

ODYSSEY



Volume 10
Fall Issue 2014

A PUBLICATION OF FUND FOR TEACHERS



Pre-schoolers practice Tree pose.



Jill not falling down at the London Bridge.



Warrior posing in Northern Ireland.

Power in the Pose

Linda Abaunza-Jimenez & Jill Charrier, Hinojosa Early Childhood/PreK - Houston, TX

When we explain to others that we traveled to the United Kingdom to study yoga so that we could use it in our Pre-K classroom, we are often met with a puzzled look and the question, “Why yoga?” Many people envision four and five-year-olds struggling to hold difficult poses in a silent, sweaty environment, but that could not be further from the truth! As Pre-Kindergarten teachers in a Title I school, many of the students in our classrooms live in poverty. With poverty often comes poor nutrition, stress and emotional, behavioral and social difficulties. We believe that incorporating yoga into our classrooms will result in motivating our students to become more active, enhance their concentration, spark their imaginations and give them tools for stress management.

In July we set off to train with three United Kingdom yoga teachers who shared our desire to help children cope with stress, develop self-control and develop a positive self-esteem. We began in Northern Ireland where we learned that children’s yoga is not about perfecting poses – it’s about making it playful and fun. We learned to use affirmations with students and to incorporate yoga into themes in our classroom, such as “Under the Sea” or “Space.” Next we traveled to London where we practiced Vinyasa yoga and Yoga Nidra, along with partner poses to teach teamwork and cooperation. One of the best parts was participating in a children’s yoga class at a school similar to our own. We ended our odyssey in Scotland, where we lived with our yoga

instructor. She taught us how to make yoga playful and joyful and how to use yoga with storytelling. We participated in a family yoga class with her, as well.

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*“Knowledge is power.
Information is liberating.
Education is the premise of
progress, in every society,
in every family.”*

- Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mission in Motion

“Students now ‘do’ science for a purpose. They realize that mapping an area to know where people live is ethically and morally important. Their work can help save lives in the aftermath of a natural disaster.”

- Leah Keith-Houle
Red Bank High School, Chattanooga, TN

Project Description

- Mapped three Caribbean islands as part of the University of Tennessee Chattanooga’s Tropical Island Ecology and Geology course
- Joined a two-week field experience at Gerace Research Center in San Salvador, Bahamas, to examine past and present geology of terrestrial and marine habitats

Fellowship Experiences

- Canvassed 10,000 individual homes, businesses, schools and churches to gather demographically-correct data for students to construct maps using scientific mapping technology
- Taught San Salvador High School students a course on mapping without technology and established a collaborative partnership with the school
- Asked by UT Chattanooga professor to co-lead a middle school STEM teacher training on mapping based on her excellence in the field

Classroom Impact

- Teaching GIS and mapping technology as a new curriculum for the state of Tennessee
- Incorporating hands-on humanitarian work to inspire scientific research
- With fellowship research, facilitating students’ construction of islands’ first maps with geological and demographic information for use in crisis management by ambulance and postal services
- First class in the nation to serve on an Open Street Map Humanitarian Mapping Team
- Future projects include mapping escape routes for Syrian refugees and working with professional cartographers to create digital maps of natural disaster sites for use by first responders

Fund Facts: A geologist, Leah is the first teacher ever accepted into UT Chattanooga’s Tropical Island Ecology & Geology program. After her FFT fellowship, Leah received a Teacherpreneur grant from the Public Education Foundation – Chattanooga to purchase drones for aerial mapping projects in GIS and Scientific Research classes.

To keep the momentum going,
donate at fundforteachers.org



From the Executive Director

How was school today?

Fund for Teachers is a community committed to the belief that education has the power to transform lives and that teachers catalyze that transformation.

*“Do not go where the path may lead,
go instead where there is no path
and leave a trail.”*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



Karen with CO Fellow Kevin Denton.

Our community includes committed leaders in multiple sectors; the classroom, the boardroom and philanthropic organizations all working together. Fund for Teachers celebrated the beginning of the school year along with them.

Fellows use their summer fellowships for knowledge acquisition, fostering creativity, gaining technological literacy, civic engagement and building global awareness. FFT provides the resources to them to help obtain those objectives.

