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#WTNChangeTheStory



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DAILY SCHEDULE

	July 19 - Day 1	July 20 - Day 2
8:00 -8:30	*Registration & Light Refreshments	
8:30 – 8:45	*Greetings – Roseann Bayne – Elizabeth Conners Welcome – Ralph Singh Introduction to Dr. Darcia Narvaez	*Greetings – Roseann Bayne – Elizabeth Conners Welcome – Ralph Singh Introduction to Dr. Naresh Singh
8:45-10:15	*Dr. Darcia Narvaez	*Dr. Naresh Singh
10:15 -10:30	Break	
10:30 – 12:00	Session 1 – See room assignments	Session 3 - See room assignments
12:00 -1:00	Lunch	
1:00 -2:30	Session 2 – See room assignments	*Dr. Jonathan Cohen
2:30 – 3:00	*Student Showcase	*Wrap Up – amplifying our work – Jeff Grimshaw Closing – Ralph Singh
3:30 – 6:30	WTN reception by invitation	

*Activities will take place in the Gymnasium (F140), unless otherwise noted

WTN Summer Institute-Steering Committee

Ralph Singh – Convener
 Stewart Amell – Co-Chair
 Elizabeth Conners – Co-Chair
 Tammy Anderson
 Elizabeth Appleby
 Asheena Baez
 Roseann Bayne
 Donna Blake

Geri Geitner
 Stephanie Maturo
 Mary-Margaret Pekow
 Joseph Rotella
 Heather Schuss
 John Shelmidine
 Staci Silliman
 Michael Smolnik

With special Thanks to Christopher Todd and Dr. Gerald Melvin
 In memorial - Robert J Serafini, founding trustee, Wisdom Thinkers Network



with the kind support of Bill and Nancy Byrne, Dr. and Mrs. Baljinder Singh, and many others

