



The Source for Knowledge on Gender & Orientation

# ReVision

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

## Lamenting Limitations of Learning

Phi Delta Epsilon (PhiDE) International Medical Fraternity is a professional organization with 35,000 members on over 50 medical school campuses. They are committed to creating physicians of integrity through fellowship, service, mentoring, and formal training in leadership, science, and ethics. YES Institute delivered the keynote presentation at PhiDE's International Convention in Anaheim, CA, examining how gender and orientation impact doctors' ability to serve patient needs.



YES staff member Luke Jude taking questions at the Phi Delta Epsilon Convention in Anaheim, CA.



Karen Katz, CEO of Phi Delta Epsilon International Medical Fraternity, with medical students at YES Institute.

YES staff member Luke Jude addressed over 100 pre-med and medical students, highlighting research rarely included in medical school curricula. One participant commented, "I thought I knew enough about orientation and gender, but now I see that my ideas are still too black and white. I would love to have YES speak at my school."

In discussing gender transitioning, many students began to question standard medical practices. One student said, "I never realized how difficult it can be for people to get their most basic medical needs met." Another shared, "Using strict medical terminology can actually alienate my patients and compromise their health. I will definitely think more about the words I use in my practice."

One aspiring doctor, lamenting the patriarchal values in medicine, stated, "The ratio of guys to girls at my school is 9 to 1, so I hear a lot of gender stereotypes. It's hard to be respected as a woman physician."

Following the convention, a group of PhiDE medical students from Florida and the Caribbean came to YES Institute for training. Karen Katz, CEO of PhiDE, commented after the

training: "That was one of the best educational events I've attended! It made a tremendous impact on our students. We are so fortunate to have YES as a partner."

**“I am humbled by how much I don't know, and shocked that this information isn't provided in our curriculum. Thank you for starting this important conversation! ☺☺**

- Medical student

The leadership of PhiDE is committed to making YES education available to all PhiDE members—at institutions ranging from small military academies to large public universities. We look forward to expanding our partnership with PhiDE to provide much-needed education to future doctors across the country.

## YES En Español - International Broadcast

YES staff member Eva Leivas-Andino and her son, Paolo, recently appeared as guests on *Don Francisco Presenta*, a popular Spanish-language talk show that consistently tops Univision ratings. The groundbreaking broadcast highlighted the challenges families face when a child comes out as gay or transgender, and reached millions of people throughout the U.S. as well as Central and South America.

**“My mom's work with YES has inspired me to go out and make a difference in the world. The ripple effect of this education is far and wide. ☺☺**

- Paolo Andino

Eva shared the impact YES education has had on her family: "After Paolo came out as gay, I refused to talk about it. For 8 years, I lived in fear



Eva Leivas-Andino on the *Don Francisco Presenta* show.

and extreme shame. Now I love him more than ever, not in spite of him being gay, but because he is gay. He has shown me, through his own generosity, how to love unconditionally."

Paolo received over 100 emails from people who were inspired by his emotional tribute to his

mom. One viewer commented, "Your story is my story, and the story of so many young people in the world. I am amazed at your loving words for your mother, and empowered by your courage. I wish I could have shared this with my mother before she died. Thank you for being a role model for kids like me."

Since the *Don Francisco Presenta* show aired, requests for our work have come from people all over the country who are desperate for education and resources in Spanish. One mom said, "I feel encouraged. Maybe if I learn, I can find a way to connect my family again."

**Vea el vídeo ahora en el sitio web de Univision:**

<http://tinyurl.com/donfranc>

These programs are made possible by your generosity. To participate in keeping all youth safe, visit [www.yesinstitute.org](http://www.yesinstitute.org) and learn more.

Receiving two **ReVision** newsletters?  
Please contact: [tim@yesinstitute.org](mailto:tim@yesinstitute.org) or  
305-663-7195, ext. 1113

# Families and Fear - Diffusing Volatile Mix

Mental health professionals are often the go-to resource for families in crisis about gender and orientation, yet most receive no training on these topics. Last month, 100 counselors and case managers participated in YES Institute trainings, and expressed their uncertainty about providing appropriate guidance and care to clients.



YES Board member Scott Sasich at the XVI Linking Forces Conference.

At the XVI Linking Forces Conference, a two-day educational event for direct service providers, a school psychologist asked, "What can I do when teachers as well as kids are bullying students?"

Sandra, a doctoral student in psychology, shared about her brother, who dropped out of school after enduring years of torment from his peers: "He was called 'sissy' and 'faggot' everyday, and felt like he didn't fit in anywhere. I want to be able to support kids who feel just as isolated as he did."

