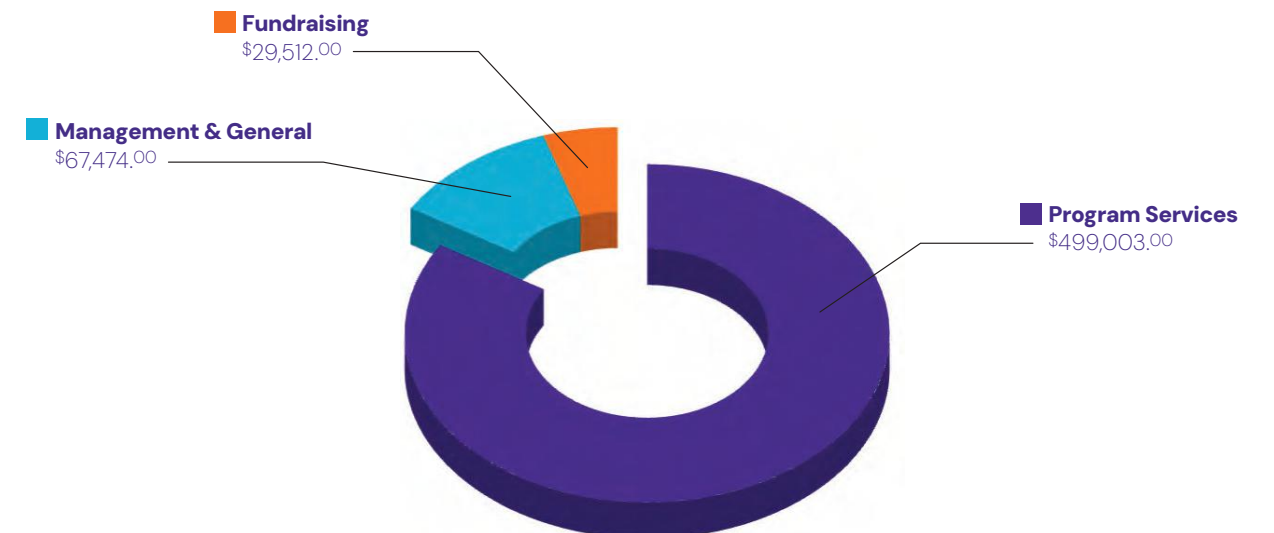


These practices have earned *YES Institute* a **98% (★★★★)** rating on **Charity Navigator** and a **Gold Seal of Transparency** from **Candid**.

