

**2009 Annual Conference
Hartford, CT
Keynote Speakers**



**Wednesday, October 14 – Jason Ryan Dorsey –
“*Bridging the Four Generations in Today’s Schools*” –**

Jason Ryan Dorsey is a bestselling author who has spoken on-site at 700 schools around the world. He personally knows the difference educators make, because an educator changed his life forever. Raised in a small Texas town, an educator helped Jason overcome challenging obstacles to start college early and out-of-state. This experience put Jason on a non-traditional path that led to him authoring his first bestselling book, *Graduate to Your Perfect Job*, at age 18. This book is now required reading in 1,650 schools and estimated to have helped 100,000 member of Gen Y enter the workforce. Jason followed the success of his first book with three more including his acclaimed guide to cost-effective school improvement, *50 Ways to Improve Schools for Under \$50*. For the last many years, Jason’s speaking and consulting has focused on creative ways education leaders can engage Gen Y while bridging all four generations in education. Jason has appeared as a generational expert on 60 Minutes, 20/20, The Today Show, The View, and in Fortune Magazine. His newest book is titled, *My Reality Check Bounced!*



Thursday, October 15 – Lesra Martin – “*Put Yourself in the Picture: Discover the Power of Hope, Heart and Human Spirit*” –

Lesra Martin was once an inner city kid dismissed by society, yet his heart carried hope and courage. He effected profound change in lives of many, including his own. "Young Lazarus," Coretta Scott King once noted, "will win your heart."

Lesra Martin's heartrending story has mesmerized and inspired millions through the major Hollywood feature "*The Hurricane*". Its' star, Denzel Washington, marveled over Lesra's real life odyssey from a poorly educated Brooklyn teen to respected attorney, Inspired by his experiences, The National Film Board of Canada produced the documentary "*The Journey of Lesra Martin*", and the compelling film has been screened at film festivals throughout Canada as well as the *Hollywood Black Film Festival*, *Black Film Festival* (San Francisco), *The Urban Literary Film Festival* (Greensboro, U.S.) and the *24th International Durban Film Festival*, (Durban, South Africa). He was invited to speak

before the General Assembly delegates at the United Nations, where he gave an impassioned speech about the devastating effects of literacy and poverty, and at Cambridge University, where he spoke before world leaders. He has been featured on countless television and radio shows, most notably as a special guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *Larry King Live*. Dozens of newspaper and magazine articles from the *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* to *Sports Illustrated* and *Reader's Digest Magazine* have chronicled aspects of Lesra's life. Lesra has built a dynamic speaking career that enables him to travel throughout North America. "The power to make a difference exists in each of us," he tells audiences as he reveals the toll illiteracy takes, and outlines how education is the path of freedom. Lesra spreads his message of hope to thousands, appearing before corporate groups, community organizations, schools and universities. He has appeared as a keynote speaker for a wide variety of companies and organizations, including IBM, General Motors, Hewlett-Packard and the International Subway Corporation. He has delivered his heart felt message to Piney Woods School (Mississippi), Atlanta International School, Boston College, Baylor University and Dartmouth, as well as appearing before the Mel Goldberg Symposium on Justice (Minnesota), Council of Exceptional Children (Child Development Institute, Early Literacy), and the YMCA (Ohio) among many others. Of his eight siblings, Lesra is the only one with a high school diploma. He completed high school as an Ontario scholar in 1983 and received an Honours B.A. from the University of Toronto in 1988. He achieved his law degree from Dalhousie Law School in 1997 and served as a Crown Prosecutor in Kamloops, BC. He now has his own law firm, Martin & Martin Lawyers, in British Columbia. Lesra has received the YMCA Black Achievers Partner in Excellence Award (Ohio). He has received numerous awards and certificates of recognition for his willingness to be a role model and mentor for youth. He was acknowledged with a lifetime membership with the National Black Caucus of Special Educators, a division of CEC (Washington, D.C.).



Friday, October 16 – Dr. Joyce Saltman – “Laughter: Rx for Survival in Regular and Special Education” – Joyce Saltman

is a professor of Special Education at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, CT. She chose to receive her doctoral degree from Columbia, because she loved the color of their doctoral gown. It was no small feat that she was able to persuade her mentor to allow her to write her dissertation on “Humor in Adult Learning.” She also holds four graduate degrees in the fields of Special Education and Counseling. Joyce’s innovative teaching style has led to the development of a graduate course entitled. “The Enhancement of Learning Through Humor,” as well as a summer institute called, “Healing, Education Laughter and Play” (HELP). In her previous life, her spirit of adventure led her to appear as a stand-up comedienne

for dozens of organizations and clubs, including Dangerfield’s and Good Times in New York City. Her experiences in the areas of education, therapy and comedy have provided an

outstanding background for her research on “The Therapeutic Value of Laughter.” Since 1983, when Joyce began lecturing on “Laughter,” she has been interviewed by national radio and TV personalities. Joyce has appeared on ABC News in New York, P.M. Magazine, the Regis Philbin Morning Show, For Kid’s Sake, and an ABC Special entitled “The Mind as Powerful Medicine.” In addition to articles published in popular magazines, her article on “Humor and Disabilities” appeared in the Disability Studies Quarterly, in 1990. Her book, Sing a Celebration, was published in 1988. Her story entitled, “Dearest Last Born” appeared in the 1999 book Chocolate for a Mother’s Heart compiled by Kay Allenbaugh. In addition, Joyce’s article, “Lighten up for Training” was published in the Nov/Dec 1996 Connecticut Yankee and American Society for Training and Development. Most recently, I’m Changing the Locks and Cementing the Windows was published. Joyce’s best friend, Ronnie Greenspan was the co-author and it is a humorous look at handling the trauma of a kid going off to college or somewhere else away from home. Joyce is presently working on a book to help teachers and parents incorporate humorous activities with kids. Intermittently referred to as the “Guru of Laughter,” and “The Chubby Broad from Brooklyn”, Joyce helps people lighten up wherever she goes!