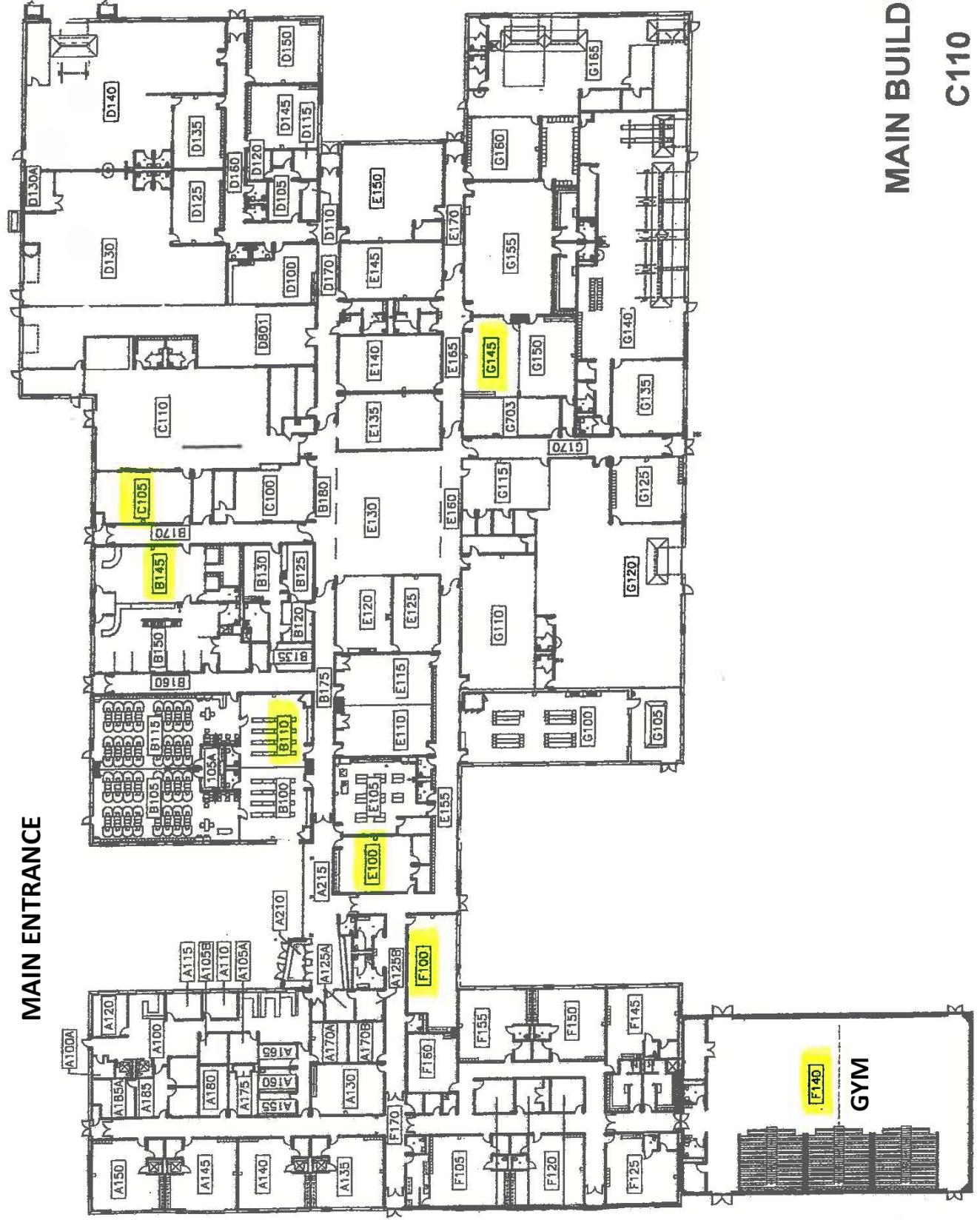
WORKSHOP LISTINGS AND LOCATIONS

Each workshop will be repeated 3 times unless noted
See workshop description and presenter biographies for more information

Day 1	Day 1	Day 2	
Session I 10:30 – 12:00	Session 2 1:00 – 2:30	Session 3 10:30 – 12:00	ROOM #
Amygdala Hijack <i>Presenter: Roseann Bayne</i>	Amygdala Hijack <i>Presenter: Roseann Bayne</i>	Dialogue with Dr. Naresh Singh Changing the story from poverty to sustainable livelihoods – a world view on poverty alleviation <i>Presenter: Naresh Singh (may meet in gym)</i>	G145
Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges – How do I reach unreachable students and families <i>Presenter: Asheena Baez</i>	Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges – How do I reach unreachable students and families <i>Presenter: Asheena Baez</i>	Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges – How do I reach unreachable students and families <i>Presenter: Asheena Baez</i>	F100
“Stories of our Past, Influencing our Future” Changing the Story between school and community – service learning w a purpose - reversing the “Brain Drain” <i>Presenter: Danielle Florio, Jeffrey Grimshaw</i>	“Stories of our Past, Influencing our Future” Changing the Story between school and community – service learning w a purpose - reversing the “Brain Drain” <i>Presenters: Danielle Florio, Jeffrey Grimshaw</i>	“Stories of our Past, Influencing our Future” Changing the Story between school and community – service learning w a purpose - reversing the “Brain Drain” <i>Presenter: Danielle Florio, Jeffrey Grimshaw</i>	B145
Teaching Resilience and Instilling Hope <i>Presenter: Geri Geitner</i>	Curbing Chronic Absenteeism <i>Presenter: Geri Geitner</i>	Teaching Resilience and Instilling Hope <i>Presenter: Geri Geitner</i>	E100
Turtles and Sandboxes: Simply integrating SEL and Character Ed into School Culture from Classroom, Specials, and Service Learning <i>Presenters: M. Smolnik, A. Sutton, J. Hobbs, D. Hathway</i>	Turtles and Sandboxes: Simply integrating SEL and Character Ed into School Culture from Classroom, Specials, and Service Learning <i>Presenters: M. Smolnik, A. Sutton, J. Hobbs, D. Hathway</i>	Turtles and Sandboxes: Simply integrating SEL and Character Ed into School Culture from Classroom, Specials, and Service Learning <i>Presenters: M. Smolnik, A. Sutton, J. Hobbs, D. Hathway</i>	C105

 #WTNChangeTheStory

MAIN ENTRANCE



MAIN BUILDING
C110

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS:

Amygdala Hijack

This session will focus on the human brain, specifically the relationship between the neocortex and amygdala, focusing on the impact of amygdala hijack on behavior. Additionally, the training will discuss the impact of social media and cyber relationships on the brain, on both student and adult behaviors.