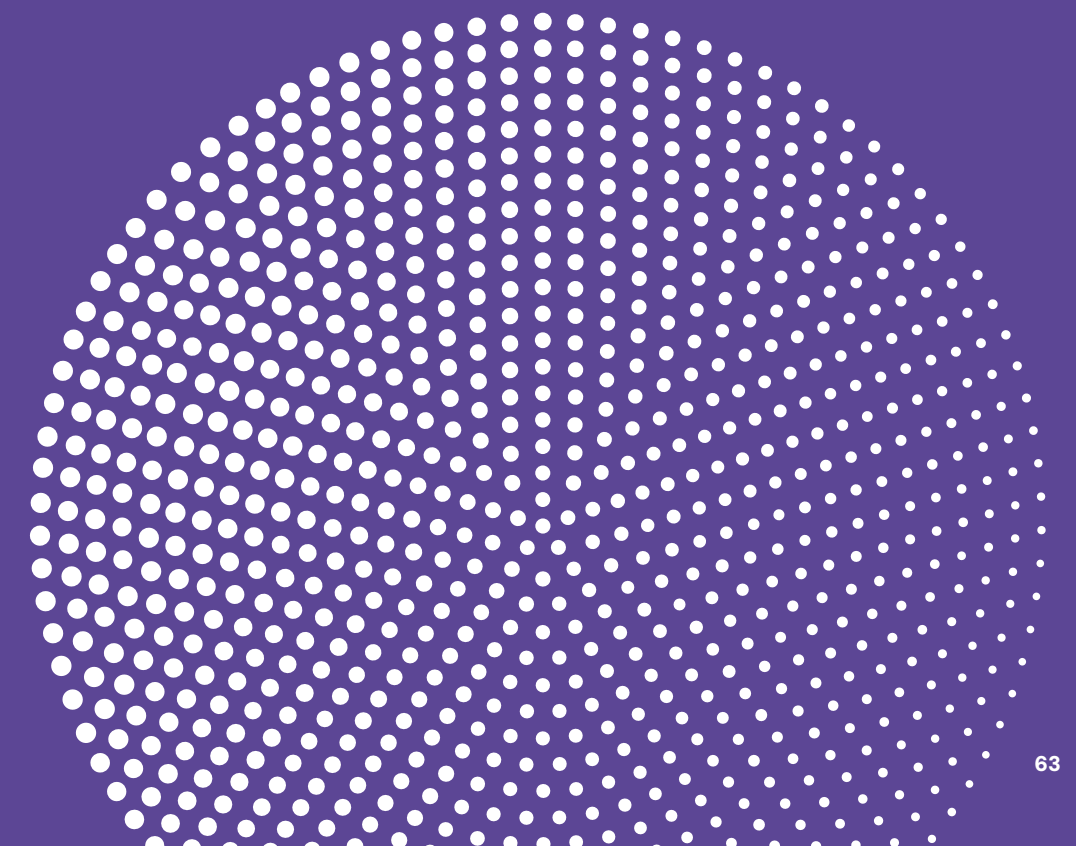
REVENUES 2024



EXPENSES 2024



five
AWARDS



HONORING 30 YEARS OF IMPACT

The individuals featured here have shared their time, talent, and treasure to advance the mission of *YES Institute*—whether through visionary leadership and organizational growth or through hands-on community education that has touched countless lives.

We honor them for their decades of dedication and selfless service, which have strengthened families, saved young lives, and helped build a more compassionate and understanding world.



PARENT AWARD
ISABELLE CAMILLE

When Isabelle’s son, Sky, transitioned, she felt called to share their family’s story and the personal, cultural, and racial nuances of their journey. Drawing on nearly four decades as a Miami-Dade County Public Schools teacher, Isabelle turned her experience into education and advocacy by writing her memoir, **Sole’s Mom: A Transgender Journey of Love, Loss, and Letting Go**, published in June 2024. She went on to share her message across local media and community platforms, including **NBC6 South Florida**, **WLRN Radio**, **WSRF 1580 AM in Haitian Creole**, and the **Miami Book Fair’s Read Caribbean program**. Together with Sky, she also spoke at the **Administration for Children and Families’ conference Our Family Values: Building the Evidence Base for Child Wellbeing in Washington, DC**. Today, Isabelle continues to inspire others as a passionate *YES Institute* speaker, reminding families that “you might never fully understand, but the important thing is to accept and love.”



Eva Leivas-Andino (center) with Visnia Scanio and Tim Wagoner.

FAMILY CHANGEMAKER
EVA LEIVAS-ANDINO

More than twenty years ago, Eva Leivas-Andino’s journey with *YES Institute* began with a mother’s love and a desire to understand. A political refugee from Cuba, Eva was heartbroken and afraid when her son Paolo came out as gay. Years later, after seeing a play about Oscar Wilde and hearing Paolo share how deeply her silence had hurt him, Eva made a promise to “transform people’s hearts.” That promise led her to *YES Institute*, where she found healing, purpose, and a community dedicated to creating safer spaces for all youth. She soon became a volunteer speaker, and what began as a volunteer role grew into nearly two decades of leadership—she has served as Chief Financial Officer, led our fundraising and development efforts, interpreted our work into Spanish, and expanded our impact across the U.S. and Latin America. Her dedication has helped thousands of families, schools, and community organizations create spaces where all youth can thrive with love and acceptance.

