



Michael, Mary Claire and Sarah at the Sorbonne

Questioning Multiculturalism by asking, “Whose World Is This?”

Sarah Giesler, Alta Vista High School – Kansas City, MO

Ten days will not be enough.

We are five days into our trip to France, and we have learned much – but we also have started to realize the scope of our project goes beyond our ten days here. We are encouraged by what we have done, seen and heard, and we are excited to see where our projects take us – and our students.

Mike, Mary Claire and I teach at a small charter school in Kansas City, Missouri, that has a majority Latino population. As social studies, language arts and journalism teachers, we assign projects around immigration, identity and community, pushing students to leave their comfort zones and write in new ways.

Since we arrived in Marseille, we have been doing just that: leaving our comfort zones and writing in new forms. As we become the students, it is fun to leave teaching for a bit and engage

more in learning; we’re asking questions, exploring new areas and people and conducting research. This learning is particularly important to us because we are viewing the world from a new perspective. Many times we get caught up in our own bubbles, focusing only on Kansas City or the Latino experience or immigration in the United States. One of our biggest takeaways so far has been that despite our different demographics, France and the United States are very similar in terms of history, immigration, political rhetoric – the list goes on.

Our experiences in Marseille encourage us as we take our learning and projects back to our students. Mary Claire and I are excited to continue writing news and feature stories and models for our students, and Mike has some new ideas for his immigration unit; we are all having fun experimenting with blogging and social media posts.

In the coming months, we will discuss our new global perspectives with our students, challenging them to expand their worldview.

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Learning in the 21st century revolves around producing new knowledge rather than mastering existing information. To prepare students for success in the information age, teachers in this issue of Odyssey designed fellowships to pursue learning, literacy and life skills in locations ranging from a covered wagon to Costa Rica. To learn what all of our 500+ Fellows are pursuing this summer, visit <http://bit.ly/FFTgrants>.

Mission in Motion

"My fellowship's goal to teach students to stand up to bullying and homophobia is directly related to the idea of respect. If our community respects who we are, then we are more capable of learning in our community."

- Taica Hsu, Mission High School – San Francisco, CA

Project Description

Partner with the Lambda Youth Network, a project of Germany's Lesbian and Gay Federation in Berlin, to model their efforts to create safer spaces for LGBTQ youth through student-led workshops, peer-to-peer education and political activism to combat homophobia and bullying at school.

Fellowship Experiences


- Observed facilities providing LGBTQ youth workshops, affinity groups and a youth-run café
- Interviewed leaders of four organizations working to make the classroom more inclusive of all identities
- Worked with facilitators who offer workshops to schools struggling to create safe spaces for learning
- Deepened understanding of intersectionalities between gender and sexual orientation and other identities, including race, class and religion

School Impact

- Members of the Queer Straight Alliance offered a professional development day for faculty based on fellowship experiences and insights
- Nonprofit Taica founded to raise awareness of gender and sexuality collaborated with the school's history department to create a curriculum on contributions of important LGBTQ individuals
- Students advocated for a multi-stall, gender-neutral bathroom by presenting to the entire faculty and student body



Fund Facts: Taica (pictured on the left in Berlin) is a National Board Certified Teacher and has taught all levels of mathematics for nine years, while also serving as the faculty advisor for the Queer Straight Alliance. In conjunction with his non-profit, Queens of the Castro, Taica has helped raise money to fund scholarships of more than \$25,000 to LGBTQ graduating high school seniors across the state.

 To keep the momentum going, donate at fundforteachers.org

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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Fund for Teachers is a pipeline for teacher leaders who are ready to lead innovation in their classrooms and beyond. When our Fellows return, we know that they are hungry for opportunities to 'go public' with their new-found practices, that they will want to expand their web of influence and they no longer think of themselves as solo practitioners.

This is not new territory for Fund for Teachers; it is what we have always done.

Ever forward,

Karen K. Webb
Executive Director

Head to our website for information, inspiration and resources.
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In the final stretch, flanked by cheering K-3 students



Smith training on his fellowship under professional triathletes



Carrying smaller torches around the school track



Smith addresses school community on race day



Students carry authentic Olympic torch and the American flag on 26-mile route around community

Perseverance Hits the Pavement

Smith Mowry, Columbus Magnet School – Norwalk, CT

The Olympic torch went through Norwalk, CT, this year, thanks to FFT Fellow Smith Mowry. A PE and Health teacher at Columbus Magnet School, Smith designed his fellowship to research nutrition and fitness skills required by Ironman athletes at the Triathlon School of Hawaii last summer. Nine months later, 90 fourth and fifth graders ran, in teams, twenty-six miles throughout the city in anticipation of the upcoming Summer Olympics.

