



Friday, May 22, 2015

Fairfield University / Dolan School of Business

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



featuring

Bassick, Center for Global Studies, Central, Darien,
Joel Barlowe, and Staples High Schools



Supported by LRNG, a joint effort of the National Writing Project,
the MacArthur Foundation, and John Legend's Show Me Campaign.

WELCOME LETTER

You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality—UBUNTU—you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. —Desmond Tutu

Dear Writers, Creators, Composers, Dreamers, Poets, Visionaries, & Mavericks,

I am because we are. I can be me because of who we are together, and you matter to the writing communities of Connecticut.

Welcome to Writing Our Lives – Digital Ubuntu: We, Too, Are Connecticut! Be proud of yourself—who you are in relation to the person sitting next to you, to the individual on the other side of the room, and to those who couldn't be with you today to celebrate your accomplishments. To allude Matt de la Peña's novel, "We are here right now," and together we are stronger.

Today's event is possible because several teachers participating in an Invitational Summer Institute through the Connecticut Writing Project at Fairfield University wanted more for their classrooms. They believe that students are more than test scores and that they deserve outlets to reimagine traditional classrooms as boundary free. So they designed writing workshops to promote ethnography, ten-minute plays, TedTalks, blogging, digital storytelling, and websites. Then they applied to the John Legend Show Me Campaign, National Writing Project, and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, saying, "We can be us, digitally, because of how we compose together with 21st century tools."

Today is the culmination of a yearlong, inter-district collaboration that brought together more than 100 students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to exchange knowledge about composing in digital spaces. Each one of you has contributed to this effort, and today we celebrate all of us as a community. We are here. We are Connecticut. And as collaborators, we deserve a standing ovation, a few finger snaps, and perennial seeds for Writing Our Lives in the future.

Today, I encourage you to get to know one another and to ask questions about each others' experiences at your respective schools. More importantly, however, I want you to recognize that you are innovators of tomorrow and "You gotta write! A'ight?"

You have already written, and today's history is being written about you.

Thank you for your participation, contributions, and excellence. This day wouldn't be possible without you.



say
what
you
need
to
say



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SPECIAL GUESTS



MATT DE LA PEÑA

Matt de la Peña is a New York Time's best selling author of five acclaimed young adult novels, including *We Were Here*, the text shared with participating schools. Matt is a graduate of San Diego State University, where he also played basketball on a full scholarship, and now lives in Brooklyn, New York. His new novel, *The Hunted*, was recently released by Delacorte Press.



CARYN SULLIVAN

Caryn Sullivan is the creator of PrettyWellness.Com, a blog about health, happiness, and being beautiful organically. After many years of working in the corporate world for ESPN, Caryn turned to a world of public speaking to promote non-toxic living and her story of overcoming cancer.



ROBERT GALINSKY

Robert Galinsky is an actor, writer, organizer, motivator, and performance consultant. Most recently he has been an executive coach for TEDxTeen and mentor to Connecticut students participating in the 2015 LRNG Innovation Challenge Award.



LYTASHA MARIE BLACKWELL

Lytasha Marie Blackwell is a poet, educator, and motivator who works in southern Connecticut to empower young people. She also conducts a series of workshops to promote the leadership and development of young women and girls.



ATTALLAH SHEPPARD

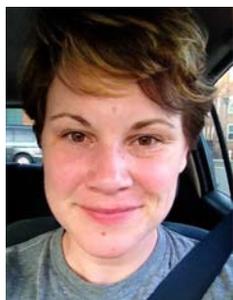
Attallah Sheppard is a graduate of Howard University, a youth advocate through Yale's Gear-Up program, a promotor for Writer's Block Inc, and a spoken-word artist with a passion for teaching writing and helping students move from the page to the stage.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- 9:15 Arrivals
- 9:20 Mixing It Up, High Fives, and Whaddups?
- 9:30 "You Are Here" - Morning Salutation with Caryn Sullivan, activist, educator, and founder of prettywellness.com
- 9:40 "We Are Here" - Greetings from CWP-Fairfield Director, Bryan Crandall
- 10:05 **Session I: The First Round of Total Awesomeness**
- Room 105** Urban Possibilities: Digital Realities - The Central High School Radio Plays
- Room 106** Divas Squared - A Spoken Word Experience with Attallah Sheppard and Lytasha Marie Blackwell
- Room 108** Redding or Not, Here They Come - The TEDx Talks - Joel Barlow High School
- 10:55 **Session II: The Second Round of Total Awesomeness**
- Room 105** Writing the Port of B: The Neighborhood Project - A Bassick High School Production
- Room 106** Writing in the Cloud: Moving from Digitally Convenient Writing to Digitally Enhanced Writing - A Darien High School Production
- Room 108** A Gathering with Galinsky (Session I) - A Workshop with TEDx Coach Robert Galinsky
- 11:40 Lunch - Dolan Dining Room
- 12:05 Keynote Address - A Conversation with YA Author Matt de la Peña
- 12:35 **Session III: The Third Round of Total Awesomeness**
- Room 105** Blogging to Break Barriers & to Create Community - Global Studies High School
- Room 106** TEDxTalks: A Staple of Writing - A Staples High School Production
- Room 108** A Gathering with Galinsky (Session II) - A Workshop with TEDx Coach Robert Galinsky
- 1:20 Departure



COOPERATING SCHOOLS



BASSICK HIGH SCHOOL

Located in Bridgeport, Bassick High School was the recipient of a 2012-2013 NWP grant for building writing excellence. It has an enrollment of 1100 youth, and last year students published One Camera and a Neighborhood under the leadership of Kathy Silver, now principal of the 9th grade academy. Kate led a digital ethnography project this year with 9th grade students to continue the promotion of student perspectives in Bridgeport.



CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES

Located in Norwalk, the Center for Global Studies is an inter-district magnet school with a focus on international studies and is housed in Brien McMahon High School. It's home to the Senators and approximately 280 students. Paula has been using blogs to enhance classroom curriculum since 2013 and spent this year working with students to digitally compose youth perspectives for the 21st century.



CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Central High School in Bridgeport is one of the state's most culturally diverse schools and has an enrollment of 2,200 students. Shaun, a Beard Teacher of the Year, is a digital master for CWP-Fairfield and a proud director of the Young Playwright Festival, which is hosted at the school. For this project, they turned to radio. Shaun is a strong proponent of listening to young people and bringing their voices to the forefront.



COOPERATING SCHOOLS



DARIEN HIGH SCHOOL

Darien High School has an enrollment of 1,149 youth. The school is known for its championship-winning athletic teams and its commitment to the National Writing Project. Jennifer led a team of English teachers to promote online, digital composition, including examining how young people can leave an ethical footprint with their composing. She and her students worked with multiple platforms to bring their perspectives to today's conference.



JOEL BARLOW HIGH SCHOOL

Redding's Joel Barlow High School is known for its phenomenal writing center. Each year, the school opens its doors to educators from around the state to score students' writing portfolios. Megan teaches several courses at the school and worked in collaboration with Kim Herzog and Robert Galinsky to lead the students enrolled in her public speaking class. She represented CWP-Fairfield at a NY Fashion Week event hosted by John Legend, a funder of today's conference.



STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL

Located in Westport, Staples High School was named by the Wall Street Journal as one of the best high schools in the nation and by Connecticut Magazine as one of the best high schools in the state. It enrolls 1,800 youth. The school prides itself on academic achievement, a curriculum geared to college readiness, and a commitment to literacy. Kim worked with her students to develop TEDx projects and collaborated with Megan Zabilinsky and Robert Galinsky.