Global Learning Adventures Await Oklahoma's Top Teachers

Fund for Teachers Now Accepting Applications for 2010 Summer Education Grants

TULSA/OKLAHOMA CITY (September 23, 2009) – Fund for Teachers invites educators from across the country to dream big and submit proposals for their own do-it-yourself learning odysseys next summer. Destinations and disciplines are limitless as the itineraries of 3,500 teachers over the past nine years include tours, conferences and independent studies on every continent. An online application goes live October 1 at www.fundforteachers.org, starting the journey toward individual grants of $5,000 and team grants of up to $10,000 for summer 2010. The deadline for submission is Friday, January 29, 2010.

"Teachers have the power to transform the world through their direct daily contact with our future generations," said Karen Kovach Webb, executive director for Fund for Teachers. "Thanks to our partnerships and generous donors, we offer educators the opportunity to pursue areas of personal and professional interest and bring their experiences and energy back to the classroom."

This summer, 400 teachers (or Fellows) closed their classroom doors to embark on their own personal and professional development experiences around the world, **72 from across Oklahoma** supported by FFT's Oklahoma community partners the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and Tulsa Community Foundation. Examples of their itineraries include:

- Two language teachers from Ada High School and Shawnee High Schools crossed the Pyrenees on horseback from France to Spain to compare and contrast the two cultures;
- Two teachers from Washington Elementary School explored the biomes, ecosystems and wildlife along the Gulf of Alaska coast to enhance the school's environmental education program;
- A Norman High School teacher traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, to create a video documentary about private and public high school students to promote cultural understanding, and;
- A teacher from Sapulpa Junior High School joined a 10-day field expedition with the National Science Teachers Association in Costa Rica to study conservation efforts, environmental education, rural and urban schools systems, and rainforest diversity.

Unlike other educational grants, Fund for Teachers gives teachers the freedom to design an experience that will most impact their lives, their profession, and their community. Applicants document their vision in a proposal detailing how their summer fellowship will make them a better teacher, in addition to ways their experience will impact their curricula. These proposals are then evaluated by a diverse selection committee comprised of community members, donors, local educators and past Fellows.

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FFT education grants are open to teachers who:

- Work with students in pre-K through 12th grade
- Have three or more years teaching experience
- Spend at least 50% of the time in a classroom or classroom-like setting, and
- Teach in an eligible Oklahoma school district (visit http://www.fundforteachers.org/apply.html for eligibility)

Examples of past Fellows' expeditions can be accessed at http://www.fundforteachers.org/fellows.html.

Fund for Teachers is a national, donor-supported organization celebrating its tenth year of awarding fellowships for self-designed professional growth to teachers who recognize the value of inquiry, the power of knowledge and their ability to make a difference. To date, approximately 3,500 of America's top teachers received more than $12.5 million in FFT grants, empowering them to pursue opportunities that transform learning for themselves, their students and their school communities.

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to recognizing and encouraging academic excellence in Oklahoma's public schools. Through its Academic Awards Program, the foundation provides nearly $260,000 in scholarships and cash awards annually to honor outstanding graduating seniors and exceptional educators. For more information, please contact www.ofe.org.

Tulsa Community Foundation, the country's largest community foundation, is a tax-exempt, public charity organized in 1998 to be the recognized, community-owned organization that initiates, teaches and encourages personal and corporate charitable giving today to ensure that the philanthropic needs of Oklahomans can be met for all generations. For more information, visit www.tulsacf.org.

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"This has been the most enriching learning experience in my career as a public school teacher. I can't wait to bring back all that I have learned to my classroom."

– Wendi Lewis, 2009 Fellow, Washington Elementary School, Clinton

"I have so much to bring back to my school. I have become a true resource for my colleagues and for my children. Words cannot express how much value I have gained from this trip. My job now is to share this with my colleagues, my school, and many more children and parents to come!"

– Karen Weiss, 2009 Fellow Prairie View Elementary School, Edmond

Kathryn Elkins, 2009 Oklahoma Fellow, participated in a 10-day field expedition with the National Science Teachers Association in Costa Rica to study conservation efforts, environmental education, rural and urban schools systems, and rainforest diversity.