BOARD LEADERSHIP AWARD
BOB OLDAKOWSKI

Robert “Bob” Oldakowski’s visionary leadership helped shape *YES Institute* into the thriving organization it is today. Serving as our first Board Chair from 1996 to 2002—and remaining an active member for many years thereafter—Bob brought both heart and discipline to our mission. A CPA and former Comptroller at the **Museum of Modern Art** in New York City, he established a strong foundation of financial integrity and accountability that continues to guide our work. After his time as Board Chair, Bob went on to serve his community as **Mayor of Key Biscayne** from 2002 to 2006, continuing his lifelong commitment to service and civic leadership. He also helped launch the **Kiaora Society of Donors** and strengthened our early partnerships with communities of faith, including the **Catholic Archdiocese of Miami**. Through his steady guidance, *YES Institute* evolved from a grassroots project into a respected institute making a lasting difference across generations.



Bob Oldakowski (center) with Ed and Carol Williamson.

COMMUNITY CONNECTOR AWARD
JOAN SCHAEFFER

For decades, Joan Schaeffer has been a steadfast advocate for equality, compassion, and social justice across Miami-Dade County. Guided by her belief that “people are people, and if they’re sick, you have to help them,” she has volunteered with dozens of LGBTQ+, HIV, health, and faith-based organizations, including serving on **Miami Behavioral Health’s Board of Directors** (including two terms as President) in the 1980s and 1990s. Known as a voice of integrity and reason, Joan also advanced inclusion within **Temple Israel** by founding a group for lesbian and gay Jews. As *YES Institute*’s first grant writer, and later as a staff member, volunteer speaker, and donor, she helped lay the foundation for our mission. Her bridge-building continues to connect communities with understanding and compassion.



Joan Schaeffer and Karen Raben, MD.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARD
VICTORINO "VIC" MARTI

Victorino "Vic" Marti's story is one of courage, healing, and transformation. After experiencing bullying and isolation related to his gender and identity, Vic once felt so hopeless that he attempted to take his own life. Through *YES Institute*, he and his family began a powerful journey toward understanding and authenticity. Vic quickly became an integral part of our community—serving as a Youth Council leader, speakers bureau member, and later as part of our staff. He strengthened our video training programs, refreshed our social media, and inspired peers with his openness and resilience. Today, Vic continues his commitment to saving lives as a paramedic and EMT-in-training, turning his own journey of survival into one of service and hope for others.



FOUNDATION AWARD
JONATHAN D + MARK C. LEWIS FOUNDATION

Over three decades, Jonathan Lewis, Daniel Lewis, Toby Lewis, and the Lewis Family Foundation have invested deeply in the heart of *YES Institute*—making a combined contribution approaching \$1.5 million to our mission. Jonathan D Lewis, a visionary entrepreneur and social equity leader, was a steadfast partner whose passion for youth, equality, and meaningful change fueled ongoing support for LGBTQ youth causes and *YES Institute's* growth. Toby Lewis, a noted philanthropist and art patron, extended a legacy of generosity and cultural investment that resonated with our values of creativity, dignity, and community. Daniel Lewis (as part of the broader Lewis family commitment) has likewise upheld that spirit of giving, collaborating to sustain our work in youth support, training, and advocacy. Their collective generosity has provided the financial foundation upon which *YES Institute* continues to extend lifesaving education, voice, and care to youth and families across the nation.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD
DR. LUIS OTTLEY

YES Institute was first introduced to Rev. Luis Ottley, son of Bishop James Ottley, through our partnership with the **Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida**. From the start, Luis embraced our mission and helped expand it far beyond South Florida. As a school leader and Head of School at institutions including **Ethical Culture Fieldston School** in New York City, **Marin Horizon School** in California, **St. Martin's Episcopal School** in Atlanta, and **St. Paul's Academy & Summit School** in Minnesota, he invited *YES Institute* to educate students, faculty, and families across the country. Luis also provided Spanish interpretation for our work with Episcopal clergy and laity in Colombia and México, ensuring our message reached new communities. A true champion for inclusion, Rev. Ottley continues to open doors for young people everywhere to live as their whole, authentic selves.



Dr. Luis Ottley (right) with Bishop James Ottley and Martha Fugate.

