

ODYSSEY

A PUBLICATION OF FUND FOR TEACHERS

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Plank Fellowship Winners
- Red Carpet Evening
- Where Are They Now?

Following Fellows on Flickr

The world awaits our 371 Fellows this summer and you can eye their itineraries by linking to a Flickr map via the Fellows section of our homepage.



Food for Thought, A National Book Series

Authors, like teachers, invent, imagine, explore, create and inspire. Join us in Houston this fall when Debbie Phelps, teacher, principal and mother of Olympic icon Michael Phelps, headlines the first Fund for Teachers "Food for Thought" event by discussing her new book, *A Mother for All Seasons: A Memoir*. Watch for similar Fund for Teachers events in program locations across the country. All proceeds will support transcendent learning experiences for teachers.

Twice as Nice

Congratulations to our newest "repeat" Fellows, each of whom first received a grant in 2004. After waiting the mandatory five years before re-applying, the following educators will once again represent Fund for Teachers in their global pursuits: Toai Dao (MFEF), Matthew Strand (ELS) and Kathryn Barclay (Houston).

May We Introduce...

Fund for Teachers proudly announces the exemplary educators representing us around the world this summer. Hailing from 25 states and 254 schools, 399 teachers received more than \$1.6 million in grants this year. Their personal journeys actually began nine months ago when the 2009 grant cycle opened. After careful planning and writing, these educators' applications met with intense competition from worthy peers, screenings at the national level, and in-depth review by local selection committees. Those teachers designated as 2009 Fellows now close their classroom doors and embark on self-designed odysseys in 54 countries on 6 continents.



Fellows from the Western region of Oklahoma.

"We truly believe that Fund for Teachers changes the world one teacher at a time," said Karen Kovach Webb, executive director of Fund for Teachers. "These grants act as catalysts to inspire and bring about change within the teacher, the classroom and the community."

A complete list of our 2009 Fellows and their chosen areas of inquiry can be found on our homepage at www.fundforteachers.org. Turn to pages 4-5 for a cross-section of our Fellows and a visual representation of the global experiences awaiting them.





2000 Post Oak Boulevard, Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77056
713-296-6127 or 800-681-2667
Fax 713-296-6134

Board of Directors

Frederick M. Bohen, Chairman
Former COO
Rockefeller University

Raymond Plank, Founder
Founder
Apache Corporation

Justine Stamen Arrillaga
Founder and Co-Chair
The TEAK Fellowship

John Gulla
Head of School
The Blake School

Patricia A. Graham
Charles Warren Professor of the
History of Education Emerita
Harvard University

G. Steven Farris
Chairman and CEO
Apache Corporation

Robert L. Hughes
President
New Visions for Public Schools

Walter Smith
Managing Partner
Baker Botts, LLP

Karen Kovach Webb
Executive Director
Fund for Teachers

Community Partners

AchieveMpls
Atlanta Education Fund
Boston Plan for Excellence
Chicago Foundation for Education
Expeditionary Learning Schools
Marcus Foster Education Fund
New Visions for Public Schools
Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence
Rural School and Community Trust
The Blake School
The Saint Paul Foundation
The Maynard Education Foundation
Tulsa Community Foundation

WWW.FUNDFORTEACHERS.ORG

From the Executive Director

Level playing fields don't exist, nor are all teachers created equal. Teachers who rise above the ambiguous "standard" are entrepreneurial risk-takers who choose to continually acquire learning that directly impacts students. Fund for Teachers resembles an economic engine empowering teachers' self-designed projects during the summer months that subsequently serve as the jumping off points for innovative classrooms for years to come.



Evening in the Orchard Event Chair Pete Miller with Fellows Lisa Anders, Sarah and Aaron Reedy and Executive Director, Karen Kovach Webb.

In addition to providing the capital for self-designed projects, Fund for Teachers also strives to build "social capital" between teachers, corporations, donors and the communities in which all co-exist. Teachers are the direct beneficiaries of individuals and corporate donors across the country and all work in conjunction with our Community Partners referenced several times in this issue of the Odyssey. The end result is a well-oiled machine operating under the Fund for Teachers flag to spread the message about our Fellows' remarkable work so that even more are encouraged to join the cause.