“I designed my fellowship to learn from professional trainers about endurance, gait and pacing in anticipation of an Olympic Torch Run. My new knowledge informed students’ training for the mile run so they could successfully complete half-mile segments of a marathon carrying an authentic torch from the 1996 Atlanta games,” said Smith.

The training regimen began last fall with a fitness test. The main issue was endurance, according to Smith, because the elementary students took off sprinting each time. Slowly, using a strategy mapped out with help of Smith’s trainer in Hawaii, students worked up to the quarter mile, half mile and, eventually, a mile run. Smith also incorporated lessons on metabolism and vitamin intake necessary to achieve their goal and develop a healthy lifestyle.

Leading up to the event to build excitement, Smith staged Olympic-inspired activities, including the long jump, javelin throw, shot put, 100 yard dash and relay races. He posted a city map in the gym where students could view their assigned routes, which were based on factors such as difficulty, segment length, topography or proximity to their neighborhoods. Parents made signs to post on road sides; local sponsors covered costs of official uniforms for each participant.

The day of the race, Smith cheered on his students from a pace car while a parent filmed the entire route and livestreamed it on Periscope so students’ families and friends around the country could follow the progress. In front of seventeen schools around the city, runners passed the torch to their peers while hundreds of students and teachers lined the streets cheering.

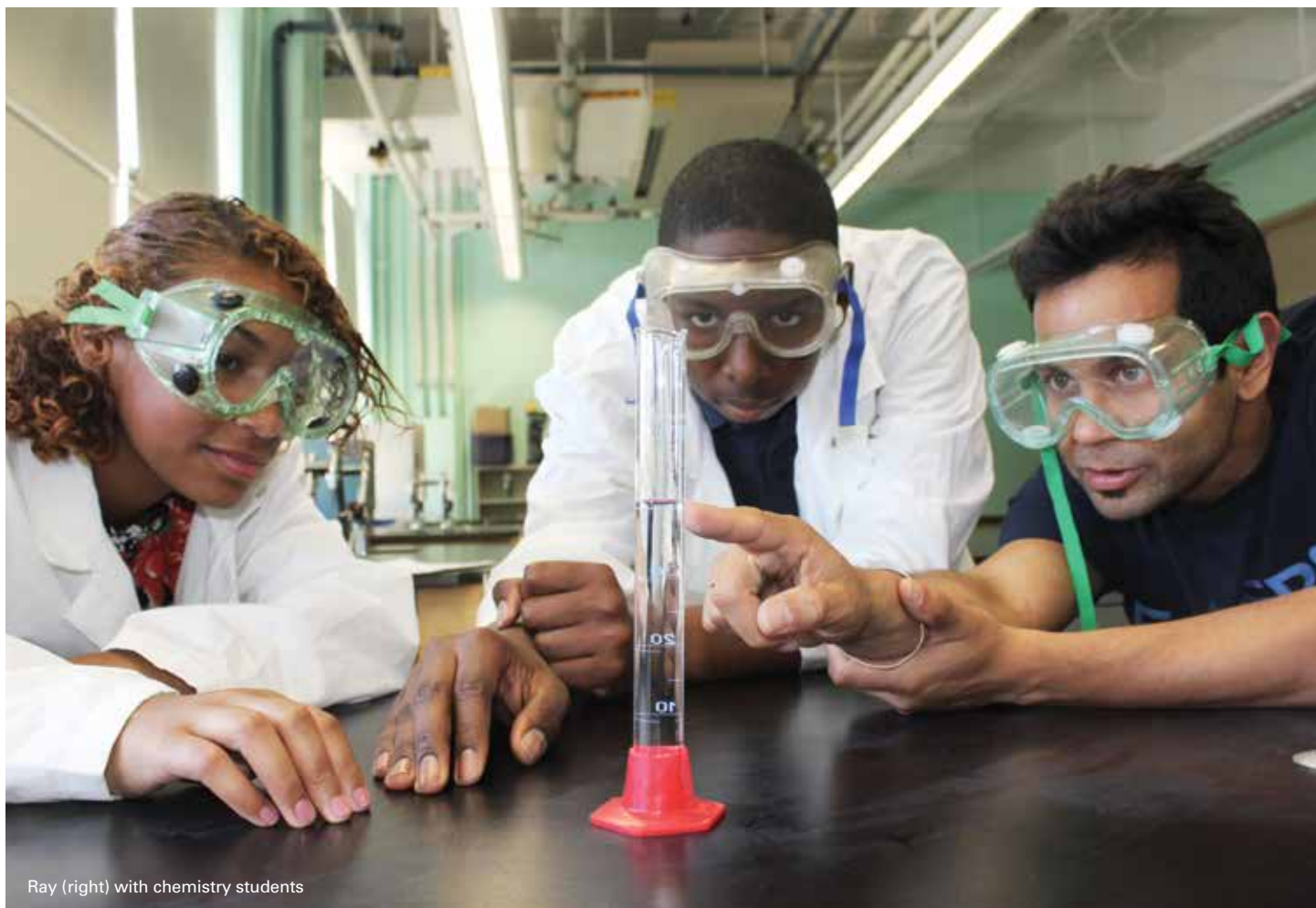
“Students’ self-satisfaction and self-confidence increased and they experienced the payoff of their training,” said Smith. “I directly correlated the perseverance and dedication needed to finish the race with our everyday struggles with peers or their multiplication tables.”

