

ODYSSEY

Volume 7, Summer 2011

A PUBLICATION OF FUND FOR TEACHERS

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433 Teachers Awarded FFT Grants

FFT awarded \$1.7 million in teacher grants this spring, validating their work and empowering their personal and professional growth. This summer, they depart to 61 countries on all 7 continents to model lifelong learning for their students in 277 schools across the country. Our website links to the fascinating fellowships they designed; their adventures will also be chronicled on facebook.com/fundforteachers.

“ It is no exaggeration to say that EVERY day of this school year I contemplated my Fund for Teachers fellowship and the lessons learned. It has become a part of me...everything I do, everything I say, every interaction I have with a student. I am better for it and all I interact with benefit from the 'new' me. ”

Scott Olinske, 2010 Oklahoma, pictured during his fellowship as a guest speaker in an Australian classroom. He observed teaching and classroom management skills to learn how to better address cultural diversity among his school's student population.



Terri and Danielle in front of Kilimani's mission statement.

V.I.P. Teachers in Any Language

Maasai warriors outside a Kenyan village re-named Terri Wellner and Danielle Merdin “Mwalimu Naserian” and “Mwalimu Naramat” last summer because of their work at Kilimani Integrated Primary School. Boston's Henderson Inclusion Elementary School adopted the new titles “Teacher who blesses children” and “Teacher who cares for children” after the women leveraged their FFT fellowship into a community-wide movement focused on empowering students with disabilities.

Danielle and Terri teach students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers in general education classrooms. Their 2010 fellowship originally revolved around bringing the sights and sounds of equatorial Africa to their fourth and fifth grade classrooms. An incidental part of the plan incorporated a visit to a potential partner school in Kenya. Everything changed, however, as they waited outside the headmaster's office at Kilimani Integrated Primary School. Turning around, they read the sign, “Disability is not inability. Give me a chance to prove it.” Inadvertently, Terri and Danielle found themselves in Nairobi's inclusive public school.

“As the headmaster shared his

school's mission statement and vision, we wept from the overwhelming feeling that this fellowship was bigger than us,” said Terri. “We realized we were meant to land in this school, meant to do something special. How could we just learn and enhance our own classroom and students? We needed to leave something behind, as well. We spent the next week teaching and learning from each other, dispelling myths, exploring similarities and differences, and marginalizing the 8,000 miles separating our students. Together, we laid the foundation for our Virtual Information Project.”

Today, the V.I.P. partnership pairs 43 Henderson students with 43 Kilimani students for comparative studies of Kenya's tropical ecosystem and New England's temperate ecosystem. Documenting their research are 18 digital African Animal Adaptation books the students created, published and are selling to benefit Kilimani Integrated Primary School.

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From the Executive Director

SUMMER VACATION [vey-kay-shun] n. (~~time for pleasure, rest, relaxation~~) a. hike the rainforests of Costa Rica, b. trek across Laos to learn about Hmong culture; c. take part in a writing workshop at Columbia; d. recreate Eratosthenes math experiments in Greece.

For the eleventh year in a row, Fund for Teachers Fellows are redefining summer vacation.

Our Fellows begin summer with an end goal in mind: To create great educational content. Each fellowship is as unique as the teacher who designed it. All include discovery, inspirational personal experiences, ideas and tools to reinvent classroom design and expand curriculum in order to help students shape and grow their own knowledge.

Fellowships do not end with the summer. We convene formal reflection meetings to consider all of the new techniques, curriculum and methods to provide a forum for teachers to collaborate. We host periodic alumni events to foster fellowship. Currently, new tools and web based systems are being developed to capture the power of the investigative learning of these teaching experts so that all teachers may benefit.

Because you are an important and special part of the Fund for Teachers family, I am pleased to share this edition of *Odyssey's* good news with you. I invite and encourage you to visit our website often this summer: Follow a Fellow – redefine summer.

For Fund for Teachers, our Fellows and supporters, these stories reflect the innovation, hard work and dedication of teachers. They also reflect the amazing things that are made possible through generous philanthropic support—things such as debate clubs and student-curated art museums—and the recognition and reward of some of the best classroom teachers in America.

