

ReVision



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

Making our world safe for ALL youth

Colorado Climbs Mountains

At the request of Stepstone Center, in partnership with Colorado Mountain College (CMC), and Susan Hakanson, President of the Roaring Fork School District, Project YES produced three days of workshops in the Colorado Roaring Fork Valley. Educators, parents, and students from Glenwood Springs and Carbondale learned about orientation, gender, and the power of communication. It was the first time many had spoken about these topics, and the outflowing of emotions and inquiry was phenomenal.

“The idea of gender as a focal point to understanding orientation was enlightening.”

– Francisco Navarrez



Francisco shares about risks for Mexican youth.

Circumstances arose that added a sense of urgency to the conference. On the second day, a CMC resident advisor was the first to arrive, anxious to share about what transpired the previous evening. She read aloud an incident report a student had slipped under her door. After detailing the harassment this student suffered, another page listed the student's history of eating disorders, depression, and suicidal



Day one in the Essentials of Orientation Course.



Communication Solutions class photo.

ideation. The student concluded his plea saying he intended to leave the college because he no longer felt safe as a gay person on campus. Having met CMC Dean Nancy Genoa, and many of her wonderful faculty on the first day, we knew this was a campus with supportive staff and a leadership team committed to having a safe environment for all students. The incident report was a good demonstration and reminder that without education capable of changing hearts and behaviors, rules and policy alone will not make the difference. We began our Communication Solutions course with this poignant lesson fresh on our minds. Jill Morgan was the next person to begin sharing. She spoke of rushing to the hospital

“Such an amazing course, from the people to the real life tools for any situation.”

– Teal Hoffman

to see her son after being told he was beaten and the victim of a hate crime. When she entered the hospital room, his head was turned from her. She called to him, asking if he was okay, and telling him that she loved him. He only turned his head farther away from her and spoke through his tears, “Mother, I’m sorry, so sorry, it is all my fault ... I’m gay!” *(Continued Page 2)*



The Communication Solutions course.

“I want young people healthy, happy, and okay with who they are and I want to be a part of making that happen. This is what I have always wanted for my son, Jacob and the rest of my children.”

– Jill Morgan, Mother

The December ReVision will mark the eight-year anniversary of our organization. Look for the next edition announcing big changes at YES!

Training Mental Health Professionals



UM counseling students in the YES Education Center of Excellence with Dr. Marilyn Volker.

In her renowned real-world teaching style, Dr. Marilyn Volker provides students with a hands-on perspective of community resources by taking her classes to different locales. What better place than the newly renovated YES Education Center of Excellence to learn about gay and lesbian youth and mental health development? Over 60 University of Miami students attended this event.

The LCD projector and wireless Internet access let students feel as if they hadn't even left their home campus. The focus of the presentation switched between PowerPoint®, surround sound digital video, and live guest speakers on wireless microphones seamlessly. We were happy to share our cutting edge technology, and always happy to welcome Dr. Volker and her eager students.

Real World Preparation

Miami Jobs Corps called Project YES to request a presentation for their female clients. Issues specifically related to participation of lesbian women had emerged, and they wanted to initiate a dialogue with all their female clients. Once the conversation started, women shared their experiences, expressed their fears, and ultimately related to one another. The uneasiness that had been present began to quickly dissolve.

The staff seemed surprised by the openness and eagerness of the clients who were receptive and welcoming of this opportunity for discussion. To the YES speakers, it was just another chance to use their voice to make a difference.

“It was terrific and awesome. I learned not to pick on gays, and we are really all the same.”

– MJC Client



Janet Perales and Kari Wallace, third and fourth from right, with Miami Jobs Corps clients.

Diverse Students Tackle Orientation



YES at Carlos Albizu University.

YES participated in a panel presentation to graduate counseling students at Carlos Albizu University. Once again, it was the discussion about gender that began to give students insights on gay and lesbian youth.

“Questions I always thought about were answered, and even stereotypes I was not even aware I had were also addressed.” – Althea Gardiner

A Ripple Effect

Turner Tech High School asked Project YES to speak to students in six different health classes. We received a note from Dr. Heather Green, the health teacher, shortly afterwards. She wrote, “The impact YES had on the students was enormous. One student came to me and said, ‘Thank you for having Joseph and Joshua come to our class. Last year I went through the same kind of harassment as they talked about. We need more of these presentations so others can understand better.’”

“Though I’m not gay, you gave me a smile on my face because you showed me no matter who you are, you should always love and be proud of yourself.”