Apache Corporation focused the attention of 2,500 domestic employees on the important work of teachers with a company-wide *Smart Start* breakfast on September 4th. We gratefully acknowledge H-E-B and Kellogg’s for the generous contribution of cereal. Kendra Scott invited supporters to a Sip and Shop event at one of its Houston boutiques with a percentage of the proceeds going to fund FFT fellowships. It’s a pleasure to welcome the Dalio Foundation to the FFT community. Teachers and students in Norwalk, CT, and Port Chester, NY, will benefit.

Our strong growth continues. We measure our success by the impact our Fellows have on their students. Those stories are our stories. Recently we assembled a select group to share their stories in an exciting video project. Stay tuned for the debut. It is a distinct pleasure to share others in this issue and on fundforteachers.org.

It’s the morning of the future. Carpe diem.

Karen K. Webb
Executive Director

Thank you to these companies supporting educators this summer through Fund for Teachers:



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 on their school communities.

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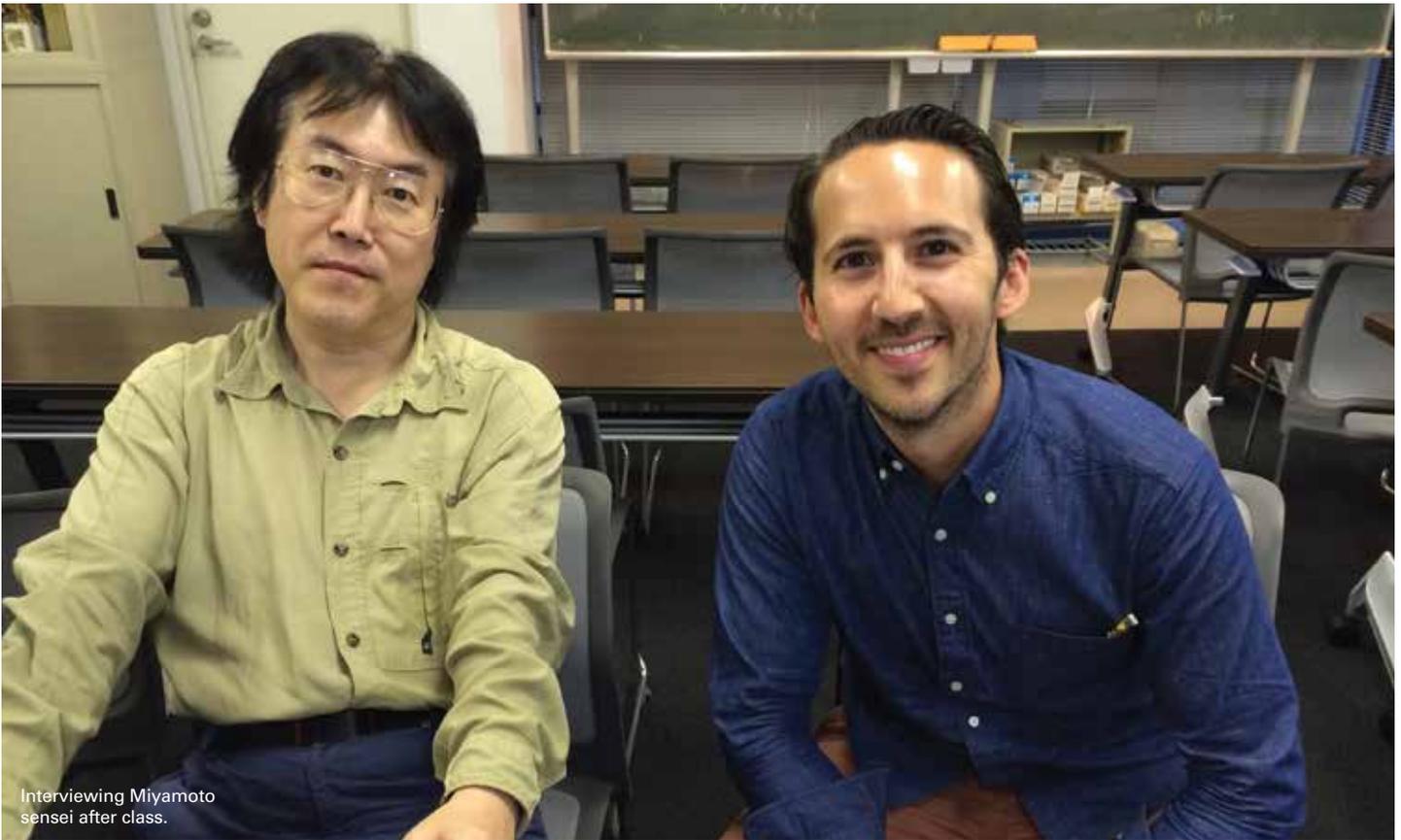
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Interviewing Miyamoto sensei after class.

