



June/July 2015

## Calendar

June 4  
IECA Northeast Regional Symposium On  
The Future Of College Admission  
Newark, NJ

June 9  
IECA Webinar: College Poor No More

June 25  
Spring Conference 2016 Planning Meeting,  
Boston, MA

June 25-27  
Executive Committee Meets, Boston, MA

July 3  
Independence Day Observed  
National Office Closed

July 7-11  
Summer Training Institute – West  
Claremont, CA

July 14  
IECA Webinar: Awaken Your  
Inner Therapist

July 15  
Board of Directors, Teleconference

July 28-Aug 1  
IECA Summer Training Institute – East  
Swarthmore, PA

August 6  
Sklarow presents Webinar for UC Irvine  
Trends in Independent College Consulting

August 11  
IECA Webinar: Red Flags During Intake

September 8  
IECA Webinar: Redesigning SAT & PSAT

September 16  
Board of Directors, Teleconference

September 30  
Workshop: Transitioning to Private  
Practice, San Diego

October 1-3  
IECA at NACAC, San Diego

November 2-4  
Pre-Conference Tours, Pre-Conference  
Workshops, Scottsdale, AZ

November 4-7  
IECA Fall Conference, Scottsdale, AZ

## 2015 Survey Tells the Tale of a Profession in Transition

Ask anyone in the field and they'll tell you the profession of independent educational consulting is growing. IECA's biannual State of the Profession survey of IECs captured that growth, but also found some fundamental changes: changes to how IEC offices are managed, how students and parents interact with IECs, pricing models, and much more.

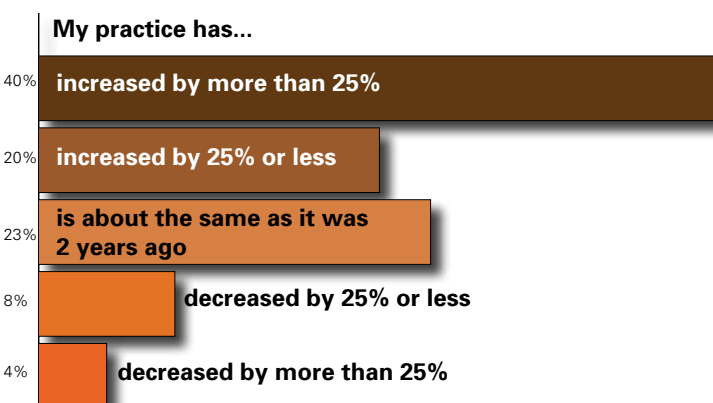
An in-depth overview will be offered in a webinar later this year, but a few areas that highlight the changes taking place in the consulting practices of IECA members are worth sharing sooner. The survey was taken by well over 500 IECs—making this the largest detailed study of the profession ever—and sought to look at how the profession is faring as a viable business/service. This report covers the IEC office, clients, and practice; the academic changes will be explored another time.

"special needs," as it was known. On this year's survey, 17% indicated they serve therapeutic clients, with 8% of the newest to the profession—Associate Members—indicating doing so.

The growing specializations are Graduate School, Learning Disabilities, Gap Years, Student Athletes, and Performing and Visual Arts. Among college

### Among IECA Professional Members:

*How does your current IEC business compare to two years ago?*



### Specialization

A decade ago most IECs were generalists, providing help for students and families who were exploring school, college, and therapeutic options. Today that is far less prevalent as members must keep up with ever-more complicated cases and volumes of information and research. A decade ago, nearly 40% of members reported working in

consultants, financial aid, career advising, and academic advising have all grown. There are other small but emerging specialties, including Christian colleges and service to homeschooled students that could signal a continuation of this trend.

### Work Load

There was a time when about half of IECs worked part-time. Often there was a school-based job

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# President's Letter

## Inspired, Appreciative, and Ready for Another Year

As a result of impressive contributions from the committee chairs and members, my first year as president has been filled with fresh ideas and solid accomplishments. I am both inspired and humbled by the thoughtful, creative and tireless efforts of my colleagues as we continue to define and meet our ever-evolving goals. Here are some recent highlights, as well as a peek into the future of IECA.

Thanks to the leadership of **Joan Koven**, (PA) an interactive ethics course will launch this summer. A special thank you to the participating actors in the webinar: **Barb LeWinter** (VT), **Susan Sykes** (MN), **Alan Haas** (CT), and **Lisa Thomas** (MN).

The College Committee tour guide proposal is in the final editing phase. This document will help us work with colleges to customize tours that meet the needs of college consultants. Recognizing that touring colleges is central to IECs' practice, the College Committee, under the leadership of **Julie Gross** (NY) and **Judy Muir** (TX), explored options for developing regional or focused program tours not associated with conferences or retreats.

**Don McMillan** (MA), a member of the Professional Liaison Committee, has executed action plans to foster stronger collegial and cooperative relationships between IECA and admission offices and professional associations. Their



Gail Meyer

initial event, IECA's Northeast Regional Symposium on the Future of College Admission, will take place in early June in Newark, NJ with a panel of admissions directors, deans, and vice presidents from University of Rochester, Franklin and Marshall College, Drew University, Swarthmore College, Marist College, and Wheaton College. After the event, the committee plans to write a white paper for NACAC that discusses future trends in college admissions.

The Schools Subcommittee of the Professional Liaison Committee is

*continued on page 7*

## IECA<sup>+</sup> INSIGHTS

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## In Focus

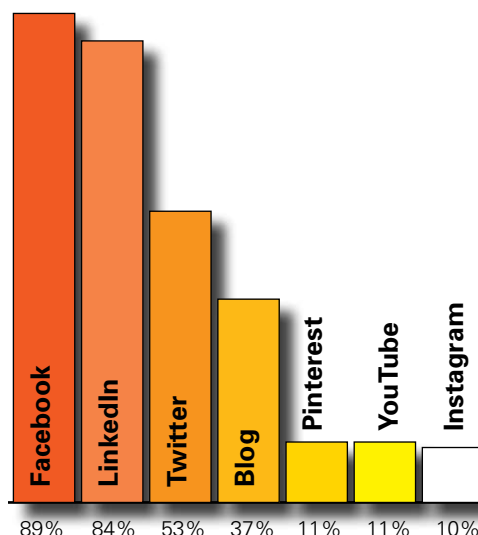
### Technology & the IEC Office

*Based on 2015 survey of IECA members*

#### Use of Social Media

78% Use social media  
22% Do not

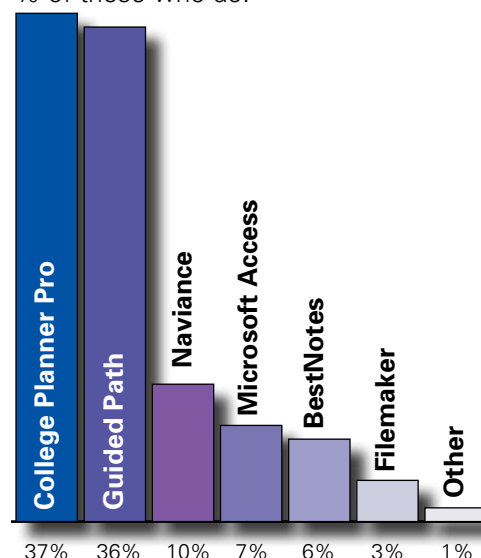
% of these who use:



#### Use of Data Management System

68% Use a data management system  
32% Do not

% of these who do:



# New Certificates Support Professional Development

IECA's educational offerings have seen a steady growth in recent years. Monthly webinars, the Professional Members Winter Retreat, IECA's Northeast Regional Symposium on the Future of College Admission, and increased numbers of tours and workshops all attest to innovative programs. Recent efforts have targeted learning disabilities and college financing as areas for educational priority.

As a way to recognize members' commitment to educational growth, IECA has begun to work with outside organizations and agencies to provide certificates attesting to ongoing learning. In Baltimore at the national conference, more than 100 attendees earned such certificates. The two offered there were for those who completed gap year training, offered in cooperation with the American Gap Association; and training in the British university system, offered in partnership with EducationUK/The British Council.

Now IECA has announced the boldest initiative yet. In an exclusive agreement with CPP, **this fall IECA will hold its first one-day training for MBTI qualified IECs.** The initial training will take place Tuesday, November 3, 2015 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in

Scottsdale, Arizona, prior to the opening of the IECA conference.

This initial training will be restricted to those who meet MBTI & CPP's established educational or license eligibility. Those with the designations listed below qualify to purchase and use assessments. CPP professional training staff will guide attendees to use the tests in the best and most ethical way to administer, interpret, and apply the assessments. For this initial opportunity only those with one of the following may register:

**Among the Qualifying Licenses:** Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Professional Counselor (LPC) or National Certified Counselor (NCC), State-Licensed Psychologist or other Mental Health Counselor.

Or:

**Among the Qualifying Degrees:** Master's or higher degree in Clinical Psychology, Educational Psychology, Social Psychology, or Social Work; master's or higher degree in Counseling, Counselor Education, and Marriage and Family Counseling; master's or higher degree in Human Resources Development or Organizational Development.



