



Learning about Chinese lanterns on Lunar New Year



Students' reaction to watching film about students in China



With Spanish teacher in Guatemala

World Cultures Club: A Passport to Learning

Elizabeth Black, DC Scholars Stanton Elementary School – Washington, D.C.

As an elementary Spanish teacher in an underserved, urban neighborhood school, I am students' gateway into the world. With no formal social studies instruction at our school beyond the second grade, I am also one of their only teachers of a new culture and language. With every unit and enrichment activity, I work to make these experiences with language, culture and geography positive and guided by student interest. With my fellowship in Mexico last summer, I did the same thing. Throughout the month I was there, I Skyped with a group of my students (and sometimes their parents) back home. Their questions, comments and reactions to my travels helped narrow the focus of my experiences to ones that would resonate in my D.C. classroom.

At the start of the 2014-2015 academic year, these same students helped me plan the school's first ever Hispanic Heritage Month celebration

and after-school assembly. Fourth and fifth grade students planned the events, reached out to teachers to publicize when and where it was taking place and wrote the script they used to co-host the celebration. The leadership of these students and overwhelming success of the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration made me realize that there was a real desire among students to know about cultures and countries different than their own. So, together, we founded the Stanton World Cultures Club.

Our after-school club consists of 15 fourth and fifth graders who meet twice a month to learn about a broad range of topics. Each month we focus on a different country and language, with occasional weekend field trips into D.C. In November, we learned about France and wrote and performed skits in French. December brought us to Kenya when we invited a special guest to talk about travels there and another special guest

to teach us songs in Swahili. During the month of February, we celebrated Lunar New Year by watching a documentary about D.C. students studying in China called *Beyond the Wall*. We also practiced some Chinese phrases, created lanterns and learned how to make wontons!

Continued on page 6

Learning that continues beyond the dismissal bell has the potential to change minds and lives. FFT grant recipients featured in this issue apply their new knowledge and skills through classroom curriculum and after-school activities, turning instruction into action through problem-based learning.

Mission in Motion

“Any great teacher brings passion into the classroom. Italy was my classroom and the great Renaissance masters were my teachers and inspirations.”

- Darryl Alello
Copper Mill Elementary School, Zachary, LA

Project Description

- Re-traced the footsteps of Renaissance masters, seeking their inspirations and how their work influenced future artists, to develop techniques for creating a renaissance in a rural Louisiana town
- Observed masterpieces in 12 cities over the course of 11 days

Fellowship Experiences

- Participated in a fresco workshop in Florence
- Observed Bernini sculptures and paintings by Caravaggio, Rubens and Raphael at the Borghese Museum & Gallery in Rome
- Toured Vatican City to view the work of Botticelli, Raphael and Michelangelo
- Explored mosaics unearthed in Pompeii
- Examined the architectural marvels of the Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore and the Baptistery at St. John in Florence
- Witnessed Michelangelo’s David at the Academia Museum and masterpieces housed at the Uffizi Gallery

Classroom Impact

- Crafted, suspended and articulated birds using tissue paper and other materials after studying da Vinci’s infatuation with flight
- Created meticulous mosaics from cut paper, learned linear perspective and how artists create the illusion of three-dimensions on a two-dimensional surface
- Started a school museum to house original works alongside artifacts from fellowship
- Hosted Renaissance Night, held in candlelight, allowing students and their families the opportunity to create frescoes
- Led field trip for sixth graders to Houston’s Museum of Natural Science and Museum of Fine Arts to study masterpieces by artists created during the Renaissance
- Created a cross-curricular Renaissance curriculum for art students

Fund Facts: For his “renaissance work,” Darryl was named Teacher of the Year at Copper Mill Elementary. Last fall, he produced a gallery show of personal paintings inspired by scenes from his fellowship. He also presented his fellowship learning and resulting curriculum at the Louisiana Dream Teachers annual Educator Excellence Symposium and the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana conference.

To keep the momentum going,
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From the Executive Director

Springing forward into the future with informed and effective teachers dedicated to being better, Fund for Teachers is actively selecting our 2015 Fellows as you read this. We received thoughtfully prepared applications from teachers working in 49 states. We’re making critical decisions with the help of several hundred volunteers joining together in conference rooms across the country. This is the most inspiring time of the year.