Puzzling Power

by Aaron Kaswell, Public Middle School 88 - Brooklyn, NY

You can be the most gifted teacher, but without a great lesson or problem that captures students' interest, you're dead in the water. My life raft with middle school math students is the KenKen puzzle. These grid-like challenges published in thousands of news outlets worldwide are the invention of Japanese math teacher Tetsua Miyamoto. I spent two weeks as his apprentice this summer on my fellowship to learn his unique teaching style that engages all learners in perseverance.

After creating KenKen math puzzles in 2004, Miyamoto founded his own school and curriculum designed around logic and analytical thinking in Tokyo. Books he authored, as well as his teaching style, reflect a philosophy of "teaching without teaching" by providing students with the environment and guidance to foster their natural problem-solving abilities. Upper-level math students and I began each day observing Miyamoto sensei silently write on the board ten math problems of increasing difficulty. During the ensuing four hours of class, however, I never observed teacher/student dialogue, raised hands or completion of every problem. Miyamoto sensei merely

provided excellent problems, confirmed correct answers, and expected solutions to come from the hard work necessary to solve them.

In short, he allowed his students to struggle with their own learning.



This fall, I intend to adopt Miyamoto sensei's "less talk is more" method of teaching, encouraging students to contemplate difficult concepts before seeking quick answers from me. School administrators are also working with me to create a puzzle elective or afterschool KenKen club where students can tap into logic skills not always inherent in math class calculations. Most importantly, my teaching will now emphasize the value of never giving up and that the process is as important as the answer. Interviews with Miyamoto sensei's students revealed their belief that it's *struggling and failing* – not the right answer – that makes one strong. I want my students to believe that, too.

Fund Facts: Aaron, also a Math for America Fellow, leads a team of teachers in the innovative blended learning program, School of One. His previous student is the youngest person ever to complete the most difficult version of KenKen puzzles. Read more about his fellowship at mrkazintokyo.wordpress.com.

Top: Aaron's first completed 9x9 KenKen puzzle.

Left: Working under the master's direction.

Prioritizing Problems

Megan Swanson & Debbie Bennett, Calabasas High School - Calabasas, CA

Solutions to scientific problems are not always black and white. For instance, it seems logical that African wildlife should be free to follow natural migration patterns; but, what if those instinctual routes intersect farmers' subsistence crops? Citizens of Botswana do not want elephants trampling their income any more than residents of Los Angeles want brown bears swimming in their pools. We designed our fellowship to observe the "gray" issues surrounding conservation in Southern Africa and help students realize that while there may not be a perfect solution, it is important to be part of the discussion.

For twelve days, we investigated how the scientific process could be used to address challenges of conservation. Should tourists visit a lion cub park in Johannesburg if, once grown, those animals are eventually released for trophy hunters? Should a father in Namibia without water for his family drain water away from wildlife in the Okavanga Delta? And an unforeseen question that arose in Botswana: Should

children as young as four years old learn about HIV prevention in a community in which 20 percent of the citizens are infected with the virus?

These and other thought-provoking questions met us throughout our fellowship. And when students entered our Environmental Biology and AP Environmental Science classes in August, we introduced these experiences as opportunities to become agents of change. Southern California faces multiple environmental issues, including drought, invasive plants in the Santa Monica Mountains and water quality of the Los Angeles River. We will now draw on international case studies to address these local challenges and teach the scientific method of problem solving. It is a cliché, but our fellowship will help inspire our students to "think globally and act locally."

