

Please feel free to copy this registration form and pass it on to anyone who may be interested in attending the conference.

registration information

Name:_____

School:_____

Address:_____

City:_____

Year in School:_____ E-mail:_____

Phone Number: (_____) _____

Please indicate selection and quantity

_____ Gustavus student/staff registration FREE with current ID

_____ Non-Gustavus student registration FREE

_____ General adult registration \$8.00 per person

Total enclosed \$_____

(make checks payable to *Building Bridges*)

Please send completed registration to:

Diversity Center
C/O Building Bridges
Gustavus Adolphus College
800 W. College Ave.
St. Peter, MN 56082

Or register online by March 4 at: gustavus.edu/diversity/buildingbridges

lodging information

St. Peter

AmericInn: 507-931-6554
Konsbruck Hotel: 507-934-3154
Locust Street Hotel: 612-990-0090
Viking Jr Motel: 507-931-3081

Mankato

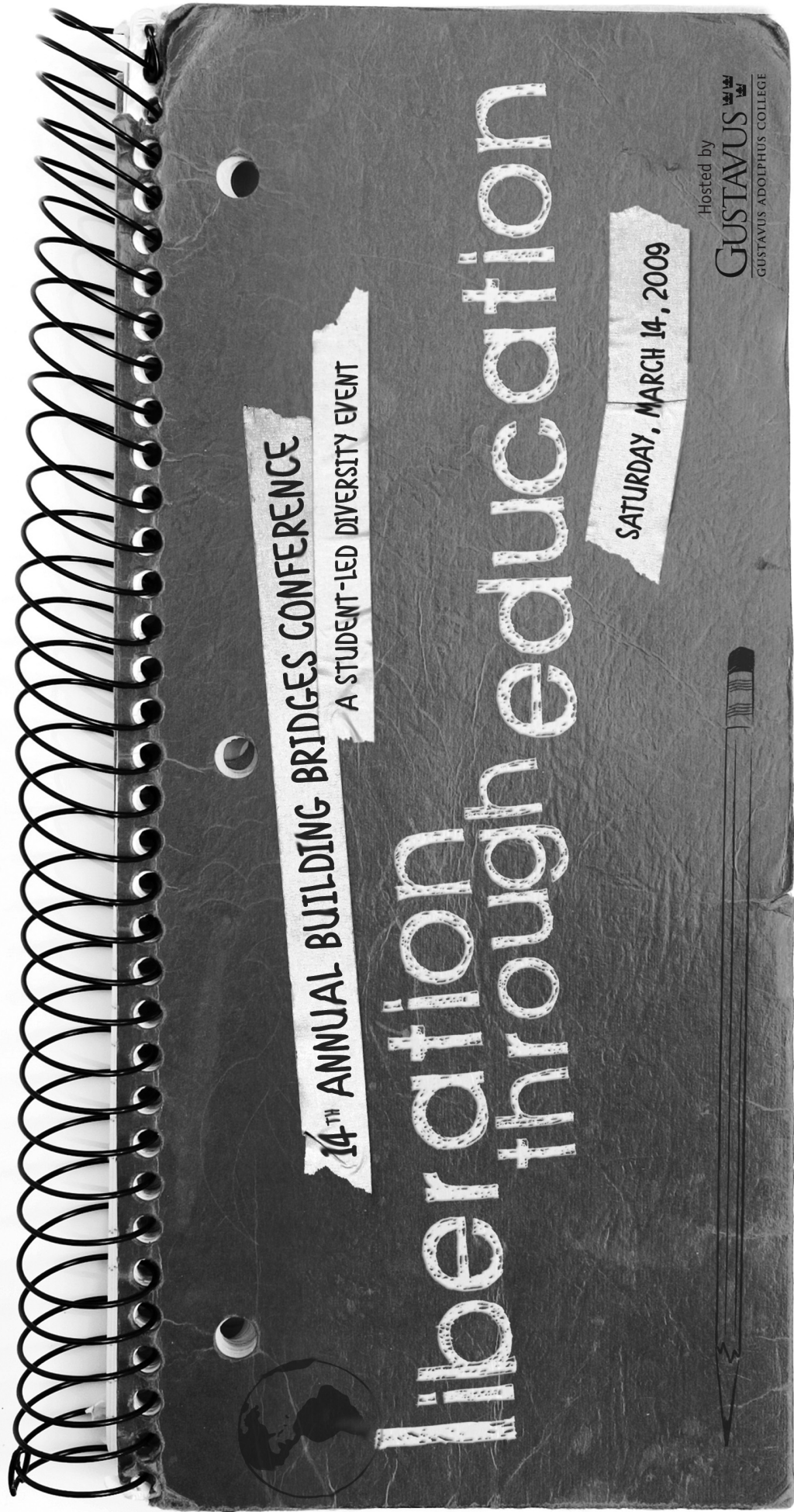
AmericInn: 507-345-8011
Best Western: 507-625-9333
Budgetel Inn: 507-345-8000
Country Inn & Suites: 507-388-8555
Days Inn: 507-387-3332
Hilton Garden Inn: 507-344-1111
Holiday Inn: 507-345-1234

questions

- Building Bridges Co-Chairs
Alli Linn and Rita Stevermer | BBCo-Chairs09@gustavus.edu
- The Gustavus Diversity Center
diversitycenter@gustavus.edu | 507-933-7449



BUILDING BRIDGES
A STUDENT-LED DIVERSITY CONFERENCE
Gustavus Adolphus College
800 West College Avenue
Saint Peter, MN 56082