While parents, teachers and even the chief of police ran alongside students, kindergartners through third graders

took twenty-minute shifts carrying the Olympic and United States flags around the school track continuously for five hours. Both their relay and the Torch Run culminated in a city-wide celebration, attended by the mayor, Board of Education members and the local congressman. Each Torch Run participant was awarded a medal, a pedometer and bumper sticker sent by the Triathlon School of Hawaii.

“In my teaching career, I’ve attended more than forty professional development days, visited different states, and even different countries, to gain a better understanding of my field of teaching; however, nothing will ever compare to the knowledge and hands-on experience I attained through this FFT fellowship,” Smith said. “I developed background knowledge to understand more about young athletes’ physical abilities and how to help them accomplish their fitness goals. Along the way, we all learned about teamwork, collaboration and the need to rely on others if you want to accomplish something amazing.”

Fund Facts: Smith has taught PE for 21 years and loves to integrate into his lessons science, math and specifically the arts, even traveling to Zibo City in China to compare arts education strategies with those in Connecticut.



Ray (right) with chemistry students

Analyzing Data, Addressing Global Issues, Improving College Readiness

Ray Ahmed, The Expeditionary Learning School for Community Leaders High School – Brooklyn, NY

My students live fifty miles away from the Indian Point Power Plant, currently topping America's list of nuclear power plants at risk of earthquake. Even more unsettling, an electrical disturbance at the plant last December caused one of the reactors to shut down. My students are aware of the risks associated with living in a nuclear fallout zone, but they're not proficient with the science that makes the plant run. This lack of knowledge not only impacts them as citizens but also as college students who, they tell me, don't pursue STEM classes or careers after doing poorly in the first few weeks of college chemistry. To make chemistry less abstract and more accessible for my urban students, I'm using my FFT grant to monitor and analyze radiation levels resulting from the nuclear power plant disaster in Fukushima, Japan, to form case studies for my eleventh graders.

I begin my fellowship volunteering with Eyes for Fukushima, an organization that aims to promote grassroots internationalization in Fukushima to improve the lives of people affected by the nuclear disaster. This amazing opportunity allows me to help this community, as well as learn how a community responds and adapts to the nuclear disaster. I will document my findings through interviews, videos and photographs. The second week will be devoted to recording the radiation levels throughout various parts of Fukushima, as well as interviewing citizens and documenting my findings. In addition to independent research, I'll also take part in a city-sponsored tour that provides insight into the decontamination of the city, including the process of scrubbing roads, buildings and trees with street sweeping vehicles, high-powered sprayers, and hand-held brushes. I will