FOUNDER'S LEGACY AWARD
CONNIE BARDEN & MARTHA FUGATE

The personal commitment that became *Project YES* was born from a deep concern: a lack of education and communication was leaving gay youth unsupported and vulnerable to self-harm. What began as a small, volunteer-led effort to prevent these tragedies quickly led to vital conversations with community leaders and educators. This process uncovered a core truth that shaped *YES Institute's* enduring mission: to provide the education and communication that would enable people to support all youth and thus prevent suicide. Thirty years later, the legacy of founders Connie and Martha continues in every life saved, every family reunited, and every young person who finds understanding and knows they belong through the work of *YES Institute*.



Barbara Byrne with Martha and Connie.



PHILANTHROPIC HEROES AWARD
Lane Park & Dr. F. Lynn Leverett

Dr. F. Lynn Leverett and Lane Park are cherished friends and steadfast supporters of *YES Institute*. Over the years, they have opened their home to host Kiaora Society donor appreciation gatherings and have given generously to our mission with enduring love and pride. A trailblazer in medicine, Dr. Leverett became a physician at a time when women were often told nursing was their only path—paving the way for others to follow. Together, Lynn and Lane are passionate advocates for environmental care, women's leadership, and youth mental health. Their compassion and generosity have strengthened families, inspired healthy living, and enriched the fabric of our South Florida community.

CORPORATE BELONGING AWARD
BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA

Baptist Health South Florida is a long-standing and trusted partner, working collaboratively to ensure care providers and staff receive ongoing education to provide compassionate, best-in-class care for all patients. Baptist Health has supported **Bioethics Continuing Medical Education (CME)** learning opportunities and patient-centered care presentations that equip healthcare professionals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to serve all individuals and families with dignity and care. As one of the region's largest not-for-profit healthcare systems, Baptist Health is guided by core values that elevate every interaction—centered on People, grounded in Belief, guided by Compassion, driven by Excellence, and upheld with Integrity & Transparency. Baptist Health strengthens a shared commitment to healing, understanding, and welcoming care that improves health outcomes and fosters trust.





six
CELEBRATION OF LIFE

We Remember

We honor the memories of these remarkable young people.

Their radiance fuels our passion to create a world free of suicide, violence, and discrimination.

“ Every great dream begins with a dreamer.

Remember, you have within you the strength, the patience,
and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. ”

– Harriet Tubman

Eric/Hope Verbeeck

April 14, 2000—March 6, 2018

Eric/Hope Verbeeck was a vibrant youth who loved theater, food, traveling, and sharing kindness with others. She was known for her *joie de vivre* and fully engaging in all her interests; when it came to theater and ballet, she loved both to perform and to watch; in terms of food, she enjoyed both cooking and consuming (especially fine dining); in travel she often planned every detail and then enjoyed the journey as it unfolded. Hope was a lifelong resident of Key Biscayne and attended MCA Academy, earning a nearly straight A academic record and recognition from her involvement in the National Society of High School Scholars, Student Council, Character Counts Club, and an award from Claes Nobel of the Nobel Peace Prize family at his investiture in Atlanta.

We honor Patty Verbeeck, Hope’s mom.



Elijah Destin Logan

August 19, 1999—February 10, 2025

For those fortunate to have met Elijah, his being, compassion, and authenticity made you realize you were in the presence of someone carrying a wisdom and knowing far beyond his years. Elijah lived a courageous life of unblinking truth. Informed by his deep love and faith in Christ, he touched our souls, and enriched the lives of so many who knew him. Elijah endured and overcame horrific middle school bullying attacks, discovered a safe and welcoming learning environment at NSU University School, served as a riveting and moving *YES Institute* youth speaker, and earned a Master’s degree from Florida Atlantic University. A sudden cardiac arrest took him too soon from his family, his fiancée, and his community of friendships.

We carry our mission forward in his memory.



