

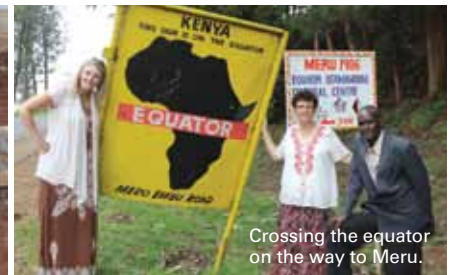
Cindy and Donna at an elementary school in Tharaka.



Students recycle items for system prototypes.



Future fish pond at Kaaga Girls School.



Crossing the equator on the way to Meru.

Fishing for Solutions to Hunger

Give villagers fish and feed them for a day. If Donna Gradel's students design and build a sustainable fish pond, they'll feed them for a lifetime.

Donna teaches AP Environmental Science and leads the Environmental Club she chartered at Broken Arrow High School outside Tulsa, OK. Over the course of her 25 year career, her students consistently voiced two laments: "How will I ever use this?" and "What can I do to make a difference?" With art teacher Cindy Gharibvand, Donna answered both questions by designing an FFT fellowship rooted in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) that addressed a human need: hunger.

Learning from an international aid worker about Kenyans' lack of healthy protein, the teaching team considered *aquaponics* as a potential solution. (Aquaponics is a sustainable food production system used to raise fish and cultivate plants in a symbiotic, toxin-free environment.) Using their grant, Donna and Cindy traveled to Meru, Kenya, where they partnered with administrators at the Kaaga Girls School to research the technique's viability in the sub-Saharan desert. This fall, using data collected in Meru, Donna's students

are constructing 20 scaled-down prototypes of an aquaponics system in a storage closet serving as a makeshift science lab.

"Our FFT grant was a sound investment that's empowering students to think at a higher level..."

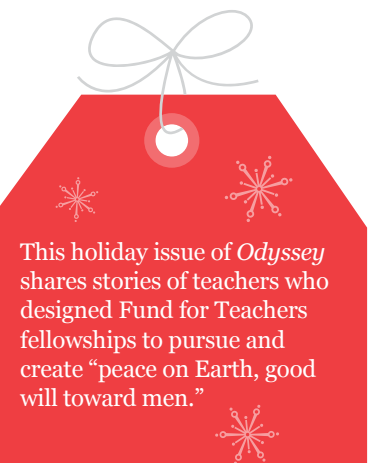
"A central focus of the new Common Core State Standards supports students' ability to apply classroom learning to real life," explained Donna. "Working with aquaponics, students engage in a problem, learn about biological systems, and integrate pre-engineering skills to solve a global issue. Instead of simply learning a formula, they're making history."

In a related effort, the Environmental Club organized an "Aqua for Tharaka" campaign, raising money to fund a water well in a district near Meru. Students sold water bottles at the Homecoming game and are seeking matching donations from local businesses to raise \$18,000 for the project. Current and former students are clamoring to go with Donna and

Cindy to install the aquaponics systems in Kenya this summer.

"Our fellowship not only inspired us and impacted our students' learning, it is changing a part of the world forever. And if our system works, it can be replicated throughout the world to provide food, clean water, and jobs associated with maintaining it," said Cindy. "Our FFT grant was a sound investment that's empowering students to think at a higher level, solve a pertinent problem, and bring about good in the world."

Watch a short video of Donna and Cindy's fellowship at youtube.com/fundforteachers.



This holiday issue of *Odyssey* shares stories of teachers who designed Fund for Teachers fellowships to pursue and create "peace on Earth, good will toward men."



2000 Post Oak Boulevard, Suite 100
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713-296-6127 or 800-681-2667
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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

At this time of the year, my thoughts always turn to those things that I want to celebrate. And this holiday season I have much on my list. Over the past months I have had the opportunity to visit with teachers and their students across the country and continue to find that the lessons learned in the classroom are often more important than just the curriculum. We have expanded our outreach throughout Wyoming partnering with the Ellbogen Foundation and grown to offer a state-wide program in Texas. This dynamic growth continues to fill our objective of changing the learning for more children.



