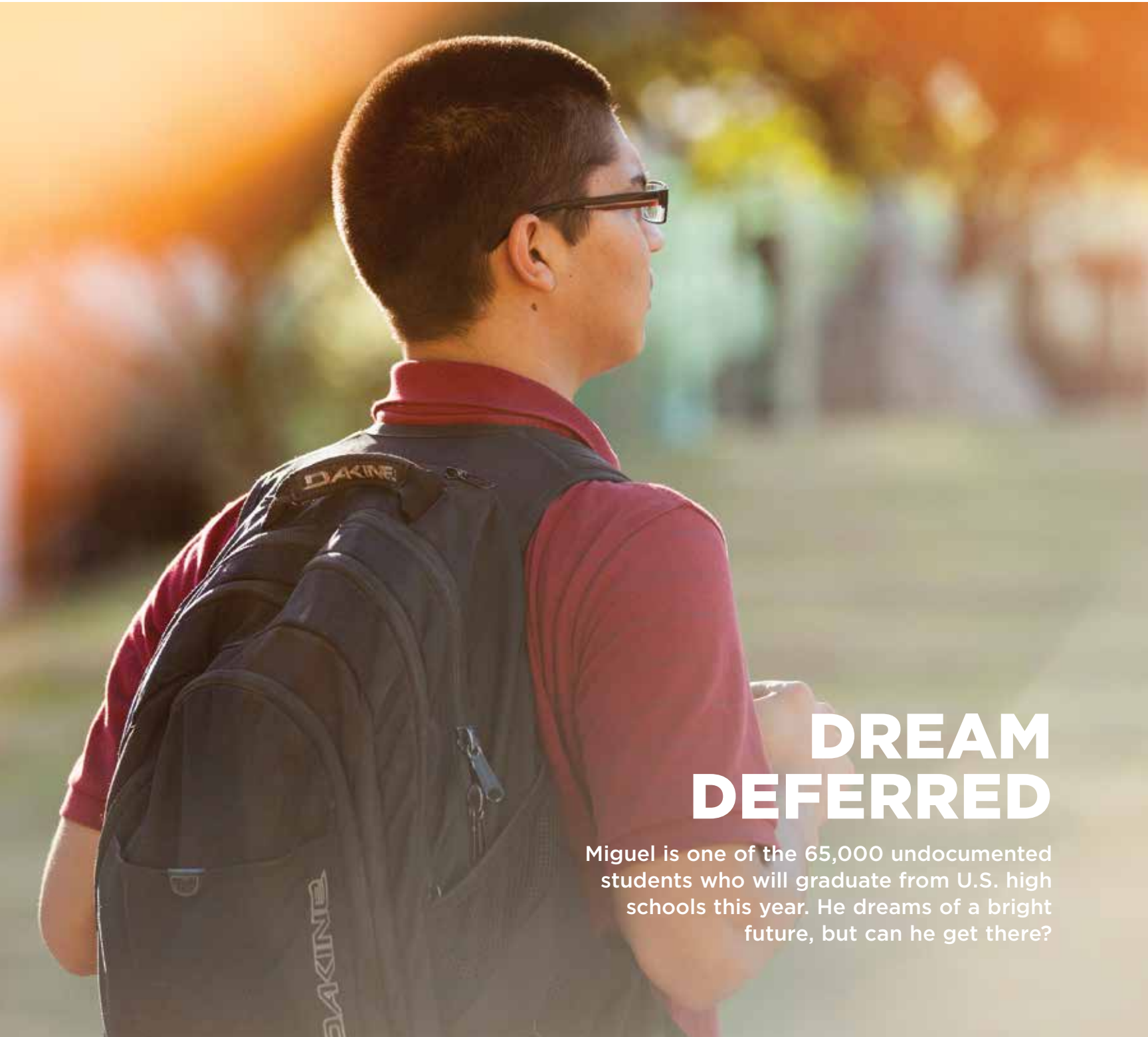


One Day

TEACHFORAMERICA ALUMNI MAGAZINE / FALL 2013 / EDITION XIX



DREAM DEFERRED

Miguel is one of the 65,000 undocumented students who will graduate from U.S. high schools this year. He dreams of a bright future, but can he get there?



Rachel Bennett Yanof
 Founder, Phoenix Collegiate Academy
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Meeting Miguel



Dear fellow alumni,

All of us remember the college banners we hung on our classroom walls, the promises we made that if you work hard enough you'll get there. So what if all of that was a lie?

That was the question on my mind after I met Miguel, the high school student who appears on the cover of this magazine. I flew down to Phoenix in September to meet him and we talked for two hours in the cluttered office of his principal, a Teach For America alum. (To protect Miguel and his family, we have changed his name and chosen not to identify his school, principal, or the many other Teach For America alumni who are making an enormous difference in his life as teachers and mentors.)

Miguel is quiet, intelligent, polite, with a shy smile that peeks out when he's talking about his favorite historical video game ("You can expand your economy and conquer Europe!") or his mom's chicken with orange cream sauce. He is struggling in Advanced Placement physics, but he loves it. He says an English unit on dystopian literature helped him get through some hard times. An aspiring engineer with a gift for programming, Miguel dreams of going to M.I.T. He is, as his principal puts it, "just an awesome kid."

Miguel is also undocumented. He came to Arizona from Mexico when he was 8, crossing a desert on foot with his mother and younger brother. Today, at 18, he is a young man trying his best to build his future in a country he can't claim as home. Although he is a recipient of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—which protects him from deportation for two years—Miguel, like so many of the 65,000 undocumented students who graduate from U.S. high schools each year, has no path toward citizenship. Nor is he eligible for federal or state financial aid or in-state tuition—an enormous obstacle for his low-income family.