But if our organization is the engine, our Fellows and their stories are the gasoline. They provide countless inspiring stories to share, several featured in this issue. This summer, 399 teachers set out on individually-forged pathways as Fund for Teachers Fellows. We, along with their students, follow these wayfarers via blogs and online updates on Facebook and Twitter and invite you to do the same. Visit our website, be part of the journey and spread the word.



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.

Where are They Now?



Habitat volunteers on site in Nayarit, Mexico.

In 2003, Patty O'Connell received a Fund for Teachers grant to travel through Central America and bring experiences back to students at Brooklyn College Academy. She included volunteering in her itinerary as a way to immerse herself in the history and cultures of the region. Patty collaborated with Habitat for Humanity's Global Village, working alongside homeowners and local volunteers to build a home in Guatemala. Six years later, that experience continues to shape Patty's life and the lives of students and teachers she enlists on annual building projects.

"Since my 2003 trip to Guatemala, generously funded by Fund for Teachers, I've led Habitat trips in Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico and worked with my students on a local build in Brooklyn," Patty said. "I'm also planning fundraising efforts to support Habitat for Humanity through the sale of my photography and artwork, and I'm already planning next year's trips to Colombia and Cambodia."

Patty's Fund for Teachers fellowship still impacts her teaching and her students. Recognizing the dire needs of the Guatemalans motivated her to make a greater impact in the world. She subsequently earned a masters of social work in 2006 and currently works as a high school social worker at The Urban Assembly Academy of Government and Law in New York City. Patty actively encourages her classes to engage in community service projects, hoping

that placing students in the shoes of those less fortunate inspires them to give back.

Patty's experience personifies Fund for Teachers' belief that teachers have the power to transform learning for themselves, their students and their communities. Drawing students and colleagues into her Habitat efforts exponentially extends the power of one 2003 grant around the world.



Patty with Habitat homeowner Juan in Rincon de Guayabitos, Mexico.

Definition Please

Fund for Teachers relies on our Community Partners as representatives in cities across the country. They serve as the primary contact with our applicants and Fellows and manage all aspects of marketing, application processing, selection committees and award notifications. Community Partners share our mission and take local ownership of the program. They are charged with raising money toward an endowment to cover their Fellows' grants and ancillary program costs, and help evaluate our program annually to make it even stronger.

"Our Community Partners are vital to accomplishing Fund for Teachers' mission," explained Perrin Worrell, Fund for Teachers' program manager. "Intrinsically woven into their school districts, our Community Partners possess an awareness of the educational fabric for their areas that we can't tap at a national level. They also witness Fund for Teachers' impact firsthand as they initiate and maintain relationships with our Fellows."

A few exceptions exist to our Community Partner model. We operate the Houston program out of our national office to remain aware of what we're asking from our Community Partners. We are also in the process of pursuing Community Partners in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Los Angeles – cities where donors provided funding for fellowships but we have yet to secure a local partner. If you have suggestions for Community Partners, please contact Meghan Knox at meghan.knox@fundforteachers.org.



Fund for Teachers is a proud partner of



JONES NEW YORK
IN THE CLASSROOM

Oh the Places They'll Go

The variety of disciplines and destinations represented by our exemplary Fellows' itineraries combine the best of the Travel Channel, public television and *National Geographic*. Enjoy this cross-section of experiences represented on this world map and follow our Fellows as they contribute photos from their summer odysseys to the 2009 Fellows Flickr map on our website.