Objectives of the building bridges conference

- To promote mutual respect and understanding about diversity issues throughout college campuses and larger communities
- To lay a foundation for opening up dialogue throughout the world community, bringing together individuals from various settings, situations, and interests to discuss pressing matters involving global diversity
- To dispel the assumption that one person’s actions cannot make a difference by providing the means for social change

the conference

Building Bridges is a student-initiated, student-led diversity conference dedicated to addressing today’s pressing social and global issues. We work to increase awareness and action through inspirational speakers supplemented by interactive workshops and action steps. This year’s conference, “Liberation through Education,” will focus on educational inequality in the U.S. and abroad and the important influence an education has on an individual’s future. After learning about educational inequality, the committee wondered, “what can we do to help someone get an education?” We began to answer this question by receiving generous book donations from communities in the Midwest to benefit students in Uganda, collecting more than 23,000 books. We will continue working to answer this question in this year’s conference. We promise an inspirational, hands-on learning experience that will provide many ways in which you too can answer the question for yourself.

On behalf of the Building Bridges Committee, we cordially invite you to the 14th annual Building Bridges Conference.

Alli Linn and Rita Stevermer
2009 Co-Chairs

Conference Schedule

9:00 a.m.	Registration
10:00 a.m.	Welcoming Address and Keynote Speakers
12:30 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)
2:00 p.m.	Workshops
3:00 p.m.	Workshops
4:00 p.m.	Workshops
5:00 p.m.	Action Piece

Keynote Speakers



freedomwritersfoundation.org

ERIN GRUWELL

In 1994, Erin Gruwell began student-teaching at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, CA. Her class consisted of the lowest-performing students in the school, many of whom were labeled “unteachable.” These teenagers had grown up in an urban community facing extreme racial division and violence. By the time the students stepped into Gruwell’s classroom, many had witnessed murder, rape, gang violence, and drug abuse.

Gruwell began her teaching career at Wilson High without knowing the immense challenge she was undertaking. Her first weeks of class were filled with racial slurs, accusations, acts of hate, and inescapable tension between students. Instead of sticking with her original lesson plan for the year, she changed it to allow her students to rethink rigid beliefs about themselves and others, to reconsider daily decisions, and to reconstruct their futures.

With Gruwell’s encouragement and steadfast support, her students were able to shatter stereotypes and become critical thinkers, aspiring college students, and citizens advocating for change.

Inspired by Anne Frank and other real-life heroes from the novels they read, Gruwell’s students dubbed themselves the “Freedom Writers,” and went on to capture their high school journey in the novel *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them*. All 150 students, who were told they had a slim chance of completing high school, went on to graduate, and many continued on to higher education.

Gruwell and students have appeared on numerous television shows, including Oprah, The Rosie O’Donnell Show, Prime Time Live, The View, Good Morning America, and CSPAN’s Book TV. The original class has been featured in National Public Radio, People magazine, was the subject of a 2007 Paramount Pictures’ movie, and more. Gruwell has received numerous awards. Currently, she serves as president of Freedom Writers Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded in 1997 to decrease high school drop-out rates through the Freedom Writers Method.

“Erin is a true inspiration and an example of the extraordinary difference one person can make in the world. She continues to transform the lives of students across the country through her work and the Freedom Writers Foundation.”

— Hilary Swank, two-time Academy Award Winner



freedomwritersfoundation.org

MARIA REYES

Maria Reyes was born in East Los Angeles and moved to Long Beach after the Rodney King riots. Reyes came from a family with a strong gang heritage—both her father and grandfather were gang members. At age 11, she was jumped into a gang, making her a third generation gang member. Reyes was in and out of juvenile detention centers for the better part of her teenage years.

Given the choice to stay in a detention center or go to school, Reyes chose high school. Her probation officer enrolled her at Woodrow Wilson, where she was placed in Gruwell’s class and thus, as a freshman, became an original Freedom Writer.

Since then, Reyes earned a bachelor’s degree from California State University Long Beach and has traveled the country speaking about the power of education and the need for educators to give students a second chance. As a spokesperson for the Freedom Writers, Maria has appeared on tv shows and her story was highlighted in the movie *Freedom Writers*.

workshops and activities

■ Teach For America

Teach For America works to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting our nation’s most promising future leaders to teach in some of the most poverty-stricken communities in the U.S. These leaders commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools. Going beyond traditional expectations, these teachers lead their students to significant academic achievement.

■ Admission Possible | Abby Matthews

Admission Possible identifies promising low-income students from the Greater Twin Cities and Greater Milwaukee metro areas, and helps them prepare to earn admission into college. Started in 2000, the organization has expanded to partner with 17 high schools. More than 1,000 students have enrolled in the program, and to date, 99% have earned acceptance into college.

■ Operation Bootstrap Africa | Jim Cornell, ‘83

Operation Bootstrap Africa helps people help themselves with educational programs and projects in Africa. For more than 40 years, the organization has participated in the successful completion of over 3,200 classrooms in self-help partnerships with the people and government of Tanzania. Other projects are underway in Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

■ Invisible Children | Zachary Barrows

Invisible Children works to empower high school and college students, transforming apathy into activism to create change in the lives of people in the African nation of Uganda. Schools for Schools, its newest initiative, partners schools in the U.S. with schools in Uganda to raise money to rebuild the Ugandan schools. In just three semesters, students across the nation have raised more than \$3 million for the cause.

■ Action Piece | Interactive Literacy

Conference attendees will guide children through themed interactive stations with a “Gustie Guide.” The Scholastic Book Fair will provide parents and children with the opportunity to purchase books and become excited about reading. Conference attendees may also purchase a book for a child in the community.

■ And More!

Visit gustavus.edu/diversity/buildingbridges for updates.