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**From the Executive Director**

Teachers are catalysts: people who precipitate an event or change. Student achievement, learning environments, classroom morale are all precipitated by professional and evolving teachers. As long as excellent teachers exist, we wait on no Super-fix.

For all of our unsung heroes who guide and educate children, I am grateful. We've had the pleasure of working with more than 4,000 dedicated pros during our first ten years. Each, in their own way, guides students, leading them to knowledge, vision and insight. Building on fellowships catalyzed by our donors, our Fellows daily infuse their changed perspectives on teaching and learning into 2,395 schools across the country. We celebrate this gift of learning for teachers and students alike.



Karen prepares FFT's Annual Campaign mailing with help of Apache volunteers Susie Zaccaria and Christy Grace.

Teaching is about the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, but that's not the whole story. Teachers, as lead learners, elevate and model the experience of learning to a level that includes achievement and excitement. We spent a good deal of time during this past year listening to and working with our grant recipients – through our first Institute and several inaugural Alumni events – to better understand what a good learning experience meant for them in order to better foster it for others. These thoughtful practitioners discussed not only the changes in their teaching practice, but also their students' equally enriched dimensions of learning inspired by the independent work and study teachers pursued on their fellowships. We're sharing some of these stories with you in this *Odyssey*. Takeaway: we all need to keep learning.

Fund for Teachers is an integrated agency of partnerships, donors, volunteers, teachers and friends. While applications for summer 2011 are open for prospective Fellows, it takes our entire support team of alumnae, school administrators, staff, directors and corporate volunteers to reach more teachers and more students. December and January are full of local information sessions and net-based webinars. Tell a colleague, tell a parent, write a check.

Our successful efforts are predicated on yours. Be a catalyst. Give inspiration. Help Superman.

*Peace, Karen Kovach Webb*

Karen Kovach Webb  
Executive Director



**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.

# The Gift of Peace

The greeting “Namaste” acknowledges the belief that a “Divine spark” resides within each of us – be it Brooklyn students enrolled in Shannon Lynch’s after-school yoga club, or the residents of Nairobi’s Kariobongi slum to whom she taught yoga this summer on her FFT fellowship.

“The young people I teach at the Urban Assembly for Law & Justice are primarily from historically disadvantaged populations; either low-income students of color, LGBT identified (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), in special education, and sometimes, all three,” explained Shannon. “Many of them report high levels of stress and depression, and difficulties staying focused. To combat the socio-emotional issues that hinder at-risk students’ success, I approach my teaching from a holistic perspective and have witnessed how yoga and meditation can enable students to self-soothe and regain focus in the classroom and beyond.”



“Sharing yoga poses will lead to sharing about the implications yoga has on their lives as students, family members and citizens.”

- Shannon Lynch

Left: Shannon assumes the “Powerful Pose” with fellow instructors from the AYP.

Below: Shannon leads a yoga class for children in Nairobi’s Kariobongi slum.



Shannon wanted to learn from another community and culture demonstrating success with at-risk youth using alternative teaching methods. Inspired by the Africa Yoga Project’s (AYP) efforts to enhance street youth’s well-being through yoga, she traveled to Nairobi on her FFT fellowship to explore how AYP empowers students to translate ‘yoga moments’ off the mat and into their lives.

Shannon never imagined that these learning moments would surface when practicing yoga on dirt floors in buildings bordered with raw sewage or within the Langata Women’s Prison alongside children of their incarcerated mothers. Despite the conditions, Shannon found the Kenyans full of joy, love and laughter. She returned to Brooklyn convinced that her students could arrive at a similar place of wholeness, despite the barriers in their way.

Shannon plans to extend the fellowship’s impact by linking her Brooklyn students to those in Nairobi through yoga. “Using flip cameras, I want my students to create and film their own yoga sequences to exchange with their peers in Nairobi,” said Shannon. “Sharing yoga poses will lead to sharing about the implications yoga has on their lives as students, family members and citizens.”



## Food for Thought Luncheon

Houston friends “defied gravity” in October, participating in the second annual Food for Thought luncheon. Gregory Maguire, author of the best-selling *Wicked* series, transported guests from his childhood orphanage to the Broadway stage with an inspirational testimony to the power of imagination. Honoring the depth of Fund for Teachers’ work—funding teachers’ professional development experiences that impact student achievement—guests and sponsors gave generously, raising \$100,000 for Fund for Teachers.

