

## Keynote

**Mike Fazio** - Mike Fazio is the Founder and CEO of Workforce180, LLC. He is also a popular keynote speaker at state, regional and national workforce conferences. He and his team have assisted more than 400 different workforce organizations, from all 50 states + Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and Guam! He has enjoyed a 25 year + career focused on Sales, Management, Marketing, Training and Recruiting, with a definitive belief that consistent, enthusiastic coaching and leadership development, provides individuals and organizations, with the tools needed to reach higher levels of performance. Mike has historically implemented successful strategies in both his corporate and government experiences and is driven by an uncanny, unreal, unparalleled, unbelievable and unending passion for helping and teaching others. He is a born and raised “east coaster” and has worked throughout Iowa during his career. Mike is very excited to be returning!

## Presenters

**Martha Bell** - Martha Bell is a State STAR Trainer for the Iowa Department of Education, Division of Community Colleges. She completed her STAR instructor certification in 2014 and state trainer certification in 2016. In the past three program years, Martha has assisted in certifying AEL instructors in their use of evidence-based reading instruction techniques. She is an Adult Education and Literacy Program Lead Instructor at Southeastern Community College, where she has helped adult learners earn their high school equivalency diplomas for 13 years. Martha teaches STAR (pre-HSE) and HSE reading classes, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. She also collaborates with other instructors, writes course lesson plans and identifies curriculum for district-wide use, and trains new instructors, as well as many other activities designed to better prepare adult learners for HSE testing, post-secondary education, and employment. Martha holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Iowa Wesleyan College and is completing the final requirement for her Master of Education degree in Adult Education from Pennsylvania State University. She has many years of experience teaching pre-literacy to college-level classes in AEL, college, and community settings. When the work day ends, Martha’s favorite activities include spending time with her family, following her son’s athletics, spoiling her grandchildren, reading, writing, and traveling.

**Joe Collins** - Joe recently began working with the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) in the newly developed position of Education Program Consultant for Sector Partnerships. In this role he will have the privilege of helping to connect, assist, and empower sector partnerships across the state, earning the unofficial title of “Mr. Sector Partnership” by his colleagues. Prior to joining the IDOE, he worked as a Training Facilitator for IowaWORKS-Central Iowa through a partnership between Iowa Workforce Development and Indian Hills Community College. He developed and led workshops on topics such as resumes, interviewing, work ethic, and conflict resolution to a wide range of audiences. Before diving head first into the public sector, he also worked in Human Resources, Account Management, and Marketing in the private sector. He earned his Bachelor of Science degrees in Marketing, Spanish, and International Business from Iowa State University and a Master of Science degree in Adult, Continuing, and Occupational Education from Kansas State University. He believes in continuous improvement and tries to earn at least two new certifications or licenses per year, the most recent being the Bridges Out of Poverty Trainer certification and attending the Next Generation Sector Partnership Academy.

**Page Eastin** - Page Eastin works as an advocate for people with disabilities in the Iowa Department of Human Rights, where she currently serves as director of the Client Assistance Program. Page is a graduate of Coe College (BA, Psychology) and Drake University (MS, Rehabilitation Counseling). Her career has been spent advocating for the rights of Iowans with disabilities in the areas of healthcare, employment, and community-based services. Page's work is focused on influencing change in statewide policy, advocating for equal access to services, and working to promote competitive integrated employment for all Iowans, including those with the most significant disabilities.

**Mary Gaston** - Dr. Mary Gaston is the Director of Adult Education for the School District of Pickens County in South Carolina. She directs the districts' adult learning activities including community collaboration, program development, training and staff development, and reporting. Dr. Gaston began her career as a classroom middle and high school teacher and has also coordinated parent education/family literacy programs. She is currently an Adjunct Professor with the College of Charleston teaching both GED classes and Integrating Technology into the Adult Education classroom.

**Cyd Hanson** - Cyd Hanson is the instructor/HSED coordinator for Kirkwood Community College's AEL program and has been with the program since 2013. Cyd works with students and staff across Kirkwood's service area. Cyd is also a STAR trainer, and often says AEL programs are a best kept secret. Cyd has a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Coe College and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Loras College.

**Alex Harris** - Alex Harris has been the State Director for Adult Education in Iowa since January 2012. As the director and state administrator for the HiSET™, Alex leads the Department's efforts in adult education and achieving a High School Equivalency Diploma. Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy mission is to provide accessible, quality instruction that develops life, work and literacy skills. From 1996 to 2001, Alex Harris worked with the Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development to provide training and job placement services for non-English speaking job seekers and under skilled workers in Sydney, Australia. Prior to joining the Department, Alex Harris worked from 2002-2010 with a school district assisting special needs students successfully transitioning to college, work and life. Under his leadership the program served several hundred students making significant life changes. In his role as state director, he has led extensive strategic planning and policy initiatives to craft a blueprint for Iowa's adult education and literacy reform. Alex Harris has established collaborative partnerships with the private sector and other public agencies to increase awareness of the needs for adult education participants. Recently, Alex has been elected to serve as the region's representative for the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) as well as a member of the executive committee for the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education.