Francesco Tamma

January 28, 2004—Oct 21, 2021

Known for his curiosity, wit, and humor, Francesco Tamma was a star student, an accomplished violinist, and an avid sailor, and was exploring his personal orientation before he fell victim to anti-gay rumors, ridicule, and cyberbullying. He continues to be remembered and honored through the work of Francesco’s Foundation, founded in 2021 by Diana Cochrane and Jennifer Alsop.

YES Institute has provided leadership, networking, and communications development for their nonprofit 501(c)(3) programming efforts in New York and Long Island.





seven
WHAT'S NEXT



Luminous Voices
Limitless Futures

What's Next

What Will the Future Bring?

Over the past 30 years, the work of YES Institute has changed and grown, and yet in many ways, stayed the same. Youth have taught us about the support they need. Families have trusted us to learn about their cultures, faiths, and fears in order to help restore their families. Clergy, health professionals, educators, and more have asked for guidance in a rapidly changing world. Research institutions have called on our expertise to better understand community challenges. In every time and every case, **we are guided by our calling to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to thrive.**

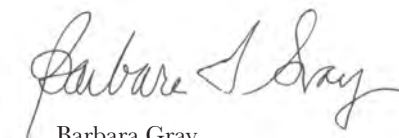
YES Institute is largely a volunteer organization. It is the many people who show up and share our purpose that enable the work of *YES* to happen. Youth speakers, donors, faith leaders, parents, doctors, teachers, and every person who contributes, shares our passion and our mission: to prevent suicide and ensure the healthy development of all youth. **Our deep commitment to youth safety has led our growth since 1996, and it will continue to inspire and drive us for all the years ahead. We invite you to join us.**

It is unlikely that conflicting opinions will cease to exist. It is also unlikely that children will always be accepted and cherished just the way they are. If that utopian ideal is ever realized, we will have found the cure for youth suicide. Until then, we will continue to follow where protecting youth leads us. **The issues may change or evolve, but the need for education and communication on those issues will not**—and with your support, we will be here to meet that need.

We are so grateful to everyone who has been part of our legacy so far, and we encourage those who share our vision to reach out to learn more. Together we can lift up young people's **luminous voices** and support them in having **limitless futures**.



Joseph Zolobczuk, MEd.
Executive Director
Staff member since 1996
Kiaora Society of Donors since 2007



Barbara Gray
Board Chair 2024-2026 Term
Board member since 2023
Kiaora Society of Donors since 2000

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For More Information

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“ I learned that I am the one responsible for all that I have and all that I am. And that **I am at choice at every moment.** ”

Marco G.

– Well-being in Times of Uncertainty course participant

HAPPY 30TH ANNIVERSARY YES INSTITUTE

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T: 305-793-0338
E: Roxy@PurposeAndAdventure.com
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CONGRATULATIONS, JOAN SCHAEFFER!



Alper JCC
MIAMI

We celebrate Joan's well-deserved recognition and applaud the YES Institute for 30 years of life-changing work.

“ I learned I am the author of my own story, and I have the power to create a purpose for my life. ”

Thiana L.

– Well-being in Times of Uncertainty course participant

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CELEBRATING
30 YEARS

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AND LIFE-CHANGING ADVOCACY
FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH.

WITH GRATITUDE,
THE GORDON FAMILY

30 Years of Service

With immense gratitude, we thank and congratulate all the staff, board members, volunteers, and donors who have enabled us to fulfill our mission for three decades.

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Congratulations to YES
Institute on 30 years of life-
saving service for children.

I am truly proud to continue
supporting the organization,
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Kevin Veilleux, Broker Associate
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With gratitude and admiration, Riviera Presbyterian Church celebrates 30 years of the YES Institute's compassionate leadership—creating understanding, preventing harm, and transforming our community through education, courage, and love.



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“As a parent, I struggled to connect with my child after they came out.

**YES Institute provided the tools and understanding
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– Parent

Support Our Mission

YES Institute is committed to providing effective tools and a strategic approach

to preventing suicide and ensuring the healthy development of all youth—

across school communities, medical and mental health organizations, workplaces, and faith groups—

so that our young people, families, and communities can thrive and reach their fullest potential.