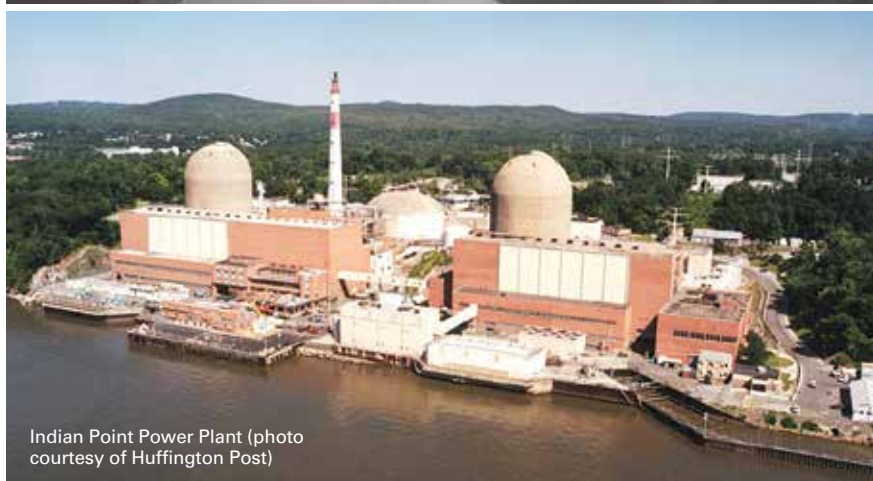
then travel to Hamadori, the region that had to be decontaminated, topsoil removed, buildings scrubbed clean and debris stored underground. Here I will explore radiation monitoring posts that have been placed throughout the region. Finally, I'll join the Bridges for Reconstruction Tour Group, which explores the 20km exclusion zone outside of the nuclear plant to document the outcome of the disaster.

Throughout my fellowship, I will use a dosimeter to measure and record radiation levels. This will allow me to function as a scientist, gathering evidence and using a logical process to make decisions about the impact of nuclear technology.

The research continues when I return to school, but my students will take the lead. With the same dosimeter I use in Japan, students will measure radiation levels around our school community and



Radiation level in Fukushima Prefecture on March 2011 (photo courtesy of Christian Åslund Photography)



Indian Point Power Plant (photo courtesy of Huffington Post)

in New York City; they will then compare and contrast their measurements with my data from Fukushima. Following this preliminary experiment, students will design an experiment involving bacteria, yeast, and/or plants to determine the impact of ionizing radiation, or X-Rays, on the viability of living organisms. (Special thanks to our local orthodontist for providing the X-Ray machine.)

Because our students struggle with the Common Core English Assessment, particularly around the Writing for Argument portion, I'm collaborating with English teachers to assign a written argument about Indian Point, which will be Common Core aligned and incorporate resources gathered on my fellowship. Students' final product will be a policy memo to the Governor of New York that addresses the prompt, *Should Indian Point be Decommissioned?* This task will also allow students to complete demanding work that requires higher-order thinking skills that will prepare them for college and career.

As a science teacher, it is important for me to grow as a teacher and a scientist. And being a good scientist requires me to be engaged in

understanding the process of experimental design and scientific inquiry before teaching it. This fellowship allows me to analyze the impact of natural events on man-made energy sources while observing the direct negative impact of technology on Japanese mothers, fathers, grandmothers, sons and daughters. I believe that combining science-in-action with human impact will diminish the abstract nature of chemistry and inspire students as mathematicians, scientists and globally-aware citizens.

Fund Facts: Ray holds degrees in chemistry and computer science, as well as a master's in biomedical engineering. He is a NYC Department of Education Senior Science Common Core Fellow, Math for America Fellow and Model Teacher at his school.

Questioning Multiculturalism by asking, "Whose World Is This?"

(Continued)

In a more localized way, we now understand our students better, too. Not only do we better appreciate their immigrant backgrounds, but we also identify with what they go through as students. We are experiencing the struggles and rewards of finding primary and secondary sources, interviewing others and writing intriguing stories. On top of those activities, we are dealing with the realities of travel, such as dealing with logistics while in a foreign country. While we all speak some French, our deficiencies in the language create some difficulties when meeting others; the Euro Cup soccer tournament is taking place in France, leading to riots and tear gas; striking transportation workers cancelled our train to Paris; we are seeing increasing numbers of French soldiers casually carrying assault rifles. Needless to say, we are on edge. Many of our students, though, live with similar anxieties all of the time. Now that we identify more with students, hopefully we can engage and provide scaffolds for them in stronger, and more empathetic ways.