**Tanya Haug** - Tanya Guerrero Haug, Director, HiSET Outreach, works in her current role to connect community organizations and adult education programs with the HiSET. In her previous role as director of proposal development at ETS, she oversaw ETS's competitive proposals for federal and state agencies as well as for other organizations. Prior to joining ETS in 2004, Tanya worked in the Grants and Recognitions department at Northside Independent School District and as a Marketing Manager at Kaplan Test Prep. For more than 20 years, Tanya has been active in community service as a non-profit board member and volunteer. She attended both Trinity University and the University of Texas at San Antonio earning her B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies.

**Margo Rainwater Hernandez** - Margo Hernandez Rainwater, M.Ed., has been an educator and professional trainer in her field for 24+ years. As a BurlingtonEnglish Customer Manager, she manages

the sales and implementation of educational software, while providing professional development to adult education programs.

**Kathy Houghton** - Kathy Houghton is the director of program services for Literacy New York, providing training, advocacy, support, and technical assistance to a network of volunteer literacy programs serving thousands of adult learners across the state. Kathy's 20 years of experience in adult and higher education include extensive teaching and training experience in reading, writing, learning disabilities, program management, assessment, English as a second language, and volunteer management. Her knowledge of on-the-ground adult education issues is a plus when training, and allows her to connect with participants in looking for ways to improve teaching and learning.

**Doug Keast** - Doug Keast is the Project Lead for the National Disability Institute with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center, capping his career in the employment and disability arena since 1979. He has worked in sheltered workshops and coordinated a Supported Employment program for seven years. Doug provided technical assistance to County officials operating cooperative funding projects with Vocational Rehabilitation services to expand Supported Employment in Iowa. When WIA was implemented, Doug served on the team in Iowa that developed the local WIBs, facilitated strategic planning and developed the memoranda of agreement between WIBs and the service entities in their communities. He has also served as the Ticket to Work Coordinator on NDI's DEI team, providing support to DEI states operating Employment Networks.

**Marcel Kielkucki** -- Marcel Kielkucki has been the director of High School Completion Programs at Kirkwood Community College since July of 2010. As Director, Marcel works with a team of instructors and staff to provide AEL services to the Kirkwood Region. Marcel has a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education from Mount Mercy University and a Master's Degree in Educational Administration from the University of South Dakota.

**Dan Li** - Dan recently began working with the Iowa Department of education (IDOE) in the position of Education Program Consultant (Education Research Analyst). In this role, Dan conducts researches and analyzes data relevant to Adult Education, Joint Enrollment, and Career Technical Education. Prior to joining the IDOE, she worked as a graduate research assistant for Research Institute for Studies in Education, at Iowa State University, where she worked on several state-wide evaluation projects in education. Dan has presented her studies in national and international conferences such as AERA, NACTEI.

**Cale Loewen** -- Cale Loewen joined the Kirkwood AEL program in October of 2015. As the program Pathway Navigator, Cale teaches Kirkwood's Pathways to Success course in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. Cale also works with students to provide them with their next steps beyond adult education, partnering with other education and service providers across the region. Cale has a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Northern Iowa.

**Robin Lovrien** - Robin Lovrien (Schwarz) M.Sp.Ed: LD; Ph.D., is a teacher, tutor, coach, consultant, presenter, researcher and author of 50 years' experience in ESL and 40 years' experience in learning disabilities and reading teaching. Dr. Lovrien has taught English learners at all ages and levels in a wide variety of settings. She is known for her work in helping teachers understand what causes adult English learners to struggle in learning and how they can reach the widest range of learners. She currently consults and coaches from her home in Downeast Maine.

**Pam Meader** - Pam Meader, a former high school math teacher, has taught math in adult education for over 25 years. Most recently, she helped co-develop [Adults Reaching Algebra Readiness \(AR\)<sup>2</sup>](#) with Donna Curry. She is a national trainer for LINCS and ANI (Adult Numeracy Instruction). Pam enjoys sharing techniques for teaching math conceptually from Basic Math through Algebra and has co-authored the Hands On Math series for Walch Publishing in Portland, Maine. Pam is currently co-director of the SABES Center for Mathematics and Adult Numeracy professional development initiative for Massachusetts.

**Karinne O’Ram** - Karinne O’Ram taught K-12 English, Music, and ESL in California and Arizona for 6 years. Three years ago, she and her family moved to Iowa, where she began working at Northwest Iowa Community College. Since joining the NCC team, she has taught ESL, HSED Language Arts, and Math. She also leads professional development trainings among her colleagues, focusing on implementing the standards and best teaching practices. Last year, she was on a panel presenting math standards implementation at the AEL Conference, and in October, she was a table coach at the Standards Implementation Conference.

**Claire Brakel Packer** -- Claire Brakel Packer is an ESL Instructor at Kirkwood Community College, Iowa City Campus. Claire discovered her love for language teaching as an English teacher in Japan and since then has completed an MA in TESL at St. Cloud State University, taught at one university, three community colleges, and several community-based programs throughout the Midwest. Areas of expertise include curriculum development, refugee education and workforce development/career training with ESL populations.