Our fellowship made us better teachers; we are more knowledgeable and passionate about our subject matter. What we previously taught from books cannot even compare to what

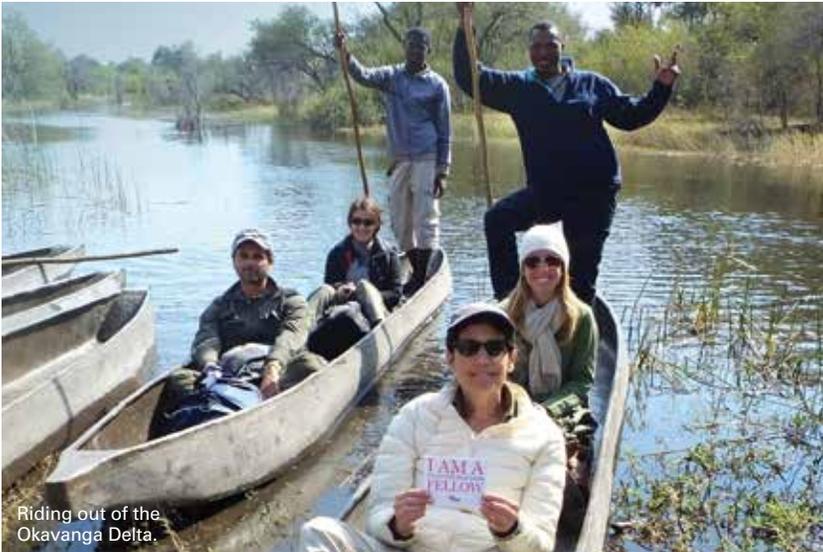
we experienced during our fellowship. We did not know the right questions to ask students about conservation until we sweated in the Kalahari Desert, flew above Victoria Falls or observed cheetahs in Kruger National Park. The challenges facing Southern Africa cannot be solved with a Google search. Solutions will come when students learn from passionate teachers, synthesize what they hear, arrive at options and communicate them -- either as Ph.D.s or citizen scientists.

Fund Facts: A teacher for seven years, Megan has been recognized for her commitment to geographic education through the National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow Program, and for furthering conservation education through Ecology Project International's Marine Education Fellowship. Debbie earned the 2014 Paul Shin Memorial High School Chemistry Teacher of the Year award, the 2013 Carl Gibbs Award for Environmental Excellence and is a 2011 Computer Supported Collaboration in Science Fellow with published articles in several scientific journals.

“What we previously taught from books cannot even compare to what we experienced during our fellowship.”



Megan in the Khama Rhino sanctuary on the edge of the Kalahari Desert.



Riding out of the Okavanga Delta.



On a game drive in Botswana.



Wildlife of Chobe National Park.



Flying over the Okavanga Delta.



Kim Parfitt, teacher at **Cheyenne Central High School** in **Cheyenne, WY**, also pursued the topic conservation in Africa on her fellowship this summer. Kim accompanied an assistant professor of zoology at the University of Wyoming on an Earthwatch Foundation expedition observing lions in Kenya's national reserves to enhance ecology units in AP/ Honors biology and demonstrate for students that "science is a verb." She will use her experiences to teach conservation that's solution-oriented. "Students will utilize my scientific observations and data from Africa to make sound scientific decisions that influence how we live on our land in Wyoming."

Fund Facts: Originally selected as a 2013 Fellow, Kim postponed her fellowship after the death of her son in a car accident. When the expedition team in Africa found a group of lion cubs, a companion asked if they could name one after her son, which they did.





Barrie and Kristy with tour guide Mandy Mankazana in Soweto's Walter Sisulu Square.



With students at Martin Luther King Jr.'s church in Atlanta.

Message in a Maboneng Precinct market in Johannesburg.

Disrupting the System

Kristy Li Puma and Barrie Moorman, E.L. Haynes Public Charter School - Washington, D.C.