YES led a series of workshops at the Institute for Child & Family Health, where several counselors are currently handling critical cases: a 5-year-old client adamantly declaring himself to be a girl; a mom so ashamed of having a gay son that she refuses to seek support from family and friends; and a distraught teenager whose parents performed an exorcism after she came out as lesbian.

Many participants were conflicted about including a family's religious beliefs in the context of therapy: "How do I support parents in

**“Before today, I never spoke up when I heard someone being bullied with anti-gay slurs. Now I will be sure to address it head-on.”**

- Psychologist



Dr. Timothy Razza, Director of Student Training at the Institute for Child & Family Health, introducing YES Institute to his team.

having their faith *and* loving their child?" "How do I tell parents that I don't think being gay is a disorder without scaring them off?"

These concerns were echoed at New Horizons Community Mental Health Center, where YES speaker Joshua Johnson shared about coming out as gay while growing up as a young, black male, and having no role models. Participants began brainstorming ways to make YES education available to the youth they serve. A crisis counselor commented, "This education is critical, especially for kids in inner-cities, where violence and hyper-masculinity take so many lives."

## Teachers, Too, Trip Over Bullying

Teachers who participate in YES education consistently comment on the daily abuse they witness among students, and their sense of helplessness to make a difference.

**“In all my 27 years of being an educator, nothing has been more enlightening, powerful, and life-changing for me than this course. It has totally changed my outlook on gender and orientation.”**

- MDCPS Administrator

Last month, 15 teachers and school administrators participated in our Gender/Orientation Series™, and heard first-hand the horrors of bullying from 13-year-old



Britney Hoffman, MA, facilitating the Gender/Orientation Series™.

Daniel, a student in Broward County: "Kids say mean things and push me around everyday. Sometimes teachers see it happening and don't do anything. I hate going to school." Daniel, who has been hospitalized 4 times in the past year for suicidal behavior, quietly expressed his biggest fear: "I'm afraid someday I'll just snap and do something really stupid. I used to get sad, but now I just get angry."

One teacher commented, "This education is imperative to get everyone to communicate with each other and break the cycle of bullying in our schools. It has nothing to do with 'gay,' and everything to do with saving the lives of our kids."



Course participants in the Gender/Orientation Series™ at YES Institute.

## Fostering Change



Twenty-three percent of homeless youth identify as gay or transgender. (Cochran et al, 2002)

Foster parents and group homes are often ill-prepared to protect and serve these youth, and end up contributing to the social isolation they experience.

**“I had a boy once who was gay, but I didn't know how to handle it. He got placed with another family. Now I feel much clearer about how to love my children for who they are and not try to change them.”**

- Foster parent

Last month, YES staff member Eva Leivas-Andino led an educational dialogue on gender and orientation for Spanish-speaking foster parents at CHARLEE Homes for Children. Parents were initially uncertain about asking questions, but soon opened up to express their concerns: "If a boy is effeminate, does that mean he's gay?" "Are people born gay, or is there a way to change them?"

Many participants shared circumstances where their fears about certain children led them to terminate placements. "Many kids have passed through my house," said one parent. "I see what a difference asking questions and getting informed can make when things get difficult."

### Featured Exemplar Video



Lynn Evans, a science teacher at Palmetto Senior High School, continues to bring YES education to the students, faculty,

and administration at her school. With an extraordinary commitment to creating student leaders, she is demonstrating the difference teachers can make with their voices. See the video now:

[www.yesinstitute.org/video](http://www.yesinstitute.org/video)

# What Will Your Legacy Be?

Our dear friend and longtime supporter Lynn Leverett has again demonstrated her resolute commitment to creating a future where youth are free from harassment and discrimination.



Lynn Leverett, MD, former chief pathologist of South Miami Hospital.

She has established an irrevocable trust naming YES Institute as beneficiary in her will, an extraordinary legacy that reflects her incredible generosity and visionary leadership.

We are profoundly grateful for Lynn's bold stand, and salute her as the founding member

of YES Institute's **Planned Giving Society**. If you would like to join Lynn in building the foundation for YES' sustained development, please contact Eva at 786-301-3940.

Dear Friends,

I am inspired by the trust Lynn Leverett has placed in our work, and proud that YES Institute's growth is now assured long into the future. As you review your estate plans from time to time, I invite you to consider YES Institute as a beneficiary. By joining our Planned Giving Society, you will be part of providing a lasting legacy for tomorrow's generations. Your commitment to keeping youth safe makes our work possible. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

- Eva Leivas-Andino, CFO

## Kiaora Society Membership

We welcome Joseph Blount & Kirkland Basnight to the YES family as new Kiaora Luminaries, and thank them for generously hosting our spring Kiaora event at their beautiful home.



Kirkland Basnight & Joseph Blount.