## IECA at Regional ACAC Conferences



After IECA's successful Professional Members Retreat, we were pleased to return to Birmingham, Alabama in April for the SACAC conference where college admission reps, Independent Educational Consultants, and school counselors from nine southern states came together. IECA's information table, staffed by Membership Associate Amanda Fogler, heard from many future IECs and scores of colleges looking to work more closely with IECA members. Our CEO, Mark Sklarow, led a breakout session "Everything You Know About IECs is Wrong," joined by Vice President of Enrollment, Greg Zaiser from Elon University, and Dean of Admissions, Brent Benner, from University of Tampa. Our recent participation has helped strengthen IECA's relationship with SACAC and colleges in the south.



IECA played a significant role at the 2015 "SuperConference" joint meeting of the Western, Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain ACACs in Reno, NV. The IECA presence in the exhibit area was evident with the membership team of Diana Kane and Amanda Fogler connecting with members and non-members.

Mark Sklarow presented three sessions: an update of his popular presentation on social media for IECs; as a panelist on "Our Members, Our Ethics," moderated by past NACAC President Katy Murphy; and on "Latest Trends" with **Gail Grand** (CA) and **Sean Hawes** (WA) that included early results from our 2015 membership survey.

Several IECA members presented a session on creating a student centered IEC practice, including **Sandy Furth** (CO), Sean Hawes, **Steven Mercer** (CA) and **Jenny Umhofer** (Associate, CA). **Cyndy McDonald** (CA) served on a panel with Jed Applerouth and others on stress management.



# Snapshots from the IECA Spring Conference in Baltimore

*more photos can be found on our website and Facebook page*



Our popular **Roundtable Discussions** provided the opportunity for interactive discussions on several topics on various specialties



**Goucher College President José Antonio Bowen's** opening address focused on the limits of technology in education



**Marcia Rubinstien's** husband, Eytan, accepted the Steven Antonoff Award for Professional Achievement on her behalf



**Conference Central** was the hub of activity throughout the conference week







IECA members enjoyed reconnecting at the Tuesday night **Member Dinner** at Pazo



New Board members, officers, and Nominating Committee members were elected at the **Annual Membership Meeting**



The **School & College Fair** was exhilarating and exhausting, and remains one of the most well-attended events of the conference



**More than 50 breakout sessions and 4 pre-conference workshops** featured presentations by nearly 150 colleagues



**Keynote Speaker, Rosalind Wiseman**, provided an insightful session on bullying, parenting, leadership, and the use of social media

that was needed to maintain a home. The percentage of full-time IECs has grown to 76% among Professional members, with another 6% indicating efforts to build their work to a full-time practice. Although the percentage of full-timers among Associate members is lower (43%), nearly a quarter say they are seeking to build their practice to full-time. The stereotype of the IEC “dabbler” has been busted. Another debunked myth is that of the inexperienced IEC who stumbles into the field. On average, IECA members have 12 years of experience in educational consulting or admissions. And a new trend may be developing: about 5% of members (up from 1%) work for nonprofits, CBO, or educational institutions, rather than for-profit companies.

Less than a quarter of members indicate working a traditional 9–5 day. Some 80% report working late afternoons and weekends, 60% see clients on Saturdays, and 47% on Sundays. One reason the work load seems intense is because most members are busier than ever. Almost half of respondents report that over the past two years business is up significantly. Overall, 67% say their client enrollment is up, 11% indicate it is down, and 22% say it is unchanged over the last two years.

### Seeing Clients

Back when IECA began doing surveys, it wasn’t even necessary to ask about how IECs interacted with clients because it was a given that they always met face-to-face. In one of the biggest changes in the data, that is no longer the case, as IECs increasingly work with clients in remote and underserved areas. Although 90% of members see their clients in person at least once, only 38% see their client in person every time and 27% say they see their clients “most of the time.” The remaining 35% see their clients in person less than half of the time, using new technologies to maintain contact. Two-thirds of members working remotely report using Skype with at least some clients.

One of the anticipated changes was the growing number of international students seen by members. The growth was unlike anything IECA expected—more than 55% of members report working with international students. Over half of those indicate working with a small, but growing, number.

### The Office

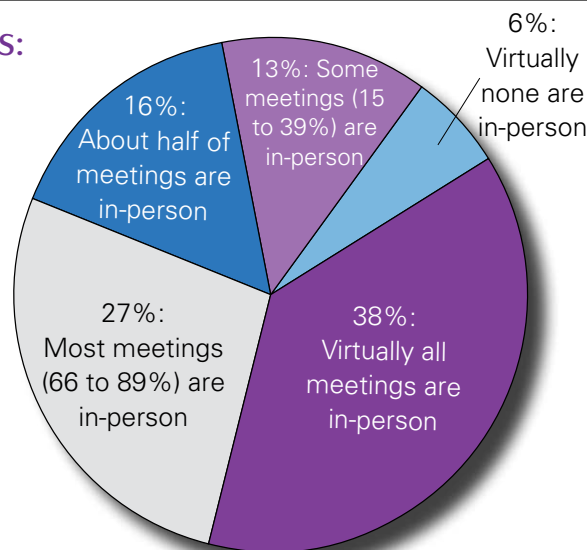
Just two years ago, in the last member survey, only a third of members indicated that they were part of a larger multi-professional practice. In a very short time, that number has climbed to 47%.

Today 55% of members indicate they are incorporated, a number that has steadily increased over the past 10 years. And in what

## Among All Members:

**Over the course of time you work with a client, what % of those meetings are in person?**

Note: In place of in-person meetings, IECs use new technologies to work with students remotely.



seems like an obvious area of agreement, more than 91% use a contract or a letter of agreement. It was not that long ago when that number was hovering around the 50% mark.

Another indicator of IECs viewing their work with a more professional mind-set is that 58% of members hold professional liability insurance. It’s the first time this number has been more than 50% in our biannual surveys. In yet another, two-thirds of members indicate using a data management system for their offices, with CollegePlannerPro and GuidedPath most commonly used but Naviance, Best Notes, Filemaker, and other packages also noted.

One of the most surprising trends was the growth in noncomprehensive fee structures. While nearly 88% of respondents indicated that they have a comprehensive fee (unchanged from the past), a growing number offered lower cost alternatives to serve families of varied means. A record high of 70% offered potential clients hourly rates, and 28% had smaller, more affordable packages. A similar number offered a pick-and-choose menu of services. Another 10% said they charged on a sliding scale, based on a client’s ability to afford services. This growing list of options could explain why although respondents said that 28% of clients would be considered in an upper socioeconomic class, a similar 26% would be considered working class or poor.

### College Client Behaviors

This survey affirmed that students who work with IECA members act differently than their peers in the college search and the application process. Two examples: nationwide 16% of students enroll in a private college, a number that’s been declining, but among those working with an IECA Professional member, that percentage soars to 68%, more than four times the number. Just as dramatically, although just 20% of students attend college out-of-state, among those working with IECA Professional members, that jumps to 69%.

Watch for the announcement of the webinar where more detailed information on fees, services, and much more will be explored.





preparing a survey to document the volume of school placements done by IECA consultants. The data emphasize the importance of our work in school placement, especially selective schools.

The Professional Member Retreat in Alabama was a great success, with tours, a college panel of SACAC admissions officers, and our new "one great idea" session. The next retreat will be in January 2016 in the Richmond, VA, area where there will be a wide range of schools, colleges, and therapeutic programs to tour.

Under the steadfast leadership of **Charlotte Klaar** (MD), the Strategic Planning Committee has been working on elements of a plan to ensure IECA's leadership into the future.

The IECA book on college admission is in the final stages with copy editors working on contributions from over 100 members. We hope to have it ready for our fall conference.

The Therapeutic Committee will once again represent IECA at the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at their annual conference in San Antonio, TX, this October. The committee will also present a pre-conference training workshop, "Foundations of Practice," at the IECA Fall conference in Scottsdale, AZ.

IECs face an increasingly delicate balance when advising families on appropriate yet affordable college options. The Affordability

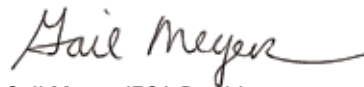
Subcommittee, chaired by **Elisabeth Morgan** (CT), offered a pre-conference workshop: *Affordability: Incorporating the "Other" Fit Into Our Practices*.

IECA has reached an agreement with CPP, the company that provides certification for Myers-Briggs and the Strong Interest Inventory Training. CPP will offer a one-day training program at the fall conference.

The terms of three Executive Board members have come to an end: **Audrey Ludemann** (CT), Vice President for Committees, will join the Board Development Committee; **Terry Lloyd** (MI), Vice President for Education and Training will join the Nominating Committee; and **Pam Jobin** (CO) completed her one-year term as Vice President for Ethics and Professional Practices but will remain a member of the Board.

Thank you to Board members **Linda Cain** (CO) and **Kim Davis** (NC) for their contributions to discussions and committee work; it has been a pleasure working with you.

Finally, I offer my unwavering gratitude to all of you for making my first year as president both thought-provoking and exhilarating. I look forward to another productive year, solving new puzzles in the months ahead, knowing I am in excellent company.



