



Photo: Kelli Utcell

## Bringing Big IDEAS to Pebble Beach

BY MICHAEL CHATFIELD

**Founders Jim and Cynthia McGillen discuss childhood bullying, a subject at the 2016 Authors and IDEAS festival, with Monterey County Superintendent of Schools Nancy Kotowski.**

**T**his September marks the 10th annual Pebble Beach Authors & IDEAS Festival, a weekend of stimulating talks from some of the world's best speakers. The fact that the word IDEAS is all caps is not a typo.

"We changed that to reflect the notion that our presenters are brilliant people and great speakers—but not all have written a book," says Jim McGillen, co-founder along with his wife Cynthia. "Just because someone wrote a best seller doesn't necessarily mean they're a great speaker."

The festival moved from Carmel to Pebble Beach a few years ago, now calling Stevenson School home.

"Having students around is a terrific addition,"

McGillen says. The list of past presenters is impressive: Condoleezza Rice, Sandra Day O'Connor, Carl Hiaasen, Bob Ballard and Doris Kearns Goodwin have all spoken at past festivals. But it's not always the marquee names that create the most interest.

"It's always the lesser-known speakers who generate the most buzz," McGillen says.

That's precisely why the decision has been made this year to hold off announcing keynote speakers until just before the weekend of the festival, September 23-25.

"We prefer that attendees experience the entire weekend, rather than just buy a ticket to hear a celebrity speak," McGillen avers.

*Tickets sell quickly. Visit [www.pbaif.com](http://www.pbaif.com).*