Program

Prelude
Gesu Gospel Choir, directed by H.L. Ratliff

Welcome
Henry, Grade 8

Poetry Reading
Shayon, Grade 8, “Silent City”

Opening Remarks
Reverend Stephen D. Thorne, Moderator

Keynote Address
Kenneth Ginsburg, M.D., M.S.Ed.

Panel Discussion and Audience Q & A
Rebecca Hilgen Bryan, MSN, APN, NPC
Dan Rhoton, M.Ed.
Jeffrey R. Sparaganza, Ed.D.
Ronald W. Whicker, III, Ed.D.

Closing Remarks
Robert Weinstein, Vice President of Development, Gesu School

Refreshments
Thank you!
We thank our keynote speaker, panelists, moderator, board of directors, volunteers, faculty, and staff, who have made today’s event possible. We thank you for joining us in our efforts to transform inner-city education.

For information on past symposia, including videos and summaries, visit www.gesuschool.org/symposium.

Note from the President

Welcome to our 20th Annual Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education. As a pioneer in urban education, Gesu School is constantly focused on identifying new ways to better serve our children, while also being committed to sharing the key learnings with others. Our symposium has become a time-honored tradition for that purpose.

We hope that you find today’s discussion impactful and that our work here generates new ideas to benefit school-aged children across the nation.

Peace and blessings,

Bryan Carter
President and CEO, Gesu School

Barbara B. Renninger, Chair
Robert M. McAlaine, Vice Chairman
Keith M. Pension, Secretary
Gerard J. Davies, Treasurer
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Sr. Ellen Convey, IHM, Principal
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Alana D. Lee, Vice Principal
Robert S. Weinstein, Vice President of Development
Bob Gagliardi, Finance Director
Jose Gonzalez, Director of Graduate Support

Gesu School’s 20th Annual Symposium on Transforming Inner-City Education

NOVEMBER 3, 2017
1:00-3:30 P.M.
keynote address by
Kenneth Ginsburg, M.D., M.S.Ed.
refreshments provided
Welcome to Gesu School!

Gesu School, an independent Catholic, Jesuit school located in North Philadelphia, is recognized as a national model for inner-city education. Co-directed by the Jesuits and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM), Gesu serves 450 children in grades Pre-K through 8. Without selective admissions, the school strives to provide a quality, innovative education for its neighbor children to empower them to break the cycle of poverty and violence.

- Gesu School embraces the Jesuit ideal of cura personalis – care of the whole person – and the IHM belief that every child can learn, providing resources to build a variety of academic and personal skills across a range of ability levels.

- In a city where approximately 65 percent of public high school students graduate from high school in four years, 90 percent of Gesu alumni graduate high school on time, and of those graduates, 86 percent go on to college or post-secondary education. Many of our graduates attend top college preparatory, independent, Catholic, charter, and magnet high schools.

- Gesu School’s primary service area includes the three poorest zip codes in the City of Philadelphia. Tuition covers only a fraction of our costs. Critical financial support from outside donors provides our students with a top-notch education and the support they need to succeed.

To learn how you can make an impact on Gesu School students or support events such as the symposium, contact the Development Office at 215.673.9027 or development@gesuschool.org

Empowering Traumatized Youth

Gesu School’s 2017 Symposium, Our Kids Are Not Broken: Empowering Traumatized Youth, will examine best practices surrounding the impact of trauma on our students, in and out of the classroom. This year’s keynote, Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, a nationally recognized expert in the field of child development, will speak about his extensive research and practice in utilizing strength and resilience to confront the underlying effects of stress and trauma on youth. Our expert panel will continue the conversation, providing practical expertise on how trauma-informed pedagogy can be employed to foster a more productive learning environment.

Kenneth Ginsburg, M.D., M.S.Ed.
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Ken Ginsburg is a Pediatrician specializing in Adolescent Medicine at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. For Covenant House Pennsylvania, an agency that serves Philadelphia’s homeless youth, he serves as Director of Health Services. His research focuses on nurturing youth to develop their own solutions to social problems and teaching clinicians how to better serve them. He co-developed the Teen-Centered Model, which enables youth to voice and find their own ideas. Dr. Ginsburg is the editor of Reaching Teens: Strength-Based Communication Strategies to Build Resilience and Support Healthy Adolescent Development, a multimedia trauma-informed pedagogy published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Ginsburg has received over 30 awards for research, clinical skills, or advocacy efforts. These include The Young Investigator Award and a visiting professorship from The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, The Lindback Award for distinguished teaching from the University of Pennsylvania, and The Humanism in Medicine Award for a Penn faculty member who delivers compassionate patient care. He works alongside Boys and Girls Clubs of America and The National Congress of American Indians as their external resilience expert and with The Military Child Education Coalition on stress reduction and resilience-building strategies.