Gail Meyer, IECA President

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## Wilderness Therapy for Emerging Adults

by Judith E. Bessette, EdD, IECA (WI)



Like many of my fellow IECA members, I've noticed a dramatic upswing in *emerging adult* clients. Emerging adult is a term coined by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, PhD, a leading expert on young people ages 18 to 25 ([www.jeffreyarnett.com](http://www.jeffreyarnett.com)). With this area of need rapidly growing, it's no surprise that programs serving emerging adults have grown as well.

Because I am especially interested in the growth of wilderness therapy or outdoor behavioral health programs, I recently posed several questions to 14 such programs—most were both adolescent and emerging adult programs and a few operated only with that older population—that offer young adult wilderness treatment:

- Why is this age group presenting with an increased need for treatment?
- What seems to be working?
- How do we know it's working?
- What advice do programs have for parents and IECs working with emerging adults?

### New Demands

In response to *why* programs had added emerging adult services, two themes emerged. First, the increased demand for emerging adult wilderness programming was initiated by families who had younger children who'd been successful in adolescent wilderness programs. An even more frequent reason cited for this increased demand was the economic downturn that began in 2008 that led to families putting off treatment until late in their teen's 17th year or even until after a college experience (or two or three) had failed.

Second, although there has been more traditional treatment available for emerging adults with addiction problems for some time, wilderness options are seeing great successes in this arena. But substance abuse is only a fraction of what's being treated. These young men and women are experiencing significant emotional problems—depression, anxiety, trauma, and attachment to name a few—and plenty are dealing with *failure to launch*. They need wilderness therapy that can provide a clinically intense intervention and teach both coping skills and life skills.

You may have first heard of *failure to launch* as a comedy starring Matthew McConaughey, but it's no laughing matter.

*continued on page 11*

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## Wilderness Therapy, from page 9

Arnett suggested that the changes in our culture over the last 50 years have led to a new developmental stage—the emerging adult. And just as society needed to accept the notion of adolescence over 100 years ago, we now must recognize this new developmental need. Wilderness may be just the ticket to assisting a client in working toward that launch.

### Different Needs

Programs also reported that there are new factors in play that need to be addressed in working with emerging adults. Process addictions (especially screen time and pornography) are worse than ever, leading to inordinate and unhealthy levels of isolation. That isolation has contributed to a generation that has learned to objectify others, seeing them only as vehicles to be used, obstacles in their way, or irrelevancies to what they want. Wilderness programs offer emerging adults an opportunity free from distraction—that is, off the technology grid—to see the effect their life is having on others, to learn to take responsibility, to begin anew, and to build lasting and trusting relationships with family and others.

Increased screen time has also taken the place of other talent building. More and more emerging adults have very little success in or areas of competency outside of what they can do—or who they can be—online. Wilderness experiences force young adults to build talents, skill sets, and efficacy outside the computer.

In addition, the number of emerging adults diagnosed with spectrum issues is on the rise. Heroin is cheaper and more accessible than prescription drugs; in fact, many communities see its use as epidemic. Parents are having more trouble letting go. For example, some helicopter parents actually want, *even expect*, to go on job interviews with their emerging adults!

Although several programs talked about the importance of remaining “true to the basic tenets of wilderness therapy” in their young adult programs, they also identified a number of enhancements to their programs that have come about in just the last few years. The therapy has become much more sophisticated, and therapists as well as field staff are more highly trained. That is especially true as programs have become not only trauma-informed but are also actually treating trauma at a deep level.

### Enhanced Programs

Wilderness therapy is more holistic than it once was, with components that address mind, body, and spirit. Programs are incorporating yoga, mindfulness, meditation, and even cultural immersion alongside more traditional wilderness experiences. Such additions add structure and strengthen the young adult programs. And although wilderness therapy has always honored a connection to the earth, horticulture therapy is now being used in some programs.

Several programs have also added more of an adventure therapy component to their repertoire and offer such activities as rock-climbing, rappelling, and canyoneering, which contribute to talent building and give emerging adults more skills with which to move into adulthood. There is also more emphasis on individualization versus a one-size-fits-all approach to programming and a far more collaborative attitude in working with emerging adults.

Family therapy and parent resources have also become more sophisticated as programs learn better ways to help parents

develop a different kind of relationship with their emerging adult than they had with their adolescent child. Often there is a parallel process in place between the young adult in his or her work and what the wilderness therapist is doing with mom and dad.

A few programs discussed how important the concept of transition is for emerging adults as they move to the next step beyond the wilderness experience. Some programs offer opportunities for young people to participate in community experiences and then return to “the woods” to process and reflect on their experiences.


Wilderness training has always been rich in metaphor; one program likened the need for thoughtful transitioning for young adults to rehabilitating a wild bird in captivity. Suggesting that just as the bird is given structure and support to practice skills slowly, rather than simply being released on its own back into the wild, so young adults often feel that they are strong enough to fly and skilled enough to thrive immediately after leaving a wilderness program, but that sense of confidence can be a dangerous illusion without thoughtful transitioning.

### Research

In 1996, several wilderness programs banded together to collaborate and share best practices. The founding programs realized the advantage of uniting to promote program standards and excellence. The original members served primarily an

*continued on page 12*


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## *Wilderness Therapy, from page 11*

adolescent population, but today, the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Council (OBH) is 18 members strong and serves both adolescent and the emerging adult populations.

OBH partnered with the Association of Experiential Education (AEE) in 2013 to help expand AEE's existing standards to better reflect current wilderness therapy practices and create an accreditation process for outdoor behavioral health programs. Among the various accrediting bodies, AEE stood out as the best organization to collaborate with because of its long-standing reputation in the field of experiential and adventure education, including more than 25 years of experience accrediting programs in the field.

The AEE-OBH Council partnership resulted in a detailed set of ethical, risk management, and treatment standards created by longstanding leaders in OBH, adventure therapy, and wilderness programming. To insure objectivity, AEE alone handles the actual accreditation process, which ensures a level of separation and accountability that is essential to the integrity of accreditation.

OBH has also sponsored the development of the OBH Research Cooperative (OBHRC) to facilitate research and find credible, objective information to answer the question, Does wilderness therapy work?



The work of the research cooperative is managed by the OBH Research Center, housed at the University of New Hampshire, and directed by Michael Gass, PhD, LMFT. Several research scientists work with the center, and it supports many aspects of OBHRC, including risk management, clinical research, accreditation, and insurance reimbursement, among other initiatives.

The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP) is also involved in research endeavors. NATSAP is committed to helping its member programs access pertinent research information and engage in the evaluation of their own programs. The organization publishes the *Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs* and manages the NATSAP Research and Evaluation Network. Go to [www.natsap.org](http://www.natsap.org) for more information.

Several studies of adolescent wilderness therapy programs have reported successful results in terms of programming effectiveness. Outcome studies have also shown that the gains made by teens in wilderness therapy are maintained over time.


Similar research is now being conducted on the emerging adult population. The results for one of the first studies that demonstrates the efficacy of wilderness programming for young adults can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0886571X.2013.852452>. OBHRC also has projects going on in young adult wilderness programming. The early results of research on young adults appear to be similar to and as positive as the research for adolescents. Visit the Research section at [www.obhcouncil.com](http://www.obhcouncil.com) to learn more.

### Helpful Advice

Wilderness therapy programs working with emerging adults had some advice for both parents and IECs. Parents play an incredibly important role in young adult programming, especially in wilderness programs:

- Once young adults are over 18, they cannot be compelled to stay in treatment, so parents must be willing to find some kind of leverage to help keep their young adult engaged. Their resolve will inevitably be challenged at some point, but they need to be able to hold the line.
- Parents must be committed to treatment when it comes to working with young adults. Mom and dad have to do their own work to help the family system become stronger and healthier.
- Parents also need to understand that the emotional development of their young adult is probably limited in some way, and almost certainly if he or she has been using substances. On an emotional maturity level, they may be talking to a 14-year-old in a 19-year-old's body.

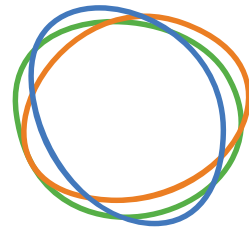
IECs can help parents cope with all of the above and more by:

- Using soft reminders to parents that their teen or 20-something is, in fact, an emerging adult is one way to help.
- Helping parents understand their role as their child transitions into a functioning adult. Sometimes when that transition initially falls short, a parent can feel a sense of failure and attempt to compensate by over-parenting. In emerging adulthood, the parent's role needs to shift from acting as a manager to more of a consultant. IECs can often help parents with that translation.
- Helping parents clarify the specific outcomes they are hoping for when choosing a program. IECs can encourage parents to write down their hopes and dreams and identify the hopes that are within their control and those that are outside of their control. Knowing what the parents are looking for is helpful in identifying the right program fit.
- And even though the emerging adult is that 18-going-on-14 kid, IECs can draw the young person into a dialogue about what they want and have an objective discussion that is often just not possible for parents to do. 