– Turner Tech Student



Joshua Johnson at Turner Tech High School.

“The presentation was very helpful and made me more willing to help gay kids in our school who are getting picked on. I learned a lot and I think that a lot of schools need people to talk to them about this topic.” – Turner Tech student

Colorado (Continued from Page 1)

So many powerful stories were told, many of them about raw pain, isolation, and survival. Each story made way for healing, partnerships, and ultimately new possibilities. We left reluctantly, like parting from family, but assured by the declarations people made that day. New beginnings will emerge in Colorado to make it a safer place for all youth.

“I learned how to give up being right and let people just be themselves and have their opinions. I learned how much I try to change or have people agree with me.”

– Cheryl Haddock

Dean Nancy Genoa invited YES to consider coming back to CMC next year. She proposed a week-long YES Institute each summer, drawing leaders, educators, parents, and youth. The CMC summer training facility houses 200 participants who would be invited from every community in Roaring Fork Valley.

Kiaora Society Update

We thank **Carol & Ed Williamson**, who increased their Kiaora contribution to **Visionary** this year, for their outstanding and consistent support. Thanks to **Cynthia & Emilio Vazquez**, and to **Kevin Veilleux** for increasing their yearly commitment to **Leader**. We welcome **Dr. Patrick Abuzeni, Thomas Taylor**, longtime volunteer and supporter of Project YES, and **Gene Sulzberger** as new **Mentors**. Many thanks to renewing members

Bruce Christensen, Daniel Carriazo, Victor Garcia & Tim Wagoner, Randall R. Gluss, Ernesto Gonzalez, Lawrence R. Hyer, June Raben, Lee Brian Schragger, Hortensia Soriano, Jose Valdes-Fauli & Shed Boren, and Patricia & Milton Wallace as **Kiaora Mentors**. Our appreciation to the **SE Florida Episcopal Foundation** and the **Ruth Anderson Foundation** for funding Project YES educational programs again this year.



Kiaora Society

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

Visionary

\$10,000 or more

Lang Baumgarten
Tim & Meredith Birrittella
Jonathan & Tina Kislak
Jonathan Lewis
Ed McAmis & Gerson Gonzalez
Peter Pilotti & Joseph Rodano
Carol & Ed Williamson

Champion

\$5,000 or more

Adrienne Arsht
Greg Baldwin & Jose Castro
Stephen E. Herbits

Leader

\$2,500 or more

Connie Barden & Martha Fugate
Paula Black
Douglas DeBoer & Howard Kurzweil
Paula Morabito & Maria M. Yip
Robert Oldakowski & Luis Mendoza
The Schaeffer Family
Cynthia & Emilio Vazquez
Kevin Veilleux

Mentor

\$1,000 or more

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Carlos Garcia Velez & W. Kent Davis
Dr. Patrick Abuzeni
Nancy Allen
Gary Bremen & Roger Boone
Daniel J. Carriazo
Jorge R. Centurión
Bruce A. Christensen
City National Bank of Florida & the Abess Family
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Scott Dansky & John Dawson
Joseph F. Fitzgerald & Kenneth G. Rau
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Carlos Garcia-Velez & W. Kent Davis
Randall R. Gluss
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Marty Harris & Nikki Korval
Lawrence R. Hyer
Jan Kirchoff
Joseph M. Kraus
Ellen L. Leesfield & Pamela Peny
Eva Leivas-Andino, her Children & Grandchildren
George L. Lindemann, Jr.
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Richard Milstein & Eric Hankin
Glenn L. Minton & Eddie Eskdale
Elsie Miranda & Lourdes Cuervo
Magda Pantaleon
José Luis Peré
June Raben
Karen Raben & Andrea Pernick
Harry Rimm
Bill Ross
Howard Perry Rothberg II & Paul A. Scolieri-Rothberg
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Martin H. Smith
Hortensia V. Soriano
Scott Lewis Stanton
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Gene C. Sulzberger
Thomas Taylor
Juan Carlos Urquiola
Jose Valdés-Fauli & Shed Boren
William Vaughan
Patricia & Milton Wallace
Rev. Marta S. Weeks
Jennifer Weise
Laura White
Trae Williamson & Daniel Carter
Robin Wolff & Kathy Gregory
Stephen I. Yaeger, Ph.D.

A Challenge For You



Since the day Project YES began, Jonathan Lewis has been looking for the perfect way to contribute and take our work to the next level. This year he has done it again!