Karen Webb with Food for Thought keynote speaker Richard Dreyfus.

Every teacher makes an impression on their students. Our Fellows make positive and often life-changing ones. Fund for Teachers stories are our teachers' stories. We are proud and thrilled to announce that one, Erik Fogel, who used his Fund for Teachers' grant to develop an urban debate league in the Bronx, was recognized in November at the White House as one of 12 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award recipients. In her remarks during the ceremony, First Lady Michelle Obama said "...you do it in unbelievable ways, in some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable. And I know that you put a lot of late nights and long hours in to give these kids opportunities worthy of their promise."



FFT Fellow Erik Fogel and Ashley Meija, member of the New York City Urban Debate League, accepting their award from First Lady Michelle Obama.

This year we awarded our 5,000 Fellow and to celebrate we got together with 35 of them from across the country, Richard Dreyfus, and 400 of our wonderful supporters. One Fellow, Patricia Greenleaf, spoke passionately on behalf of all:

*"I am going to be the teacher that raises the bar, I am going to be the teacher that sets high standards for student achievement, I am going to be that teacher that pulls everything out of my students. I am going to be the teacher that teaches with high rigor and engagement because breakthroughs take place in classrooms when we find resources that divert student focus from all of the other issues that hinder and impede their learning. **I am the change.**"*

Celebrate intentional optimism. As you are putting the final touches on your holiday list, please remember all of the *Patricia's* and *Erik's* working in American classrooms and make a gift to Fund for Teachers. Together, **we can all be the change.**

Joy and peace this holiday season and in the New Year.

Karen K. Webb
Executive Director



Jenny harvests chiles on a farm in Quintana Roo, Mexico.



Students plot out garden in school courtyard.

"I had an incredible time on my fellowship, but it's perhaps more rewarding to know I'm beginning something meaningful for my students."



Growing plants to eventually transplant.



Tending the greens.



Jenny's students harvest the same chiles in their school garden this fall.

A Safe Harbor in Chicago's Southwest Side

Last spring, unseasonably warm weather triggered a surge of gang violence in some of Chicago's roughest neighborhoods, including Little Mexico where high school students attend Farragut Career Academy. During these weeks, Jenny Sarna's science students created an interior oasis by transforming a concrete courtyard into a Mexican Heritage Garden.

"Many of my students are Mexican immigrants or Mexican-Americans," explained Jenny. "I was looking for a way to make Biology more real, more meaningful to them and thought gardening was the way to go... it can be transformative." She submitted an FFT grant proposal to investigate native plant species in Mexico and design a sustainable school garden.

When Jenny learned her proposal was funded, she and her students started plotting out the garden space and growing seeds to transplant from

the classroom when days grew warmer. Friday Field Trips to Chicago's urban and botanical gardens helped inspire the design of their own. When the school year ended, a dump truck delivered fertile soil for raised beds, replacing dirt contaminated with high levels of arsenic and mercury.

In July, Jenny left the garden in her students' care and departed on her fellowship, visiting several communities within the Yum Balam Ecological Preserve in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. She observed the region's conservation practices, interviewed medicine men and traditional farmers, and learned about new plants from that region which could also grow in Chicago. Jenny's research, pictures and interviews, inform a new curriculum for the Gardening and Conservation Club she founded this fall, providing students with authentic information to develop their own science projects within the classroom and garden.

As Jenny engages students in this new setting, the school community simultaneously connects with her. Teachers, custodians and security staff appreciate the harvest and a greener space on school grounds. One teacher in the on-campus preschool (created for students' children) brings toddlers into the garden to sample new flavors and plant a few seeds of their own.

