



For Immediate Release

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Big Ideas Fest Explores “Educating to Be Human”

Eighth Annual Big Ideas Fest Draws Provocative Thinkers to Explore Innovation in Education in San Jose, CA, Dec. 4-7, 2016

San Jose, CA—December 3, 2016—As the nation faces a growing backlash against tolerance and equal rights for all, educators nationwide are at the front lines of not only helping students achieve but also building on the qualities that define our humanity, such as compassion, empathy, respect for others, grit, and bravery.

The eighth annual Big Ideas Fest, sponsored by the nonprofit Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME), will convene more than 170 educators and advocates to take part in this three-day event, held at the historic Dolce Hayes Mansion in San Jose, CA.

“Participants at the meeting will address crucial topics, from social-emotional learning, to conflict resolution, to addressing the racism, bigotry, sexism, and homophobia that threaten our humanness,” says ISKME founder and CEO Lisa Petrides. “As educators and innovators, it is our responsibility to provide more than knowledge. Our future—and the future of learning—will depend on our ability to work together to find common purpose, solve problems, and improve the world.”

The Big Idea Fest’s unique format includes Rapid Fire talks by innovative risk-takers; networking with educators passionate about creating change; and Action Collab design-thinking workshops, which engage groups to brainstorm, prototype, and ultimately create high-impact solutions to challenges in education.

Sessions will focus on everything from social-emotional learning and conflict resolution to refugee education.

The Big Ideas Fest will kick off with a "Taking Off the Mask" workshop led by the Ever Forward Club and its founder Ashanti Branch. This program strives to nurture and support the growth of the world's future leaders by creating communities of students who set and achieve their personal goals both inside and outside of the classroom.

Further explorations into our human selves will be led by Christie Hardwick, an executive coach and spiritual guide to CEOs and nonprofit directors. Her talk, "Changing the World, One Mind at a Time," will provide a framework for understanding how the way we listen determines what we learn.

Other speakers include Atman Smith, co-founder of the Holistic Life Foundation; Todd Bol, creator and executive director of the Little Free Library; and Lena Alfi, director of Strategic Partnerships for the Middle East Children's Institute. The final keynote, "Speaking Power to Power: Community Organizing to Create a Humane and Equitable Public Education System," features Jitu Brown, national director of the Journey for Justice Alliance. Activities also include the screening of the documentary CodeGirl and a presentation by its producer-director, Lesley Chilcott.

ISKME is known for its cutting-edge work in the field of open educational resources (OER), primarily through OER Commons, a comprehensive digital public library. The Big Ideas Fest features many sessions and learning labs that empower educators to discover, share, and adapt OER resources for subjects from the humanities to STEM.

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The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (www.iskme.org), located in Half Moon Bay, CA, is a global leader in research and practice around open education in education. An independent non-profit organization established in 2002, ISKME is well-known for its OER Commons initiative (www.oercommons.org), as well as its award winning research on information and knowledge use in the education sector.

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To learn more about the Big Ideas Fest, please go to: <http://www.bigideasfest.org>
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