



ReVision

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

The Dictates of Conscience and Principles

YES Institute went to Tampa, Florida, to train over 100 equity leaders from all 67 counties in Florida. They asked for education and resources to handle cases of student harassment or discrimination based on gender stereotypes.



Dr. Adeola Fayemi, Director, Florida Office of Equity and Access.

We were invited by Dr. Adeola Fayemi, Director of the Florida Department of Education Office of Equity and Access. Equity leaders serve schools, community colleges, universities, parents, students, and community groups on topics impacting educational equity. Their extraordinary commitment to student safety is setting a new standard for principled responses to "transgender" students in schools across the state. Cases of transgender students are challenging many equity leaders, who are committed to learning how to respond appropriately in these unfamiliar circumstances.



Luke Jude leading a gender course for equity leaders.

Dr. Fayemi shared, "I attended a YES gender course in January, and the very next day I had a new case involving a young transgender student. This education is so valuable because these issues are facing us *now*, and our fears must not keep us from doing what is best for the kids."

Addressing the discomfort people may feel about gender transitioning, one participant proposed, "We really need to ignore how we feel about this, and just focus on protecting students' rights." In the midst of applause for this



Martha Fugate speaking to equity leaders from 67 Florida counties.

comment, YES Director Martha Fugate responded: "Actually, you can use your feelings to relate to others who may also be struggling. Many people are conflicted about this topic, and your authenticity can lead to solutions you never thought possible." Many participants saw how expectations around gender affect all students. As one participant said, "A student in one of my schools was recently beaten up. He has a slight figure, and is really into music.

People assume he is gay, but no one knows how to talk about it. YES is doing great work just by opening this discussion and giving us a chance to talk about our concerns." At the completion of the training, the common response we heard from equity leaders was: "We need more training!" We look forward to working with all the representatives throughout the state who expressed interest in hosting YES Institute for additional training for their communities.

Authentic Speaking for NY Youth



YES Institute recently returned to New York for an encore at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School. Serving over 1,600 students on two campuses, Fieldston demonstrates a commitment to academic excellence, ethical learning, and progressive education.



Fieldston student Riley Paul with Luke Jude.

In our previous work with Fieldston, parents, teachers, and administrators participated in YES courses. This time we reached middle school students and a new group of teachers and parents.

In Communication Solutions™, teachers and parents who felt alienated from one another uncovered the source of their disconnect. As one parent shared, "We have a 'Parent & Teacher Group' where teachers and parents are supposed to collaborate together, but only parents attend the meetings. I see now that as parents we mostly just complain about the

teachers or some agenda for our child. It's no longer a mystery why teachers haven't been participating." That authentic sharing prompted lively discussion, resulting in parents inviting teachers to truly collaborate.

“Now I can communicate with my friends and family without arguing or fighting. This will solve problems I believed would never come to a close.”

- 8th grade student

See **Fieldston**, page 2



Fieldston middle schoolers in YES Communication Solutions™ for Students.

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

YES is going green! If you are receiving two newsletters, or if you would like your *ReVision* delivered online, please contact: tim@yesinstitute.org



Fieldston parents and teachers in Communication Solutions™.

Jessica Romano, a teacher, said, "This course has been so powerful—a real revelation. I tend to automatically assume others' communication is about me. I can now give them space to speak without 'sacrificing' myself, and without interjecting 'me' into their communication." Nicole Cee, a parent, shared, "I experienced how solutions can be found by reaching out, really listening, and including others in conversations. Now I can let go of control and really be effective in my communication."

In the Gender Continuum course, participants discussed the impact of gender stereotypes on students. "We have all been shoved into one box—M or F—all of our lives," stated one teacher. "The same thing is happening now with our students. YES opened more possibilities than I imagined for starting conversations on these topics that will really make a difference. Getting rid of labels will move us toward the unity we strive to achieve in this school—not just regarding gender, but all the categories we use to measure 'diversity.'"

Forty middle school students participated in Communication Solutions™ for Students, and their comments at the start of the day confirmed that no one is safe from bullying based on gender expectations. When asked how many had witnessed or been harassed with "anti-gay" or gender slurs, every single hand in the room went up. "My best friend and I get called 'faggots' just because we're both guys and we hang out a lot," said one student. Another offered, "People call me 'lesbian' just because I didn't go out with this guy who really liked me."

“ My foundation is rocked! Now I know how much I haven't known, and how much more education our school community needs to create a safe environment. ”

- Jon Richer, Assistant Principal, Fieldston Middle School

Students gained effective tools for communicating powerfully when others attack them, or when people disagree. A seventh grader stated, "I think I can now handle difficult



Martha Fugate leading Communication Solutions™.