Presenter, Roseanne Bayne – Day 1 - Session 1 and 2 only

Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges: How do I reach unreachable students and families?

This targeted session will take you on a journey of self-discovery teaching educators through proven examples of:

- How to create social and emotional breakthroughs for hard to reach students
- How to build bridges of communication with problematic families
- How to create sustainable school and community relationships

Presenter: Asheena Baez

Curbing Chronic Absenteeism: Tools for Engaging Students and Families in School, All Day, Every Day (Session 2 only)

This session will provide participants an overview of strategies for prevention and intervention for chronic absenteeism, and examples of impactful community-wide responses to engage students and families in school. Participants will create a plan to start the school year with a month long campaign to promote positive student attendance habits and family/community awareness of the potentially devastating impact of chronic absenteeism on our students and communities. Presenter: Geri Geitner

“Stories of our Past, Influencing our Future” - Changing the Story between school and community – service learning w a purpose - reversing the “Brain Drain”

Through an exciting turn-key oral history partnership between schools and Wisdom Thinkers, learn how high school English has been turned into an exciting living classroom reconnecting generations and enriching their lives, reconnecting and restoring hope through the school to the community. It has become a major tool to enhance workforce development in High School students and reverse the “Brain Drain.”

Play a nationally recognized service learning game, “Change the Story,” that helps focus middle, high schoolers, and adults on the power of story to impact public perception and ultimately policy around some of the more intractable current problems and allows students of all levels and abilities to connect and feel empowered to change the story of their world. Presenters: Jeffrey Grimshaw, Danielle Florio

Teaching Resilience and Instilling Hope: Understanding and Effectively Responding to the Impact of Childhood Trauma in Schools (Session 1 & 3 only)

This session will provide participants with foundational knowledge of the research on the impact of trauma on cognitive, behavioral and emotional development of children. Specific strategies for creating learning environments beneficial to all students, but essential to economically disadvantaged and trauma impacted students, will be explored. Presenter: Geri Geitner

Turtles and Sandboxes: Simply integrating SEL and Character Ed into School Culture from Classroom, Specials, and Service Learning

Some feel that there is no time to deal with Character education and SEL. Join us for an exciting journey to help children find their story, build a class and school climate that nurtures character, honors diversity, and deters bullying, using Wisdom Thinkers award winning stories to Light Our Way. Presenter(s): Michael Smolnik, Autumn Sutton, Jacqueline Hobbs, and Dorianne Hathway

Day 2 only - Dialogue with Dr. Naresh Singh – Changing the Story from Poverty to Sustainable Livelihoods - following his keynote, internationally recognized leader in poverty reduction will hold an open dialogue with those interested in exploring solutions to overcoming generational poverty.



WELCOME MESSAGE FROM WISDOM THINKERS NETWORK CHAIR, RALPH SINGH:

On behalf of Wisdom Thinkers Network it's my pleasure to welcome you all to our inaugural summer institute, what I hope you remember as two of the most exciting days of your lives. The steering committee, under my co-chairs Stu Amell and Betsy Conners, has put together this fabulous program and I can't thank them enough for their endless hours over the past 6 months. But first I want to thank, Christopher Todd, and everyone at CiTi for their fantastic support without which this wonderful time together would not have happened, and naturally our wonderful sponsors.

And I want to thank all of you for taking your valuable time out of your summer, to strengthen your commitment to what I know is all of our shared goal - inspiring our youth to succeed in an ever-changing world, and I want you to leave knowing that we can change the story together.

You see we believe stories have the power to change the world. And moreover, the stories we choose to tell and how we choose to tell them literally determines the future course of civilization.

The modern world has lost its stories, and without a clear visible standard, except for those with dollar signs, it's hard for our children to have something to wrap their identities around. So we have brought traditional stories back into curriculum and built a turn-key oral history program which has strengthened the connection between generations.

The very fabric of our society is badly frayed. By reweaving the wisdom of our traditional stories, both sacred and secular, and new understandings into education and public life, we will be able to strengthen our social fabric and foster a more compassionate inclusive civil society.