Judi Bessette can be reached at [drjudib@mac.com](mailto:drjudib@mac.com)

*Author note: Thanks to Anasazi, Aspiro, Evoke, Expedition Therapy, Legacy Outdoor, Medicine Wheel, New Vision, Open Sky, Pacific Quest, Red Oak, Second Nature, Summit Achievement, True North, and Wingate Wilderness programs for helping me write this article and special thanks to Dr. Neal Christensen, PhD, and Will White, DA, for going above and beyond!*





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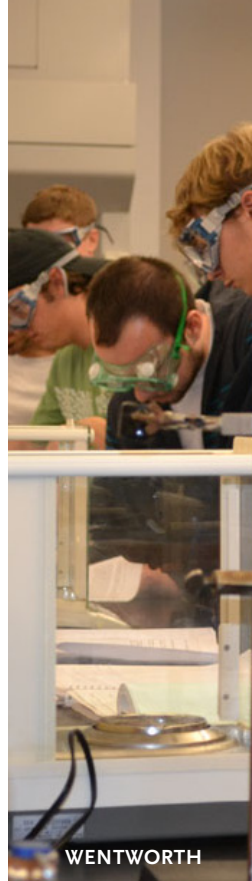
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## Momentum in Outcomes-Informed Treatment

by Mike Petree, ACMHC, Research Systems Consultant, Outcome Tools



Historically, treatment programs have managed to run successful businesses without proving treatment effectiveness—at least in the private-pay mental healthcare field. It's not that clients and professional referents aren't asking for outcomes, as any admissions personnel can testify, it's that the vast majority of programs have no outcomes data and no motivation to collect it unless market forces require them to do so.

When the topic of success rates arises, common responses include clever diversions, such as raising philosophical questions about what "success" really means, sharing a favorite anecdote describing one client's success, or referring the potential customer to an ecstatic alumnus.

Today, however, a growing number of treatment programs are researching effectiveness and can respond to the question of success by authoritatively stating, "Our program works! We've been measuring for years."

### Current Landscape

Currently the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP) and the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Council (OBHC) are working with more than 70 programs to build an outcomes database, using an electronic system called Outcome Tools to collect the data. These data are compiled in a large database and processed annually by Dr. Mike Gass and his team of researchers at the University of New Hampshire. The results, which show strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other programs, are provided to each contributor.

Although the project began with only treatment program data, several independent educational consultants (IECs) and interventionists have joined in the data collection. With their contributions, the data collected provide a richer view of the series of treatments, which often includes different programs and types of services. Referring professionals play a key role in rounding out the data set.

*continued on page 16*

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### Outcomes, from page 15

Participating programs, IECs, and interventionists use OutcomeTools, a web-based data collection system, to electronically administer a small battery of instruments, including the Youth Outcome Questionnaire for adolescent clients and parents; the OQ 45.2 for adult clients; the General Functioning Scale of the Family Assessment Device; and a demographic survey for clients, parents, and treating clinicians. At the basic level, these surveys are administered at admission, discharge, and 6 and 12 months postdischarge.



This battery of tools collects information about diagnostic history, treatment history, referring professionals, current symptoms, and other variables that are then correlated with the results of the OQ Measures. The OQ Measures serve as the backbone of the system and were developed specifically for measuring change. They come equipped with a clinical change index that, on the basis of the normative data used to validate the instrument, shows whether the differences in scores from one instance to the next are different enough to be considered clinical change.

### IECA Involvement

IECA recently commissioned an analysis of the NATSAP aggregate to explore the differences in outcomes for clients who have and have not hired IECs. The results of that analysis will be compiled in an article authored by Dr. Stephen Javorski to be published in the summer of 2015. This analysis is the first of many future inquiries pertinent to professional referents and evidences the cooperative relationship between NATSAP and IECA. The relationship between outcomes and the involvement of a referent will be an ongoing factor in future data analysis.





## The Professional Referent's Role

Because of the influential nature of the relationship that referents have with treatment programs, IECs play a key role in forwarding their industry's shift from practicing the art of therapeutic placement to practicing the science-informed art of placement decision making. Unlike treatment programs that can take years to shift culture and approach, IECs are nimble and swiftly adaptable players in the treatment process. IECs can learn about current research results and immediately incorporate new information into program evaluation and placement decision making.

For example, in an article in the January 2015 *Child & Youth Care Forum*, "The Role of Transport Use in Adolescent Wilderness Treatment: Its Relationship to Readiness to Change and Outcomes," authors Anita Tucker, Joanna Bettman, Christine Horton, and Casey Comart examined the impact of transport services on outcomes. The sample size consisted of 350 clients. Their results showed that clients who were transported had equal or better outcomes than those who weren't. Although hard conclusions cannot be made from this study alone, such results do provide empirical insight into the process and will have direct impact on therapeutic placement decision making.

Referents can begin to influence programs toward data collection by asking the following questions when touring programs:

1. Are you collecting *and reporting* outcomes data?
2. Are you involved in an aggregate outcomes research initiative?
3. What normed and valid instruments are you using to collect your data?
4. Is this process overseen by a neutral third-party entity?

## Conclusion

The private-pay mental health field is moving toward outcomes-informed treatment. Aggregate databases, such as those sponsored by NATSAP and OBHC, are growing rapidly and results are influencing the treatment process. Professional referents can play a powerful role in increasing the strength of this movement by asking a few important questions when touring and assessing programs and by collecting and sharing outcomes data on their clientele. 🚶

For more information about how to become involved, please contact Mike Petree at [Mike@remoteresearchdirector.com](mailto:Mike@remoteresearchdirector.com)

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## Educating the LGBTQ Student in the 21st Century

by Carlton Rounds, Director of Educational Partnerships with Cross-Cultural Solutions



For nearly 30 years I have worked with young people. I have been an educational counselor for young people of many races, nationalities, abilities, and socioeconomic circumstances. I have counseled students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ); HIV positive; homeless; abused; undocumented; gifted and talented; mentally

ill; and addicted. I have worked with those who are refugees, who have been affected by gangs, and who are coming out of correction facilities. Whether they are in elite prep schools, suburban public high schools, or GED programs for homeless teens in the Bronx, each student is a universe unto him- or herself. I share my story to help support your work with students in the LGBTQ community.

As acceptance for gay people gains national legal and cultural recognition, the backlash to the movement has created increased violence and painful rhetoric targeting the gay community, specifically its youth. The 24-hour media cycle exploits those conflicting narratives, barraging watchers until they are numbed to

the destructive intent of the message. Although the conversations can be shocking, the fact that they are happening so publicly can be a positive thing because it exposes hateful agendas. But I have to wonder, How does a young person in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity react to this kind of constant mixed messaging? I feel fear, and I wonder if they do too.

### A Safe Space

As a youth, I was very sensitive to the opinions of others and my peers. As part of my personality development, I looked to people surrounding me for role models and encouragement. For gay youth, there seemed to be only two options for self-preservation: to retreat inside or to rebel with vigor. I chose the vigorous route. Adults interpreted my teenage persona and behavior in ways that usually resulted in suggestions for me to conform (for my own safety) so that my soul could be saved or so that I would not encourage other “different” youth, like me, to question and challenge authority structures. It never occurred to anyone that it might not be me that needed to change, but instead their own behavior and beliefs.

As a sophomore in a remedial class reserved for youth who confronted the status quo, I met the educator who changed my life and my trajectory. She created a safe space in her classroom where I could escape the beatings, share my feelings openly, and engage in critical thinking about the world. She recognized something special in me, something worth nurturing and defending. She allowed me to take off the armor, breathe, and be a vulnerable teenager. She also helped me understand how profoundly gifted I was as a young man, as an activist, and as an intellectual. To be very direct, she saved my life. She understood that my *resistance* was actually a reflection of amazing *resilience*, and she became the conduit to opportunity and college.

### Self-Awareness

If 1 out of 10 people are on the LGBTQ spectrum, current educators are already working with this target population with various levels of success. Like any other population that continues to experience marginalization, discrimination, judgment, or unequal treatment, a best practice for one group is likely to be a general best practice for another. For the sake of this discussion, I am going to focus on the gay community, but I feel that gay could be substituted with female, Muslim, Black, poor, disabled, foreign, and so on.

Many educators are distracted by what they can readily observe about a young person and use a visual identity marker as an initial point of reference. For identities that cannot be seen, it is necessary to engage other methods. What process do you have

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*continued on page 20*



*LGBTQ, from page 19*

## Curiosity and Cultural Humility

This kind of approach will not only support your work, it will strengthen your relationships with your community. Find what resonates with you about the gay community and become a real part of the narrative. Find yourself in the history, and when you do, share that connection. Go deep and disclose. If you take that risk, students are more likely to reciprocate.

## Permission

may disclose parts of their identity exploration with different groups, but rarely share everything with just one individual. Imagine that each young person is on a spectrum with many layers and it will take some time to sort out the nuances. If you feel like you are beyond your comfort level, do you have a diverse set of colleagues to call upon?

## Language and Visual Cues

Once again, don't assume gender pronouns. Use neutral ones to signal that you are aware that there are people in the world other than straight people and that they deserve to be linguistically





accommodated. Gender neutral language is a huge cue to gay people that you have some level of awareness and use it to include all people, not just those you think are gay. Are your terms up to date? Have you processed the emotional responses you may have to language that has been updated, revised, reclaimed, or recoded? For example, ask about my family, not my Mom and Dad, because straight kids sometimes have gay parents.

## Trust

Appreciate that any young person who feels different inside—or has been made to feel different—is managing some level of alienation, anxiety, and fear. Those feelings can make it more challenging to trust another person, especially an adult who is in a position of power. For many youth who are exploring their sexual identity, they are already expecting judgment, profiling, and perhaps public exposure. For some, their college financing may hinge on successfully hiding their sexual orientation from you and their parents. If they seem afraid, trust that they are afraid for a legitimate reason. Respect the boundaries they set. You may be totally accepting, but that is about you and your world-view, and may not be shared.

