



Vampire legends top list of students' interests.



Team TSV: LaVerne McDonald, Stephen Howard and Phylecia Raglund.



Western literature's classic version of the vampire.

Vampires Help Slay Reading Apathy

Fans of the movie *Twilight* fall into one of two categories: Team Edward or Team Jacob. Students at Ossie Ware Mitchell Middle School in Birmingham, AL, support a third option: *Team TSV* (Teachers Seeking Vampires). Team TSV, a science, a history and an English teacher, will research vampire legends across the British Isles' this summer, to inspire students' interest in reading.

"For 20 years, I've taught in an inner-city school and I've never witnessed this level of reading apathy," said LaVerne McDonald, history teacher and team lead. "After telling students what to read for all those years, I turned it back on them and asked what they wanted to read. 'Vampire stories' unanimously topped the list. I decided if I could use vampires to get their attention, then I automatically get their interest and the war is won."

Team TSV, McDonald, Phylecia Raglund and Stephen Howard, heads to England, Ireland and Scotland in July, bringing to light the cultural influences and historic sites associated with

Western literature's vampire legends. By observing the geography and locations featured in works by John William Polidori, Bram Stoker and Lord Byron, the team becomes primary sources for their students and, hopefully, catalysts of positive reading habits.

"After telling students what to read for all those years, I turned it back on them and asked what they wanted to read."

"We figured those reading our application would think we were crazy proposing a vampire-themed fellowship. But that's what the students wanted, so that's what we wrote. The beauty of Fund for Teachers is that we could *choose* what we wanted to learn, as opposed to being *told* what to learn," said LaVerne.

Community support leading up to the teachers' departure encouraged LaVerne that they were onto something. Features by the *Birmingham News* and local ABC affiliate, in addition to accolades from the Alabama Board of Education, buoyed their excitement. The only negative response came from former students, who complained about missing out on the experience.

Continued on page 6

Fund for Teachers annually asks preK-12 teachers "WHAT do you want to learn? WHERE do you want to learn it?"

In this issue of *Odyssey*, we look at WHY teachers designed their particular fellowships, and HOW they plan to translate their summer experiences into students' success when they return to their classrooms this fall.



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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.



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From the Executive Director

"Now more than ever, America needs what you, the class of 2012, has to offer. America needs you to reach high and hope deeply. And if you fight for your seat at the table, and you set a better example, and you persevere in what you decide to do with your life, I have every faith not only that you will succeed, but that, through you, our nation will continue to be a beacon of light for men and women, boys and girls, in every corner of the globe."

President Barack Obama, to graduates of Barnard College



Even if you didn't attend a graduation ceremony recently, you most likely heard excerpts of commencement speakers' exhortations on the news. For approximately 30 minutes, each speaker imparted wisdom and encouragement aimed at preparing students for the next chapter of their lives. America's teachers do the same thing, but for 50 minutes, 6 periods a day, 5 days a week, for 9 months out of the year.

To make those minutes meaningful for teachers and their students, Fund for Teachers offers grants for summer learning experiences. As you read this, hundreds of teachers are engaged in one-of-a-kind learning adventures made possible by \$1.8M in Fund for Teachers grants. The uniqueness of their odysseys reflect the diversity of students' academic challenges and interests -- that's because we empower educators to design fellowships that fill in the gaps of their practice and their students' learning.

In this issue of *Odyssey*, we focus on the WHY behind where our 458 teachers chose to learn with their fellowships. Experiential learning for teachers this summer equates to energy in their classrooms this fall. And we know this equation pays great dividends because what teachers put into their own learning is what students ultimately get out of theirs.

This summer, as we celebrate graduates' accomplishments and send them off to distant shores, don't forget to thank the teachers who modeled learning for them since kindergarten. And enjoy our Fellows' blogs as they depart to their own distant (and some not-so-distant) destinations. For both graduates and FFT Fellows, the learning continues.

Karen K. Webb
Executive Director

Summer Reading List



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“... science and engineering can be something more than sitting in a library or working in an oil field.”

Not Your Pop’s Physics Class

The booming oil services industry in Midland, TX, fuels a thriving economy; it also tempts high school students to forfeit diplomas for dollars, dropping out of school to work on oil rigs where they immediately out-earn their teachers. Additionally, students perceive engineering careers as boring because “that’s what my dad/mom does.” Keeping students in school and interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects inspired Cory Callaway and John Jefferies’ FFT fellowship. And, echoing Super Bowl MVP’s annual announcement, they’re going to Disney World.

At the Richard Petty Driving Experience and Disney World, the Midland Senior High School science teachers will research how data is collected and used to aid in the design of entertainment and sport activities. They will investigate ways Newtonian mechanics are incorporated into fast moving vehicles and rides to then enhance classroom activities and “rebrand” physics for students.