In these two days, you'll be inspired by great speakers, allowed to dig deep into key areas of concern, and be given valuable tools and resources to help unlock your creativity, and then unlock your children's hidden gifts.

In the keynotes, our experts will help us explore how our brains are wired to develop character and what an important role our culture plays; the importance of school climate to create safe schools and combat bullying; and finally how to change the mindset from poverty to sustainable livelihoods. All three topics blend into helping us create a hopeful world view.

Then through the breakout sessions, we'll look in depth at how many of these concepts are being brought to life – in both rural and urban settings helping revitalize communities, bridge generation gaps, touching children who have slipped through the cracks – at the same time uplifting not just a school but a community.

At this critical juncture in our world, our children are beset by so many complex issues around them, the scourge of drugs, the bullying and violence, and systemic poverty that it's often hard to teach and reach them. The importance of character education and social emotional development cannot be overstated. Our education depends not just on our Principals, but on the principles we instill in our children. It is perhaps the greatest investment we can make.

Wisdom thinkers is committed to helping our children find their story and then inspiring them to help change the story of their world. We feel it's our sacred duty not just to point the way, but to actively help our children succeed.

Are you ready for the challenge?

Scan this QR Code to get immediate access to
Wisdom Thinkers Network downloadable content!

Together we're going to change the story!

Ralph Singh, Chair
1736 State Route 5
Elbridge, NY 13060
1-888-793-7257

www.wisdomthinkers.org



CONVENER:



Ralph Singh, Author, Educator, Story-teller, and Community Builder, Chairs the Wisdom Thinkers Network and currently consults to develop curricula and resources in poor rural, poor urban, and everywhere in between, to help create a school climate which nurtures character, honors diversity, and deters bullying. His award winning “Stories to Light our Way, Journey to the World of Good” draws from wisdom stories from 11 different traditions, with common core aligned lesson plans, Pre-K through 8, easily implemented by teachers and internalized by students and have proved especially effective in reaching special needs and non-verbal students, the hard to teach, and others who tend to slip through the cracks. The approach brings an understanding of shared values into schools and community, using the teachings and wisdom stories from the world’s traditions and cultures. Together with his middle and high school inquiry model service learning game, “Change the Story, a game to Alter Reality,” endorsed by Harvard’s Dr. Richard Weissbourd and Dr. David Streight, and their turn-key Oral history project help foster more compassionate, engaged, pluralistic citizens and lead to a more dedicated, ethical workforce.

Ralph is a veteran of character education and has spent his life promoting spirituality and values in education and public life. Over 20 years ago he was part of the CNY Education Consortium’s taskforce on Values in Public Education where he helped develop and name their Schools of Character project which was administered throughout the state by Syracuse University. He can be contacted at ralph@wisdomthinkers.org or for more information www.widomthinkers.org

SPEAKERS:



Jonathan Cohen, Ph.D., A.B.P.P., Co-founder and President of NSCC

Jonathan Cohen, Ph.D. is the co-founder and president of the National School Climate Center (NSCC). He is an Adjunct Professor in Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University; co-founder and emeritus chair, The National School Climate Council; co-editor of the International Journal of School Climate and Violence Prevention; and a practicing clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst.

Jonathan has worked in and with K-12 schools for over thirty-five years as a teacher, program developer, school psychologist, consultant, psycho-educational diagnostician and mental health provider. After working as a middle school teacher at the Marianne Frostig Center for Educational Therapy in Los Angeles, he received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the City University of New York, New York, New York and completed a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychology (1979-1980) at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center as well as at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Department of Pediatrics, New York, N.Y. He is a Diplomat in Clinical Psychology, American Board of Professional Psychology (June, 1988).