Perhaps most important, changing teaching and learning for 4,400 teachers from 2,600 schools in 41 states across the country reiterates our commitment to supporting a growing effort of innovation in the school house locally and nationally.

Thank you for your commitment to Fund for Teachers and for your continued support. With your help, we can continue to redefine *summer vacation* and help teachers do and achieve great things.

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.

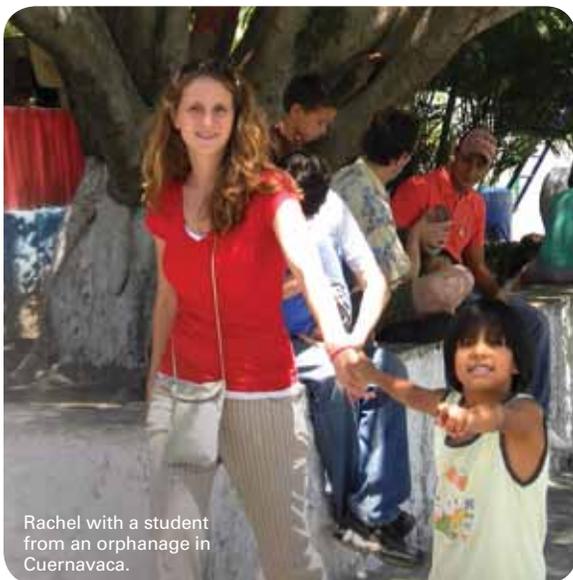


Back in the Classroom

The Ripple Effect of One Fellowship

“Poco a poco. Little by little,” advised the director of the Instituto Chac-Mool language school in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The director was describing one’s ability to learn conversational Spanish, Rachel Eddington’s goal for her FFT fellowship. But the saying also sums up Rachel’s efforts to build relationships between herself, students and their families back at Chicago’s Donald L. Morrill Math & Science Elementary School.

“A language barrier made talking with students about their progress disheartening, for the student and for me. And calling a student’s family was extremely intimidating since I felt insecure about my Spanish language skills,” explained Rachel. “I realized that to help students meet and exceed the expectations of our city, state, and their families, I needed to improve and increase communication with students and their support systems. I wrote an FFT proposal to live with a Mexican host family while attending a language immersion program in Cuernavaca.”



Rachel with a student from an orphanage in Cuernavaca.



Rachel works on Spanish grammar at Instituto Chac-Mool in Cuernavaca.



Rachel guides a fellow teacher through a children’s Spanish book during an N2N meeting in Chicago.

Equipped with improved language skills and greater confidence after her month in Mexico, Rachel started the school year by creating a parent/teacher exchange called Neighbor2Neighbor (N2N). Each week, Spanish-speaking parents and English-speaking teachers convene afterschool to practice conversations and learn vocabulary from each other. She found money in the school budget and purchased Rosetta Stone® software to facilitate the collaborative learning process. In addition to building relationships between parents and teachers, the program models lifelong learning for the students who inspired it.

“Students see their teachers trying to learn another language and respond with, ‘I can help you!’ said Rachel. “As students assist teachers with translation and pronunciation, they are also watching teachers work outside their comfort zone. As a result, I believe that students, themselves, are more willing to work outside of their own comfort zones. Our school is experiencing an energy of empowerment.”

Rachel credits her FFT grant with empowering her to start something new. “N2N is a direct result of the confidence I gained from my intimate exposure to the language. Now I have a solid foundation of language skills, so when parents come to me and don’t speak any English, I begin the conversation.”

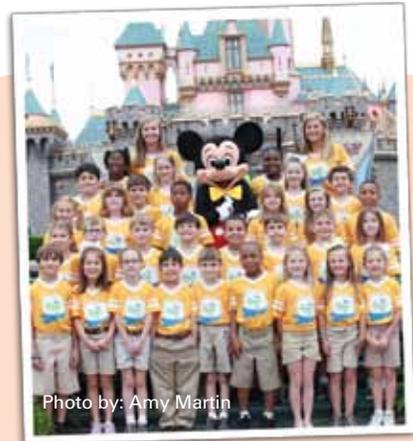


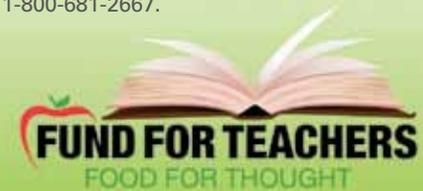
Photo by: Amy Martin

Breigh Rainey and Kristy Gilpin, 2010 Zachary, LA, and their students won Disney’s Planet Challenge, a project-based learning environmental competition for classrooms across the United States. Their grand prize: An all-expenses paid field trip to Disneyland in April.

