

## Wisdom Thinkers Network Meets at CiTi campus

Posted By [Submitted article](#) On February 19, 2015 @ 3:48 pm In [Oswego](#) |

MEXICO, NY – Individuals from education, business and the community in Oswego County recently gathered at the Center for Instruction, Technology & Innovation's Mexico campus to discuss ways to promote positive character development for students.



Ralph Singh, CEO and chair of the Wisdom Thinkers Network, discusses ways to promote character development for students during a recent meeting at the Center for Instruction, Technology and Innovation's Mexico campus.

Ralph Singh, CEO and chair of the Wisdom Thinkers Network and coordinator of the Inspire 14! Initiative, brought dozens of community leaders together to brainstorm ideas on how students can build and develop good character traits, while also developing the soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

The Wisdom Thinkers Network is a non-profit organization that attempts to develop students with the power of storytelling.

Singh's latest project titled "Stories to Light Our Way," is a compilation of stories that celebrates diverse cultures and the traditions of different cultures.

Aligned with the stories are a series of projects that reinforce their lessons and help students understand the importance of building character.

"Wisdom Thinkers is another vehicle school districts can use to promote respect, character education and diversity," said Stuart Amell, superintendent of schools for the Sandy Creek Central School District. "Our students need to learn that in order to be a successful citizen, they must demonstrate respect and an understanding that being a 'team player' is a priority in today's job market."

During the meeting, three small focus committees were comprised to develop ideas on how to expand on the initiatives and ideas of the Wisdom Thinkers Network. The three committees were broken into educators, community members and business officials.



Ralph Singh (second from right) discussed how to build and develop positive character traits for students with several local educators.

After brainstorming ideas on their own, each committee shared their ideas with the rest of the attendees.

"Our meetings give us the opportunity to learn more about Wisdom Thinkers and share what each school district is doing," said Amell. "It also gives educators an opportunity to hear what business and industry has to contribute to our mission."

Prior to the meeting, a luncheon was held and featured food prepared by culinary arts students at CiTi. A tour of the campus' new renovations was also given by Roseann Bayne, assistant superintendent of instruction; CTE principal Marla Berlin and CiTi business education liaison Garrett Weiss.

During the tour, attendees were able to visit several new classrooms on the CiTi campus, including culinary arts, digital media, public safety and justice, cosmetology and nursing.

Oswego County Today » [Wisdom Thinkers Network Meets at CiTi campus](http://oswegocountytoday.com/wisdom-thinkers-network-meets-at-citi-campus/)  
<http://oswegocountytoday.com/wisdom-thinkers-network-meets-at-citi-campus/>

---

# Wisdom Thinkers Network meeting of Inspire 14!

---

by Submitted Article • Jan. 22, 2015

Ralph Singh, chair and CEO of the Wisdom Thinkers Network and coordinator of Inspire 14! brought together individuals from education, business and community in Oswego County to work together to form a foundation for a meaningful life, in school, in the community and in the workplace for students in the county.



*Ralph Singh, chair and CEO of the Wisdom Thinkers Network talks to members of the Inspire 14! committee about expectations and how to move forward with the character education initiative with "Stories To Light Our Way."*

The initiative aims to educate students and help them build and develop good character, while also developing soft skills essential for success in the workplace and community.

Individuals from the various organizations represented at the meeting shared their roles and goals for the Wisdom Thinkers Network and Inspire 14! in particular.

Many of the members present represented school districts across the county in some capacity while others were from youth organizations or community and business leaders.

Together, the Inspire 14! group aims to start the work at the elementary school level to infuse character education into the school through storytelling.





*During the meeting, groups worked together in small focus-centered committees to develop ideas for how to expand and grow the initiative across the county.*

The group worked together in small focus-centered committees to develop ideas for how to expand and grow the initiative across the county.

The “cornerstone” of the character education program centers around a book entitled “Stories to Light Our Way.”

The book of eleven stories celebrating diverse cultures and traditions from around the world, uses children or animals as the main characters to teach a particular value or reinforce a character trait.

