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Oakland Tribune, The (CA)

Conference in Half Moon Bay tackles school challenges

December 5, 2009

Section: News

Neil Gonzales San Mateo County Times

Innovators from various fields have converged in Half Moon Bay to tackle education's toughest challenges.

Nearly 200 experts in schools, engineering and other professions are in town for the Big Ideas Fest, produced by the locally based Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education and co-sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The **conference** at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel started Sunday and will run through Wednesday.

Participants will team up to design methods that could improve K-12 and higher education, and speakers will include former astronaut Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman in space, and Mike Marriner, an advocate for experiential learning opportunities.

"The goal of the Big Ideas Fest is to spotlight, challenge and develop strategies to accelerate the ways in which education can be made relevant to learning," said Lisa Petrides, the institute's president. "It is meant to be a starting point for a movement that supports innovation in (kindergarten to postgraduate) education at a time when the need to accelerate high-quality learning is essential for our country and our future."

For more information, go online to www.bigideasfest.org.

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