Events in Ferguson, MO, provided a troubling backdrop for the new school year. Our students returned to school with questions, confusion, frustration and anger as they connect what they are seeing in the news to their own experiences with racism and prejudice. Our fellowship in South Africa this summer now frames these discussions, lessons and projects, which we'll use to support the development of students' leadership skills.

Our passion is youth activism that disrupts injustice. In writing our grant proposal, we thought a lot about what it means to "disrupt" a system. We teach about the Civil Rights Movement and take students on organized trips to expose them to models of activism. Many students, unfortunately, learned the story of the Movement as one of civil rights superheroes who rose above the people to create change; based on this narrative, our students assume they will never reach such heights and feel powerless as a result. In reality, groups of young people across the world have transformed societies throughout time and we are depending on our students to continue the fight for change. We designed our fellowship to spend twelve days in South Africa exploring the role that young people played in dismantling an unjust system. One of our main goals was to demonstrate that individual voices can and do create significant change.

In addition to insights from well-known historical sites and museums, a personal tour of Soweto by a participant in the 1976 youth uprising provided a new understanding of the anti-Apartheid movement. Mandy Mankazana, our guide, explained the complexities, triumphs and continuing struggles associated with race relations there. A participant in the uprising as a high school student, her testimony highlighted the power of telling one's story as a form of activism. Ms. Mankazana showed us the power that one person's interpretation of history can have over someone else's understanding of it. While some places and events speak for themselves, a guide's contextual interpretation is vital to understanding the multi-dimensional aspects of history itself. In South Africa, we were re-inspired to serve as those guides for our students back in D.C.

Our city faces many challenges and divisions ranging from school boundary re-zoning to neighborhood gentrification to the football team name. We want our students to understand that their voices should be valued and honored in all of these discussions. Part of disrupting a system is asking questions and not passively accepting circumstances. As a result of our fellowship, we have collaborated on the design of a new Sociology class for the school's first group of seniors in which students will partner with local organizations

to impact education and housing policies. To create more extensive activism opportunities, we're founding an afterschool club where students will identify community issues that are important to them and follow examples of youth freedom fighters locally and globally to take specific action.

Perhaps the most important thing we realized on our fellowship is that we can't teach stories we don't know. If we want to deconstruct the myth that only "superheroes" affect change, we must tell students stories beyond King and Parks and even Mandela. As educators, we must share a diverse set of stories and experiences in which students see themselves – stories like those we learned in South Africa.

Fund Facts: Barrie's interest in student activism arose from high school experiences with student government that provided interaction with the Maryland State Department of Education and state legislature. She leads Civil Rights trips with her students and works with a non-profit organization in Maryland to promote youth leadership in her spare time. Kristy works with the school's ELL students and college access programming. She is a native of the D.C. area, where she has also worked as a youth organizer and cultural worker.



Mary with "Our Lady of Charity, the Patroness of Cuba."



Mixed media drawing by 8th grade art student demonstrating conflict between street art and vandalism.



Escalona murals transform Havana neighborhood.

Progression of Families and Societies

Mary Rodriguez, John F. Eberhart K-8 School - Chicago, IL

"What are you?" my younger art students ask. Little ones don't have filters so they ask innocent questions. What they mean is "You look like us, but you don't speak Spanish. You have a Spanish name, but you were born in South Carolina. Are you one of us or not?"

In some senses, I am. I am a second generation immigrant of Latino descent – as are 90% of my students. However, I've always felt disconnected from my heritage. My mother's family fled Cuba in the sixties and her homeland remained mythical due to political restrictions. When I discovered Fund for Teachers, I pursued a grant to make cultural connections between my predominantly Mexican students and my own Cuban heritage. I designed my fellowship to compare the street art of Cuba with the murals of Mexico, all the while discovering a little more about "what I am."

My students' perception of street art is not a socially appropriate one. Unfortunately, my school and the surrounding neighborhood struggle with gang activity and vandalism. I traveled to Cuba to research the true nature of street art – murals (not graffiti) that are for the people and accessible by the people. Joining a People-to-People tour, I experienced the work of folk artist José Fuster at his eclectic home "Fusterlandia" and observed an entire neighborhood revitalized by the murals of Salvador Gonzales Escalona. These artists (and many others whose work we observed) incorporate art into public spaces where it's enjoyed by the whole community. Such exposure opened up many ideas for similar work my students can and will do.