Canada

Steve Miller
Life Academy – Oakland
Work alongside a physician researcher and Qi-Gong expert in Toronto to develop a physical education program appropriate for underserved high school students

SOUTHERN PACIFIC OCEAN

Mexico

Amanda Klonksy
Jefferson Alternative – Chicago
Attend language school in order to more effectively serve Spanish-speaking incarcerated youth in Chicago

Iceland

Kathy Bailey and Kathryn Barclay
Falcon Pass Elementary – Houston
*Explore Iceland's geological wonders,
ecosystems and culture through an 11-day
study tour to create integrated studies*

Ireland

Mindy Rubin
Coulson Tough K-6 – Houston
*Attend the Fiddlers Retreat Work
in Ireland to increase knowledge
Irish style of violin performance*

United States

Tyler Alexander
North Country Union High School – Newport, VT
Attend the Civil War Institute at American University to explore the war's relationship to American politics, nationhood and race relations

Costa Rica

Kara Brunk, Janie Evans & Nicole Miranda
6th & 7th Grade Center – Tulsa
*Assist Ecology Project International in research
for international conservation of sea turtles to
improve hands-on learning for students*

Namibia

Jennifer Parsons, Leno
West Platte Elementary
*Conduct field studies in
access to water, water
of human and wildlife
elephants and working*

Brazil

Brazil
John Tschirgi
Kingsbridge International High School – New York
Explore the role of Capoeira (a martial arts/folk dance) in establishing a unique Afro-Brazilian identity and its use within the education system to teach students about slavery.

Fellows by Program

Program	Grant
Atlanta	14
The Blake School	5
Chicago	23
Expeditionary Learning	20
Houston	46
Los Angeles	7
Minneapolis	5
New York City	58
Oakland	11
Oklahoma	44
Rural Schools	11
Saint Paul	10
San Francisco	6
Washington DC	2



Community Partners Spotlight

Growing up in the Midwest, the most important influence in Fund for Teachers Founder Raymond Plank's life – other than his father – was his Latin teacher at The Blake School. Noah Foss was a towering figure who, according to Plank, gave him the focus and self-respect he needed. Out of respect to the instrumental roles Mr. Foss and The Blake School played in his life, Plank created Fund for Teachers nine years ago and awarded the first Fund for Teachers grants to Minneapolis-area educators.

To this day, educators at The Blake School continue to inspire future generations. A pre-kindergarten through grade 12, independent school located on three campuses in the Minneapolis metropolitan area, The Blake School recognizes that teachers have different needs at various times in their professional lives and is proud that its faculty members enjoy access to many different opportunities for professional development, including Fund for Teachers.

The Blake School Headmaster John Gulla has long been a champion of Fund for Teachers: "Inspired by an abiding desire to invest in those who invest in children, Fund for Teachers is an extraordinarily effective program that has a lasting impact on the teachers it serves. In 30 years in education, I have never encountered a program as profound as this one in its belief in and support of the eternal influence of a teacher."



What You Plant is What You Harvest

Fund for Teachers Hosts an Evening in the Orchard



Seeds of inquiry planted by our Fellows' experiences are destined to bear great fruit in the lives of their students, so an orchard was the perfect setting for Fund for Teachers' 2009 fundraiser on April 25th in Houston. Apple trees laden with votives greeted guests entering behind a spectacular procession of Willowridge High School's marching band. Aaron Reedy, 2008 Fellow from Chicago, shared with guests his fellowship experience, followed by event chair Pete Miller, Chairman, President and CEO of National Oilwell Varco, who spoke on the impact a particular teacher made on his life. Cocktails and dinner preceded the highlight of the evening: Jim Belushi and The Sacred Hearts' raucous rhythm and blues performance. Belushi and his stellar band revved the crowd for more than an hour, slowing down only to present Mr. Miller with an autographed guitar in gratitude for his support of Fund for Teachers.



Orchard guests John and Danielle Ellis with Tony Petrello

Red Carpet Evening for Fellow and Students



Robert Jeffers and Dorsey High School students on the Film Fest 4 red carpet

On June 4 in Los Angeles, 17 student film makers attended the Dorsey High School Film Fest 4 red carpet event at 20th Century Fox's Little Theatre to debut their commercials, music videos, PSAs, narratives and documentaries resulting from teacher Robert Jeffers' year-long film production and editing class. Fox executives, film organizations, teachers, parents and the film makers themselves enjoyed the screening of 10 films and received encouragement from Robert, Dorsey High School film program alumni Alma Alegria and Devindra Somadhi, Jr., and Fox STAR Mentor Program Director Deborah Bryant. The evening's finale saw David Sosa win Best Overall/Best Direction and Christopher Simmons win Best Editing. Both received something better than an Oscar – \$1000 college scholarships from 20th Century Fox. For more information about Robert's fellowship, see page 8.