## Parents

Parents may have suspicions about the sexual orientation of their children, and some have likely given inconsistent messages over time about how they feel about gay people. Their level of awareness regarding this dynamic and its influence may not be very evolved, or they may feel guilt and respond by overcompensating or overprotecting. In my experience, one parent is likely to be more supportive and the other the more critical. A young person's sexual orientation—and anything else they share in confidence—is not the property of their parents. It can be a difficult dance balancing the integrity of the relationship with your young person (the client) while still meeting the needs of the parents (your customer).

## Colleges

There are many resources [see list at the end of this article] that explore how open and welcoming various universities are to gay people. Schools that have bad reputations with gay issues and safety are not viewed, in general, as socially or academically progressive, and are thus less desirable. That makes sense. If gay people are not safe, it is usually reflective of a campus atmosphere where other groups are at risk, including women, minorities of color, and international students. This can mean that to keep a high rating, colleges and universities underreport abuses, inflate reputations for diversity, and project public images that are very different than the lived reality of their students.

Sad to say, but different regions of the country have very different interpretations of what gay friendly means. There is a difference

between being actively tolerated and being empowered and included. Investigating the reality of diversity on campus has to involve an organization's entire faculty, staff, and funders. There are many masks of inclusion worn by colleges and universities that have a shameful lack of diversity hiding at upper levels of decision making.

## College Essays

I support the desire for young people to explore their sexual orientation or gender identity through writing. They should never receive the message, no matter how subtle, that disclosure is somehow inappropriate. Rather, anchoring the exploration of identity and the process of self-awareness in a larger context is key. Colleges are looking for critical thinkers who can engage complex ideas and concepts. In short, being gay is not more instructive than any other minority group, it is how the student interprets their world that gives it power and relevance.

Another way to address an identity issue in the college application without having to claim any singular identity is to write about a leader in the gay community and his or her journey, impact, and strengths. You do not need to be gay to find a parallel with a gay narrative. For a young person who is still exploring, it can be very powerful to give them permission to choose another minority group that they admire. Comparing and contrasting different groups' challenges and opportunities can show maturity and expanded thinking. Finally, it is crucial for the student to share what more they want to learn; what questions they hope to explore about themselves and the world; and how those inquiries speak directly to the college's learning community, values, and academic strengths.

## Breathe

If you do your homework, build your LGBTQ professional allies, increase your fluency with gay culture, and find your unique connection to difference, you will do great. Gay people are resilient, adaptable, and like many other minority groups, responsive to those who make the effort to authentically connect. Mistakes will happen, misinterpretations will occur, but you and your young person will survive. 🙌

Carlton Rounds can be reached at [clr100@gmail.com](mailto:clr100@gmail.com)

## Resources:

Campus Pride: [www.campusprideindex.org/default.aspx](http://www.campusprideindex.org/default.aspx)

"The Gay and Lesbian Guide to College Life" [www.randomhouse.com/princetonreview/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307945013](http://www.randomhouse.com/princetonreview/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307945013)

LGBTQ scholarships: [www.finaid.org/otheraid/lgbt.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/lgbt.phtml)

Point Foundation (National LGBTQ Scholarship Fund): [www.pointfoundation.org](http://www.pointfoundation.org)



## Residential Anxiety Treatment

by Don Vardell, executive director, Mountain Valley Treatment Center



According to the National Institute of Mental Health, eight percent of US teens suffer from an anxiety disorder during their school-age years, with symptoms typically beginning at age six. Only 18 percent of these teens seek mental health treatment. As this statistic will no

doubt increase, the need for specialized anxiety treatment in outpatient and residential environments will grow. Although outpatient therapy can achieve results for some, a short-term and intensive residential treatment environment is warranted when the anxiety causes major interruptions in daily living, such as repeated school or social avoidance. A specifically focused residential treatment center or RTC can provide comprehensive and consistent clinical interventions and support that can't be achieved in a home-based community setting.

Many parents of children with debilitating anxiety can trace the start of symptoms to elementary school, but often don't find effective help until early adolescence, when academic requirements become more challenging. As a result, families resort to managing the anxiety and behaviors in accommodating ways that unknowingly make it worse. Although many teens in RTCs have had outpatient therapy, their results have been limited, because many community-based clinicians are not well-versed in effective treatment modalities for anxiety disorders. Additionally, the work to "retool" the family to stop accommodating their child's anxiety may be difficult to do consistently in a nonresidential setting.

Anxiety and related disorders, such as phobias and OCD, are treated with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) approaches, specifically exposure and response prevention or ERP, a treatment technique that was developed to help people effectively confront their fears. When people are fearful of something, they tend to avoid the feared objects, activities, or situations. Although this avoidance might help to reduce feelings of fear in the short term, it can exacerbate such feelings in the longer term, sometimes generating behaviors that become detrimental to everyday life and well-being.


Exposure therapy is designed to help break the pattern of avoidance and fear. Gradual exposure to the feared objects, activities, or

situations in a safe and nurturing environment can help adolescents decrease avoidance, recognize irrational thoughts and behaviors related to fears, and engage in healthier and more fulfilling activities and relationships. Although ERP can be implemented in an outpatient setting, a controlled and focused residential treatment environment can provide better results for severe anxiety. ERP in a residential setting will in some ways look similar to what may have been done with an experienced therapist at home—gradual and repeated exposure to the anxiety causing stimulus, time for habituation to occur, and anxiety symptoms decreasing—however, a residential environment allows for repeated *in-vivo* (real world) and more intense exposures where cumulative data can be collected. An RTC also ensures a greater number of professionals will be working with the adolescent and family system, which is hard to achieve with home-bound teens.

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When a family and independent educational consultant (IEC) have determined that a residential placement is needed, a program with a structure and model that supports the delivery of ERP should be considered. A comprehensive and specialized anxiety treatment program that utilizes ERP would typically include:

- Multiple and extended ERP groups weekly where students receive education about ERP and participate in exposure activities
- Cohort work on exposure scenarios where two or more students can develop an exposure plan for similar fears
- Intra- and intersession exposure work with a trained therapist or specialist and opportunities to “rehearse” confronting fears *in vivo*
- Data collection during the exposure assignments that includes cumulative rating of the anxiety (scale of 1–10), documenting and communicating thoughts, describing physical sensations, and acknowledging safety behaviors
- Exposure work supplemented by weekly individual and family therapy.

Although a program that specializes in anxiety with a strong clinical component is paramount, the programmatic structure of a residential program should also be fun and include an environment to support exposure therapy. Consider whether the program includes experiential and recreational activities to develop skills and explore passions and other evidenced-based elements to help with anxiety, such as mindfulness activities like yoga, nutrition education and healthy meals, and fitness and outdoor activities. Programs should also have the ability to support the academic needs of the student.

## Terminology

As a student and family become immersed in a residential treatment experience, they will pick up a new vocabulary. The following are examples of terminology related to activities used in specialized anxiety treatment:

**Fear Hierarchy.** A list of a student’s phobic situations and objects ordered from the least to the most fear-provoking. Early on in residential treatment, a therapist will work with a student to develop their Hierarchy to inform the gradual exposure therapy plan.

*continued on page 24*



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*Anxiety, from page 23*

**Safety Behaviors.** Actions to prevent disaster that inadvertently prevent the disconfirmation of maladaptive threat beliefs. Safety behaviors can “work” for a student, but they will not effectively expose them to the feared situation; therefore, they do not help the student develop healthy coping strategies for the feared object or situation. For example, someone who has a fear of public speaking may develop a safety behavior, such as having to wear a certain article of clothing before the presentation, but will not develop the ability to make a presentation without the clothing article, thus continuing the cycle of anxiety around public speaking.

**SUDS (Subjective Units of Distress Scale).** A relative measure of anxiety, usually on a scale of 0–10. Each student develops their own scale based upon their personal physiological, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms when faced with an anxiety-provoking situation. This scale is used during exposure therapy to track habituation and desensitization to fear stimuli.

**Interoceptive Exposure Therapy.** An exposure therapy process commonly used to treat Panic Disorder. During interoceptive exposure, a person purposefully and systematically induces the physical symptoms of panic and anxiety, absent from any actual fear stimuli. This assists in promoting desensitization to the uncomfortable (and feared) physiological symptoms that often play a role in the development of panic attacks.


**Imaginal Exposure.** Exposure to the fear stimuli through a discussion about the stimuli, conjured images of the feared stimuli, or thoughts of the feared stimuli aided by written or recorded verbal material. This process allows people to slowly face their fears with a greater sense of control and safety. Imaginal exposure is often used as an entry into exposure therapy when a person is highly fearful and avoidant. Imaginal exposure can also be effective in treating fears that cannot be readily reproduced (e.g., anxiety associated with a past experience or a specific person or place). A student with a fear of vomiting (Emetophobia) will be exposed to situations where he/she vomited by writing a story about the situation, gradually adding more information about the situation/ scenario, and identifying rituals associated with avoiding those situations. Exposing the student to sounds of vomiting; fake vomit;



and actually replicating a vomiting situation, such as emitting water out of the mouth, will support the exposure work.