“The need for applicable and creative connections to science and math curriculum is more important than ever,” wrote the teachers in their fellowship application, “not only because physics is now required for all students on Texas’ recommended graduation plan, but also to prepare them for local and global jobs increasingly requiring science and math proficiency.”

Using iPhones, iPads and handheld data collection devices, the teachers will graph data points and film scenarios on the NASCAR track and roller coaster

tracks for classroom experiments. The teachers believe backing up equations with their fellowship experiences will bridge the gap between theory and relevance for students.

“We want students to realize the real-life relevance of concepts we teach,” said Cory. “By exploring the physics behind race cars and amusement park rides, we expose them to the idea that science and engineering can be something more than sitting in a library or working in an oil field.”



Cory and John teach science at Midland Senior High.



Teachers will collect data from cars racing 165 mph.

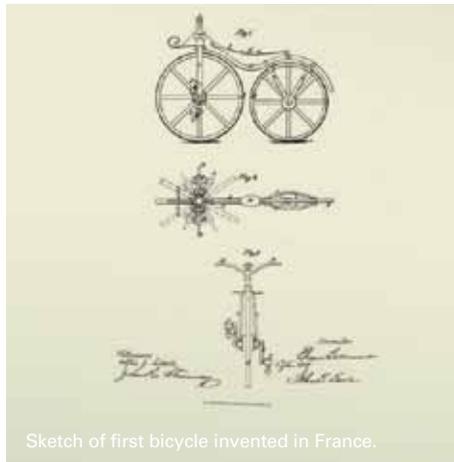
Bringing Biking Back

Alesa prepares for Tour de France

In 1867 French carriage makers debuted the modern bicycle. Thirty-six years later, cyclists navigated the inaugural Tour de France. This summer, Alesa Murrow journeys to the source of the sport, riding several stages of the famed road race in advance of competitors, to redefine exercise for sedentary students at Skyview Elementary in Yukon, OK.

“As a PE teacher, I take seriously my responsibility to cultivate students’ healthy lifestyles,” said Alesa. “The only activity students get, other than my PE class once every three days, is video games – and Wii Sports doesn’t count as exercise. Kids are increasingly alienated from the world beyond their TV screens. I needed a creative way to redirect their digital interests into physical activity.”

Alesa focused her Fund for Teachers’ grant proposal on biking. Bike trails, though underutilized, crisscross her community and she dreams of students exploring their surroundings the way she did growing up – behind the handlebars. Families can also enjoy biking together, increasing the likelihood of student engagement. She concluded that the ideal destination for showcasing the potential and exhilaration of cycling was the Tour de France.



Sketch of first bicycle invented in France.

For two weeks in July, Alesa rides three stages of the race with a group led by a professional guide: From Albertville to La Toussuire; a route outside Sete; and a final ride from Limoux to the tour finish line in Foix, where she’ll await the winners. Afterward, armed with a VIP pass, she’ll film interviews with cyclists and trainers about their motivation for and enjoyment of the sport. “Modeling the exciting possibilities of exercise will expand students’ perception of fitness,” said Alesa. “Sharing with students professional cyclists’ words of motivation and encouragement will



Alesa will ride ahead of Tour cyclists.

elevate exercise from a chore to a viable option for extracurricular entertainment.”

The tour continues in Oklahoma this fall, when Alesa creates a Tour de Yukon. Students completing each stage earn colored wristbands correlating to various sections of the route (red for hills, green for flat terrain, etc.). Healthy living, rather than a yellow jersey, will signify success.



"The Kenya Experience" participants in Iten, Kenya.



Matt after a race in Manhattan.

We Are What We Eat: Bad News for Students

"In my mind, I am a Kenyan," reads Matt Roberts' favorite running T-shirt. Anthropologically speaking, this Caucasian high school teacher's lineage does trace back 600 generations to Africa's Great Rift Valley. But his Paleolithic parents didn't eat chips and soft drinks for breakfast, as do his students at Brooklyn's High School of Hospitality Management. Alarmed at young people's lack of knowledge about the importance of diet and exercise, Matt designed a fellowship destined for the cradle of civilization in Kenya, seeking connections between prehistoric nutrition and anatomy to convince students that they are what they eat.

Matt plans to run across Kenya on an educational safari with "The Kenya Experience" program for the first half of his fellowship; learning skills from some of the world's most elite runners will energize the afterschool running club he established last year. Afterwards, he'll interview Smithsonian Institute anthropologists excavating human fossils at multiple dig sites for first-hand accounts of how prehistoric lifestyles could have led to survival of the fittest.

