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## **175 innovators to consider ways to revolutionize K-20 education at Big Ideas Fest in Half Moon Bay from 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, CALIF. – November 1, 2009 – The man who is archiving the Internet and striving to make universal access to all knowledge a reality... The robotics guru who has discovered new ways to bolster student engagement in and mastery of science ... Experts on experiential learning and applying gaming and virtual learning applications for schools and classroom... School turnaround specialists... The founder of Peer 2 Peer University, an organization that enables students to teach themselves using open-education sources and by forming self-organized collaborative online groups... These are among an all-star line-up of world-renowned innovators in education who will be making rapid fire presentations at the Big Ideas Fest. The event will bring 175 K-20 education innovators and leaders from schools, colleges, government, science, philanthropy, cultural agencies, and a broad range of creative fields to Half Moon Bay from December 6 - 9, 2009.

Participants 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 of the Half Moon Bay-based Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (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.”

“It is a time for big ideas. From economic viability to international competitiveness to personal efficacy, education is seen as a lynchpin. Indeed, it’s seen as the key to national, local, and personal readiness and transcendence,” says Mark Milliron, president and CEO of Catalyze Learning International and Board Chair at ISKME.

## **Focus on Action and Transformational Changes**

The Big Ideas Fest – which is produced by ISKME 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 map out entrepreneurial strategies and transformational changes they can make on campuses and in schools and communities.

As part of the event, participants will take part in “Action Collabs”, in which they will work together to actually design and prototype real-world innovations in education. Education stakeholders – including trustees, teachers, policymakers, students, researchers, community-based organizations, foundations, social entrepreneurs, and others – organized in cross-sector groups to break out of silos will tackle old problems with fresh ideas to identify new opportunities for innovation and transformation. They will work through a design process in which they further define the problem, discuss what research is needed to address it, and develop prototypes they can use to test out alternative solutions. They also will learn about and experience what it takes to scale and spread ideas and ensure they are adaptable to different contexts.

Participants also will have opportunities to network with other dedicated innovators and education stakeholders who believe that the business-as-usual mode of operation in education is no longer sufficient.

## **All-Star Presenters from Diverse Fields**

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:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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**, co-founder of Road Trip Nation, and an advocate for experiential learning.
- **Neeru Paharia**, who has pioneered new ways of delivering education, including Peer-to-Peer University that enables students to teach themselves using open-education sources and by forming self-organized collaborative online groups.
- **Gever Tulley**, founder of the Tinkering School, a part-lab-part-summer-camp where kids use power tools to create amazing things like roller coasters, and where students are encouraged to take risks and embrace failure.
- **Joel Westheimer** from the University of Ottawa whose research explores the ways educational theorists conceive of teaching democracy and the ways school practices embrace or challenge these conceptions.
- **Myra Strober**, labor economist and professor of education at Stanford University and the author of a soon-to-be-released book on interdisciplinary learning.

*A detailed agenda, with session titles and locations, will be available in the next few weeks.*

## **Why Is It Called a Fest?**

This is a gathering where innovation is meant to be designed, shared, celebrated, and rewarded. 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. As a social media-inspired event, the Big Ideas Fest will itself be a platform for creating and capturing stories, performances, and other forms of creativity such as video, micro-blogging, and podcasts. An outcome of this effort will be a network of knowledge collaboratives that will be encouraged to work throughout the year to build, refine, and implement solutions to our toughest challenges in education.

## **Agenda**

A detailed agenda will be available in the next few weeks.

## **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](http://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](http://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. ISKME works directly with teachers and students to engage with learning resources through processes that a) involve continuous improvement, b) require collaboration and social learning, and c) build expertise from within and from the bottom up.

## **How to Register**

Click here to [register now](#) to reserve your place at this important inaugural event. For more information about the Big Ideas Fest, please go to: <http://www.bigideasfest.org>