Above: Chair Danielle Ellis (r) with Gregory Maguire and Dr. Kelly Cohen-Fein, this year’s honoree who volunteered to chair the 2011 event.



## FFT Welcomes New Board Member

We are pleased to announce that Jeff Edmondson, executive director, Strive Partnership, has joined Fund for Teachers’ board of directors.

The Strive Partnership is a coalition of postsecondary, K-12, business and non-profit organizations in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky aimed at increasing educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment of students throughout the region.

Jeff brings a wealth of experience to the board. He previously served as program assistant at the 21st Century School Fund, peaceable schools coordinator at Woodrow Wilson Senior High, and as a member of the Peace Corps in Gabon, Central Africa.

Jeff’s dedication and commitment will help Fund for Teachers build and sustain our outreach to teachers across the country.

Fund for Teachers is a proud partner of



# The Gift of Learning



Reflecting on their fellowships, Fellows share how the gift of learning transformed them personally and professionally. As all of our 4,000 Fellows transfer their experiences into classrooms and communities, they unwrap potential and light up the minds of students across the country.



**"TAKE RISKS!** I emphatically declare to my students on a daily basis. "As a teacher, how do I teach my students to do this? I have concluded that the best way is to take risks alongside them. My fellowship this summer helped me to take many artistic and academic risks, which are now propelling me to explore uncharted territory in my teaching."

*Julie Yick, teacher at San Francisco's Gateway High School, researched Puerto Rico's African, Taíno, and European roots through history, music and arts as a lens for understanding Puerto Rican culture.*



"This adventure was one of the most gratifying experiences in my professional career... it had been over ten years since I was able to take the time to truly learn about my content in the field. After years of research using web sources and text, this fellowship reinvigorated my desire to teach my subject matter to my students. Geology has never felt more alive to me than when I was in Iceland. Glaciers, geysers, geothermal energy, granite rock, and gigantic fault lines made me grateful to be an Earth science teacher."

*Derek Dubossi, teacher at New York City's Bronx Academy of Letters, explored the geologic landscape of Iceland to enhance the historical and physical geology units in his Earth science curriculum.*

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Wendy and Meredith learn from a Dominican micro entrepreneur.

## The Gift of Self-Reliance

One year ago, math teachers Meredith Innis and Wendy Lai were assigned to teach the Entrepreneurship class at Boston's The English High School in fall 2010. Charting unknown territory, they turned to the Network For Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) for a curriculum and support, and applied for an FFT grant to witness entrepreneurship in action in the Dominican Republic.

"We chose specifically to explore micro entrepreneurship here because of the parallels between these emerging business people and our students," explained Wendy. "Microfinance loans range from \$50-\$100, an amount within our students' reach, and traveling to the Dominican Republic was an opportunity to better understand many of our learners with Dominican heritage."

In addition to enrolling in Intensive Spanish Language courses in Santo Domingo, Meredith and Wendy explored housing communities on sugar cane farms to learn from its residents about how they borrow, build, work, and repay their way to better lives for themselves and their families.

"Our visits with the community banks and local businesses left us inspired by the dedication and diligence of so many," said Wendy. "Our experiences exploring the country and learning from its people gave us a better understanding of the hearts and minds of our students back home in Boston. Our fellowship left us with a greater passion for and a deeper connection with the work we do in educating a diverse student population to become socially responsible and informed young adults."

In November, Wendy took their Entrepreneurship class to New York City's Wholesale District, where

students leveraged their own \$50 microfinance loans obtained through NFTE to purchase items for resale at a community-wide holiday bazaar. After repaying their loans, students will donate a portion of their profits to fellow entrepreneurs through the microfinance clearinghouse Kiva.org.

*"Our fellowship left us with a greater passion for and a deeper connection with the work we do..."*

- Wendy Lai

"We want our students to come away from this experience realizing that anything is possible if you put your mind to it," said Meredith. "It doesn't matter how humble your beginnings, one can overcome a lot of adversity by diligently and persistently following your dreams. A lot of our students might not make the connections between their math or English classes and the 'real world.' But through our fellowship, we're teaching them that paying attention, working hard, and applying principles learned can yield not only great financial results, but also resilience."



Budding entrepreneurs display their purchases from the NYC Wholesale Shopping Event.