“ Huge impact! I have an entirely new way to communicate, which makes me more comfortable dealing with difficult conversations and potential conflicts. ”

- John Kurtz, Fieldston teacher

situations better. I can stand up and speak for myself rather than shut down, and now I know how to solve problems peacefully. This will make me more of a leader." Many students were excited to apply their new communication skills at home with their families. As an eighth grader shared, "I've had so many win/lose situations with my mom, and this is exactly what I needed. I used to always yell when I was mad. Now I can be calm and have a better relationship. I'm so happy I signed up for this course."



Rhonda Thomason, Grants Administrator for Teaching Tolerance, Montgomery, AL.

Rhonda Thomason, Grants Administrator for Teaching Tolerance in Montgomery, Alabama, traveled to New York to participate in our courses at Fieldston. She has a vision for bringing YES

Institute models to Alabama to reinforce and empower the efforts of the Alabama Safe Schools Coalition.

Gender & Orientation: What Is the Link?

In the past year:

- A professor, a sports writer, a city manager, and a minister all made national headlines for coming out as "transgender."
- *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, MSNBC, *Newsweek*, and ABC's *20/20* all featured stories on transgender youth that captivated public interest.
- A popular daytime soap opera and a network television series introduced transgender characters.
- The Employment Non-discrimination Act passed only after protection for "gender identity" was removed.

People are beginning to question this new phenomenon of gender visibility: "Why so much about transgender?" Gender has gone largely unexamined since the women's movement, which somehow left an unsatisfactory shadow around gender as men versus women. Ironically, with this new horizon of gender awareness, many people are reluctant to pursue education on gender, either certain they already "know," or feeling that somehow it doesn't affect them.

We invite you to join us in deepening the inquiry into this complex aspect of human experience. What if gender has all of us? How can we effectively dissolve the illusion of competing interests? Bring your questions and ideas to our next gender course, where we will examine the latest research on this cultural revolution around gender.

Words That Hide and Divide

In schools, the expression "That's so gay!" is used as a dangerous weapon for social compliance. Students police each other with slurs they hear voiced in the media, at home, and in the community. This smoke screen of bravado keeps people fearful of speaking openly about gender and orientation. Last month YES speakers reached 400 students who began to consider the difference they could make with their voices.

“ I did not even know what 'transgender' meant before today. It's very important to discuss these issues as clinicians in order to better serve our patients. ”

- Medical student

“ I hear 'anti-gay' slurs almost everyday, and I've never said anything about it. No one deserves to be shamed or persecuted for who they are. ”

- High school student



Students in a YES presentation at Temple Beth Am.

Introducing myYES OpenCourseWare!



YES Institute now receives requests for our education from all over the country. Knowing the difference education can make for youth and families, we are committed to making our courses available to anyone, anytime.

Our first course, Essentials of Orientation™, is online now. We invite you to take this course, and contribute your feedback and insights on the accompanying discussion boards. Your participation in sharing information, ideas, and inspiration will provide an opening to new ways of thinking about gender and

orientation. Only by collaborating together can we create definitions that truly support the safety and well-being of all youth. Use your virtual voice to make a difference! To begin participating in the myYES Online Community, simply log in at <http://my.yesinstitute.org>

If you receive our newsletter, you already have an account on myYES. For a reminder about your username and password, contact Tim at 305-663-7195 or webmaster@yesinstitute.org

We thank Reverend Marta Weeks for her generous support in making this course available to families everywhere.

Kiaora Society Membership

The contributions of Kiaora Society members make the work of YES Institute possible. Youth and families who are isolated and afraid often fall outside the priorities of foundations. Kiaora members allow us to take our education where it is needed most.

We offer grateful thanks to Ed McAmis & Gerson González for continuing their generous support as Kiaora Visionaries. Their unwavering commitment to our work has been a tremendous gift inspiring us since YES began. We thank Mel Heifetz for all his special support,

and continuing as Kiaora Champion. We also thank Thomas Blount for renewing as Kiaora Leader. Renewing as Kiaora Mentors are José Alonso, Maria Alonso & Alex Montague, Jorge Centurion, Bob Cole, Lane Park, Harry Rimm, Juan Carlos Sagrera & Raphael Wagner, Lee Schragger, Mark Scott & Joseph Falk, and Patricia & Milton Wallace. We also welcome and thank new Kiaora Mentors James Gross & Justin Bolinger, and Luis Guillermo Pons.

For information about joining our Kiaora Society, please contact Adriana Warren at 305-663-7195.



Kiaora Society

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

Philanthropist \$100,000 or more

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Featured Exemplar Video

ex-em-plar (*noun*) [ig-zém'plär]
1. one that serves as a model or as an example. 2. an ideal.