The architecture of the selection committee is purposeful; a committee is comprised of several clusters, each containing, at minimum, three readers: a community representative, a school administrator and a previous grant recipient. Each participant is charged with ‘blindly’ reading (identifying information of the applicant removed) a dozen applications and scoring them on a rubric. These volunteers then convene in clusters during an in-person meeting. When people come together in conversation, magic happens. Each perspective adds a dimension to the selection process. Ultimately, the cluster winnows the dozen proposals to a few chosen recipients, FFT Fellows. Everyone learns so much from each other and, ultimately, a teacher is awarded the funds to pursue a personalized and relevant learning experience. The committee member is forever invested in their Fellows’ projects. Some of the most poignant feedback we receive is from the folks who sit on our selection committees. One thing is clear; inside classrooms and out, Fund for Teachers is changing views on education.

Defining and predicting potential is artful science. Fund for Teachers exists for those educators with the drive and determination to fulfill their own potential, leading innovative learning for themselves and their students. We launched our initiative 15 years ago with the conviction that engaged and effective teachers given support to pursue unique, individualized learning make a difference in students’ lives. It is our privilege to curate the stories of this powerful work in this issue and on our website.

Stay tuned: On April 2 we announce our 2015 Fellows. Our collaborators, Fellows and newest grant recipients will employ #FFTFellow on social media to share the excitement.

Thanks to you, all of our friends and volunteers, together we’re supporting successful teaching and learning, just as we’ve done for 15 years. With your help, we’re fulfilling potential.

Ever forward,

Karen K. Webb
Executive Director

Special thanks to The Houstonian Hotel for hosting the first phase of our national selection process.



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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 on their school communities.



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Returning from the market with students in Myanmar



Club members in Jenks celebrating Zomi National Day, their tribal event in Southeast Asia



Dining with teachers at the refugee camp

Journey from Refugee School to US School

Pamella Garvin, Freshman Academy - Jenks, OK

When Myanmar (formerly Burma) is mentioned in the world news, my ears perk up because my community has a growing number of refugees from there. Among the English Language Learners in my school, Burmese is the second largest group represented. Since language and culture are tied to one another, I wanted to learn more about my students' backgrounds to better meet their needs. I learned that the majority of my students lived three or more years in Malaysia where refugee schools provide the only possibility for education. My FFT fellowship allowed me to visit the schools my students attended prior to arriving in the US, thus learning about their culture and better helping them integrate into their new community.

In Malaysia, I visited six different refugee schools, spending time with teachers and students. I learned that life as a refugee child means having adult responsibilities within a sheltered environment. These students have limited experience with hands-on

and group activities, yet they have continual exposure to the English language in classes taught by English-speaking volunteers. Seeing their educational setting and participating in their community gave me a better understanding of the Burmese students' strengths and weaknesses. I returned with many ideas to help my school understand the Burmese and help my students share their cultural pride.

I began the school year by telling my colleagues stories from the Malaysian refugee school so they could contextually understand our students' background. Additionally, I founded the school's Multicultural Club so that English Language Learners have an outlet to share their culture while also becoming part of the larger school community. Since extracurricular activities didn't exist in Burmese refugee camps, these students have always hesitated to join a school club. The Multicultural Club provides a comfortable way for students to become involved in our

school community. Approximately 100 members of our new club raised enough money in the past six months to provide a summer school scholarship for an English Language Learner at our high school. They've also raised awareness of the difficulties refugees face upon entering a US high school.

My fellowship to Malaysia gave me the tools to explain our students' deficit in education to my colleagues and the compassion to motivate these same students to keep learning.

Fund Facts: *Pamella is a National Board Certified teacher and taught German and Spanish before her current role with the English Language Development department. In addition to her FFT grant, she's also a recipient of grants from the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).*

talking trash

with students

by Megan DeRitter
Monarch Academy Charter School
Glen Burnie, MD



Megan with the Guatemalan eco-brick fence that inspired her school project

Eco-friendly is no longer a new concept for elementary school students. They are bombarded with ideas on how to contribute to a greener world from ad campaigns and conscientious parents before they even enter the classroom. Despite an interactive curriculum, including several trips to the local recycling center and landfill, I could tell my students were on information overload. They knew the “3 R’s” (reduce, reuse, recycle), but there was a definite disconnect on how their immediate actions could have a long-term impact on the environment. It wasn’t until my students started “talking trash” with a pen pal classroom in Nebaj, Guatemala, that I recognized an opportunity to truly make an impact.