Jonathan founded and directed the Teachers College Press Social Emotional Learning series, which was published in partnership with the Collaborative for Academic, Social Emotional Learning. He has authored over 85 articles, chapters and books including Educating Minds and Hearts: Social Emotional Learning and the Passage into Adolescence (Teachers College Press and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999); (with B. Cohler) (1999) The Psychoanalytic Study of Lives over Time: Clinical and Research Perspectives on Children Who Return to Treatment as Adults (co-edited with Bert Cohler; Academic Press; 1999) and, Caring Classrooms/Intelligent Schools: Social Emotional Education of young Children (Teachers College Press; 2001). Both of his Teachers College Press books were awarded the "Best Academic Book" by the American Library Associations Choice in 1999 and 2001 respectively. He is a co-author (with John Devine) of the recently published volume Making your School Safe: Strategies to Protect Children and Promote Learning (Teachers College Press, 2007). And, the co-editor (with Kristie Fink and Sean Slade) of Integrating Prosocial Learning with Education Standards: School Climate Reform Initiatives (Routledge, 2017)

Dr. Cohen has consulted to scores of schools, districts and State Departments of Education interested in furthering social, emotional, ethical and academic education and positive school climate in America, France, Israel, Japan, Peru, and Switzerland. He often lectures to groups of educators, parents and/or mental health professionals here and abroad. He speaks to educational and parent groups about a range of topics and has presented keynotes at scores of national conferences, State and Federal educational meetings, schools and district professional development forums. He is the father of two children and has been married for 36 years.

jonathancohen@schoolclimate.org



Dr. Darcia Narvaez Ph.D., Director, Notre Dame's Collaborative for Ethical Education

Darcia Narvaez is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame. Her prior careers include professional musician, classroom music teacher, business owner, seminarian and middle school Spanish teacher. Dr. Narvaez's current research explores how early life experience influences societal culture and moral character in children and adults. She integrates neurobiological, clinical, developmental and education sciences in her theories and research about moral development. She publishes extensively on moral development, parenting and education. Recently she has been studying the Evolved Developmental Niche (nest) and how it influences moral development, moral capacities and preferences. She hosts interdisciplinary conferences at the University of Notre Dame regarding early experience, flourishing and evolution. In 2016, she organizes a conference on Sustainable Wisdom: Integrating Indigenous KnowHow for Global Flourishing. She is the author or editor of numerous books and articles. Her recent book, *Neurobiology and the Development of Human Morality: Evolution, Culture and Wisdom* (2014), won the 2015 William James Book Award from the American Psychological Association. She is executive editor of the *Journal of Moral Education*. Author of: [Moral Landscapes](http://darcianarvaez.com/) <http://darcianarvaez.com/>; <http://www3.nd.edu/~dnarvaez/>

I write typically about research findings related to moral functioning and living a good life. Sometimes I muse on things that I puzzle about (politics). I am very concerned about how much our society doesn't seem to know about how to raise good, healthy and happy children, so I spend a great deal of time on parenting. I also write about things that I am working on myself--the endless quest for virtue! This is an opinion blog, not a set of research articles, intended for the public not scientists.

Published works

[Neurobiology and the Development of Human Morality: Evolution, Culture, and Wisdom \(Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology\)](#)

[Personality, Identity, and Character: Explorations in Moral Psychology](#)

[Handbook of Moral and Character Education \(Educational Psychology Handbook\)](#)

[Character Psychology And Character Education](#)

Recent Posts

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[What do babies think about how adults treat them at birth?](#)

[Raising Children With Love or Dynamite?](#)

[With the evolved nest we become human; without it we are fearful "reptiles"](#)

[Is Humanity's "Moral Sense" Inherited or Nurtured?](#) Humans are born into a cooperative world. They become cooperative with good care.

[Why Worry About Undercared for Males? Messed up Morals!](#) Should we be worried that misdeveloped males run the world?



Dr. Naresh Singh, International Development Consultant

Dr. Naresh Singh is currently an independent consultant in international development working mainly in the areas of sustainable livelihoods and resilience building in crisis and post crisis situations. He was the Program Director of the Caribbean Local Economic Development Program with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2012-2013) and was Director General of Strategic Planning and Operations the Partnerships with Canadians Branch at CIDA until January 2012 where he was also Acting Vice-President 2009-2010. From 2006 to 2008 he was Executive Director of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, co-chaired by Madeleine Albright and Hernando de Soto and hosted by UNDP.

Naresh has had a distinguished career in international development that has included work in more than 40 countries. Before joining the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, he served as Director General of Governance and Social Development at CIDA. From 1996 to 2001, he worked at the U.N.D.P. as Principal Adviser on Poverty and Sustainable Livelihoods. This position followed his three-year tenure as the Director of the Poverty and Empowerment Program at the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#) in Winnipeg, and several years as Executive Director of the [Caribbean Environmental Health Institute](#).