"I had an incredible time on my fellowship, but it's perhaps more rewarding to know I'm beginning something meaningful for my students," said Jenny. "In addition to its educational value, our garden symbolizes a safe space – somewhere beautiful and peaceful. Every student deserves a space like that."

Read more about the evolution of Jenny's fellowship at mexicanheritagegarden.blogspot.com.



Margret at Barnes & Noble during a teacher presentation.



With a resistance fighter interviewed in Italy.



Outside Anne Frank's house in Amsterdam.



Pages from her book *Threads*.

Resisting Bullies in the Third Reich and the School Lunch Room

Resistance in World War II meant “shooting at Hitler,” according to Margret Atkinson’s middle school students in Zachary, LA. In their minds, German youth’s leaflets opposing the Third Reich or a French pastor’s sheltering of Jews in the church attic seemed less significant to Hitler’s defeat. Margret wanted to convey that “doing the right thing” takes *many* forms. So, in the summer of 2011, she used an FFT grant to research the Resistance Movement and its members in five European countries.

Margret’s fellowship began in Berlin at Gestapo and SS headquarters, where she studied the lives and sacrifices of those arrested for opposition activities. Interviews with survivors in Denmark, Sweden, and Italy heightened experiences at concentration camps, Anne Frank’s house, and Paris’ Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), an organization that saved children from concentration camps.

“Walking through the Shoah Museum’s resistance exhibit in Paris, I felt the same frenzied compulsion as at Auschwitz: I had to write down as many names as I could, as if my writing their names would somehow breathe life back into them,” recalled Margret. “That’s what I hoped to do with my grant – tell individuals’ stories so children could learn from courageous acts and create moral paradigms that value each person’s humanity.”

When teaching about World War II, Margret now talks in words students readily understand due to rampant school and cyber bullying: perpetrator, bystander, victim, and upstander – a term she learned from the Holocaust Museum Houston. “Students see that being a bystander, even in everyday situations like teasing and gossip, equates to doing nothing,” said Margret. “Using Resistance Movement members as examples of upstanders, students see concrete ways to develop frameworks

for literally standing up and doing what’s right.”

Margret expanded her classroom lessons into a children’s book entitled *Threads* based on the common thread of humanity protected by five Resistance Movement members she researched on her fellowship. She also facilitates anti-bullying presentations at her local Barnes & Noble twice a year for educators from surrounding areas.

“Intolerance can be found in every turn of life, and it’s only through dialogue, honest conversations, and empathy that it can be extinguished,” said Margret. “We must choose to become upstanders for the marginalized so that individuals’ value is appreciated and the human faces of the victims emerge.”

*For a PDF version of *Threads* and resources shared in Margret’s presentation, visit cultivatingthegardenfma.com.*



With students, receiving her award from ING.

Photo: Lauren Kawana and The Oakland North

Graphic Stories Told Through Art

Three-year-old Thi Bui and her parents fled Saigon in 1978, so she understands the plight of Oakland International High School students walking into her classroom. Collectively, these young men and women speak 29 languages; 100% of them are English Language Learners, almost all of them having immigrated to the US in the last four years. Many of Thi's students similarly escaped from conflicts in Liberia, Bhutan, Nepal, Iraq, Burma, and the former Soviet bloc. In an attempt to get to know her students and their stories, Thi reaches out in the one language they share – art.

Thi invites her students to share who they are and where they come from by creating graphic novels (commonly known as comics) about their lives. In doing so, she not only teaches storytelling through art, but also helps students process what they've gone through to arrive in her classroom. Thi likens the process of her visual storytelling curriculum to counseling. "A lot of what therapy does is create a meaningful narrative out of painful events. This work gives students an outlet to express their grief, fear and joy that previously remained buried," she said.

Creating art out of chaos became a mission for Thi after she received a 2009 Fund for Teachers grant to return to Vietnam, with her mother as a guide, and retrace her family's experience: from World War II, through the American conflict, to their escape and resettlement in America. Since her return, she has been transforming her oral history into a graphic novel. She used that process as the basis for a new high school art and history course "Comics as Oral History," which she later adapted for the English Learner population at Oakland International High School.