**Habituation.** Describes the process of anxiety reduction (achieving physiological homeostasis) over time without the use of safety behaviors or avoidance of the feared stimuli. Experiencing anxiety habituation in the face of a fear stimulus is believed to help develop new learning in regards to the actual threat (or lack thereof) posed by a certain object or situation.

- **Intrasession habituation** describes achieving habituation during a single exposure therapy challenge. For example, a SUDS peak rating of 8 out of 10 and a final SUDS rating of 4 out of 10 when a person is exposed to a fear stimulus.
- **Intersession habituation** describes achieving habituation between exposure therapy challenges, thereby reducing the unwanted fear response or distress during the subsequent exposure challenge. For example, “Yesterday when I saw the dog, my anxiety peaked at 8 out of 10. Today when I saw the dog, my anxiety only peaked at 6 out of 10.”
- **In Vivo Exposure.** Simply putting the student in real-world situations that will evoke the fear multiple times whereby the self-rating of the student’s anxiety will reduce.
- **Expectation Violation.** A concept that is highlighted when completing exposure challenges to promote new learning. This concept aims to highlight the discrepancy or mismatch between someone’s feared outcomes of an exposure challenge and the actual outcome. This concept is especially important to highlight when the person has difficulty experiencing anxiety habituation during exposure challenges.
- **Family Accommodation.** Coping strategies the family system engages in to manage fear-provoking situations at home that actually reinforce the feared object or situation. One example is a family that eliminates green food items from the entire house because the student has a fear of green-colored food. A residential anxiety treatment program will include significant work with the family on eliminating accommodating behaviors and learning how to support the student’s exposure work during and after treatment.

No matter what treatment environment is warranted or selected, creating a collaborative network of professionals and providers will net the best outcome. Residential programs typically work alongside IECs and other referral sources as well as parents and at-home providers to support a student while at the program and through a successful transition. As awareness and impact of anxiety disorders grows, knowledge of effective and available programs should as well. 

Don Vardell can be reached at [dvardell@mountainvalleytreatment.org](mailto:dvardell@mountainvalleytreatment.org) or [www.mountainvalleytreatment.org](http://www.mountainvalleytreatment.org)

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# Social Communicative Competency Improves Students' Satisfaction and Success

by Sarah Davison, Speech-Language Pathologist, Chapel Haven Asperger Syndrome Adult Transition program, and Ryan Shoemaker, Speech-Language Pathologist, Chapel Haven West

Those who have never experienced the real-life struggle of someone with social communication deficits may find it difficult to imagine the communication challenges that crop up in simple everyday interactions. "Social communicative competency (SCC) is at the core of the disability for students with Asperger's," noted Virginia Hodge, executive vice president of autism programs at Chapel Haven and a certified speech/language pathologist. "A student who can't cook dinner can still get take-out food. But a student who can't interact socially will see an effect in every part of his or her life."



and how to take that perspective to decide how to effectively interact with that person in a variety of contexts and settings. SCC lessons also provide instruction in recognizing and reading nonverbal communication; social problem solving; conversational expectations; and "netiquette," i.e., the hidden rules of electronic communication. Through role-playing, videotaping, and continual practice, students can learn how to make social plans, call a professor to arrange for extra help, or interview for a job effectively. Raising students awareness of how to modify their verbalizations and behaviors to address the nuances of social communication and interactions is key to success—for example, understanding how to modulate one's speech characteristics, such as tone of voice, inflection, volume, and rate of speech to denote sarcasm. In addition, students can also learn how to more accurately use and interpret a variety of language forms (e.g., formal vs. informal language, direct vs. indirect language, figurative

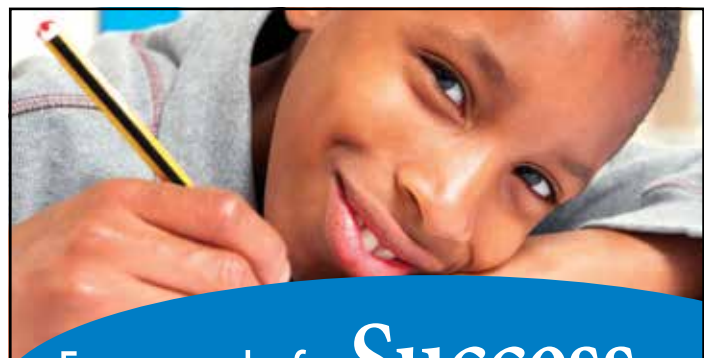


Learning to identify and value the perspectives of others is at the core of successful SCC and ultimately leads to a happier and more productive adult life. As students acquire this skill, they often experience increased self-satisfaction because social interaction becomes more intuitive and successful. The benefits of considering the perspectives of others span every kind of relationship and social setting, not only by assisting in creating positive experiences but also by avoiding or de-escalating potentially negative situations.

Social environments are filled with unwritten rules—the "hidden curriculum"—that can shift dramatically with even the smallest change in a setting. Learning how to identify and follow those rules across a wide range of social contexts is especially challenging for individuals on the spectrum, who tend to be more rigid in their thinking. As students become more familiar with this concept and the process, they find it easier to be comfortable and successful in unfamiliar social settings and they become more flexible thinkers.

Through instruction in social cognition and social communication, students learn how to appreciate another person's point of view

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language, irony, and so on.) and then take those skills out into the real world.

Individuals on the spectrum often have difficulty establishing new relationships as well as managing existing relationships. The process of learning how to classify a relationship, identify strategies for keeping that relationship going, and determine what kind of information can be shared with that person can be quite a challenge. But the importance of understanding the scope, nature and expectations of one's relationships with others cannot be overstated; all individuals experience a wide array of both positive and negative relationships and need to be able to interact in an expected way with each.

### Three Success Stories

What kind of benefits can accrue from intensive social communication therapy? The following comments from individuals and their families provide answers.

- "My eye contact has improved. I show interest in other people. I am more empathetic toward friends. I have improved in my ability to terminate conversations appropriately and initiate questions in conversations." When this young lady first began taking college courses, she recalls, "I did not know how to add or drop a course. I took the wrong classes and did not know how to ask for help from the Disability Resource Center. I did not know how to watch for cues, which professor I should pick, or who would be appropriate to my needs. Now I am able to advocate for accommodations. I'm able to talk to my professors and access resources like the campus writing center, the technology lab, and career services."
- The mother of a recent college graduate says that the focus on SCC has meant a world of difference. "My son has learned how to listen and, even if he is not engaged, give facial expressions indicating that he is listening. Whereas before he would just walk away, he can sit at the table now at Thanksgiving and Christmas, where there are 20 people at a table, and engage in conversation."
- Another parent of a young adult with Asperger Syndrome reports that before the SCC approach, her son would "attempt to enter conversations by asking over and over: Do you like pizza? He would have zero timing on that. It would be disconnected from anything going on and he would interrupt. As he has gained competence, he has become confident enough to go up to a group, listen, and comment on what is being said—and his timing has improved." 🙌

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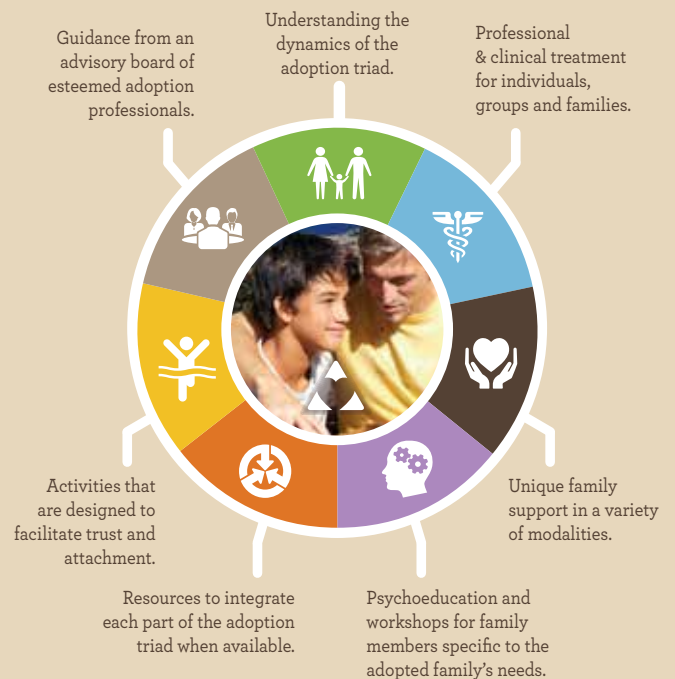
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# Regional Groups

## The South Florida Regional Group

The South Florida IECA group provided a free college counseling seminar in March at the African American Research Library and

Cultural Center in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Over 30 students and parents received detailed college admissions information, and IECA members answered individual questions after the seminar.

## The DC/MD/VA MIX Regional Group



Members of the MIX group met with reps from Creighton University and Birmingham-Southern College. From left to right: Amy Hayes (Birmingham-Southern College), Wendie Lubic, Emily Snyder, Jacob Carter (Creighton University), Nancy Griesemer, Sandy Clingman, Kim Snyder Mehta.