With their FFT grant, Breigh and Kristy documented the historical work of Europe’s “Big Thinkers” to inspire students to similarly impact the world by channeling their passion to learn and discover. “From the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to the notebook pages of da Vinci, we saw examples of the artistry that arises from turning passion into something tangible. We returned to our own great thinkers, our students, with a newfound desire to share our knowledge and create sparks of imagination that can never be extinguished!” Mission accomplished and congratulations.

Funding Teacher Grants

Stories of learning and life-threatening experiences (not necessarily related) sum up Fund for Teachers’ third annual Food for Thought luncheon on October 10 in Houston. Nationally-recognized author and education advocate Sam Chaltain serves as keynote speaker. Joanne King Herring, whose daring story was immortalized on the silver screen in Charlie Wilson’s War, will be honored for championing educational opportunities for girls. For more information or to support FFT with your ticket purchase, call 1-800-681-2667.



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SUMMER LEARNING ON SEVEN CONTINENTS

The exodus has begun. Planes, Eurorails and rainforest zip lines are delivering our 2011 Fellows to their destinations for learning on all seven continents. Fifth century historian Herodotus said "All men's gains are the fruits of venturing." We anticipate great gains for these teachers, and their students, resulting from their FFT fellowships.

North America

"FFT has given me the opportunity to take professional learning and enrichment to new heights. Through this grant, my students can see firsthand the importance of learning a new language, being a global citizen, and understanding cultural diversity. FFT has enhanced my passion as a teacher and I look forward to this life-changing experience."

Aliyah Frazier, Atlanta, will research ancient & indigenous cultures of Mexico, Guatemala and Belize to make the Spanish language more relevant to students' lives & exemplify the importance of understanding cultural diversity.

South America

"With the amazing help of FFT, I will grow professionally as an educator and personally as a musician this summer. This opportunity to be immersed in a culture so rich with music is one in a lifetime, and I am excited to open my students' eyes to a new culture."

John Carroll, Chicago, will observe in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro samba music's ability to unite diverse people and build national pride to inspire students' exploration of global music.

Europe

"I feel rewarded and acknowledged for my work with young people because of this grant. My students are amazed at the reality of my studying at a world-class university and are excited for me."

Pamela Lindberg, Minneapolis, will attend a summer educators' institute at Oxford University to examine the work of significant literary figures, from Chaucer to present day, to help students develop their own opinions, analysis and evaluation in literacy.

Asia

"This grant gives me the opportunity to take the concepts and theories I learned through articles and journals to a four-dimensional level. Of course, the fringe benefit of getting to know an exciting, different culture while I travel is also made possible because of this award."

Wendy Huang, Los Angeles, will participate in an educator's workshop in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to investigate the Singapore Math concept and how its methods and support strategies help students internalize math principles for long-term growth.

Africa

"This truly validates my work as a teacher. Having the chance to research and explore a new part of the world and develop a curriculum reflecting my journey is a tremendous opportunity. I believe that Fund for Teachers understands the true meaning of professional development."

José Valenzuela, Boston, will research and document throughout West Africa the slave trade of the 18th-19th centuries, utilizing primary sources and interviewing University of Ghana professors, to help students examine the historical period of enslavement and understand the role of historians in recreating history.

Australia

"This grant affords us the opportunity to learn from accomplished educators in the field of literacy in a culture that shares similarities and differences with our own. Afterwards, we will develop a literacy curriculum that emulates that of Australia's to help our students and families become lifelong readers."