It is being utilized in area school districts to foster a positive, ethical culture in the schools.

A culture which Joe Menard, superintendent of schools for the Central Square Central School District said is building character.

“These stories work,” he said. “The bottom line is that these stories work.”

Aligned with the stories are a series of projects that reinforce their lessons and help students engage in discussions that support making wise choices, building character, cultivating compassion and creating social responsibility.



*Wisdom Thinkers Ralph Singh, Roseann Bayne, Stewart Amell, and Brian Hartwell are pictured following a recent meeting to discuss the character education initiative with business, community and education leaders across Oswego County. The Sandy Creek School District played host for the recent monthly meeting.*

“Inspire 14! came about,” said Singh, “in part because of the focus society places on tests in school,” causing him to ask the question, “Why are we not preparing them for the test of life?”

His approach and answer to the question was to use the power of the story to prepare young people for that all important test of life.

The Wisdom thinkers Network’s mission says: “We believe that stories have the power to change the world – and by reweaving the wisdom of our traditional stories, both sacred and secular, and new understandings into education and public life we will be able to strengthen our social fabric and foster a more compassionate, inclusive, civil society.”

Sharing their perspective on the success of the stories were Sandy Creek representatives Jacqueline Hobbs, Dorianne Hathway and Carolyn Shirley.

They shared their experiences utilizing the “Stories to Light Our Way” in the Sandy Creek District.

The district began the “Stories to Light Our Way” project this year and Hobbs said she utilizes the stories in Morning Program at the elementary school level.

She shared with members of the group how the stories’ messages and character education are a good fit in morning program.

She also shared how the district incorporates the stories into the elementary curriculum.

The group reads a story in morning program and an activity is done in one of the special area classrooms as a follow up to reinforce the message.

For Hobbs, the transition to Wisdom Thinkers was an easy one.

“We’ve been doing some of the same activities, we’re just connecting it in a different way,” she said.

The same goes for Hathway, a middle school physical education teacher, who said she has embraced the initiative and starts her class each week with the positive stories.



*Dorianne Hathway, a physical education teacher at Sandy Creek Middle School shares her experiences with the “Stories To Light Our Way” character education initiative. The character education project seeks to improve classroom culture by using the stories to form a foundation of cross-cultural understanding, build social skills, improve empathy, honor diversity and reduce bullying behavior.*

“For me personally,” she said about using the stories in the class, “this is a precursor to my classroom. This sets the tone for the rest of the day.”

Her class is currently working on a project to identify hidden talents. Each student writes a talent they possess on a paper coin which then becomes part of a large treasure chest bulletin board display.

This self-exploration helps students identify what they do well and celebrate that talent as well as recognize the talents of others.

Sandy Creek superintendent of school Stewart Amell supports the Wisdom Thinkers initiative in the Sandy Creek District and praised those teachers and administrators who have moved the initiative forward.

“These are not just teachers,” he said. “They are teacher leaders.”

He told the group that others in the school district look up to the teachers and through their diligent efforts they have begun to implement the project successfully into the schools and that his job is to support them in the effort.

Sandy Creek Middle School principal Carolyn Shirley said she will incorporate the lessons into her student team meetings.

She meets with the student leaders every other week and the implementation of character education into the meetings is a natural evolution to get middle school students involved.

The stories form a foundation of cross-cultural understanding without having to talk about it in specifics, according to Singh who believes that indifference is the greatest obstacle for change faced by young people today.

Using the stories, he believes that young people will receive the positive message and that the positivity will act as a counterbalance to the negativity that young people are barraged with every day.

It is creating that culture of acceptance and tolerance that will change the outcome.

Singh is often asked by students which story from the book is his favorite one, to which he is quick to say, “My favorite story hasn’t been written yet. My favorite story is the story you will write; the story of your life.”