"Unlike early humans, today's youth are increasingly sedentary and their diets are dominated by processed, high caloric foods and drinks with little nutritional value," explained Matt. "As a result, they are burdened with obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure, factors that directly impact academic achievement. This opportunity to demonstrate why and how their bodies function at an optimal level, using their ancestors as examples, will inject anatomy and anthropology into my more traditional Global History lessons."

Because his school offers culinary training, Matt collaborated with the program's instructor to offer an African unit this fall in which students will prepare prehistoric and popular African dishes. In conjunction with his Global History curriculum, PE teachers will incorporate a "hunting and gathering" exercise regimen and Matt will prepare lessons for school-wide advisory classes on how students can fuel their bodies for short- and long-term benefits.

"Despite my best efforts, no amount of preaching or explaining has swayed students' lifestyle choices. I believe my research and experiences in Africa will expose them to their evolutionary origins and an understanding of why our bodies work as they do," said Matt. "If I can get the kids to understand that what worked for their ancestors will work for them, that would be a major accomplishment."

Additional Fellows pursuing health and wellness related themes this summer include:

Trisha Nakano (Elsie Whitlow Stokes Public Charter School - **Washington, DC**) who will participate in the Nosara Yoga Institute's HeartRise Children's Yoga Teacher Training in Nosara, Costa Rica, to incorporate yoga into the school's wellness program and help students trust themselves, become more aware of their body, and, ultimately, enjoy a better understanding of who they are;

Daniel Zeroski (Stillwater High School - **Stillwater, OK**) who will meet with representatives from the Olympic Movement Organization and Youth Sport Trust Young Ambassadors during the 2012 Summer Olympics in London to learn strategies for cultivating students' love of wellness and improving Oklahoma's 48th place ranking in states' overall health;

Lindsay Leonard Nelson, Katherine Thune (Linwood Monroe Arts Plus 4-8 - **St. Paul, MN**) who will travel to the Villa Sumaya Yoga Retreat Center on Guatemala's Lake Atitlan to explore how yoga-based movement, mindfulness and social/emotional skills can help students with special needs learn regulation techniques that improve their quality of life; and

Colleen Leary (Curley K-8 School - **Jamaica Plain, MA**) who will participate in yoga teacher training programs at the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Stockbridge, MA, and the Integral Yoga Institute in New York City to learn ways of providing students with special needs a calming practice that requires no equipment or therapist, but can bring awareness and reflection.

Sean Brooks, 2010 Boston Fellow, carried the Olympic Flame for 300 meters in Dalkeith, Scotland, on June 14. Sean is one of five outstanding teachers from the United States pre-selected to be a torchbearer through a program sponsored by Samsung Electronics America.



Bob Sybert



Matt Schilling



Mary Ellen Powell



Teachers will research various forms of humanitarian aid.



Students serving at Edwards Street Fellowship Center last spring.



Gareth Bonner

Service Learning in Haiti & Hattiesburg

Dropping a can of corn in a food drive box meets a need, but engenders no empathy for the person living with hunger. Mary Ellen Powell, teacher at Presbyterian Christian School in Hattiesburg, MS, believed this type of “philanthropy-from-afar” did students little good. To help students truly understand, and be affected by, those suffering from various forms of poverty, she and three colleagues designed a fellowship to make community service hit a little closer to home. In June, they will spend eight days researching volunteerism, foreign aid and microfinance efforts in Haiti as Fund for Teachers’ first team of Fellows from Mississippi.

“We chose Haiti as our destination because the country faces multiple problems requiring creative solutions,” said Mary Ellen, who volunteered in

Haiti following the 2010 earthquake. “We designed this fellowship to observe international efforts at poverty reduction to help students more readily recognize extensive needs in their own community. Their perception of and response to the needs of others, particularly those living in poverty, needs adjusting, needs to become personal.”

“We chose Haiti as our destination because the country faces multiple problems requiring creative solutions.”

The central question guiding the team’s research is “What does help look like?” Researching Haitian projects supporting environmentalism (a reforestation project), entrepreneurship (ecotourism efforts), job development (artisan microenterprise), human

services (orphanage volunteerism) and disaster relief (international aid) will produce a multifaceted answer.

This fall, the teachers plan to integrate their experiences into science, history and literature classes. Mary Ellen also plans to deepen a relationship with the Edwards Street Fellowship Center near their school, providing students with hands-on opportunities to address various forms of poverty.

“We want students to see people in need and realize ‘There but for the grace of God go I.’ Witnessing various ways Haitians work to better their lives will broaden students’ awareness of solutions for poverty and, hopefully, increase their esteem for those seeking a way out.”

I AM A FUND FOR TEACHERS FELLOW

Name: Brian Hartley Sago

Profession: Middle school art teacher
The Blake School - Hopkins, MN

Honors/Leadership positions: Scholastic Art & Writing Award for Outstanding Educator; Alumnus of Notable Achievement – University of Minnesota; K-12 district-wide curriculum mapping advisor for Minneapolis Public Schools.

