

“Tomorrow’s whole person must have a well-educated solidarity . . . When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection.”

—Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus
“The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education” (Keynote address, October 2000)

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Fordham Center on Religion and Culture
113 West 60th Street New York, NY 10023

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY



Autism and Advocacy

A Conference of Witness and Hope

27 October 2006, 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**Fordham University • McNally Amphitheatre
140 West 62nd Street • New York City**



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Conference is free and open to the public.

Registration is required.

E-mail: jafisher@fordham.edu.

Call: (212) 636-7698 or (718) 817-0662

OPENING ADDRESS

- Timothy P. Shriver, Ph.D.
CEO and Chairman, Special Olympics, Inc.

SPEAKERS

- Kristina Chew, Ph.D.
Saint Peter's College
- Salvatore C. Ferrera, Ph.D.
President, Xaverian High School, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- James T. Fisher, Ph.D.
Fordham University
- William C. Gaventa, M.Div.
Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on
Developmental Disabilities
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
- Rabbi Geoffrey Haber, D. Min.
Temple Emanu-El, Closter, N.J.
- Bruce Mills, Ph.D.
Kalamazoo College
- Mark Osteen, Ph.D.
Loyola College in Maryland
- Gloria Pearson-Vasey, M. Div., author
The Road Trip: Life with Autism
- Kassiane Alexandra Sibley, co-author
*Ask and Tell: Self-Advocacy and Disclosure for
People on the Autism Spectrum*
- Lance Strate, Ph.D.
Fordham University
- Mary Beth Walsh, Ph.D.
Caldwell College

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disability that has been the subject of extraordinary interest and controversy in recent years.

Amid often heated debates over causation and treatment, the depth of commitment and service witnessed daily in the autism community merits celebration; our many challenges invite further reflection. This conference features the varieties of advocacy practiced with and by persons with autism, especially those forms of advocacy grounded in moral and religious traditions. The presentations offered at this event are intended to encourage additional reflection and discussion by members of the audience. We hope to promote greater engagement with autism advocacy as an integral component of work for social justice.

Morning Session: Advocacy and the Traditions

Speakers will share their experience in advocacy for persons with autism in liturgical and educational settings. While they represent various traditions and approaches, this work is grounded in theological convictions on the dignity of the human person and a "spirituality of presence" for autistic persons within communities of worship and learning.

Moderator: Rev. Bill Gaventa, M.Div.

Speakers: Rabbi Geoffrey J. Haber, Mary Beth Walsh, Ph.D., Salvatore C. Ferrera, Ph.D.

Afternoon Session: Advocacy and Self-Advocacy in the Formation of Persons and Community

A condition commonly associated with social isolation and withdrawal, the experience of autism has generated innovative forms of community-building through the gifts of advocacy and self-advocacy. Speakers will treat their work in collaborative service-learning settings; in literary partnerships and the "blogosphere;" in new models of residential community; and, in pioneering models of self-advocacy.

Moderator: Lance Strate, Ph.D.

Speakers: Kristina Chew, Ph.D., Bruce Mills, Ph.D., Mark Osteen, Ph.D., Gloria Pearson-Vasey, M. Div., Kassiane Alexandra Sibley

Sponsored By: The Francis and Ann Curran Center for American Catholic Studies

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