## The New Jersey Regional Group



Sixteen IECA members from the New Jersey Regional group attended a luncheon in March with Dickinson College. Included in the photo, front row: Laurie Weingarten, Cathy Davenport, dean of admission, Dickinson College, Anne Weisholtz, Carolyn Cohen, Jill Siegel, Cynthia Chomiak. Back row: Lynne Rosenfeld, Abbie Rabin, Traacy Hobson, Diana Towle, Lisa Bleich, Carolyn Mulligan, Beth Cassie and Greg Moyer, senior associate director of Admissions, Dickinson College.



A small group also met with a rep from Kalamazoo College in April. left to right is Larry Blumenstyk, Laurie Weingarten, Lisa Bleich, Linda Kay, Emilee Suchomski, Admission Counselor, Diana Towle, Carolyn Mulligan, and Jessie Martin.

## Schools and colleges looking to meet with IECA members can contact our Regional Group representatives:

### ARIZONA

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### MASSACHUSETTS

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### WASHINGTON, DC

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Claudia Black is internationally recognized for her pioneering and cutting-edge work with family systems and addictive disorders. Claudia's work with children impacted by drug and alcohol addiction in the late 1970s fueled the development of the co-dependency and developmental trauma field. Her passion to help young adults overcome obstacles and strengthen families built the foundation of the Claudia Black Young Adult Center. Not only is Claudia the clinical architect of this groundbreaking treatment program, she is also actively involved with the treatment team, as well as with patients and their families.

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# IECA Members & College Admission Officials Gather as NACAC Meets in San Diego

September 30-October 3, 2015

## LUNCHEON FOR IECA MEMBERS & COLLEGE ADMISSION OFFICIALS

*Thursday, October 1, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.*

The unofficial start of the NACAC conference for hundreds is the traditional IECA members and admission reps luncheon, held annually just before the opening general session. We expect as many as 400 guests to join us! Invitations will be sent out in August to college admission officers and IECA members.

## TRANSITIONING TO PRIVATE PRACTICE COLLEGE CONSULTING

*Wednesday, September 30*

IECA's widely acclaimed full day workshop for school-based

counselors or university-based admission reps looking to transition into independent educational consulting has again been endorsed by NACAC as one of its official preconference workshops. Registration is being conducted through the NACAC conference registration site, with program details found on the IECA website.

## IECA IN THE EXHIBIT HALL

*Thursday-Saturday, October 1-3 • Booth #1015*

Come visit the IECA team, learn about IECA membership, member services, how colleges can connect with IECs, and much more. Visit with IECA Chief Executive Officer, Mark Sklarow; Deputy Executive Director, Sue DePra; and Manager of Member Outreach & Engagement, Diana Kane.

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# Why I Belong

I joined IECA for a number of reasons and have found additional benefits that I never expected. Initially I joined:

- To demonstrate to families my dedication and commitment to the profession of educational consulting
- To develop professionally and to stay current with issues in higher education



- To meet like-minded professionals and to develop a professional support network

And finally....

- To develop friendships and have fun!

I can honestly say that all of the above items have materialized and I am so thankful that I joined IECA. I have gained so much from the conferences and professional retreats, and the friendships that I have made are invaluable and treasured. What I had not anticipated was the level of support for running my business, the great networking with colleagues across the country, and the number of referrals generated from the search engine on the IECA website. I have become involved with outreach, serving as chair for the Outreach Committee this year, and have thoroughly enjoyed working with other incredibly talented IECs in an effort to move our profession forward. I love being a member of IECA and am so glad I took the step years ago to submit my application!

**Jan R. Kerchner, MBA (CA)**

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# Introductions

## Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

**Gena Foster** (TX) has been an independent educational consultant for four years. Her career working with students spans 25 years in education. She is the founder of the Word of Love Christian Academy, a K-8 school in Hurst, Texas, and was its administrator for 12 years. She was also the director of the Word of Love Christian Center.

Foster holds a BS in Business Administration, a BA in Christian Education, and an MS in Psychology and often speaks at workshops and other public events about college admission, education, and family. She volunteers with the Battered Womens Foundation, assisting at monthly events.

A recent widow after 32 years of marriage, she is the mother of three—two daughters who have BFAs in musical theatre and a son with a degree in business—and indulges her self-proclaimed “huge heart for kids” through her work. She works with all students to find the best fit, but has a particular expertise in competitive artistic programs. In her spare time, she enjoys photography, scrapbooking, and the arts.

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Specialty: C*

**Nora Kling** (Colombia) taught at bilingual schools in Bogota and has been an IEC for three years and an associate member for two years. After receiving a BA in Liberal Arts from Boston University, she earned an MA in Education from the University of Alabama. Kling attended IECA's Summer Training Institute in 2013 and is a member of the Overseas ACAC.

Committed to making a difference in students' lives, Kling performs pro bono work for first generation college students in Colombia and also volunteers in the library at Hogar Nueva Granada, a low-income school for students K-11.

Kling, who has lived in Bogota for 17 years, married her high school sweetheart 19 years ago, and they have three children ages 17, 15, and 10. When her oldest child begins his applications for college this fall, she will be experiencing the other side of the college process. In her spare time, Kling loves reading, spending time with her family, and traveling.

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Specialty: C (+I)*

**Hilary Lehn** (BC) has been an independent educational consultant and an associate member for two years. She served as director of admissions and the director of university counseling at Southridge School in British Columbia, Canada; dean of enrollment management at The Ethel Walker School (CT); and associate director of admission, Albright College (PA).

Lehn has an MEd in Counseling Psychology, College Student Personnel Administration from James Madison University (VA), and a BA in Psychology, Advertising from Ithaca College. She attended IECA's Summer Training Institute in 2005. She is a member of Overseas ACAC, NACAC, and Pacific Northwest ACAC.

Lehn's current projects include writing a book for Canadian students about US and Canadian university admissions and contributing to the IECA book on college admissions, both in progress.

Originally from New York, Lehn lives in White Rock, BC, Canada, with her husband, Marty, and two daughters, Audrey and Erika.

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Specialty: C*

continued on page 34

**Kathryn Meyer** (UT) has been an IEC for 10 years. She earned an MS from Columbia University School of Social Work and is a member of the National Association of Social Workers.



Meyer is involved with many community nonprofits, consults with the local school system on mental health issues, and facilitates teen groups and teaches workshops in the local schools. As a facilitator for Arts-Kids Inc., an after-school program, she works with special needs and at-risk groups at the high school level. Meyer also developed Mental Health First Aid, a curriculum for eighth-grade students in Park City Schools, and is an alumna of Leadership Park City, a leadership development program.

In addition, she volunteers with Park City Lacrosse, Park City Ed Foundation Program Assessment, Recycle Utah, Mountain Town Trails Foundation, Moms Demand Action, and the Summit County Suicide Prevention Committee. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, travel, hiking, trail running, and spending time with her family and friends.

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Specialty: T*

**Mel Preimesberger** (CA), an IEC for five years, has been on “both sides of the desk” for many years, serving as a college counselor at Sonoma Academy in Santa Rosa, CA, and having almost 14 years of combined admission



experience at the University of Southern California, including a position as associate director of admission.

Preimesberger earned a BS from the University of Southern California in Gerontology and attended the Harvard Summer Admission Institute. She is a member of Western ACAC, Southern ACAC, NACAC, and the Overseas ACAC, and has given presentations at College Board and Western ACAC conferences. She received the University of Southern California Black Alumni Award.

In addition to serving as a Board of Trustees member and chair-elect at Justin–Siena High School in Napa, CA, Preimesberger is an elected member of the Board of Trustees at The Oxbow School in Napa. She also volunteers at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Youth Group in Napa, and has been a guest speaker with the Leadership Academy Youth Leaders in Action of Napa High School, offering college advising to both groups, and was a volunteer/mentor for College Match. Most recently, she was a guest speaker for the UCLA College Counseling Certificate Program.

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Specialty: C*

**Patricia (Patti) Schabinger** (IL), an educator for more than 30 years and an independent educational consultant for 16, holds an education degree from the University of Illinois and an MA in Special Education/Learning Disabilities with specialties in learning differences and



gifted education. She is a Certified Learning Specialist with training in executive skills, ADHD, learning strategies, English, reading, and writing. She trained Chicago teachers at a Saturday Enrichment Academy to teach students extensive reading comprehension skills.

Schabinger continues her professional development through memberships, including CHADD, LDA, Illinois ACAC, and ACCA, and conferences and workshops, and attended IECA's 2012 Summer Training Institute.

Her volunteer activities include 10 years at a local high school working as a liaison between college admissions officers and students and a position on the board of Professionals in Learning Disabilities/Special Education (PLD/SE), serving as the cochair of Educational Therapists. She has also worked with charities to support children with cancer and other catastrophic illnesses and raised funds for those programs.

She and her husband, Paul, have three sons: the oldest is a physicist researching quantum field theory, the second holds an MBA and works in logistics, and the youngest is a student at the University of Missouri. Schabinger also enjoys theater, traveling, reading, and aqua Zumba.

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## In the News

**Ann Rossbach** (NJ) and **Jane Shropshire** (KY) were quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* article, *Helping Teens Find Their Path*, on April 7.