Best asset in the classroom: Natural light. Humans don't do so well under fluorescent light, so I often conduct class without it.

I always wanted to be: An astronaut or microbiologist.

Before teaching, I: Spent a few years as a pre-med biology student, took a break from college, and managed a grocery store.

Career turning point: Dropping my science major to study printmaking. A large number of printmakers come from science or medical backgrounds, and many doctors and scientists possess artistic talent. Printmaking requires the replication of identical works by hand, as does any science experiment, so it's a logical leap.

I entered the field of education: Thanks to my middle school art teacher, Mrs. Knueppe. I didn't realize she was guiding me to a career at the time, I simply enjoyed the work. Later, she hired me as her assistant for a summer class. Mrs. Knueppe never directly said, "You should be an art teacher," but put a lot of skills in place to guide me towards the profession."

Best lesson I've learned: You can't roller skate in a buffalo herd.

Most influential person: My high school science teacher. With two sentences, Mr. Kuntzman pushed me over the edge from bad student to a good one.

The two sentences: "I know you can do better. I don't know why you don't."

Biggest Inspiration: Microbiology, particularly the structure within biological forms. The patterns and forms found in nature are endlessly fascinating.

I teach: Because at the end of each day, I feel like I helped make the world a slightly better place for a few young people. That's a lot more satisfying than most professions.

With my 2008 FFT Fellowship, I: Completed an international Artist-in-Residence program at Proyecto Ace in Buenos Aires, Argentina, discovering ways of merging traditional art media with new media to keep art relevant for students in the "digital divide."



Vampires Help Slay Reading Apathy

(Continued)

According to LaVerne, every world culture, beginning with the earliest civilizations, incorporate some form of vampire legends, making the topic ideal for world history curricula. Stephen plans to lead student inquiry into the biological ramifications of vampires' habits (digesting blood and jumping great distances); Phylecia will guide students' reading of Stoker's *Dracula*, Lord Byron's poem "The Giaour" and lesser-known works of Polidori (credited by some as the creator of the vampire genre of fantasy fiction).

"Naturally, as an educator, I want students' reading scores to go up because success in any subject depends on one's ability to read. But as a person who loves children and wants them to succeed in life, I want them to enjoy reading," said LaVerne. "If vampire stories hook them on reading, then so be it."

Follow Team TSV this summer at:

<http://www.facebook.com/Teachersseekvampire>

2012 Year in Review

The teachers highlighted in this *Odyssey* join an elite cohort of peers comprising our 2012 class of Fellows:

458 teachers representing
310 schools are pursuing learning in
77 countries on
6 continents with
\$1.8M in FFT grants.

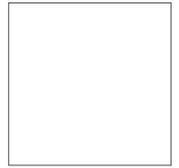
Jumpstart Summer 2013

Fund for Teachers' 2013 grant application opens online October 1, 2012.

Visit fundforteachers.org for inspiration and more information on how to apply.



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Many Fellows maintain blogs during their fellowships to chronicle their experiences for students in real-time. Visit fundforteachers.org to follow these and many more blogs throughout the summer.



Betheny Parker and LaNette Jackson, (Edmund, Oklahoma) interview teachers, parents and students at the Bourton Meadow School in Buckingham, England, to document British viewpoints of the Revolutionary War.

<http://dcladiesacrossthepond.blogspot.com/>



Suzi Loosen (Milwaukee, WI) enrolls in Oxford University's "Reading Twentieth Century Poetry" course, complemented by a "Renaissance to Modern Art" course at the University of Wisconsin - Waukesha, to develop art survey and poetry analysis skills and demonstrate for AP English students the close connection between art and literature.

<http://msloosen.blogspot.com/>



Team All 4 One (Chattanooga, TN) visits four Costa Rican biomes, observing eco-tourism, microfinance, ecologically-sound farming and environmental conservation, to enrich individual academic disciplines and better understand the culture from where their Hispanic students emigrated.

<http://ccabiology.weebly.com/biology-blog.html>



Kevin Denton (Fort Collins, CO) observes micro-lending, well water and poverty initiatives in Rwanda to create a math/economics unit that demonstrates the meaningful role math can play in solving real world problems.

<http://kfdenton8.posterous.com/>



Jean King (Houston, TX) charts the lives and careers of Gaudí, Miró and Dalí across the Catalonia region of Spain, observing their techniques with ceramics, tile and mosaics, to design a ceramics unit that leads students in the transformation of unadorned school spaces into vistas of brightly glazed tiles.

<http://www.asthewhitecrowflies.blogspot.com/>