Dr. Luis Ottley brought YES education and communication courses to students, faculty, and parents at Fieldston School in New York. He is committed to establishing Fieldston as a national model for educational excellence.

DR. LUIS OTTLEY



Dr. Luis Ottley, Principal, Fieldston Middle School.

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

Communication Solutions™

YES Course Inspires Ripple Effect on Families and Friends



Luke Jude, Joseph Zolobczuk, and Mackenzie Pawliger.

Silence around gender and orientation has persisted for so long that many people do not know how to talk about these topics. Initiating dialogue is the most important part of our mission, and one thing everyone can do to make a difference for all youth. In April, 30 people participated in our signature Communication Solutions™ course, and learned effective ways to produce results even when people disagree.

“ This model of communication will allow me to recover and preserve some of the most important relationships in my life. I cannot even begin to express how grateful I am. YES has really saved my life. ”

- High school student



Course participants engaged in discussion.

“ I now recognize that getting ‘hooked’ into argumentative conversations is totally unproductive. The YES model can lead to powerful solutions, which would have seemed impossible if I hadn’t experienced it myself. ”

- Rachel Soffile

Dear YES Institute,

This course challenged me to re-work, re-think, and re-arrange my ideas about communication and dialogue. With gentle instruction from Joseph and Luke, I saw that trying to “prove” my point—no matter how sophisticated my language—is simply a version of banging my head against the wall. My brain could see how this paradigm shift from debate-style communication to solution-oriented dialogue debilitates the self-destructive tendencies based on conflicting opinions. But my mouth, my greatest betrayer, couldn’t seem to keep up with this change in approach! My mouth likes a good fight—all about me, always right, always ready to produce a laundry list of arguing points, always wanting to win, win, win. The statistics on youth suicide, and the violent death of my own friend, inspire me to continue challenging my mouth *and* myself. Look for me at YES speaking engagements. I’ve got a lot of listening to do!

Ana Romes
Victim Advocate
Miami Police Department

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

NY Middle School Students See New Possibilities

Register for Courses

ESSENTIALS OF ORIENTATION™ & GENDER 101 - 8 CEU
Friday, June 20, 9AM - 1PM & 2PM - 6PM

COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS™ - 12 CEU & MPP
Friday & Saturday, July 18 & 19
Noon - 6PM each day

2008 SUMMER EDUCATION WEEK
Communicating Powerfully, ReVisioning Gender
Friday through Monday, August 22-25
Experience 4 of the YES courses together!



Participants in the YES Gender Continuum course.

YES Institute in Hispanic Media

Hispanic youth and families who are dealing with a gender transition often feel like they have nowhere to turn. Breaking through the cultural taboo around this topic is vital to the safety and well-being of all youth in our community.



YES speaker Eva Leivas-Andino on Telemundo Television.

See this video in our Digital Media Library: <http://my.yesinstitute.org>

“I came out to my mom years ago, but she pretends it didn’t happen. The segment on YES will give me a way to bridge that conversation.”

- Jesse, High school student



305-663-7195
www.yesinstitute.org

Vision

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

Mission

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

Education Partnerships

Ethical Culture Fieldston School, NY
North Georgia College & State University
Rainbow Center, Atlanta, GA
Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida
Teaching Tolerance-Southern Poverty Law Center, AL
TransYouth Family Allies, AZ
The Alliance for GLBT Youth, FL

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Joseph Zolobczuk, Education & Training

Ext. 1112 joseph@yesinstitute.org

Tim Wagoner, Technology Services

Ext. 1113 tim@yesinstitute.org

Statistics

Boys are first called “faggot” in elementary school, long before orientation is known. Gender is at the core of most harassment.

Gay Youth:

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

Heterosexual Youth:

- 80% of youth harassed “as gay” actually identify as heterosexual

Impact of Gender Ideals:

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

Board of Directors

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Nursing: LPN, RN, ARNP, MW
Psychology: PY, PPY, LPY, SS
Nutrition: NC, RD

Board Approved CE Provider #50-1652

Welcome New Board & Staff



Randall Gluss

We welcome Randall Gluss to the YES Institute Board of Directors. Rand is Senior Vice President at Northern Trust, and has been involved at YES since its inception.

His contributions both as a longtime Kiaora

member and course participant are a natural expression of his commitment to keeping youth safe. We are thrilled to have Rand’s leadership and vision on our Board as we take YES education to the next level of growth.

Adriana Warren joins YES as the new Managing Director. She has over 10 years of experience in financial and project management, and has enthusiastically taken over responsibility for our Kiaora Society and Hispanic outreach. Her passion for making a difference in the



Adriana Warren

community is inspired by her 17-month-old son David and her husband Mark. Adriana fits in perfectly with the YES “family,” and she is already creating new opportunities for us to expand the impact of our work.