

# ODYSSEY

A PUBLICATION OF FUND FOR TEACHERS



Whitney and Perez with Patience, a teacher in South Africa's Tubelisha Township.



Preschoolers in Chicago present ways to support the cause.



Preschoolers in Khayelitsha Township, South Africa, with goodie bags prepared by Perez's first graders.

## The Power of Preschoolers

Preschoolers finger paint, build with blocks and, in Chicago's Nettelhorst and Audubon public schools, they raise money for fellow preschoolers in South Africa and Swaziland.

Their teachers, Zio Perez and Megan Whitney, strive to integrate service into their curricula. So, after personally seeing the basic needs in two African schools the summer before, they mounted a campaign collecting books and raising money to transform the educational experience in a small corner of the big continent. Perez and Whitney used their Fund for Teachers grant to underwrite travel and accommodation expenses, enabling them to hand-deliver the donations and conduct teacher training. Raising money for books and supplies, however, fell to their preschoolers.

"Developmentally, most preschoolers are still in that ego-centric stage," said Perez. "But we turned this project into such an integral part of our curricula that the children definitely knew what they were doing and were invested in giving to someone else."

The four-year-olds and their parents exhibited Donald Trump-like skills,

creating mini-presentations to pitch their project and collecting spare change for the cause. Families organized bake sales and a local musician even performed a benefit concert.

Further enriching the philanthropic project, both teachers created a donation opportunity on their students' level. Whitney's students donated a favorite book from home and dictated to their parents why that particular book was special to them in a letter to the eventual recipient. Perez invited her students to select favorite small toys (Slinkies, balls, sunglasses, etc.) and they spent a day stuffing goodie bags for the African students.

"Raising money was our goal, but so was making giving concrete for preschoolers," explained Whitney. "Even though we had a big picture in mind, we wanted our children to know a three-year-old can help someone.

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**Celebrate your gifts at work:**

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- Volunteering in Vietnam
- Digging Deep Into History
- Pursuing Justice with a Paint Brush
- Drafting a Business Plan, Re-Writing a Destiny





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## From the Executive Director

Now, as we each stop to count our blessings, I wish to recognize you with gratitude for the opportunities that you made possible for 515 Fund for Teachers Fellows over the past year. I am fortunate to work with generous supporters, dedicated partners, a committed Board of Directors and a dynamic staff. All of you play valuable roles in the successful fulfillment of our mission. You gave teachers the chance to pursue their own lines of inquiry, to gather information and to create new ways to present it to their students. The bounty of your gifts continues to grow.

Please enjoy the inspirational sampling of learning made possible by you. Cicero said it best: "What greater or better gift can we offer the republic than to teach and instruct our youth?"

Peace and Happy New Year,



### Our Mission

Fund for Teachers enriches the personal and professional growth of teachers by recognizing and supporting them as they identify and pursue opportunities around the globe that will have the greatest impact on their practice, the academic lives of their students and their school communities.



Tran riding down the Mekong River.

# Volunteering in Vietnam

Doannie Tran teaches anatomy and physiology at Boston’s O’Bryant High School of Math & Science. He uses theoretical patients’ case studies to teach students diagnosis and problem solving skills.

But he wondered how one teaches, or better yet treats, real people facing daunting odds using limited resources and basic medical training. Tran sought out Fund for Teachers for a fellowship to take him to Vietnam to explore HIV care for the poor.

For one week in Ho Chi Minh City, Tran met with staff from VCHAP, the Vietnam-Center for Disease Control-Harvard-AIDS Partnership, while they trained local doctors in HIV management. The following four weeks, Tran volunteered in Hue, a small town in central Vietnam, observing care in a charity clinic, going on home visits to HIV patients and observing medical training at the Hue University School of Medicine. He spent his final week in Hanoi, studying national health care policy under the auspices of the Asia Foundation, Clinton Foundation, and VCHAP.

