



Former Google Exec Headlines Saint Viator Speaker Series

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Kevin Willer, former head of Google's Chicago office.

Kevin Willer knows something about awakening innovation in business leaders. As former head of Google's Chicago office, Willer formed partnerships with stakeholders that included city and state governments, universities, non-profits, industry associations and entrepreneurial organizations.

In April, Willer will leave Google to become the new president and CEO of the Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center. Its sole mission is to provide resources to help thousands of entrepreneurs in the Chicago area establish and grow their companies.

But can he spark innovation in young men and women?

Willer will address that very topic as the keynote speaker at Saint Viator High School's second installment of its speaker series, "Awakening the Innovator in Our Young Men and Women."

The free presentation takes place at 7 p.m. on May 3. Its discussion will bring together a panel of innovators and entrepreneurs at Saint Viator High School, located at 1213 E. Oakton St. in Arlington Heights.

Panelists include Genevieve Thiers, founder of Sittercity --- the country's largest online site for matching parents with sitters and nannies; John Roberson, executive VP of the Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center; Jim Banaszak, Chief Technology Officer for OpenCEL; and Jim Fruchterman, founder and CEO of Benetech.

Moderating the evening will be John Aiello, Saint Viator alumnus and founder and chairman of The SAVO Group, which creates collaborative sales software.

"It is incumbent on us as parents, teachers and business leaders to assist young men and women in their exploration of the world around them," Aiello says. "Exposure to innovators and leaders can't help but challenge and inspire their thinking.

"We have to help students discover talents and interests," he adds, "that might otherwise go undeveloped without some encouragement and meaningful dialogue."

Aiello says landing Willer to headline the event was key.

"In his former role at Google and in his new one with the CEC, Kevin has been at the forefront of what is becoming a true innovation Renaissance in Chicagoland," Aiello says. "What better expert to get to highlight our focus on innovation."

Mary Maher, Saint Viator's executive director of advancement, expects the evening to be interactive, providing students and their parents an opportunity to question these leading innovators and entrepreneurs.

"Our 50th Anniversary Speaker Series is all about the meaningful exchange of dialogue," Maher said. "While we expect a very informative keynote address from Kevin Willer, those in attendance should come ready to seek information from several incredible sources."

In planning the night, Aiello sought specific individuals with important stories to tell and the willingness to participate in open dialogue that can provide valuable, tangible advice for students and parents.

“We are talking about leaders and innovators whose work has literally changed industries and impacted lives worldwide,” Aiello says. “What makes this group so unique is their willingness to step out of the boardroom and off the Web page --- to where young men and women can ask the questions that, with the right inspiration in an answer, can form the next generation of leaders.”

There is no charge to attend “Awakening the Innovator in Our Young Men and Women,” but because space is limited, pre-registration is recommended.

Those interested can register at <http://50years.saintviator.com> or by calling Saint Viator High School at 847-392-4050.

The next installment of the 50th Anniversary Speaker Series, “Awakening the Servant in Our Young Men and Women,” is scheduled for September.

For more details about the Shaping the Future Speaker Series, and other events in the 50th Anniversary Celebration, please visit <http://50years.saintviator.com>.