

Keynote Presenters

Thursday, Opening Keynote

“The Power of One and The Power of Many: The Rx for School Social Workers: Relationships” Stephen Sroka, Ph.D.



“You have the **Power of One** to start a fire. But you need **The Power of Many** to keep the fire burning.”

This is a high-energy, motivational, multimedia presentation that is research-driven and reality-based. It integrates cutting-edge research and humor and inspiring real-life stories to facilitate learning about the whole student and the mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical needs and their relationship to academic and life success. The program is filled with “tips from the trenches” to help school social workers keep students safe and healthy so they can learn more and live better. This session addresses the four challenges of building relationships: communication, collaboration, culture and caring. It explores the role of social-emotional learning, mental health, school climate, the whole student concept, and teambuilding. It offers honesty, humor and hope that everyone can make a difference. The school social worker will leave with an unforgettable message filled with an incredible sense of hope and joy that with education about relationships, helping one another and believing in yourself, you can change schools, communities, and lives.

Steve Sroka grew up in poverty in a housing project in a single parent family. After many set-backs and challenges in his youth, Steve learned that education was the only way out of the ghetto for him. When he graduated from high school, he worked full-time to get his family off welfare before entering college. He learned how to deal with the challenges of being ADHD and dyslexic. His childhood disabilities and experiences were “gifts” or “grit” that offered unique opportunities that helped him become a better person and educator. Today, Dr. Stephen Sroka is an internationally recognized speaker, trainer, author, teacher and educational consultant on health education, sex, drugs (especially opiates and heroin) and violence (including bullying and suicide) proactive prevention education, school safety, brain-based learning, at-risk students and alternative education, juvenile justice, parenting, dropout prevention and leadership building for schools and communities. He is widely known as The Power of One speaker. Steve is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor, School of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University, and President of his company, Health Education Consultants. He has worked in schools worldwide for over 30 years and has received many awards including the Outstanding School Health Education Award, selected as the Disney Outstanding Health Teacher of the Year, and was inducted into the National Teachers Hall of Fame. After he suffered a cardiac arrest, Steve realized that it takes more than one person to save a life. His message changed. Dr. Sroka's spirited new programs bring to life the belief that you need The Power of One and The Power of Many to change schools, communities and lives.



Saturday, Closing Keynote “Evidence-Based Practice for Busy Professionals” Jim Raines, Ph.D., LCSW

Evidence-based practice has been the law of the land since 2001, but busy school social workers have often found it cumbersome to implement. Taking a nuts and bolts approach, practical strategies will be shared to make each stage of EBP easier to do in a high-pressure school environment. These include asking the right questions, locating research-based interventions, how to adapt interventions to fit local populations, and simple approaches for evaluating progress at each tier. Jim will also reveal improvements to the SSWAA website to facilitate easier access to a wide range of evidence-based resources. Detailed examples along the way make this presentation true-to-life and even heart-warming.

Jim Raines calls himself an accidental academic with the heart of a practitioner. He has been President of the Illinois Association of School Social Workers, Midwest School Social Work Council, and now the School Social Work Association of America. He previously keynoted the SSWAA National School Social Work Conference in St. Louis in 2010. He was the recipient of the Midwest School Social Work Career Achievement Award in 2012. As a professor of social work, he is the author of three books published by Oxford University Press, two dozen articles, and numerous book chapters. He won the Gary Lee Schaffer award for academic contributions to school social work in 2016. Jim has been Chair of the Department of Health, Human Services, & Public Policy and is currently a professor of social work at California State University Monterey Bay. You can follow his work on www.academia.edu.