Despite our anxieties, we are having a great time and learning more than we realized we would. It is clear that we have only scratched the surface of the subjects of our project. We have much more to do in the final five days.



Street art/statement in a Paris neighborhood

Fund Facts: Michael, Mary Claire and Sarah are blogging daily from their fellowship at bit.ly/FFTidentity. Their research will build on the learning of three 2014 Fellows from Alta Vista High School. John Kearney and Katie Laird with Jay Pitts-Zevin (now teaching at KIPP Endeavor Academy) used their FFT grant to research in the diasporic nations of Israel and Palestine to refine units that explore the displacement/narrative and bolster the school-wide vision of deepening student understanding of the nexus for identity and social justice. They now use personal examples from the West Bank to elevate students' thinking and writing. (Read more about their fellowship and impact at bit.ly/FFTisrael.)



Tara's older and younger students team up for a mentoring activity

Student Mentors Model Collaboration

Tara Shetler, Garden Elementary School – Pasadena, TX

What other disorder affects 1 in 68 children and has shown a ten-fold increase in prevalence over the last 40 years? What disorder still plagues our society globally with unknown answers to questions we are all so desperately in need of? Autism: a single word that holds so much complexity and mystery we almost do not know where to begin.

Gwen Cole (Pomeroy Elementary) and I used our 2015 Fund for Teachers grant to attend The Autism Show in London and, afterward, volunteer at a local non-profit impacting those on the autism spectrum. Our motivation was (and is) to empower professionals, parents and the younger generation living with autism in our school community.

During the three-day, international event, we learned alongside physicians, psychologists, behavior specialists, professionals, parents and those diagnosed with autism. The experience was truly a gift and renewed our excitement for teaching. We spoke to many older individuals about their life-long experience with the disorder; we saw 20-year-olds with autism holding jobs and earning incomes with the support and guidance of an assisting organization. One exceptional session demonstrated how the United Kingdom

is trying to help adapt the everyday life of individuals with autism and make the country more "autism-friendly." Professionals discussed sensory issues for those with autism and how to support those sensory issues in the everyday world. For instance: lighting. Individuals in the UK are working on a law that would ban florescent lighting in stores to address sensory overload of lighting for those with autism.

The unbelievable drive of adults with autism to gain rights within the United Kingdom was quite spectacular and eye-opening. In no way are they embarrassed or shy about their condition; instead, they are fighting to change how one sees a person with autism. We wanted to make that change for our students, as well, teaching them to embrace who they are, knowing they should fight for their rights, and believing they can have a very full life outside of the autism diagnosis.

We began by implementing student mentoring programs at our schools. Now, older students with autism mentor younger peers and we're working on expanding the practice district-wide. We're witnessing all students' confidence expand through mentoring. In addition, we held our district's first professional development session on autism. From

handing out door prizes and goodies to sharing what we learned on our fellowship about sensory issues and life after school, the session provided parents, staff, and community members with new insights into the world of autism.

Gwen and I want to emphasize what a difference these experiences and opportunities make in teachers' lives. Before this fellowship, we never thought to question or even wonder how autism is dealt with in other countries. It is so important to be able to learn from others and gain new insight into something you feel so deeply about. We are forever thankful for this rare experience that increased our desire to learn and renewed the love for what we do and those for whom we do it.

Fund Facts: In her 12 years of teaching special education, Tara has been recognized as Teacher of the Year twice. She's currently finishing a Master's Degree in Education. Gwen has been a preschool program for children with disabilities (PPCD) teacher for the past seven years and achieved the status of Model PPCD Classroom for the district. She also collaborated with colleagues to design, create and implement a district training for other staff members working with young children with disabilities.



Jan driving the horses on the trail

Project Management Through Manifest Destiny

Paulette Goodman, Lookingglass Elementary School – Roseburg, OR

After arriving in The Oregon Territory from Michigan in 1854, Aaron Rose staked his claim on the banks of the South Umpqua River and built a hotel for travelers on the Oregon-California Trail. One hundred and fifty years later and ten miles west of his family homestead in Roseburg, OR, lies Lookingglass Elementary School, where Jan Polka, Paulette Goodman and Katrina Scott teach fourth and fifth grade. These teachers designed an FFT fellowship to illustrate the fortitude of their town's founding father and thousands like him who migrated during westward expansion. Modeling the Manifest Destiny experience, Jan, Paulette and Katrina climbed in the back of a canvas-topped, flare boxed, wooden wheeled wagon for a week in June as research for a similar living history experience with their students.