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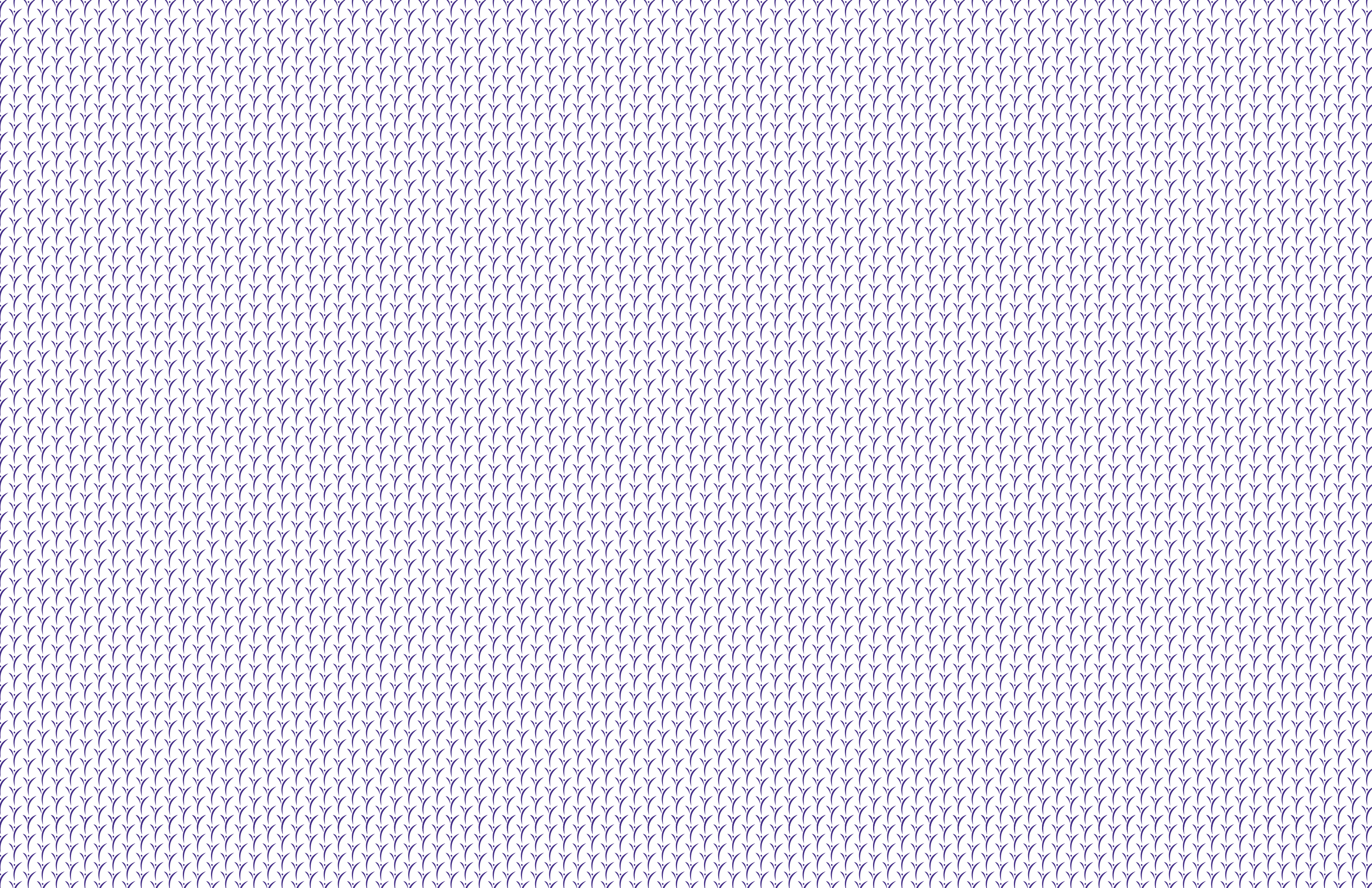
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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



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