Rebecca Hilgen, Bryan, MSN, APN, NFC Panelist

As UrbanPromise’s Wellness Center Director, Rebecca coordinates or leads all trauma-informed health and wellness-related activities at UrbanPromise’s Ministry in Camden, NJ. Before arriving at UrbanPromise, she worked for 20 years as a primary care Nurse Practitioner in private practice, was an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, and health faculty for Presbyterian USA Credo Conferences. She has completed two of three levels of the Lakeside Global Institute Trauma certification program and is currently enrolled at Rutgers University, Camden where she is earning her Doctor of Nursing Practice. Her focus is on an integrating Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) knowledge into nursing curricula. She has been published in various medical journals and publications, including Advance for Nurses, Medscape, and The Journal for Nurse Practitioners.

Dan Rhoton, M.Ed. Panelist

Dan Rhoton has been working with youth for the past two decades in a variety of capacities. As a teacher and administrator at St. Gabriel’s Hall — a residential facility for adjudicated youth — for over 16 years, Dan had the pleasure of teaching and learning from some of Philadelphia’s most promising and dynamic young men. Beginning in the juvenile justice field, Dan developed extensive expertise in the use of restorative practices and trauma-informed methodology both inside the classroom and in the larger community. Dan has received the Meritorious Service Award from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and the Philadelphia Diane Watson City Community Service Award. He was named Board President of the Year for Eastern North America. Recently, he was designated as a finalist for the 2017 NationSwell Tech Impact All-Star Award. Under his leadership, Hospewoks was honored to receive its Sanctuary certification and has been recognized with the prestigious 5th Annual Scattered Goodness Award and as 2016 Nonprofit of the Year in both Greater Philadelphia and South Jersey.

Jeffrey R. Sparagana, Ed.D. Panelist

Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana (retired June 2016) served the Pottstown School District (PSD) in a variety of capacities during his 23 year tenure — Teacher, High School Head Football Coach, Middle School Assistant Principal and Principal, Elementary School Principal, Director of Elementary Education, Supervisor of Federal Programs and Reading, Director of Education and Human Resources, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent. He was the senior administrator for PSD’s community-based school readiness initiative - PEAK (Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness) since its inception in 2005. He was a member of Governor Rendell’s Pennsylvania Early Learning Council. Under Dr. Sparagana’s leadership, PSD initiated a healthy living program focusing on brain science within an active learning environment and a K-12 TEAM initiative. In 2015-16, Dr. Sparagana and the district’s executive team brought in a zero tax increase for the 2nd consecutive year, the first time in history, while maintaining the integrity of and enhancing PSD’s academic programs.

Ronald W. Whitaker, II, Ed.D. Panelist

Dr. Ronald W. Whitaker, II is an Assistant Professor of Education at Cabrini University. He works to intentionally incorporate culturally responsive tenets into Cabrini’s undergraduate and graduate education programs. He also serves as the Director of District and School Relations and Co-director for the Center for Urban Education, Equity, and Improvement (CUEEI) at the University. Dr. Whitaker’s 15 years of experience in urban education have centered on issues that impact the educational experiences of African American male youth. These include incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy into teacher education programs and developing culturally responsive programming and practices. He also specializes in issues related to cultivating diversity, equity, and improvement; intercollegiate athletics; and integrating spirituality and religion into education. Dr. Whitaker is also an appointed Scholar Fellow in Improvement Inquiry at Duquesne University, a 2016 American Education Research Association (AERA) Asa Hilliard/Barbara Sizemore fellow, and a 2017 Black Theology Fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Reverend Stephen D. Thorne Moderator

Father Thorne is a Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and was ordained in 1998. A native of North Philadelphia, he has served as a pastor, administrator, and educator. He has earned degrees in philosophy, theology, and education. Presently, he serves as Pastor of Saint Martin de Porres Catholic Church in North Philadelphia and Chaplain at Neumann University, where he is also a faculty member. As an advocate for diversity, he is the convener of THE INITIATIVE, a network of African American educators dedicated to leadership in urban schools. He is the author of “Walk Like You Have Somewhere to Go: A Literature Review of the Academic, Social, and Cultural Needs of African American Adolescent Males in Urban Schools,” published in CATALYST, Spring 2016. Father Thorne is blessed to serve on the Board of Gesu School, where he is also a mentor to the 8th grade young men. In 2016, he was awarded the Gesu Spirit Medal.

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