A tour bus also took us to historically and architecturally significant public art across Cuba, even stopping at a block party where we enjoyed music and dance alongside the locals. Along the way, the group indulged me in an unplanned stop on our itinerary – the home where my mother grew up prior to emigrating.

As one of two art teachers for 1,500 kids in a K-8 setting, opportunities to define art are endless. Using my fellowship experiences as a model, we'll reconsider the role of art in expressing identity, bringing us together as a community and improving public spaces. And we'll all learn a little more about "what we are" as we collaborate on enhancing the school with art alá Escalona.

Fund Facts: Mary holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Southern Florida and a Masters in Art & Teaching in Art Education from Columbia College. Mary's grandmother, a wealthy attorney before emigrating, worked as a waitress in Atlanta as a single mother before Mary's grandfather joined them from Cuba several years later.

Power in the Pose

(Continued)

We have already planned how to implement yoga with our new students. Some mornings will begin with yoga games that energize the body/mind/spirit and contribute to team building. Yoga will do more than just stretch their bodies—it will also stretch their imaginations! When our students return from lunch full of energy, we will read a children's book such as Eric Carle's *The Mixed Up Chameleon* and the students will act out the book using yoga poses. We will follow that up with a guided relaxation so that students have time to relax and reflect. Teaching our students breathing exercises will also benefit them if they feel unhappy or angry, when they will be encouraged to view posted pictures of breathing exercises and calming poses.

The same colleagues, first dubious about our yoga research, found themselves on the cafeteria floor during our in-service week in August, laughing, talking and relaxing as we taught them poses and yoga games built on cooperation and listening skills. Our presentation concluded with almost 100 members – including our principals – lying in Corpse Pose with closed eyes as we read the story, "The Magic Mirror," from *Aladdin's Magic Carpet*. We encouraged the adults to visualize looking in a mirror and saying, "I am smart. I am beautiful. I am strong" – messages we will instill in our students.



Teaching yoga games during in-service week.

Fund Facts: Jill has served her school as an ESL Head Start teacher for ten years, gaining recognition as her district's Elementary/Intermediate Teacher of the Year, as well as the Suburban Houston Association for Bilingual Education ESL Teacher of the Year. Linda emigrated from Mexico nine years ago and, in her fifth year as a Pre-K bilingual teacher, was awarded Teacher of the Year at her campus.



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Beyond the Classroom

Erik Fogel - Bronx, NY

- 2005 First FFT Fellowship**
Attended the National Forensics Coaches Institute, followed by Dartmouth College's Debate Institute for Coaches, to create the first debate elective and after school debate team at the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice.
- 2006 School's debate team places second in national competition**
- 2010 Second FFT Fellowship**
Attended the International Society for Technology in Education conference to learn strategies for empowering award-winning school debate team with 21st century skills.
- 2011 Founded New York City Urban Debate League (NYCUDL)**
Established and assumed leadership of the first scholastic, year-round debate league in New York City, providing free programs and tournaments for all schools and students. Responsible for raising funds to cover students' transportation, meals and tournament fees.
- Debate Team at Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice becomes the largest and most successful Title I debate team in the country.
- 2012 NYCUDL receives the National Arts & Humanities Youth Program Award at the White House**
- 2014 NYCUDL members awarded full debate scholarships to Wake Forest, Dartmouth and Columbia University**

Today, more 1,000 New York City students from 100 schools participate in the NYC Urban Debate League each year. Erik developed a fledgling debate team at his school into a youth movement that, this year, sent more teams from any debate league in the nation to the most prestigious and elite high school debate tournament – the Tournament of Champions.



Erik and a member of the Great Debaters at the White House.

“No other program in the world does what Fund for Teachers does – sending teachers off to anywhere and do anything that will directly impact students. It's magical and creates not a ripple effect, but a tsunami of learning. After experiencing the most powerful professional development I've ever had, I started the Great Debater program at my school and then expanded it to the entire city. I thank Fund for Teachers for the resources and inspiration to make it all happen.”