In addition to donating his time and expertise toward helping his Vietnamese

patients this summer, Tran is creating a DVD of common English medical phrases for use in training Vietnamese doctors at Hue University Hospital. In addition, his video footage of medical history taking and the role that information plays in diagnosis of diseases changed how his students approach their own cases, leading them to focus on good questioning and critical thinking.

“My students’ increased interest in global health issues resulting from my fellowship could manifest itself in several ways,” speculated Tran. “At the very least, I think my students will be more aware of these issues both in terms of health care inequities abroad and the need for better health care coverage at home. I also think that they may organically decide to find a way to contribute their time, money or resources to a cause, domestic or international.” ■

**“From my firsthand experiences with the practice of medicine in Vietnam and with knowledge gained from personal interviews, my students will be able to directly relate their learning of anatomy and physiology to real-world issues.”**



Tran before rounds with Hue University Medical students.



A student at the Masakheni Fox Educare Centre in Khayelitsha Township with new books donated by Whitney and Perez's students.



Children in Ezulwini, Swaziland, wearing handmade dresses sent from a donor in Chicago.



Whitney and Perez meet "Lucy the Hippo" outside Swaziland.

### The Power of Preschoolers (Continued)

Volunteering at any level can happen, no matter the age."

On the ground in Africa, Whitney and Perez spent days delivering new libraries of books, as well as their students' gifts. Money raised in Chicago bought tables, chairs and heaters for the Masakheni Fox Educare Centre in Khayelitsha Township, where 50 preschoolers previously sat on the ground for classes and meals. In Swaziland, students hugged their new books while their teachers assumed the role of student, learning literature training skills from Whitney. Weekends found the Chicagoans on photographic safaris, snapping images of the animals that capture their preschoolers' imaginations.

"Besides teaching about compassion, this project has been a true integration of global awareness," said Perez. "Our Fund for Teachers fellowship inspired us to teach eco-friendly science learning, such as reusing and recycling our natural resources, animal life, social science topics and language arts skills through reading and writing pen-pal projects with the children abroad."

"Our inspiration was the dedication and positive spirit of the teachers, staff and community we had the honor to meet in southern Africa," said Whitney. "Most importantly, the welcoming and eager children we met in Africa drive us to continue service projects with our own students in Chicago." ■



Bake sales and presentations helped Perez and Whitney reach their \$5,000 goal.





Above: Thames working an eight-hour dig day at Israel's Tel Gezer.  
Left: Thames' student finding treasures in Tel Ya'ar.

# DIGGING DEEP INTO HISTORY

**Nicolas Cage has nothing on Trey Thames. Inspired by the Hollywood blockbuster *National Treasure* and a Pompeii documentary, Thames set out to teach his students basic archaeological methodology and theory. But he had to learn it first.**

Thames sought out Fund for Teachers for a grant to participate in the Tel Gezer Excavation Project in Israel. He designed his fellowship to spend five weeks in the Israeli sun, excavating artifacts, learning how to properly record daily site work and attending lectures.

Upon returning home, Thames and his students from The Woodlands Christian Academy near Houston constructed a 50'x50'x6' simulated archaeological dig of their own called Tel Ya'ar (tel meaning "mound," ya'ar meaning "woods").

The site consists of three levels corresponding to different time periods within ancient Israel's history, with each level concealing artifacts and features corresponding to the historical context of that particular time. Thames brought back some items from Israel, with others coming from eBay, gardening stores and The Home Depot.

**Thames' students aren't the only ones benefiting from the excavation, as multiple teachers on campus incorporate the "big dig" into their own academic agendas.**

Geology teachers analyze the rocks and sedimentary forms, math classes study statistics based on the probability of finding items in each section, and

Latin and Biblical studies students draw conclusions about the possible inhabitants, their socio-economic status and their daily lives.

Finally, Thames' high school archaeology students created a hands-on, multidisciplinary curriculum, using Tel Ya'ar to teach elementary students history, math, religion and science.

