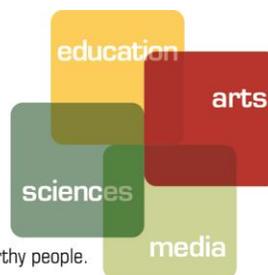




PUBLIC SQUARE Speakers Series

Public conversations on meaningful topics with noteworthy people.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WSRE IS BRINGING “OUR KIDS” AUTHOR ROBERT PUTNAM TO PENSACOLA



PENSACOLA, Fla., February 15, 2017—Robert Putnam is a leading expert on the topic of inequality and opportunity in America, and he is coming to Pensacola to share his ideas and solutions for diminishing the opportunity gap for today’s youth.

WSRE’s Public Square Speakers Series, in partnership with Studer Community Institute, will host a lecture by Putnam at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18 in the WSRE Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio at Pensacola State College. Admission is free, and online registration is required at wsre.org/speakers.

Putnam is a public policy professor at Harvard University and a bestselling author. Among his most notable publications are “Making Democracy Work” and “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.”

His latest book, “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis,” chronicles the growing gap in opportunity for American youth and offers a groundbreaking examination of why fewer Americans today have the chance for upward mobility—the chance to work hard, achieve success and live lives better than those of previous generations.

Putnam’s research looks at whether or not youth coming from different social and economic backgrounds have roughly equal life chances and how that has changed in recent decades—how the opportunity gap has widened and why.

His findings support the claim that the American Dream is failing and that America can address this national crisis through change that is both bottom-up and top-down to offer more opportunity to all American children.

In “Our Kids,” Putnam says, “This is not the first time in our national history that widening socio-economic gaps have threatened our economy, our democracy, and our values. The specific responses we have pursued to successfully overcome these challenges and restore opportunity have varied in detail, but underlying them all was a commitment to invest in other people’s children. And underlying that commitment was a deeper sense that those kids, too, were our kids. ... For America’s poor kids do belong to us and we to them.”

“Last year Dr. Dana Suskind of the University of Chicago came to Pensacola to share the story of her work in early learning. Her talk was the spark that’s focused Pensacola on building America’s First Early Learning City. WSRE is fueling that spark by hosting Dr. Putnam in our community. It’s also another example of why WSRE is a vital community resource,” said Quint Studer, founder of Studer Community Institute.

“Dr. Putnam's work and book is another important step in making sure we increase the school readiness of all of our children, an investment that research shows can lead to less crime, higher wages and a better quality of life for everyone in Pensacola.”

Admission to all WSRE Public Square Speakers Series events is free. The Studer Community Institute is coordinating registration and providing a copy of “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis” for the first 100 people who register. More information is available at wsre.org/speakers.

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Robert D. Putnam is the Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a Fellow of the British Academy and past president of the American Political Science Association. In 2006, Putnam received the Skytte Prize, the world’s highest accolade for a political scientist, and in 2012, he received the National Humanities Medal, the nation’s highest honor for contributions to the humanities.

About WSRE

WSRE is a Public Broadcasting Service member station, locally owned and licensed to the Pensacola State College Board of Trustees operating as a service of Pensacola State College. WSRE has served the needs of Gulf Coast communities through programming, educational services and outreach since 1967. WSRE produces, acquires and distributes programs that address local interests and reflect the diverse cultural, political, geographic and demographic characteristics of its audience. WSRE Educational Services connects teachers, parents, caregivers and children to PBS’ rich educational resources.

About SCI: The Studer Community Institute’s mission is to improve the quality of life for people in the Pensacola Metro. Research indicates two areas that are key to an area’s quality of life are jobs and education. The Institute’s research shows improving these two areas are crucial to improving the quality of life for all the citizens of the Pensacola metro area. In education, the Institute is focused on efforts to create “America’s First Early Learning City” and boost kindergarten readiness. An Early Learning City is a place that enlists the whole community in building a culture of lifelong learning, including in its public spaces. It is a community that supports early brain development, parent engagement and school readiness for all of our children, especially those ages birth to 5.