Give at: [www.fundforteachers.org/give-campaign/](http://www.fundforteachers.org/give-campaign/)

## Be a Catalyst

Fund for Teachers needs your help to inspire teacher and student growth. Please participate in our Annual Giving Campaign today.

# The Gift of Creativity

Father Diego Cera and Scotty Graham share much in common. Fr. Cera, a Spanish missionary to the Philippines in the 1800s, left a legacy of music for his parishioners; Scotty, a teacher in Pearland, TX, is building a legacy of learning for his students. Their common tool: the pipe organ.

Scotty's "Switched-On Physics" program at Dawson High School encourages students to explore and apply math and science concepts through hands-on projects. After learning about Fr. Cera's 17th century pipe organ constructed entirely from bamboo and still operational in Las Piñas City, Philippines, Scotty applied for and was awarded an FFT grant to see it for himself – and for his students. In June, he spent ten days observing, studying and playing the Las Piñas Bamboo Organ. He also met with a local high school physics teacher to create a virtual community for their students.



Scotty was allowed to play the Las Piñas Bamboo Organ during his fellowship.

"I wanted to study the engineering behind the Las Piñas organ and connect our students with the remarkable vision of Fr. Cera, who overcame tremendous obstacles to realize his vision of constructing a tropical organ," he said. Scotty believed Cera's eight-year project, which included preserving the bamboo pipes in Manila's sand for a year to make them resistant to termites, held scientific and life lessons for his students.

"The scientific concepts my students will learn as they build their own bamboo pipe organ include engineering, recycling, acoustics, fluid mechanics and mathematics," said Scotty. "But on a larger scale, they will learn from Fr. Cera's incredible drive to succeed. His example of working around limitations to surmount obstacles can inspire our students as they face challenges in their academic and professional lives in the pursuit of their dreams."

Scotty presented to the Texas Science Teachers Association about his FFT fellowship this fall and plans to share his story at the National Science Teachers Association's conference in San Francisco this spring. In addition to the pipe organ building project, Scotty is raising funds for a team of students, colleagues, sponsors and community members to attend Las Piñas' Bamboo Organ Festival in February 2011.

## The Gift of Exploration *(Continued)*

Jessica is developing an entomology unit for students about basic insect identification. Students will correspond with Jessica's teammates from Ethiopia to raise research questions and design experiments. She hopes to work with a group of expatriate students in Bahar Dar to establish a cultural and scientific exchange.



Left: Jackpot! Collecting quarry from a pitfall trap.

Jessica collects insects using the single climbing rope technique.

"At first glance, I am a science teacher," said Jessica, "but by sharing my experiences in Ethiopia, students get the sense that I am an explorer, a photographer, a writer, an adventurer, and an eager student. If I can be all these things, they can too."

To read more about Jessica's adventures, visit her blog: Bugcounter - Bringing Science, Adventure, and an Appreciation of Other Cultures into the Classroom, at <http://bugcounter.wordpress.com>.



Chicago Fellows discuss implementation plans of their fellowships.

## Reflection

FFT eagerly anticipates each Fellow's updates throughout the summer, and we are invigorated by hearing their insights each fall during our *Reflection* events. These events allow Fellows to share with each other ideas surfaced through hindsight.

"Teachers often get caught up in routine when returning to the classroom after an FFT fellowship," said Sarah Rossi, program manager for FFT's Chicago partner, Chicago Foundation for Education. "*Reflection* serves as an opportunity for Fellows to reconnect with their exhilarating summer experiences and share ideas for incorporating those experiences into their classrooms. The sharing is key; many teachers walk away inspired by things they witness colleagues already implementing post-fellowship."