**Brandi Parsons** - Brandi Parsons serves as the high school distance learning instructor/coordinator for Kirkwood Community College. She received her ESL endorsement from William Penn University in the spring of 2010, her master's in educational technology from MidAmerica Nazarene University in 2008, and her bachelor of arts from Central College in 2003. She is incredibly interested in where jobs will take us in the future and the role we play as educators to ensure all of our community is engaged in the economy.

**Lucas Plouff** - Lucas Plouff is the ELL I-BEST Lead Instructor/Coordinator at Hawkeye Community College Adult Education and Literacy. Aside from I-BEST responsibilities, he teaches language acquisition courses. He earned his Master of Education from the University of Missouri.

**Robbin Rekemeyer** - Robbin has been an instructor in the Adult High School Completion Program at Kirkwood Community College for three years. After returning to school to earn secondary education endorsements in marketing, management, economics, and mathematics she taught middle school and high school before employment at Kirkwood as a Business/IT adjunct, Health IT Grant manager, and high school completion instructor. She teaches math classes and has worked with other staff to develop the CCR aligned math curriculum for Kirkwood Community College’s High School Completion program. Robbin has worked to test the new CCR aligned CASAS math examinations through review of questions and administration of tests for validity and reliability. Robbin has also led training in CCR alignment for Kirkwood faculty, faculty from other colleges, and at state trainings. Robbin earned a BS in Industrial Administration from Iowa State University, an MBA from the University of Iowa, and teaching certifications from Cornell College in 2002.

**Ashleigh Richmond** - Ashleigh Richmond is the Lead Instructor for Language Arts in the Community Education Center at Indian Hills Community College in Ottumwa. She has taught literature and

communications classes for more than eight years, as well as adult literacy for the last three years. She became a STAR certified teacher in May 2016, and began co-leading STAR training for the Iowa Department of Education in September 2016. Ashleigh's professional and educational background includes a B.A. in English from Central College, an M.A.T. in English from the University of West Alabama, and several years of experience in public relations, recruitment, and marketing. When she's not teaching, Ashleigh enjoys spending time with her husband, son, and daughter. She is an avid reader and baker, and she loves to travel.

**John Romeo** - John Romeo is an Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) for Southeastern Community College as part of Southeast IowaWORKS. As an OWDS, John's duties include helping men and women transitioning from Corrections enter into the work force by helping them prepare for job opportunities. He is trained to assist transitioning offenders deal with barriers to success through work assessments, job development, writing résumés, developing soft skills and support services.

**Jennette-Marie Shepard** - Jennette Shepard is the Student Success Lead Instructor/Coordinator at Hawkeye Community College Adult Education and Literacy. In addition to teaching and coordinating the I-BEST program, she teaches math and high school equivalency classes. She earned her BA in mathematics and teaching from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, ME.

**Jason Walker** - Jason earned a BA in International Relations and French from Morningside College and an MA in Public Administration from Western Illinois University. He taught English in Madagascar as a Peace Corps volunteer and has experience working as a community organizer and as a supervisor in corrections and human services settings. He has been the Lead Teacher for HSE/ELA at Muscatine Community College for three and a half years. While waiting for test results to come back from students, he enjoys running, biking, lifting and spending time with his wife, 3 1/2 year-old son and his border collie, Benji.

**Allison Westgate** - Allie Westgate is an educational sales consultant for adult and higher ed ESL programs. She has been with National Geographic Learning for two years. She loves working closely with instructors and other professionals in the ESL community, and encourages frequent communication with them. As your consultant, it is her goal to learn about ways she can help the ESL community move forward, and to provide solutions that prepare your students for academic and workplace environments, and the world around them.

**Mike Williams** - Mike Williams has his Masters in Public Administration and has been in his role as a Program Education Consultant with the Iowa Department of Education since April of 2014 working with the PACE, GAP and HiSET programs. Mike worked for the Iowa Department of Human Rights for 14 years working with high school and college transition programs along with Title I, II and III of the ADA as well as a state resource for ADAAG accessibility issues. Mike lives in Des Moines, Iowa and has two daughters, a Senior in college and a Freshman in college.

**Tony Wilson** - Tony has spent 30 years in a elementary school setting serving as a teacher, assistant principal, educational coordinator, and coordinator of afterschool programs. He also completed a successful military career in Iowa Air National Guard, retiring in the rank of Colonel. Throughout these two careers, Tony understood and applied the principle of "sanctuary" to create an environment that was safe, caring, and supportive. The establishment of sanctuary enhanced his effectiveness in the classroom and as a military leader. Tony has continued to apply the principle of "sanctuary" as a

foundational tool in his work to bring about transformational changes in classrooms, corporations, correctional settings, job training programs, and in governmental agencies. Tony is excited by emerging brain research that explains “why” sanctuary is effective, “how” the creation of sanctuary promotes success, and he is eager to share the information with others. The intentional creation of sanctuary will promote and enhance success in homes, schools, business, and in human services. Tony is also author of a book titled, *You Are Enough*, aimed at helping people to effectively harness the power of Thought to create an internal sanctuary and to live a more hopeful, successful life.