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175 Innovators To Design Ways To Transform Education at Big Ideas Fest in Half Moon Bay, Dec. 6-9, 2009

Unique event will bring prominent innovators from education and other fields to devise solutions to K-12 and higher education's toughest challenges

Half Moon Bay, CA (November 16, 2009) -- President Obama has dedicated \$5 billion, more than any other president, to overhaul the nation's schools. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan wants to reward what works. A local Institute in the Bay Area is trying to identify just that.

The Big Ideas Fest – which is produced by ISKME, the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education, and is sponsored by KnowledgeWorks Foundation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Red Hat, Microsoft Research, Lumina Foundation, Metlife Foundation and others – will bring together innovators and stakeholders who can help move from theory into action. Participants will design entrepreneurial strategies and transformational changes they can make on campuses and in schools and communities. These educators, policymakers, trustees, leaders of community-based organizations, philanthropists, and social entrepreneurs will be inspired, share knowledge, and transform “big ideas” into solutions that scale. They will be immersed in three extraordinary days of inspiration, collaboration, and change.

“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,” says Lisa Petrides, president Half Moon Bay-based ISKME, which is hosting the event. “It is meant to be a starting point for a movement that supports innovation in K-20 education at a time when the need to accelerate high-quality learning is essential for our country and our future.”

“There has been a great deal of talk about innovation in schooling in the United States, but K-12 education, which endures constant change and policy churn, still remains hidebound in traditional modes of school organization, financing, teaching, and technology deployment,” Petrides notes. “Meanwhile, U.S. higher education prides itself on being the greatest system in the world even though other nations are rapidly accelerating their higher education investment, reach, and effectiveness, leaving the U.S. system far behind in such crucial areas as cost, access, and attainment. Across both systems, educators have not yet discovered how best to balance formal and informal learning, harness technology and new forms of pedagogy to improve learning, take advantage of emerging virtual and collaborative learning communities, and make teaching and learning more relevant and learner-centric.”

The list of speakers is an all-star assembly of individuals who have led significant change efforts in their fields and can help spark new thinking. Presenters at the event will include:

- **Dr. Mae Jemison**, physician/engineer and the first African-American woman in space, who will talk

about how we can rocket our education system into a different stratosphere.

- **Brewster Kahle**, founder of Internet Archives and an advocate for universal access to all knowledge who has archived 150 billion Web pages and 1.6 million books and is making out-of-print publications available at no charge to the public.
- **Mike Marriner**, director and co-founder of Road Trip Nation, and an advocate for experiential learning opportunities.
- **Yvonne Chan**, principal of the Next Century Learning Center and a member of the California State Board of Education, who helped transform a troubled, large urban school in Los Angeles Unified School District into an award-winning charter school.
- **David Calkins**, professor of robotics and computer engineering at San Francisco State University and president of the Robotics Society of America, who has helped students master science by engaging in robotics competitions.
- **Myra Strober**, labor economist and Emerita professor of education and economics at Stanford University and the author of a soon-to-be-released book on interdisciplinary learning.
- **Joel Westheimer**, co-founder of Democratic Dialogue and professor of education and sociology, University of Ottawa, who researches democracy and democratic engagement and the ways school practices embrace or challenge these conceptions.

As educators, we know that learning often happens when people leave behind their usual modes of problem-solving, as well as when a diverse group of stakeholders have opportunities to interact in different, yet meaningful ways. The Big Ideas Fest is not a conference of PowerPoint presentations and speeches, but an event where a broad group of stakeholders will be empowered to design and pursue solutions to some of the most challenging educational dilemmas we face today.

Time and Location

December 6-9th, 2009
Ritz-Carlton Hotel
Half Moon Bay, California

(program begins Dec. 6th at 4:00pm, and ends Dec. 9th at 2:00pm)

Host Organization

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 knowledge sharing in the education sector. 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 international research on information and knowledge use in the education sector. Its research and development efforts enable schools, colleges, universities, and the organizations that support them to expand their capacity to collect and share information, apply it to well-defined problems, and create human-centered, knowledge-driven environments focused on learning and success. ISKME, a leader in research on social learning and open education, also offers professional development workshops and continuing education for teachers focused on innovative concepts and practices related to digital and social learning, and open education curriculum.

For more information about the Big Ideas Fest, please go to: <http://www.bigideasfest.org>
For more information about ISKME, please go to <http://www.iskme.org>