**Shirley Bloomquist** (VA) was quoted in the March 15 *Washington Post* article, *A Father's Pressing Question: How Many AP Courses Are Enough?*

**Janet Rosier** (CT) was featured in the article, *Students Gain Access to Files on Admission to Stanford* on January 16; and in the *Hartford Courant* article, *College Waitlist: When You're Not In, Or Out* on May 10.

**Brenda Friedler** (CT) wrote a letter to the editor that was published in *The New York Times* on March 18, in response to Fran Bruni's article, *Accepted? Rejected? Relax*.

**Katherine Cohen** (NY) contributed an article to *VOX* titled, *Nine Things I Wish People Understood About Getting Into College*; she was also a guest on *The Wall Street Journal Live's Lunch Break* program for a segment titled, *College Acceptances: What Seniors Need to Know* on April 1.

**Kristin White** (CT) wrote an Op-Ed article for the *Hartford Courant*, *Going to an Elite College is No 'Golden Ticket'* on March 13; and an article for the *Darien Times*, *Author Dispels College Success Myths* on May 17.

**Jamie Dickenson** (WV) was featured in *CardHub's* recent article, *Can You File Bankruptcy on Student Loans?*, about discharging

student loans in bankruptcy.

**Sandra Moore's** (NY) blog, *Hone Your Genuine Skills to Wow Colleges*, was picked up by the *Poughkeepsie Journal* on March 1. And High School Counselor Week included it in their weekly publication on March 5.

**Charlotte Klaar** (MD) was featured in the *Leesburg Today* article, *School for the Gifted Hires College Consultant* on April 14.

Associate member **Donna Spann** (TX) published an article, *Top Qualities Colleges Look For During Evaluation* in the *Tyler Morning Telegraph* on May 4.

**Lora Block** (VT) wrote an article, *Don't be Mislead About College Planning* in the *Bennington Banner* on May 5.

**Sue Luse** (MN) was interviewed for the May/June issue of *Consumer Digest* article, *The Price of Admission: How to Make a College Education More Affordable*.

**Connie Pollack** (PA) was interviewed by Jon Delano, Money editor for KDKA News (CBS local station), regarding the For-Profit Institutions run by Corinthian Colleges (the Everest Institutes): *Local Everest Institute Remains Open Despite Closures Elsewhere*, on April 27.



## Initiatives

**Susan Groden** (FL) and **Maite Halley** (FL) presented at the SACAC Mini-Camp College Workshop for high school students and families at the University of Miami on Saturday, February 22. Susan was on panels for "The College Search and Application Process" and "Preparing for the College Fair," and Maite co-hosted the interactive "GPA Game."

**Caryl Frankenberger** (CT) presented at the Small Boarding Schools Association conference in March on what is new with the WISC-V.

IECA Professional members who achieved CEP credentials in the past few months:

Mandee Adler, Jane Hoffman, Barry Liebowitz, Betsy Morgan, Judy Muir, Patricia Nehme, Nina Sculler, Bonnie Sudduth, Cindy Turner, Betsy Woolf.

**Kristin White** (CT) published a new book, *It's the Student, Not the College: The Secrets of Succeeding at Any School — Without Going Broke or Crazy*, available in the IECA Bookstore.

**Carolyn Mulligan** (NJ) presented a workshop at the Meadowlands in Secaucus, NJ for the 2015 Spring NACAC National College Fair on "Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities."





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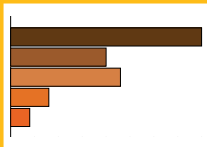


## INSIGHTS June / July 2015



*The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association*

### Inside This Issue:



- 2015 State of the Profession Survey Results
- New Certificates Support Professional Development
- Special Focus: Therapeutic Advising

### Inside the Member-to-Member Section:



- Building a Consistent Brand
- Where Does the Merit Scholarship Award Go?
- Respecting Students' Rights to Privacy



*The IECA Foundation is the force that leverages the knowledge, professional skills, and funds of IECA members, sponsors, and donors to help underserved students map pathways to success.*

## 2015 Grantee Profile: National Grace Foundation

*From Ann Montgomery, IEC, IECA Foundation Trustee*

"The college admission and financial aid process can be overwhelming for many families. For a family dealing with cancer it is paralyzing."

15,000 children and teenagers a year receive a diagnosis of cancer. Life for them and their families becomes a dizzying array of medical appointments, hospitalizations, and outpatient treatments. It is a struggle just to keep up with homework assignments. For students nearing the end of high school, the additional focus and energy required to explore colleges and take on the application process seems overwhelming. That is where the National GRACE Foundation steps in.

The mission of the National GRACE Foundation is to help children diagnosed with cancer go to college. GRACE stands for "Growing, Recovering, Achieving a College Education." The College Access Program (CAP) of National GRACE is currently operating in four pediatric hospitals across the country, in Providence, Boston, Los Angeles, and Dallas. In three short years, CAP has assisted 500 students with the college admission and financial aid process—at no charge whatsoever. The grant provided by the IECA Foundation will help National GRACE expand services to a hospital in Las Vegas.

CAP operates entirely through volunteers and a small budget that depends on donations from individuals and foundations. It provides group information sessions in pediatric hospitals, one-on-one college



counseling, helpful test prep handbooks, and advocacy with college officials and scholarship programs. CAP follows up with students as they attend college, helping them to get acclimated, find support services when needed, and persist through to graduation.

How is all this accomplished? Through a network of volunteers and a surprisingly small amount of money—approximately \$10,000 per hospital. National GRACE has big ambitions; it would like to operate CAP at 500 hospitals nationwide! The IECA Foundation is excited about National GRACE; its programs represent the type of support we are eager to give, meeting our goals of helping students in challenging circumstances to plan their educational futures, harnessing expertise that is already in the community, expanding what we can do as individuals, and showcasing a method that can be replicated in more than one location.



"When we finally got to the college application process, we were completely exhausted and emotionally spent. The National GRACE Foundation stepped up with excellent advice, solid support, appropriate suggestions and true compassion. It was so helpful to have their experienced guidance. No one else understood where my daughter had come from and where she was determined to go. We are so grateful for the organization's support and assistance!"

## Reflections on Baltimore

*From David Tuttle, IECA Foundation Trustee and Director of Admissions, Oxford Academy*

We love you Baltimore, oh yes we do, we love you Baltimore, and it is true! Remember that fun song from *Bye Bye Birdie*? It seemed fitting to open with a version of that little ditty and to highlight what a great Spring conference we all had in Baltimore!

I think many of us arrived with some trepidation and concern given the recent social justice issues the city had faced during the weeks leading up to our arrival, but Baltimore shined, as did its citizens, as did IECA! That made this IECA conference even more special and, I hope for many, convinced us that our work in education is more critical than ever.

A highlight of the conference was the Foundation's donor reception on May 6th, hosted and underwritten by five Small Boarding Schools (Brehm Preparatory, Gow School, Franklin Academy, Oxford Academy, and Purnell School). Providing a venue to celebrate those who give faithfully to our mission and to encourage new donors to support is not only worthwhile, but critical to the Foundation's success. That evening we talked about collaboration and the importance of working together for the betterment of others. This was evidenced and put into action by the support of our friends and colleagues from the LD Boarding Schools tour group, who were hosting a reception next door and graciously agreed to allow us to take the wall divider down and

open our two rooms to all. Thanks and kudos to all our friends with that group! They put collaboration into action, and that is what the Foundation is all about!

As the charitable giving arm of the IECA, we know that the money you give, and the grants we provide to those in need, are directly influencing the future change agents of our country. Education is the key that unlocks doors to personal growth and to social and community action. The projects we support are educating youth, often in urban and difficult environments, and will change lives. I encourage you to visit the IECA Foundation website and Facebook page to see some of the personal testimonials on what the Foundation is already doing. I also encourage you to continue looking for ways you can give personally and through your connections.

Over the years the Foundation has grown into a highly functional and mission-driven organization. We continue to need support from all of you. We will continue to honor those who realized nearly 20 years ago how important our work is to helping those in need. We're working to better the lives of young people through education so that they will become social activists, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and committed citizens who promote social justice, equity and fairness across the country.

June / July 2015

# IECA Foundation 2015 Donors

Thank you to these donors for their support in 2015!

as of May 15, 2015

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Hillside School

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## Honor & Memory Gifts

In honor of  
**Alan Haas:**  
Dodge Johnson

In honor of  
**David Tuttle:**  
Camille Bertram

In honor of  
**Diane Epstein:**  
Eleanor Frishman

In honor of  
**Dr. Rachel Sobol:**  
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In honor of  
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**Barbara Kenefick:**  
Jill Porter

In memory of  
**Adam Tsapis:**  
Camille Bertram  
Jody Dobson

In memory of  
**Barbara Kenefick:**  
Jill Porter

In memory of  
**Constance (Bonnie) Larson:**  
Camille Bertram

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## BALTIMORE SPONSORS

Brehm Preparatory  
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## Support the Annual Fund

Just as IECA members apply objective professional assessment, skilled individual counseling, and family engagement to help students make thoughtful, positive life choices, our Foundation supports programs that use these same strategies for underserved students.

We cannot do this work without you. Please go to [iecafoundation.org/donate.html](http://iecafoundation.org/donate.html) and support the Annual Fund today.

### HILLSIDE FUND

Camille Bertram  
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