Through *Peace Corps: World Wise Schools*, our classroom paired with one in Nebaj. Our weekly conversations with the students, teacher and a Peace Corps volunteer covered a wide range of topics, but it was trash that really got them talking. My students shared our study of local recycling and waste management

“The power of Fund for Teachers is beyond the immediate impact on the individual teacher.”

systems and the Guatemalan students opened up about the challenges their community faces with waste management. The discussion flourished into pictures, recycled art and personal stories. As my students learned about a different country and new culture, I saw a wave of comprehension and empathy wash over them. I realized I had an opportunity and obligation to further *my* understanding of this developing country so I could bring these lessons to life in my classroom. Fund for Teachers made this opportunity a reality for my students and me.

During my two weeks in Guatemala I interviewed locals, volunteered at a camp called Girls Leading Our World (GLOW), visited one of three landfills in the country and stayed with a local

family to truly immerse myself in the life and culture. Sad to say goodbye to the many great people I met along the way, I returned to Maryland excited to share my experiences with students and staff. Little did I know that this was only the very beginning of my Fund for Teachers trek. As soon as I arrived back stateside, I began to redevelop my curriculum for the upcoming school year and quickly realized the potential impact of my journey far beyond my immediate classroom.

I felt obligated to share the great efforts and innovations of this developing country with our school community. I eagerly reached out to share stories, pictures and artifacts that convey the voices of students and teachers I met. Our school was particularly inspired by “eco-bricks” – a waste management solution I observed in Guatemala. Eco-bricks are plastic bottles stuffed with inorganic material to create building blocks that can be used for construction of schools, fences and buildings. Together, we undertook a



The foundation of Monarch's eco-brick fence



Guatemalan students share tips promoting environmentalism



Collaborating on the school's new eco-brick wall



Student with clipboard monitors plastic bag usage in breakfast line



More than 1,000 eco-bricks ready for garden wall

school-wide initiative to build an eco-brick fence around the school's butterfly and rain garden.

To help, our school's Environmental Club began researching America's landfills and decomposition in comparison to Guatemala's waste management solutions. Student-designed posters and presentations filled classrooms and encouraged our school family to collect plastic waste to make eco-bricks. When plastic trash piled in classroom corners and lined cafeteria walls, it was time to begin stuffing. Every student and teacher eagerly volunteered, stuffing at least one bottle. So far, we've made more than 1,000 eco-bricks and we eagerly await the return of warm weather so we can cement and paint our new garden wall. During the cold winter months, members are designing and creating a recyclable playground, as well.

Parallel to this school-wide project, third graders also compared/contrasted waste management in their local community and Guatemala. In response

to the bottle project and as a result of their study, third graders wrote letters to our principal proposing that the school reduce the number of plastic bags passed out in the breakfast line. To support their proposal, students collected and analyzed data, interviewed peers and teachers and designed reusable canvas bags for students to carry their breakfast in. With the use of these reusable bags, we hope to reduce our contribution to our town's landfill by 175 bags, or approximately three eco-bricks, per school day.

My fellowship learning also reached into Spanish classes, as students exchanged letters with peers in Guatemala. In addition, students embraced the opportunity to practice their basic Spanish speaking with teachers in Guatemala, via Skype, to learn about their culture and lifestyle in depth. On a visit to the states, the Peace Corps Volunteer we worked with visited our school to see our projects in action. During her visit, she shared even more about culture, lifestyle, immigration and

waste management in this developing country. For this experience to come full circle was truly a moment for all of us to remember. At that moment, it felt our learning had come alive. Their learning *meant* something and inspired all of us to continue to learn and do more to bring good to our community.

The power of Fund for Teachers is beyond the immediate impact on the individual teacher. It is the ripple effect that reaches the students and their families, the entire faculty and two communities thousands of miles apart. I am inspired to continue the momentum and use my experiences as a catalyst for continued change.