Lisa Gildea, Deborah Burry and Traci Gardner will observe Australia's National Accelerated Literacy Program, which garners a 99% literacy rate, to develop and solidify language skills for struggling readers.

Antarctica

"Excitement builds on our campuses as students and teachers anticipate accompanying our expedition to Antarctica through Skype and Facebook. We can't wait to share this once-in-a-lifetime experience with our school communities!"

Brooke Leith and Adrienne Raible, Houston, will document an Antarctic journey using 21st century technology to inspire authentic learning about environmental issues, promote research skills, and compare/contrast polar and Houston climates.

Programs

Programs	Grants Awarded	Teachers Involved	Schools Impacted
Atlanta	4	5	4
Boston	20	34	18
Chicago	29	46	30
Expeditionary Learning	17	31	15
Houston	41	62	47
Los Angeles	13	24	18
Minneapolis	3	5	3
Nebraska	10	18	12
New York City	27	35	20
NYC - Asia	10	13	9
Oakland	8	13	8
Oklahoma	32	57	43
Red Wing	1	1	1
Rural School and Community Trust	11	13	11
San Francisco	9	13	9
Saint Paul	8	8	6
Strive Partnership	9	10	6
The Blake School	3	6	1
Vadnais Heights	1	4	1
Washington DC	3	4	4
Wisconsin	11	31	11

\$1.7

million
in teacher
grants

433

teachers
embarking on
FFT Fellowships
this summer

277

schools
impacted by
these returning
Fellows this fall

1,299,000

students impacted
over the course
of 2011 Fellows'
teaching careers

Countries

Argentina	Greece	Poland
Australia	Greenland	Portugal
Belize	Guatemala	Russia
Benin	Hungary	Scotland
Bermuda	Iceland	Senegal
Brazil	India	Sierra Leone
Cameroon	Iran	Singapore
Cape Verde Islands	Ireland	South Africa
China	Israel	Spain
Colombia	Italy	Sweden
Costa Rica	Japan	Switzerland
Cuba	Kenya	Taiwan
Czech Republic	Madagascar	Thailand
Denmark	Mali	Trinidad and Tobago
Ecuador	Mexico	Turkey
Egypt	Mongolia	United Kingdom
England	Myanmar	United States
Finland	Nepal	Vietnam
France	Netherlands	Zambia
Germany	New Zealand	
Ghana	Peru	

Fellowships by Subject Area

History/Social Studies	58
Language/Cultural Immersion	36
Literature/Writing	35
Other	30
Science	29
Visual/Performing Arts	28
Social Justice	23
Literacy	14
Math	9
Advanced Education/Leadership	6
Kinesiology	4

Student SCRAPBOOK

Submitted by **Rosa Maria Jimenez and Roberto Palomino**,
2010 Oakland Fellows, Global Family School

It's only a 20-minute BART-ride from Oakland's Latino neighborhood of Fruitvale to San Francisco's Chinatown. But for most of our second grade students, that distance might as well be the mileage of our own journey to China on our FFT fellowship. We traveled to China last summer in search of new bilingual methodologies and returned filled with ideas and projects. Upon returning, we worked to enrich daily Language Arts lessons with elements from different cultures, with a particular emphasis on China. Our students read Chinese folk tales and poetry, and their writings reflected a new interest in the Chinese civilization. Inspired by our pictures and videos, they developed art projects with Chinese artifacts such as chopsticks, shadow puppets and paper fans. They attempted the art of Chinese calligraphy and learned words in Mandarin. By February, our students couldn't wait any longer to experience what they had read, heard and written about.

The morning of February 24 was foggy with expected showers, but all of our students – and many of their parents – arrived at school on time and equipped to face the elements. After a quick train ride, we walked past cable cars and Union Square to the dragon-topped gates of Chinatown; we were moved by the awe glowing in our students' eyes. Impressed by their interest in and questions about Chinese



Top: Rosa and Roberto visit the Longji Terraced Fields in Jinkeng-Dazhai Village during their fellowship.



Top right: Students and parents on their Chinatown field trip



Right: Students' introduction to Dim Sum.

culture, residents graciously interacted with our students. The innumerable Chinese objects for sale, ranging from huge statues to exotic vegetables, delighted them. New flavors and chopsticks challenged them at the Dim Sum restaurant, whose owner reserved an entire floor for us and charged only \$5 per student.