Naresh holds a MSc. from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi and a PhD from the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. He is author of 6 books, several book chapters and numerous articles on governance, poverty and sustainable livelihoods. He is currently an Adjunct Professor at Boston University, School of Public Health. Naresh was also a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University, Global Equity Initiative, the Canada Trust visiting professor at University of Waterloo, visiting scholar in international development at McGill University, and a visiting fellow at the University of Guelph, among others.

Outside of academia, Naresh has advised several organizations, including the Commonwealth Secretariat; the Pan American Health Organization; and the Foundation of International Environment Law and Development.

<http://www.sustainable-livelihoods.com/nareshsingh.html>

PRESENTERS –

Amygdala Hijack



Roseann Bayne has been the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction at CiTi BOCES since 2013 and previous to that was the Assistant Superintendent of the Highland Central School District in Ulster County for four years. Roseann spent the majority of her education career in Oswego County at the Altmar-Parish-Williamstown Central School District. During her 15 years at APW Roseann was a high school English and Social Studies teacher and a school administrator.

It was while at APW that Roseann became keenly aware of the effects of rural poverty on student achievement. She became an advocate for disadvantaged youth and students with disabilities and consistently promoted instructional and behavioral strategies that would level the playing field for marginalized youth.

In her role at CiTi Roseann is responsible for all instructional activities for students and adults. She also serves as a regional trainer for topics like Bully, Harassment, Discrimination and Emotional Intelligence.

Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges: How do I reach unreachable students and families?



Asheena Baez is an internationally renowned [Mindful leadership Coach](#), Curriculum Developer, and Educational Consultant. Asheena currently serves the Summer Principal Academy Administrative Graduate Program at Columbia University, as a Leadership Coach and Summer Instructor. In addition, Asheena collaborates with Yale University's Center for Emotional Intelligence through the 1440 foundation as a curriculum developer for Social and Emotional Learning practices and techniques.

She consults and collaborates with Wisdom Thinkers to train teachers and administrators to unlock the potential of the "lower third". While Ass't Director for Pupil services in Beacon, N.Y., she personally saw the power of "Stories to Light our Way" to uplift her special needs and non-verbal students. Over the course of a 5 week summer program the students flourished, jumping reading levels and able to express themselves publicly, in some cases for the first time. In addition she has worked with the gangs in Newburgh to help them Change their story, bringing them together with community leaders to listen to what their needs are.

As a former Special Education Teacher, Director of Pupil Personnel Services and current Principal, in New York, Asheena uses her knowledge and expertise to enhance and advance the educational opportunities for students all over the world. She recently presented her experiences, along with Ralph Singh, at the joint Harvard – Tufts Tisch School conference on Moral Education.

Curbing Chronic Absenteeism: Tools for Engaging Students and Families in School, All Day, Every Day

Teaching Resilience and Instilling Hope: Understanding and Effectively Responding to the Impact of Childhood Trauma in Schools



Geri Jones Geitner is currently the Director of Student Support Services for the Fulton City School District, where she has facilitated numerous professional development opportunities regarding the impact of poverty and trauma on learning. Geri also served as an assistant principal at the middle level and coordinator of a secondary alternative education program. Prior to becoming a school administrator, Geri was a school social worker at the elementary school level, as well as in specialized programs for emotionally disturbed and behaviorally challenged students in grades K -12. Before entering the field of education she served on the staff of a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and a United States Senator in Washington, DC. Geri is a Fulton native and attended school K-12 in the Fulton City School District. She received her BA

in American Studies from Hamilton College, a Master's in Social Work from Syracuse University and Master's in Educational Leadership from Saint John Fisher College. Geri and her husband, Matthew, reside in Fulton with their children, Hannah and Jacob.

“Stories of our Past, Influencing our Future” - Changing the Story between school and community – service learning w a purpose - reversing the “Brain Drain”



Jeffrey Grimshaw is an Organizational Development Consultant with a background in government, nonprofit, business and higher education. Having served as the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board of Oswego County and Director of the Office of Business and Community Relations at SUNY Oswego for a decade. Currently, Jeff travels throughout the United States and Canada facilitating change and developing innovative organizations as CEO of J Grimshaw Consulting. He consults with Wisdom Thinkers and helps coordinate our Community Strengths Institute initiatives.