These Fellows/settlers joined the Fort Seward Covered Wagon Train in Jamestown, North Dakota, and progressed at a rate of three- to four-miles per hour each day. Participants dressed in "pioneer style" and worked as a team to build campfires, churn butter, cook from the Chow Wagon and entertain around the campfire at night (electronics strictly prohibited).

"Our students will never come



Paulette with her clothing designer/principal on the day of departure

close to understanding the sacrifices and hardships pioneers experienced by simply reading a book, but learning about it first-hand from us will bring the history to life," said Jan. "On the Trail, we developed project-based, thematic units students will use to plan their own wagon trail ride around our rural community."

In conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the school's Community Day next spring, 40 fourth and fifth graders will execute their own covered wagon convoy. Throughout the year, preparation for the overnighter will include securing wagons and horse/mule teams, planning menus, organizing supplies, designing and making costumes, charting the course and obtaining permission to camp on local farmland. This real life learning

incorporates skills such as math, research, map reading, team-building and perseverance. Journaling will contribute to students' mastery of writing skills, and community members have volunteered to help edit and publish the entries into a finished *Oregon Trail Guide*.

"Professional development offered to and required of teachers is almost exclusively focused on textbooks and testing," said Jan. "Our team is determined to meet students' needs in meaningful ways that make learning enjoyable and memorable. It is the difference between reading about an event and actually participating in it – as we did on our fellowship and our students will after us – that adds excitement and energy to learning."

Fund Facts: After retiring from 28 years of teaching in Oakland, OR, Jan's passion for learning landed her back in the classroom at Lookingglass, where she's been named Social Studies Teacher of the Year and taught Paulette's daughter in third grade.



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Movement of Birds and Migration of Students

Darin Cauley, George B. Swift Specialty School – Chicago, IL

Darin was working in a Chicago Public Schools classroom as an engineer, not a teacher, when he discovered a love of birding. While consulting on a renovation project, he caught sight of a bird hiking up a tree just on the other side of the window. Darin ran upstairs to the second-floor classroom to continue to track the bird's journey, then drove to the library after work to identify in a field guide the species (a downy woodpecker). "In that moment of wonder," said Darin, "birding became a new hobby for me."

Teaching English Language Learners became his new profession and the classroom was again the setting for an epiphany. Darin often caught his K-8 science students staring through the windows at the outdoors and realized their disconnect from nature, once readily accessible in rural villages and refugee camps they used to call home. Inspired, Darin designed a fellowship to document in Costa Rica the winter habitats of bird species that migrate through his school community to encourage students' reflection on their own migration stories.

"My students are observers. That is what they can do well, even if they don't have the skills of English proficiency," said Darin. I want to grow their observation skills and give them tools to describe their world. As I shepherd my students from day to day, pouring myself into their lives

to help them grasp content knowledge, I myself need the tutelage of an expert learner to fill me up so I have more to share with them. I'll get that in Costa Rica."

Working with an experienced research ornithologist as his guide, Darin will learn to identify birds in various regions of Costa Rica and research the wintering sites of those that pass through Chicago. Documentation and photographs will enrich biology lessons for students who can seasonally observe the same birds' southern homes around Chicago and also inform his school's method of teaching scientific inquiry. This fall, he plans to collaborate with social studies and language arts teachers to guide students' creation of narratives and dioramas about their families' migration experiences, incorporating the movement of birds they study. Darin already secured funding for field trips to expose students to outdoor settings around the city, and he envisions founding a birding club for weekend trips to the Montrose Point Bird Observatory with school families during spring migration season.

"Learners need to be curious, and they need to possess a sense of wonder that is sparked by the smallest of new discoveries. I have both when it comes to birds and I know that my infectious passion for the avian world will be transferred to my students through this fellowship," said

Darin. "My overarching goal is for students to experience these creatures as fascinating to study, fully accessible in our neighborhood and migrating on pathways they can compare and contrast with their own life movements."

Fund Facts: Darin holds a degree in engineering, endorsements in science and math and just completed his eighth year of teaching. He has researched portions of the Chicago Field Museum's bird specimen collection and identified more than 175 bird species in the wild.

Darin's students practice birdwatching on the school walkway