“We are excited by leaders from across the nations that are being attracted to your new Education Center. We are confident in the development and leadership of your organization. Thank you for all the work that you are doing for youth ... hard work and enthusiasm is clearly reflected in the success of your programs.”

— Jonathan Lewis

Jonathan Lewis Foundations have issued a challenge match of \$50,000. Two other contributions of \$50,000 each will launch the Project YES Distance Learning Initiative. Our target to secure the first \$50,000 in matching funds is December 31, 2004; the second is April 15, 2005. If expanding the reach of education for parents, clergy, teachers and youth inspires you ... please donate today to help meet this challenge.

You As a Donor Make the Difference

Would you like to experience ownership of the results you see in this newsletter? Being a member of our **Kiaora Society** will give you that ownership.

The **Kiaora Society** is a group of committed individuals who contribute a minimum of \$1,000 annually to support the work of Project YES. Their extraordinary generosity allows YES to keep doing the incredible educational work you read about in ReVision. Some members write a **check**, some donate through **United Way**, and some squeeze out **\$84 a month**.

Their dedication to our mission allows us to keep creating cutting edge work. We are deeply grateful for this support, which represents a large percentage of our annual budget.

We invite you to join today and experience the satisfaction of knowing that because of you, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and all youth will be safer. Join today by calling **305-663-7195** and ask for **Eva**, or contribute through our secure web page at <http://projectyes.org/donate/>

Communication Solutions

Lisa LaMonica and her husband Brian Braun joined us this summer for the communication course. Lisa is a counselor in Dade County Public Schools who has worked with us since YES began. She has been a champion for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth her entire counseling career. We are proud to now have her as a speaker for YES.



Lisa La Monica and Brian Braun.

“A better framework for communication ... love how it works in partnership with others. Thanks for teaching this way to make our world safer for all youth!”

— Lisa LaMonica, School Counselor

Art Benefit



Left to right: Connie Barden, Martha Fugate, Emma Birrittella, Pelayo Garcia, and Maria Elena Toraño.

We are very grateful to Cuban-American painter Pelayo Garcia, who generously donated several of his original oil paintings to Project YES. Proceeds from the sale of these works of art went directly to fund YES programs. We are also grateful to Maria Elena Toraño, who graciously hosted this evening at her beautiful Grove Isle residence. More than \$5,000 tax-deductible donations were made by art lovers and YES supporters who purchased Pelayo's brightly colored paintings. If you want to see more of Pelayo's paintings or receive invitations for future events, please call **Eva** at **305-663-7195** or eva@projectyes.org.

Foundations & Corporations

Citigroup Foundation
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Dade Community Foundation
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Joseph H. & Florence A. Roblee Foundation
Matthew Shepard Foundation
North Dade Medical Foundation
Ruth Anderson Foundation
Shepard Broad Foundation
Women's Fund of Miami-Dade



5275 Sunset Drive
Miami, FL 33143
www.projectyes.org



5275 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143
Ph: 305-663-7195 Fax: 305-663-7197
www.projectyes.org

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eva@projectyes.org
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joseph@projectyes.org

Gender Perspectives



FIU students discussing gender.

Prof. Glenda Belote, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Florida International University, regularly invites YES speakers to talk about gender, transgender, and intersex topics. Last month, we returned for another lively discussion with the FIU students.

“Such an interesting discussion. I learned things about gender I took for granted and never considered before.”

– FIU student

Vision

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

Mission

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

Educational Accreditations



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



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



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



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



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

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



Communication Solutions

Sat & Sun, Nov. 13 & 14

Sat & Sun, Jan. 15 & 16

12 CEU and TEC credits

Essentials of Orientation

Fri, January 14, 1-5 PM

4 CEU and TEC credits

Gender Continuum

Mon, January 17, 9AM-5PM

8 CEU and TEC credits

Register at projectyes.org/register

Pro Bono Support



We want to thank Leslie Lott, intellectual property law expert, for joining the YES team. Her firm Lott & Friedland has taken YES as a pro

bono client and will secure copyright protection for all education courses and materials.

This generous offer will allow the next step of our growth to proceed with velocity.

We are proud to be represented by the very best firm in intellectual property law.

Do You Know?

- **33%** of teenage suicides are completed by gay and lesbian youth.
- **80%** of youth harassed as gay actually identify as heterosexual and are **5 times** more likely to commit suicide.
- There were **17** school killings in 2001. In 2003, **49** school killings occurred. Bullying is linked to **75%** of these cases.
- Every recent school shooting contained reports of gay slurs and anti-gay bullying.

projectyes.org/research/