Fund Facts: Megan joined her current school in its second year, helping lay the foundation and establish values and goals for student success. She is committed to personal and professional growth that facilitates a high-quality learning experience and promotes character building, global awareness, and community involvement. Read more about Megan's fellowship on her blog: flyingguatemala.wordpress.com.



Learning the Adinkra symbol for wisdom from students at Bantuma School



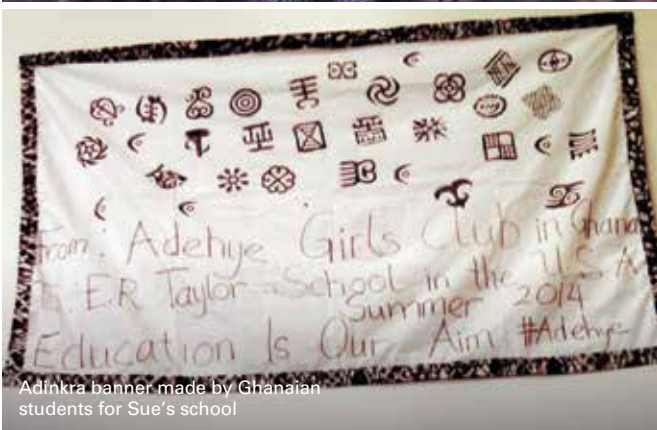
Adinkra banner made by Sue's special education students



Bracelets benefiting African after school clubs



Making Adinkra cloth in Ghana



Adinkra banner made by Ghanaian students for Sue's school



Performing an African dance at a school assembly

Symbols of Friendship

Sue Gonzales, E.R. Taylor Elementary School - San Francisco, CA

I spent one month in Ghana last summer on a Fund for Teachers fellowship studying the significance of Adinkra symbols in Ghanaian culture. I also worked with students at Bantuma School to create a book of their personal stories that relate to the universal values associated with Adinkra. These symbols, which represent proverbs and values, are an integral component of Ghanaian identity and culture.

I began my fellowship in Ntonso, Ghana, learning the history and ancient art of Adinkra printing with David Boamah, director of the Adinkra Village. I had the opportunity to carve the symbols onto calabash, pound the bark from the badie tree to prepare the dye and print my own Adinkra cloth. For the next three weeks, I worked with 60 students at Bantuma School and Christ Cares School as they authored and illustrated beautiful books on Adinkra and how these symbols impact their lives. Through these stories, I came to understand so

much about their struggles, hopes and dreams.

To share my new love of this culture with my students, I started an African Friendship Club at our school. We meet every Friday during lunch and right now we have 15 members. The girls are making bracelets using beads from here, as well as beads I brought back from Ghana. We held two sales last semester and raised more than \$600 to support the students at Bantuma and Christ Cares School. In February, club members choreographed and performed an African dance for our school's Black History assembly wearing dresses I bought on my fellowship. Each week, we read Adinkra stories "written" for us by Ghanaian students; we're creating stories of our own to share during the school's Multi-Cultural Night in April. And in my literature classes, 100 students have twice exchanged pen pal letters with African peers.

There is one Adinkra symbol, Woforo

Dua Pa A, which means, "When you climb a good tree, you are given a push." Fund for Teachers gave me such a push and I look forward to seeing where my new vision for multicultural education takes me and my students.

To learn more about Sue's fellowship and to purchase bracelets from the African Friendship Club, visit her blog at akomasfghanacollaboration.wordpress.com

Fund Facts: Sue holds a Master's degree in Special Education with a certificate in educational therapy. In addition to her FFT grant, Sue also received grants from Omprakash and All People Be Happy. She is the program director of the Book Club International, a program that empowers students to publish stories in their own communities where there is often a scarcity of books.



Testing their VEX Robot



Ashley and Nicole at Carnegie Mellon



Club members accept the Heart of Best Award

Programming Future Professionals

Ashley Daigle & Nicole MacDougall, Clark-Shaw Magnet School - Mobile, AL

Our community has an abundance of jobs requiring technical training. But because we don't have enough skilled laborers, local companies recruit from other regions of the country and around the world. As middle school science teachers, we believe we have the potential to train and equip students early enough to motivate them to pursue these opportunities. Integrating robotics into science and math classes helps make that happen.