Our allotted five hours passed quickly and, although it rained, the kids described the field trip as "the best ever." We ended the day reflecting on the way people from all over the world come to San Francisco's Chinatown to admire its mythic architecture while the majority of our kids, many of them born and raised in neighboring towns, never see it.

Exposing our Latino students and parents to a different culture was fulfilling and rewarding. Successfully extending our fellowship into the classroom taught us that authentic multiculturalism is not only possible, but also achievable. Every step taken toward integrating our society is worthwhile.

Additional Authentic Work Inspired by Fellows' Journeys

Steven Lee-Davis, 2010 Rochester, NY, inspired by his fellowship in Italy, led his students in the creation and staging of a play set in ancient Rome. The storyline portrayed one artist's quest to build the perfect temple for Hercules.



The self-named "Amazon Divas," 2010 teaching team from Briarwood Elementary in Moore, OK, coordinated a Family Rainforest Reading Night in April. Sixth graders conducted a puppet show based on "The Great Kapok Tree," plentiful in Quito, Ecuador, the sight of their fellowship. Team member Amy Chase sold bracelets made by students at Yachana Technical High School in Quito, raising \$500 to support the school's operating costs.



Rebecca Weissman, 2010 Oakland, is leading her students in social justice outreach projects to raise money and purchase books for children in the Madagascar village where she volunteered on her FFT fellowship.



Tania Llambelis, 2010 Oakland, wrote and will direct a student play in June based on her fellowship to Ecuador's La Hesperia Biological Station in the Western Andes Mountains. For five months, her students at Ascend Elementary conducted research about dinosaurs, created fossils in art class, and composed songs about the work of paleontologists.

Photo: Tania Llambelis



James Lamar, 2010 Barnett, VT, wrote a musical to introduce his students to ancient Greece and Rome, his fellowship topic. Music and art teachers collaborated with all third and fourth grade students to present nine songs, accompanied by a student band.

Fogel's debaters celebrating their first place win at the City Championships with school principal, Ms. Porter.

Where are They? Now?

Denzel Washington didn't Teach for America or earn a law degree like NYC Fellow Erik Fogel did. But the two do share a similarity: In *The Great Debaters*, Denzel portrayed the professor who inspired his school's fledgling debate team to national prominence; Erik does so in real life.

When seeking a Title I school that could benefit from his legal expertise, Erik settled at Bronx High School for Law, Government and Justice in the shadow of Yankee Stadium. Erik's principal charged him with starting a debate team, but could offer no classroom, resources or interested students. Aware of the formative life skills he gained under the leadership of an influential high school debate coach, Erik strategized ways to create an equal opportunity team that could compete against the best debate teams money could buy.

In 2007, Erik sought out FFT and was awarded a grant to attend Dartmouth Forensic Union's Coaches Workshop, the nation's preeminent summer debate institute. For one month, Erik lived on campus and learned from Dartmouth debate coaches. Intense days of training included four hours of lecture on debate theory every morning; afternoon small seminars on the debate topic, philosophy and research; and evenings consumed with practice rounds and skill drills. "It was basically 20 hours a day of debate professional development," said Erik. He returned to the Bronx to host a "bootlegged" version of the workshop for his students and began implementing the debate curriculum he wrote during his time at Dartmouth. Erik offered every student a chance on the debate team, regardless of academic record or financial means and using technology purchased with remaining FFT grant money, Erik introduced a few inquisitive students to the concepts of research, preparation and oration.

Four years later, Erik coaches more than 100 students in the largest urban debate team in America, promising each member the opportunity to compete in at least one tournament. His students helped neighboring schools start debate programs and compete against them monthly in mock tournaments. Erik writes grants to provide ribbons, medals and trophies, ensuring every competitor walk away a winner. And Bronx High is New York City's only Title I school invited to all three national championship tournaments this year. To cover entry fees and travel costs, Erik's students sell candy from Costco afterschool and run the school store. "We're going to hustle our way to the championships this summer," Erik laughed.