For more information about the Wisdom Thinkers Network, visit [www.wisdomthinkers.org](http://www.wisdomthinkers.org)

---

**Original URL:**

<http://oswegocountytoday.com/wisdom-thinkers-network-meeting-of-inspire-14/>

WRVO – npr affiliate –

## Local program uses story-telling to help students become successful



Community leaders, business representatives and educators met in Oswego recently to discuss ways to reduce bullying in schools and provide students with the tools to become successful citizens. The "Inspire 14" program was hosted by the non-profit organization Wisdom Thinkers Network, and attempts to prepare children for the future through story telling.

Ralph Singh, chairman of the Wisdom Thinkers Network, says the program fosters collaboration between students and their communities.

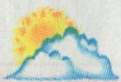
"By being able to share stories from different traditions, both sacred and secular, kids can automatically begin to reflect that we have the same values, that everybody is valued, we honor diversity," Singh said. "And so the stories become a core piece of that, in terms of setting school culture."

Singh also says "Inspire 14" will attempt to create an environment in schools that discourages bullying and promotes growth, while addressing two major concerns.

"Why aren't our kids prepared for the tests of life and why aren't our children prepared to work?" Singh explained. "What are we missing? And so that's what the initiative is about. This is just the kickoff event for what I hope is a life-long, a multi-year focus, a life-long focus on our children's success."

**WEDNESDAY**

SEPTEMBER 10, 2014



HI 80  
LO 69  
FULL FORECAST, A-8

## Carving contest set for Pumpkin Festival

Local, A-2

## Fulton, Oswego clash in girls volleyball

Sports, B-2

## Bookmobile receives grant from youth bureau

Education, A-6

# The Palladium-Times

www.palltimes.com

Officials advised people to limit their outdoor activities between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active, and to wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, shoes and socks when outdoors.

Officials also said a mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus can be effective in preventing mosquito bites.

Minimizing mosquito populations in and around their houses and properties can be accomplished by eliminating all standing water around the home and repairing or replacing all window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside, according to the health department.

For more information about EEE and other viruses transmitted by mosquitoes, call the health department at 349-3564 or 1-800-596-3200, ext. 3564, or visit their web site at [www.oswegocounty.com/health/index.html](http://www.oswegocounty.com/health/index.html).

**INDEX**

## Leaders at Inspire14 conference say stories and soft skills key to helping students and economy

By **BRIAN ZAHN**

[bzahn@palltimes.com](mailto:bzahn@palltimes.com)

OSWEGO – In the face of a dismal economy, low employment prospects and what some see as an increased focus on testing in schools rather than teaching life skills, one man thinks storytelling is the solution.

Ralph Singh, the chairman of Wisdom Thinkers Network, said he wants to prepare students for “the tests of life” during a conference held Tues-

day in Oswego.

“The stories we choose to tell and how we choose to tell them literally determines the course of civilization,” Singh said.

Singh organized an event Tuesday called Inspire14 to gather community leaders, business people and educators to explore the relationship between the educational and occupational future for teenagers in central New York and the local business economy.

Several of the speakers, including

Jennifer Cook, the chief of staff for Assemblyman Will Barclay, R-Pulaski, and Superintendent of the Central Square Central School District Joseph Menard, said students are currently lacking in soft skills, or skills that have to do with emotional intelligence, and can often struggle to impress on job interviews.

Sujot Kaur, a representative of the ACT Foundation, which provided

See **LEADERS**, A-7

1880 and 1910.  
Using shipwreck and maritime databases, libraries and old newspaper ports, Scoville finds as many historical clues as he can, hopefully linking to the data from his shipwreck discoveries.

At one point last year, Scoville thought he had found a late 18th century photograph of the wreck, but despite similar dimensions and ca windows, there were not enough clues convincing him of a match.

“I like to feel highly confident,” Scoville on identifying a shipwreck saying it can take a good deal of time to sort through the data and find story behind the ship.

See **SCOVILLE**.

## Cuomo defeats challenger Teachout in Democrat primary

**DAVID KLEPPER**

Associated Press

the use of her name, refusing to debate and joking about his poor eye-

nor was asked if he was aiming for a certain margin of victory.

Tim Wu.

While Teachout claimed endo