Robots capture students' imagination and attention. When students are exposed to real-life assembly, programming and implementation of robot designs, insecurity fades and curiosity takes over. We sponsor the school's Robotics Club and teach a semester-long elective exploring technology and careers. To stay a few steps ahead of our students, we enrolled in Carnegie Mellon University's Robotics Institute with our Fund for Teachers grant.

Although we spent 30 hours in robotics training (learning pseudo code, graphical language, natural language and C++ programming language), our personal and professional growth extended outside of the university setting. We befriended teachers from across the country; talked at length about their school structure and classroom experiences; and discussed teaching techniques, competitions, and technologies to further students' skills. These conversations inspired us and made us better teachers.

During the fall semester, we shared our new knowledge and skills with the Robotics Club. Members used this knowledge to create a robot they entered in the Jubilee BEST Robotics Competition at the University of South Alabama. In addition to creating a marketing plan, students presented their robot to a panel of professionals from local industries and fielded inquiries about their design. Our marketing and spirit teams finished in the top third of the 35 teams that competed. Our club also won the *Heart of BEST Award* for their response to the robot's performance flaws due to Wi-Fi issues. We're so proud of their efforts, perseverance and accomplishments.

This spring, with the pressure and constraints of the competition behind us, we can really experiment with our robots. Seventh and eighth graders are working in teams developing marketing strategies, promotional techniques, mechanics, team building strategies, communication/presentation skills and programming knowledge. As a result, they have basic robotics knowledge and hands-on experience that supports their STEM interests and can facilitate college scholarships. We also hope this will prepare them for future jobs available in their own backyard.

Fund Facts: Nicole is currently introducing the school's Technology Team to Inventor software; Ashley is preparing a team to compete in the local Science Bowl. The teaching team plans to introduce virtual design to the Robotics Club before next year's Jubilee competition.

World Cultures Club: A Passport to Learning

(Continued)

While my Fund for Teachers fellowship provided me with valuable stories, photographs and artifacts to share with my students, the most important impact of my learning in Mexico was creating the spark my school community needed through this new club. Students will reap the benefits of learning about Spanish-speaking countries and cultures and about places all over the world.

What will World Cultures Club be learning about this month? We'll be exploring the multifaceted society of India.



On a field trip to the Mexican Cultural Institute

Fund Facts: Elizabeth used her FFT grant to enroll in language/cultural classes and volunteer with a nonprofit serving youth in Queretaro, Mexico, to regain fluency in spoken Spanish and establish the school's World Languages program. She endeavors to instill a love of languages, learning and a broader world view in her students through the use of music, dance and art. You can learn more about Elizabeth's class at maestraviajando.org.

Watch our website for the announcement of the 2015 FFT Fellows

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Beyond the Classroom

Morgan and Marie Krueger-Miller

Morgan (Houston Academy for International Studies) and Marie (Oak Forest Elementary) are two-time recipients of FFT grants. On their first fellowship, they examined Southeastern Asia's approach to teaching math by observing a Singapore primary school and attending Asian professional development; most recently, the Krueger-Millers met with microfinance institutions in India and interviewed small entrepreneurs to engage urban students in complex economic ideas and encourage exploration of a world far larger than their own.

- Selected as The Woods Project leaders, taking inner-city students backpacking into the wilderness for two weeks
- Chosen to join the Gates Foundation Advisory Council, two of 50 teachers from around the nation who meet throughout the year to provide the foundation feedback and direction
- Featured in the Gates Foundation's March newsletter discussing the benefits of Fund for Teachers grants
- Marie named one of nine finalists for The New Teacher Project's Fishman Prize for Superlative Teaching, awarded for exceptionally effective teaching in high-poverty public schools
- Marie selected for Houston Independent School District's Effective Teacher Pipeline – observing three of the district's lowest performing schools alongside Harvard Ed Lab's Roland Fryer, a MacArthur Genius Grant recipient
- In April, Morgan returns to India with 14 students to volunteer and stay at Vision International Learning Center, a remote boarding school that uses solar and biomass energy

“*I feel like we've been acknowledged and rewarded as a professional. That gives you courage; I've tried new things—not just on the fellowships, but in the classroom. The opportunity to dream about and create the research to further your craft? That's a dream come true.*”



Morgan and Marie visit a Himalayan village during 2011 fellowship