## The Gift that Gives Twice

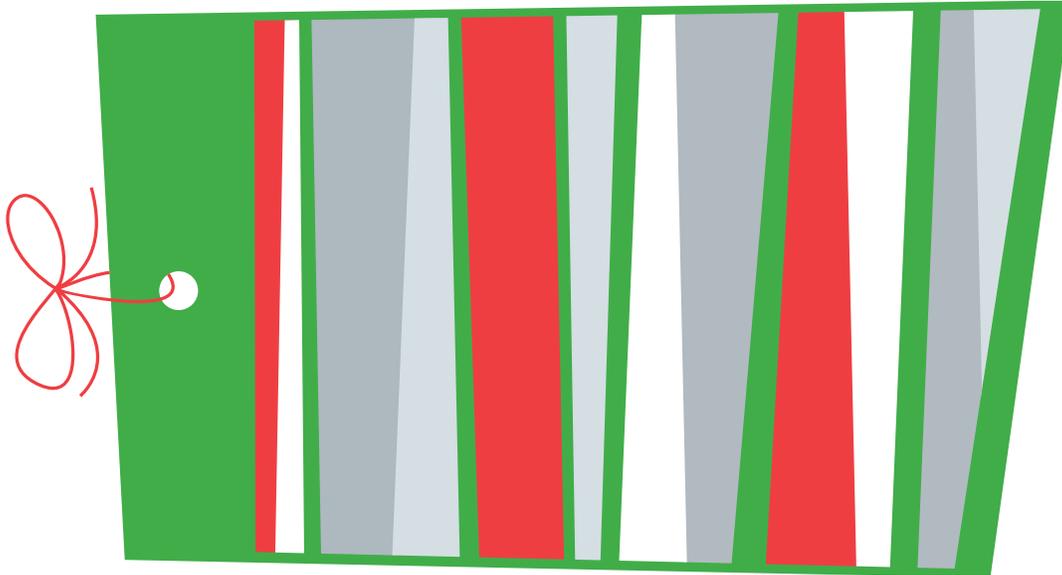
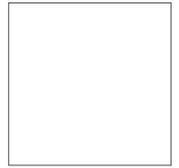
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Go to [www.goodshop.com](http://www.goodshop.com), select Fund for Teachers as your charity, and make your holiday gift giving twice as nice!

The logo for GoodShop.com, featuring the word "GoodShop" in a blue, sans-serif font with a yellow halo above the letter "o".



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## Alumni Updates

**Roweena Adalla** (New York 2009) was named “Most Outstanding Filipino Teacher” by the Association of Filipino Teachers of America.

**Robert Jeffers** (Los Angeles 2008) was named a 2010-2011 Los Angeles County Teacher of the Year, representing the profession’s “best of the best” in the state’s largest honors competition for K-12 educators.

**Dawn Staples-Knox** (Searsport, ME 2010) will present at the National Science Teachers’ Convention in San Francisco in March on her fellowship experience excavating, recording, and preserving Mammoth bones with the Earthwatch Institute in Hot Springs, SD.

**Bernadette Ward** (Oklahoma 2004) is Oklahoma’s first recipient of the Horace Mann-Abraham Lincoln Fellowship, and has earned three National Endowment of the Humanities grants since her fellowship to Korea.

**Shakera Walker** (Boston 2007) and **Monica Sims** (Chicago 2008) were chosen by NBC to participate in its Education Nation Summit at Rockefeller Plaza in September.

**Kristi Piper, Jessica Tompkins and Barbara Wells** (Houston 2010), inspired by their fellowship to a writers’ conference, created a novel-writing challenge at Manvel High School. More than 100 students participated!

**Pam Williamson** (Opelika, AL 2010) after a local reporter heard of her fellowship that traced her grandfather’s final days as a foot soldier in France, was invited to participate in a Veterans’ pilgrimage to the World War II Memorial in Washington DC.

**Jane Connealy and Julie Shonewise** (Lincoln, NE 2010) in October welcomed to their school-wide assembly Immaculée Ilibagiza, the Rwandan genocide survivor whom they visited this summer on their FFT fellowship.

**Kim Kelly** (New York City 2010) wrote and published a young adult novel, *L.E.S. Love, Eloquence and Stars*, this fall. Kelly honed her writing skills this summer on her fellowship to Columbia University’s Oral History Project, followed by a trip through Italy to capture her own family story.

**Melanie Fay** (Onalaska, WI 2010) is implementing at Franklin Elementary a compassionate communication initiative called “Giraffe Talk” rooted in a giraffe’s clear vision, exemplary listening ability and largest heart of all land animals. Fay developed this program after her two-week fellowship at the International Intensive Training on Nonviolent Communication workshop in Albuquerque, NM.

**Christina West and Jennifer Velasquez** (Houston 2010) presented to the Texas Foreign Language Association’s conference about their fellowship exploring the historical context and cultural repercussions of the Spanish Civil War.

Share your updates: [info@fundforteachers.org](mailto:info@fundforteachers.org).