We are grateful to Thomas Blount, Lynn Leverett, and Hon. Katy Sorenson for renewing their memberships at the Visionary level. We also appreciate the support of Charlie Urstadt as a new Kiaora Champion. He joins renewing Champion and longtime supporter Mel Heifetz.

Leaders Thomas Gellman & Carlos Yudica renewed their contribution early in memory of Doug DeBoer. We thank Kevin Miller & Allan Hunter for ongoing renewal as Kiaora Leaders.

We welcome Sam Blum & Milenko Samardzich, Eric T. Gottlieb, Jeri Jenkins, Robert Johnson & Layne Tidwell, Humberto Mata & Maximiliano Novoa, Esther Schumann, and Roxy-Cary Sora as new Kiaora Mentors. José "Pepe" Alonso, Carlos Cuartas & Jim O'Connor, Virginia Dunn & Jackie Cartier, Joseph Kraus & Joe Martin, Dr.

John Martin, Jr. & Forrest McSurdy, Gordon Rhodes, John & Ann Sottile, and Laura White generously renewed their commitment as Mentors.

We are also grateful to YES volunteer Loren Pulitzer for coordinating and collecting contributions from practitioners in the Prana Yoga community class during the month of February.

For the past 14 years, YES Institute's Kiaora Society of donors has formed the lifeblood of our work. Ninety-two percent of every dollar directly supports our educational programs in the community, allowing us to take our work where youth are most unsafe.

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



Connie Barden, Rachel Sottile, Kara McCabe, and Howard Kurzweil at the spring Kiaora event.

## Doug DeBoer - A Final Toast

We are deeply saddened by the death of one of our dearest friends, Doug DeBoer. Doug served the board of YES Institute as Chairman, and was a longtime Kiaora member with his partner Howard Kurzweil. Doug's leadership exemplified the perfect gentleman with the most generous spirit. Our hearts go out to Howard and to both of their families.

Howard has invited family and friends to contribute to YES Institute's educational programs in honor of Doug and his commitment to our work. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have donated in Doug's memory. To make a memorial gift, please call Eva at 786-301-3940.



Doug DeBoer, Gentleman Extraordinaire.

## Kiaora Society

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

### Philanthropist \$150,000 or more

Jonathan Lewis  
Rev. Marta S. Weeks

### Luminary \$25,000 or more

Joseph Blount & Kirkland Basnight  
Ed McAmis & Gerson González

### Visionary \$10,000 or more

Thomas Blount  
Tim Gill & Scott Miller  
Timo Kipp  
Jonathan & Tina Kislak  
F. Lynn Leverett  
Adam Lewis  
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Peter Lewis  
Toby Lewis  
Paula Morabito & María M. Yip  
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### Champion \$5,000 or more

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### Mentor \$1,000 or more

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“The dedicated life is  
the life worth living.”

- Ann Dillard

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## Physician Assistants Take Lead on Learning

Rivera began to share about their personal experiences in healthcare settings. Virgin, a retired nurse, told about colleagues who laughed at and abandoned transgender patients who needed urgent medical treatment. Bree shared the many obstacles she has faced accessing comprehensive medical care during her gender transition.

Participants asked many questions, reflecting their concern for patient well-being: “What would have made your experience easier?” “What should I do if I’m accepting, but my supervising physician isn’t?” At the completion of the hour, one student said, “I did not have any information or resources about ‘transgender’ before today. I see now how urgent it is to have these conversations with medical students.”



Physician assistant students at Miami Dade College in a YES presentation.

When YES Institute began a presentation to 40 physician assistant students at Miami-Dade College (MDC) Medical Campus, participants were initially reluctant to engage. Then one student pinpointed the palpable tension in the room: “I feel very uncomfortable, and I don’t see how this information is applicable to my practice.” The conversation shifted when YES speakers Virgin Vandervlugt and Bree



305-663-7195  
www.yesinstitute.org

### Vision

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

### Mission

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

### Statistics

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

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

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### Accreditations

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

## Men vs. Women?

YES Institute's newest course, Masculinity Distinguished, is generating provocative feedback. Some comments from participants:

“I never realized the urgency men feel to get rid of any womanly quality. It really demonstrates how masculinity isn’t just about men but about all of us.” - Kara M., YES volunteer



“Really made me aware of the limits I place on myself that keep me from being truly authentic. I’m always concerned about appearing ‘masculine enough’ to people around me.”  
- Brandon S., YES speaker

This new view of masculinity is leading to other exciting areas of inquiry. Join us for the next course. We want to hear from you!

**Masculinity Distinguished**  
Saturday, September 25  
9 AM - 5 PM



Subscribe to the YES Institute Podcast on iTunes® or go to:  
[www.yesinstitute.org/podcast](http://www.yesinstitute.org/podcast)

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