Erik will pursue his second FFT fellowship in June, attending the International Society for Technology in Education conference in Philadelphia. After researching ways 21st century technology can help level the playing field for his team, Erik will create a digital debate curriculum, host a free debate camp in August and begin the school year by scheduling videoconferences with coaches who donate their time to help the Bronx Great Debaters make history, as well.

"Every study on improving schools consistently ranks 'teacher quality' as the top factor influencing learning," said Erik. "By investing in my development, Fund for Teachers empowered me to build one of the best debate programs in the nation. Fund for Teachers gave me the means to make anything possible in my classroom and beyond."

Visit BronxGreatDebaters.org to learn more about Erik's practice or ways you can contribute to his students' success.



Danielle receives her new name from Maasai villagers.

V.I.P. Teachers in Any Language *(Continued)*

Seeing the groundswell of student activity and excitement, Henderson parents led a fundraising campaign, raising enough money to send Kilimani a laptop and LCD projector. Students and parents also mounted a book drive for their Kenyan counterparts, collecting more than 500 books for Kilimani's library.

This year's fundraising efforts culminated in May with a school-wide International Festival with multiple events supporting the V.I.P. partnership, including a silent auction of East African artifacts. Making a surprise appearance was Jane Ramu, teacher at Kilimani Integrated Primary School. She shared with hundreds of parents and students about the V.I.P. partnership's impact on her students and community. "The story of how Jane came into our lives, and thus to our school, was truly amazing and once again resonated with divine intervention," said Danielle. "We can't speak enough about FFT, because who else believes in teachers in a way that facilitates something on this grand scale?"

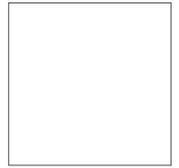
Terri and Danielle are just getting started. Inspired by their work, colleagues JoAnn Brown and Ellen McCarthy applied for and were awarded a 2011 Fund for Teachers grant to continue the work initiated during the first journey to Kilimani. JoAnn and Ellen depart on June 27th – with Terri and Danielle as their guides. "We're biting the bullet and paying our way," said Terri. "We felt that, in order to fully support JoAnn and Ellen's work and continue where we left off, we couldn't be left behind." As part of their self-titled "V.I.P. – The Legacy" trip, Mwalimu Naserian and Mwalimu Naramat will pave the way for Henderson's parent/student field trip to Kilimani next summer.

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Alumni Updates

Christina West, 2010 Houston, will participate in the Fulbright-Hays Seminar Abroad Program in Mexico. "As a direct result of receiving a Fund for Teachers fellowship last summer, I now have the confidence to apply for other professional opportunities. My experience with Fund for Teachers helped launch me into this program." With her FFT grant, West explored in Spain the historical context and cultural repercussions of the Spanish Civil War.

Martha Kempe, 2005 and 2010 Boston, received the "Distinguished Arts Educator in Visual Arts Award" from Massachusetts-based Arts|Learning and was recognized at the State House in Boston on May 25. She also earned an NEH Summer Seminar grant to study in London and the Netherlands this summer. "Fund for Teachers started it all and gave me the confidence to pursue these things," said Martha, who compared and contrasted the Parthenon's Frieze with her school's replica on her fellowship.



Keturah Kendrick, 2010 New York, received a grant from the American Council for International Education to teach in a school in Kolkata, India, while also leading professional development workshops with its teachers. Keturah is returning to India, the site of her FFT fellowship interviewing women at work to supplement her class' reading of *Sold* by Patricia McCormick.



Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School teachers and 2010 FFT Fellows, **Ethan Newlin**, **Viviana Perez**, **Isabel Renot**, and **David Lenzner** wished colleague **Jane Doherty** (far left) "Bon Voyage" in New York City.



2011 Fellows **Patricia Greenleaf**, **Natalie Sansom**, and **Daniel Alcazar-Roman** were among teachers sent into summer at Houston's "Bon Voyage Fellows" event in May.

Maria Rode, 2010 San Francisco, revisits China this summer to teach art workshops and research art and history for further cultural, historical and art knowledge to share with her students. On her FFT fellowship, she participated in an art residency in Jingdezhen, China.