Plank Fellowship Award Grows in Scope

The Plank Fellowship Award represents the highest recognition our organization bestows. In the past four years, we awarded one annual winner; but with 515 Fellows continuing to maximize their 2008 fellowships through transformative teaching, we couldn't limit the recognition to just one educator.

In February, 2008 Fellows provided applications to their Community Partners that included brief descriptions of how they leveraged their fellowships upon returning home, as well as letters of recommendation from administrators, colleagues, students and their parents. Community Partners selected one local winner and then forwarded that educator's information to our national office. In the end, Fund for Teachers celebrated National Teacher Day on May 5 by announcing one national winner and 13 local recipients. Some winners learned the news "Publisher's Clearinghouse" style with balloons and all received plaques in recognition of their honor.

Following are brief descriptions of our local Plank Fellowship Award winners and our national winner, Corey Pickering.

Corey Pickering, Millennium High School, Manhattan, NY

(in partnership with New Visions for Public Schools)

Corey's fellowship immersed her in the Muslim nation of Turkey to gain the knowledge and experience needed to conduct with confidence her Islamic Art History course. After spending one month visiting the museums and historical sites of Istanbul, Cappadocia and Selcuk, she created a new curriculum based on her experience, culminating with a final project: a mock summit between students representing seven Muslim-majority countries. In addition, she founded a Critical Inquiry teacher group; accepted responsibilities of department facilitator; became the school photographer; and served on the committee that selected New York's 2009 Fellows.

NVPS' Ron Chalusian, Vice President of Programs, Corey, and Robert Rhodes, Millennium High School principal.



Kathy Clunis, Mission Hill School, Boston, MA

(in partnership with Boston Plan for Excellence)

Kathy's fellowship enabled her to improve her Spanish-speaking skills while also studying schoolyard ecology in Bolivia and Argentina. Back at Mission Hill School, Kathy organized a Friday lunch group of solely Spanish speakers; offered students Spanish classes two mornings a week; and led students in planting four trees in a community-wide celebration at which students spoke about why trees are important and created a video for the PBS children's show *Arthur* about the topic. Kathy's classroom now travels to nearby schools, giving their presentation on trees, recycling and endangered animals.



Kathy flanked by her students at the surprise award presentation.

Trey Thame, The Woodlands Christian Academy, Houston, TX

Trey's fellowship partnered him with the Tel Gezer Project, a consortium of universities, seminaries and the Israeli Antiquities Department to excavate a site in Tel Gezer, Israel, where he learned proper techniques of modern archaeology. Back home, Trey constructed a 50'x50'x6' simulated dig named Tel Ya'ar (Hill of the Woodlands) with relics of four homes, five skeletons, and approximately 350 artifacts corresponding to three ancient Israel eras. Biology, anatomy, mathematics, geology, history and Biblical studies teachers utilize the dig for lesson application and each of his high school students assume a supervisory role for three weeks, learning leadership skills.



Erin Goodling, Civic Center Secondary School, San Francisco, CA

Last summer, Erin worked on a small homestead farm in Umbria, Italy, to develop recipes for her interdisciplinary curriculum, inform the development of an urban garden, inspire a reverence for healthy individuals and communities, and set a tone for collaboration among students and colleagues in the social service agency where she teaches 60 homeless students. Upon returning to San Francisco, Erin created weekly cooking sessions to teach students about budgeting, culinary techniques, menu planning, local and seasonal produce, and interpersonal communications. She also led her students in the construction of an urban garden at one of the agency housing sites, empowering students to plant and harvest their own fresh vegetables and herbs and witness the food cycle first-hand.



Erin cutting vegetables harvested from her new urban garden at the social service agency where she teaches.