"How often does a person get a chance to live a dream? How often does one get a chance to dig into history...to tread where the dead once lived...to see what once was...to see the story of history?" asked Thames. "Fund for Teachers let me live my dream for five weeks."

Now, his entire school is getting their hands dirty, as well.

To follow Thames' blog and his students' progress, please visit [http://web.me.com/londonriverblog/Tel\\_Yaar/Welcome.html](http://web.me.com/londonriverblog/Tel_Yaar/Welcome.html). ■



Printup becomes street art on the Berlin Wall.



# Pursuing Justice with a Paint Brush

Whether it's a fresco on the Sistine Chapel or spray paint on Berlin's steel subways, art expresses the artist's emotions, environment and human condition.

Krystyna Printup spent her summer (and her Fund for Teachers fellowship) traversing Western Europe, listening to the voices of pain and protest captured in the street art of Berlin, Paris, Rome, Venice and Vienna. She returned to Brooklyn's Bushwick School for Social Justice determined to empower her students with non-violent means of expressing their own struggles through art.

"I wanted to teach my students to follow the centuries-old practice of street artists," said Printup, "to react not with a fist, but with a brush, and to share with them the everlasting power of mark-making."

On the first day of school, Printup posted a sign up sheet for her after school mural-making project. She recognized the names of some "artsy" students whom she expected to enlist. Seeing the names of more problematic students shocked her.

"Watching normally hostile students, still dressed in gang colors, pick up a brush and PAINT amazed me!" said Printup. "For students who regularly cut

my class to show up, help, and show excitement about participating was unbelievable."

Printup's pack of painters channeled their emotions and dreams onto administrative walls, teacher lounges and school halls through art. The three murals depict artists, the community and leaders as they relate to the school's theme of social justice.

According to Printup, the murals are uniting the school. Students are sharing their ideas and are empowered, focused and more curious and engaged than ever. The freedom to mark on a school wall with no repercussions motivates a few; but, for most of them, art's driving force was creating something of permanence.

"The thirteen students who ended up dedicated to the project are my pack of kids," Printup said. "They are positive role models who are slowly making our school beautiful. Each day, I want them to experience the beauty and strength they bring to our school walls and then exemplify those traits at home and on the streets." ■



Top to bottom: Printup's fellowship provided the opportunity to explore Western Europe's variety of street art. Printup and her students working on their "Art and Social Justice" mural.

# Drafting a Business Plan, Re-Writing a Destiny

**Teaching business computer application classes at East Iberville Elementary/High School bored Tracy Martin. And if she was bored, she figured her students were numb.**

In this southern Louisiana parish, where a depressed economy leads to poor education which results in low motivation, Martin (and her students) needed a spark. A representative from Rural School and Community Trust suggested Fund for Teachers.

Martin applied for and received a Fund for Teachers grant to attend the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship conference in Baltimore, MD. There, she learned how to write business plans and developed a passion for teaching computer basics in a new way. Instead of explaining the applications by the book, she opted to challenge the students to create their own business plans

incorporating investor presentations (using PowerPoint), business cards (using Word), fliers (using Publisher) and financial reports (using Excel).

"Most of these kids won't go to college," admitted Martin, "so giving them a way to contribute to society and pursue prosperity fueled my teaching. I encouraged them to identify a need in their community and create a business servicing that need using the tools and materials I brought back from the conference."

During the fall semester, her students drafted viable business plans and practiced presentations weekly in preparation for the spring when they will seek seed money for their ventures. Martin's Fund for Teachers grant helped turn a student's business education requirement into an opportunity to enhance their community and their wallets, giving Iberville Parish the potential for new commerce and her students a chance at a new destiny. ■



Martin assists a student creating business cards.



Martin's students present their business plan for a new sporting goods store.



“Teachers create generations, one mind at a time.”

- Mary White, Bilingual Educator, Houston, Texas



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