Her students' stories depict separation from family, alienation from traditions and cultures, survival amid squalid refugee camps, perilous treks across borders, and the piecing together of new lives in a new country. While students cannot voice these pilgrimages due to language or emotional barriers, Thi elicits the experiences by providing a few simple conventions like blank panels and speech balloons. As images emerge, healing does, too.

Thi was one of three educators chosen from more than 1,300 across America to receive ING's Unsung Hero top award in September. More valuable to Thi is her students' work compiled and published as *We Are Oakland International*, available on Amazon.com. All proceeds from book sales support the school's mission to provide quality alternative public education to recently arrived immigrants.

More teachers using 2012 FFT grants to benefit their students and the greater good:

Fabienne Mondesir (Boston Latin Academy – **Boston, MA**), who volunteered with a low-income community school and met with government organizations on the island of La Hispaniola in the Dominican Republic to research pathways toward citizenship for children born to Haitian laborers and create the social activism curriculum "Doing right in the face of injustice";

Rachel Madris (Expeditionary Learning School for Community Leaders – **Brooklyn, NY**), who volunteered with community organizations supporting victims of child exploitation in Delhi, India, to teach students about human trafficking and empower them to create an authentic advocacy project;

Rosemary Barilla (Reinberg Elementary – **Chicago, IL**), who visited Peace Park in Nagasaki and attended "A-Bomb Day" remembrances in Hiroshima, observing how the Japanese promote peace through memorials, to enhance instruction on the nature of conflict and why the message of peace is one students should care about;

Andries van der Bent (Hughes STEM High School – **Cincinnati, OH**), who assisted Mongolian conservation efforts for two species native to the Asian steppe ecosystem to guide students through their own local conservation initiative as a senior Capstone project; and,

Michael McCormick & Jeff Cherry (Clear Falls High School – **League City, TX**), who volunteered with a school in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya, to develop a curriculum that shares the hopes, dreams, and challenges of students' peers in Kenya and promotes a greater understanding of another culture.

**2013 Grant Application
Deadline: January 31, 2013**

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Practicing What Gandhi Preached



Andrea at the National Gandhi Museum in New Delhi.



Surrounded by AGENTS at North Belt Elementary.

When Andrea Barela first showed a picture of Mahatmas Gandhi to students at Houston's North Belt Elementary School, they laughed. A tiny, old man with big round glasses didn't line up with their image of a leader. Since then, weekly meetings of the afterschool service club she founded focus on Gandhi's style of peaceful activism, which she studied on her FFT fellowship last summer.

"When I asked students to give me an example of a leader, they suggested Alicia Keys," said Andrea. "I found some leadership curriculum online, but the examples were historical figures solely from America. I wanted to broaden

students' view of leaders and leadership and I chose to focus on Gandhi because of his influence on Martin Luther King, Jr., a leader with whom all of my students were familiar."

Andrea's fellowship took her to Gandhi's home in Mumbai where she researched his principles of non-violent resistance, and to the National Gandhi Museum in New Delhi. These experiences now guide her work with members of her afterschool club, AGENTS (Always Getting Everyone Nicely Together Significantly). After learning about Gandhi's approach to leadership, students will then apply similar strategies to develop action plans

within the larger community.

In November and December, Andrea shares her framework for using Gandhian Thought to develop student leadership at two conferences: the National Council for Social Studies and the National Association for Multicultural Education.

"Looking at Gandhi's life to explore what a leader is, the actions they take and the example they make will help students process steps to becoming an agent of change," said Andrea. "Then, they'll be equipped to use their voices and actions to impact the community and follow their own true paths."

Funds and Awareness Raised for Teacher Fellowships



Steve and Leticia Trauber (left) join event co-chairs Steve and Vicki Farris (right) in congratulating honorees Walt and Mary Lou Smith.