Donna McSweeney and Lynn Talamini, The Cabot School, West Danville, VT

(in partnership with Rural School and Community Trust)

Donna and Lynn's fellowship led to rural schools in New Zealand to observe best practices in teaching and math literacy. Upon returning home, they set about transforming The Cabot School's methods of mathematical instruction. Furthermore, inspired by the playgrounds witnessed in New Zealand and the integral roles they play in the daily lives of students, Donna and Lynn mounted a campaign to create a similar playground to serve as a recreation site and outdoor classroom.



Donna and Lynn following their award presentation.

Cindy Coughlin and Sandra Collins, Alice B. Beal Elementary, Springfield, MA

(in partnership with Expeditionary Learning Schools)

Cindy and Sandra spent their fellowship trekking across Norway to research "Friluftsliv"—a combination of physical, mental and social pursuits of outdoor activity. Upon returning to their classrooms, this teacher team created "Friluftsliv Expeditions," monthly, full-day outdoor classrooms incorporating hiking, leisure walking, snowshoeing and orienteering; hosted International Walk to School Day; mapped Safe Routes to School; developed Family Park Walks, reconnecting families with public park lands; installed bike racks; hosted student rider/bike rodeos and bike safety classes; and conceived Mighty Milers, a running/walking incentive program, the first of its kind in the state.



District PE Instructional Leader Colleen Walsh, Cindy, Sandra, and Principal Linda Finlason.

Plank Fellowship Award Grows in Scope *(Continued)*

Melody Aufill and Donna McChesney, Yale Elementary School, Yale, OK

(in partnership with the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and the Tulsa Community Foundation)

Melody and Donna recreated the adventures of the young Abernathy Boys in the early 1900s, using their fellowship to travel more than 9,000 miles and see major and minor cultural and political landmarks to inspire students to seek their own adventures. Back in their classrooms, they oversaw students' production of an ABC picture book about the Abernathy Boys to share with younger classes; assisted students in their use of video and still photographs from the trip to create entries for the Oklahoma State Media Festival; and created a teachers guide on Abernathy literature.

Robert Jeffers, Susan Miller Dorsey High School, Los Angeles, CA

Robert applied his fellowship toward traveling from New York to Seattle to New Orleans, documenting through film interviews, tours, and school visits the emergence of an important form of urban greenspace – the garden. During the fall 2008 semester, students enrolled in his film production course and profiled the people and organizations promoting community and school gardens in Los Angeles. Students spent the rest of the school year editing the footage into a documentary short film that premiered at a red carpet event at Fox Studios in June.

Julie Anderson, The College Prep School, Oakland, CA

(in partnership with the Marcus Foster Education Fund)

Julie, along with a 2003 Fellow and eight students, traveled to sub-Saharan Africa to promote more environmentally sustainable and widely-accessible transportation by helping a local businessman establish a bicycle shop. Inspired by her experiences, Julie added to her curriculum readings by a Nigerian female writer, *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga and *Tales of Freedom* by Ben Okri; created a new upper level seminar that centers around international literature (particularly African); and revised the ninth grade curriculum to include a book about African slaves in the Caribbean called *The Kingdom of This World*.

Ziomara Perez, Nettelhorst Elementary School, and Megan Whitney, Audubon Elementary School, Chicago, IL

(in partnership with the Chicago Foundation for Education)

Zio and Megan traveled to South Africa, Swaziland and Madagascar on their fellowship to conduct professional development for teachers at three schools, as well as hand-deliver to African students goodie bags which were assembled by their preschoolers. Back in Chicago, Zio and Megan launched a fundraiser to pay for the education of children in Swaziland and created a pilot program designed to replicate their African mission by helping Chicago public preschool classrooms in dire need of materials and supplies.

Donna and Melody (left) and (right) with OFE's Dayna Rowe.



2008 Fellow
Robert Jeffers



Julie with
MFEF's Leo
Lammanna.



Megan and Zio
in Cape Town.



Fund for Teachers
2000 Post Oak Boulevard, Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77056-4400