Ms. Danielle Florio, M.S. Ed. is currently acting as the English Department Chair at G. Ray Bodley High School in the Fulton City School District. In addition, she also teaches classes at the 9th, 10th and 12th grade levels, varying from Honors/Humanities, to traditional class structures. She attended the State University of New York, College at Brockport for her undergraduate studies, obtaining her Bachelors of Science degree in Childhood Education and English Literature. She went on to complete her Masters at SUNY Oswego in Curriculum and Instruction, and recently received her degree in Educational Administration (Certificate of Advanced Study) and certification in New York State.

She grew up in Fulton, N.Y. and continues to reside in the city. She has spent the first ten years of her career in education, working to better her community through her role in the school district. By partnering with organizations such as The Wisdom Thinkers, and other organizations, she has worked to encourage students to take ownership of the changes that they would like to see happen in their community. Through a variety of projects and connections with local agencies, Ms. Florio works with students of all ages as a relentless advocate for the restoration and growth of the City of Fulton.

Turtles and Sandboxes: Simply integrating SEL and Character Ed into School Culture from Classroom, Specials, and Service Learning



Michael Smolnik proudly serves as the principal of Aura A. Cole Elementary in the Central Square School District. He has been at A.A. Cole for three years. Prior to that, he served as principal of Cleveland Elementary, a 2013 National School of Character and 2010 USDOE Blue Ribbon School.

Mr. Smolnik has seen first-hand the impact of Stories to Light Our Way in simply creating a positive building and community wide climate and culture. He has worked in the Central Square District his entire career, starting as an English teacher at Paul V. Moore High School and eventually transitioning into administration as an assistant principal at the secondary level. He has worked at the elementary level for the past five years.

Mr. Smolnik is a native of Oswego County, having moved here with his family in 1984 and attending Central Square Schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade. He is passionate about his community and takes great pride in giving back to the school system that provided him with a solid foundation. He is a firm believer in educating the whole child and he looks forward to making a difference in his school and community each and every day. Michael and his wife, Jennifer, reside in Central Square with their five children: Arianna, Mikayla, Casimir, Daxton and Ryker.



Dorianne M. Hathway, P. E. Teacher 6-12, coach, Championship Women's Volleyball, MS/HS Wisdom Thinkers Coordinator. She graduated from SUNY Cortland with a BSE Physical Education and from SUNY Potsdam with a MSE. For the past 21 years she has taught at Sandy Creek Central School. Dori coaches the Sandy Creek championship girls volleyball team and, as the middle and high school Wisdom Thinkers coordinator, has been instrumental in developing service learning projects, based on the Stories to Light Our Way. She has also served as an active member of DASA committee for the past 8 years.



Jacqueline Hobbs has been a K-5 music teacher at Sandy Creek Central School District for 15 years. She has been teaching for 22 years. She also is coordinator of Morning Program and Wisdom Thinkers for Sandy Creek Elementary. Preparing children for the social emotional challenges they face throughout their lives is the best gift teachers can give them. She has found a way to teach music while incorporating character education throughout her curriculum. She also leads a student group of Wisdom Thinkers throughout the year. These children help other students learn the importance of good character at school and at home.



Autumn Sutton is a certified General Education Teacher who taught 5th grade for 8 years and second grade for two. I will be going back to 5th grade next year. I started using Stories to Light Our Way as part of a pilot while at Cleveland Elementary. These stories were a perfect way to create the safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment I was looking for my students. While at Cleveland, we received the 2010 Blue Ribbon School for Academic Excellence Award. In 2012, Cleveland Elementary sought and received a New York State School of Character Honorable Mention Award and continued on to earn a 2013 National School of Character Award. I have continued to use the stories for the past 5 years and have even been blessed enough to create

some of the lesson plans that currently accompany the stories. I am also lucky enough to be a certified lead trainer for Stories to Light Our Way. These stories have transformed my classroom and the way I teach. I am able to connect characters that the students can relate to and remember with good decision making and character building.