Food for Thought celebrated FFT's 5,000th Fellow.

Mr. Holland's Opus star Richard Dreyfuss joined 400 guests at Houston's Hotel ZaZa on October 17th to celebrate Fund for Teachers' 5,000th teacher grant. The fourth annual "Food for Thought" event, chaired by Vicki and Steve Farris and Leticia and Steve Trauber, raised more than \$600,000 to fund teachers' self-designed professional development.

With an acting career spanning decades, Mr. Dreyfuss now focuses on

education, working through his Dreyfuss Initiative to put civics education back in the classroom.

A video introduction by former Secretary of State James Baker introduced the evening's honorees, Mary Lou and Walt Smith, retiring managing partner of Baker Botts, LLP. The emotional highlight of the evening came when Houston Fellow Patricia Greenleaf shared her fellowship's impact on at-risk

students; the audience jumped to their feet as she concluded and recognized 30 additional FFT grant recipients in attendance from across the country.

Following a live auction raising \$120,000, Mr. Dreyfuss spoke about the importance of teachers in his life and the necessity of teaching civics in our nation's schools.

I AM A FUND FOR TEACHERS FELLOW

Name: Kyle Beckham

Profession: Critically Conscious Educator of Literacy,
Social Studies and Media Arts
Downtown Continuation High School
San Francisco, CA

Best Asset/Feature in My Classroom: student-made table tops with the words Equality, Justice, Struggle, Freedom, Love, Unity, and Peace written in graffiti. These gems were the culmination of a unit on graffiti and graffiti culture.

Favorite Teacher and why: Megan Nelson, my 11th grade debate teacher and 12th grade yearbook teacher. She did everything that a teacher should do: She pushed me way past my outermost comfort level, caused me to see the world in completely new ways, put me on a path of seeking social justice in all that I do, and made me examine everything that I thought and everything I assumed to be true about the world. If I had never met her, I wouldn't be the person that I am today.

I always wanted to be: a civil rights attorney. Thurgood Marshall really inspired me when I was younger and I wanted to make change on the scale that he did.

I'm reading: *The Trouble With Black Boys*, by Pedro Noguera, *My Traitor's Heart*, by Rian Malan and *I Write What I Like*, by Steve Biko.

Best lesson I've learned: It's better to teach someone, even if they resist and fight you, even if you aren't there to see the fruit of your labors, because the world needs that effort and the people you are teaching do too, even if they don't know it.

My biggest hope is: one day my students will have the opportunities, respect, dignity and world that they deserve, a world where the potential of everyone is maximized.

My inspiration is: the faceless, nameless people who make up all of the social movements that have made real and lasting change. Also, my community and everyone who doesn't have what they deserve in this world.

Before teaching, I: graduated from college and went to study how to be a teacher at a wonderfully supportive program. I student taught at age 21 and was full time at 22.

I teach because: it is my duty. I cannot sit idly by while knowing that there are people entering this world without any sense of purpose, direction or belief that they have a right to everything that the world has to offer.

With my FFT grant, I: traveled to South Africa and witnessed a country that is beginning the second phase of its social revolution. I dreamed of going to South Africa since I was in 8th grade. Seeing its constitution, talking with its activists and walking amongst its people reaffirmed everything that I believed was right in this world, and that schools and education are central to the struggle for human dignity everywhere. I know that I am part of something larger now, something that I needed to see and feel in order to fully understand.





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“I believe every child is unique and every child deserves the right to learn; therefore, I am willing to spend hours looking for and writing grants to ensure that my students have exactly what they need to become their best selves. Of all the grants I’ve written, Fund for Teachers’ has been the most meaningful. Receiving a Fund for Teachers grant provided more than materials to enhance curriculum, it allowed me to learn and grow in ways that changed my life and my students’ lives.”

- Patricia Greenleaf, 2011 Houston Fellow

To hear Patricia’s speech, visit fundforteachers.org.