After meeting Miguel, I thought about my own students from the Bronx. This year, many of my former eighth graders

graduated from college. One of my students, Tyrell, just earned his philosophy degree from Colby College and is spending the year teaching English in China—a few weeks ago he messaged me on Facebook *in Mandarin*. On the flight home from Phoenix, I started thinking: What if Tyrell never had the chance to go to college? What if the best he could have hoped for was working at an unskilled job for low wages and with no legal rights? What would knowing these limitations have done to Tyrell and everyone who taught him and loved him? What if my promise—that hard work could overcome anything—was a lie?

In researching this cover, I spoke with Amanda Fernandez, Teach For America's vice president of Latino community outreach. She spoke movingly about the depth of despair that undocumented students can feel. "There are the big moments that we rally around and that draw attention," Fernandez says, "but even those moments don't speak to the day-to-day agony of our students—how it affects their ability to learn and the hope it strips away from children who believe they have no future."

Immigration reform is a complex issue, with good people making persuasive arguments about many aspects of this debate. It's not always easy to know exactly what is right or the fairest policies for reform. Here's one thing I do know: I'm on Miguel's side. I believe that, as a country, we need to do all we can to ensure that this extraordinary young man can fulfill his promise—and that we, as educators, can keep the promises we make to our students.

Warm regards,

Ting Yu
 N.Y. '03
 Editor

“I choose this work that is more difficult than any other job because it’s important. **This is teaching** and this is what I’ve chosen. **This is what I’m passionate about.**”

KEITH ROBINSON

Math & Physics Teacher, People’s Preparatory Charter School, Newark, NJ
2006 Corps Member, New York
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FEATURES



28 **Out of the Shadows**

Miguel is one of 65,000 undocumented students who will graduate from American high schools this year. As the debate around immigration reform continues in Congress, their futures hang in the balance. Through four personal stories, *One Day* reveals the day-to-day trials, fears, and hopes of living in the shadows.



48

Q&A with Elisa Villanueva Beard

Teach For America’s co-CEO talks about the organization’s support of the DREAM Act and why TFA is getting more comfortable with choosing sides.



52

Driven by Diversity

Students at KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate in Lynn, Mass., claim more than 45 country backgrounds, from the Dominican Republic to the Sudan, making the school’s effort to incorporate culturally responsive teaching methods all the more challenging—and all the more important.

50

Teach For America Steps Up Support of DREAMers

The organization publicly endorsed the DREAM Act this spring, and in recent years has channeled more resources into helping corps members support their undocumented students.

Cover and top photo by Jill Richards.

DO NOW

14 **TAKE 5**

After successfully challenging the New York Police Department’s stop-and-frisk practices, attorney Darius Charney (G.N.O. ’95) looks to the promise of police work in collaboration with neighborhoods.

18 **SPOTLIGHT ON... KANSAS CITY**

Kansas City Public Schools lost state accreditation in 2012. Now, Teach For America and its partners are looking for solutions to prove what’s possible.

20 **POSTCARD**

By the time they’re 10 years old, Austrian students know if they’re on track to college—or not. Science teacher Elisabeth Barišić-Jäger strives to redirect those students, mostly minorities, left behind.

22 **CORPS 360**

As the editor and publisher of the *Houghton Lake Resorter*, Eric Hamp (N. Louisiana ’96) identifies snakes for neighbors, fields questions from Cub Scouts, and advocates for community journalism.

26 **MEDIA**

Caitlin Farrell (N.Y. ’05) evaluates the data on charter schools; Nicole Baker Fulgham (L.A. ’91) views education reform as a Christian imperative; Mark Pett (Delta ’94) tells stories without words; Tracy Brisson (N.Y. ’97) speaks truth to resumes.

59 **ADVOCATE**

Before Yasmene Mumby (Baltimore ’08) and Shannen Coleman Siciliano (Baltimore ’03) could change the conditions of Baltimore’s public schools, they had to change people’s minds.

61 **INNOVATOR**

Kelly Amis’ (L.A. ’90) award-winning series of bite-sized documentaries, *TEACHED*, inspires change through the power of students’ stories.

74 **POST-ITS**

Teach For America’s new fellowships for policy makers, rural teachers, and aspiring school system leaders; alumni honors and opportunities.

79 **ALUMNI NOTES**

CONTRIBUTORS



JILL RICHARDS is a Phoenix-based photographer and a past contributor to *One Day*. She specializes in lifestyle, travel, and food

photography, but started out as a photojournalist for newspapers in South Carolina and Arizona. The experience photographing Miguel for *One Day's* cover story (p. 28), "Out of the Shadows," took her back to her photojournalism roots, she says. "Miguel is not only an exceptional student, he's a really courageous young man." Richards' photography has been published in the *New York Times* and *National Geographic Traveler*. She lives with her husband and two ugly but lovable dogs.



CALVIN HENNICK (N.Y. '04) writes about education and other topics for publications like the *Boston Globe*, *Scholastic Instructor*, and

Scholastic Administrator. He also teaches writing at the University of Massachusetts Boston and Grub Street, an independent writing center in Boston. He caught up with alum and documentarian Kelly Amis (L.A. '90) to write "Mini-Lessons" (p. 61). "Watching Kelly's films, I was reminded of the power of storytelling," Hennick says. "Data is essential, but a lot of non-experts form their opinions about education policy based on hunches and anecdotes. It's important for those people to have faces to put alongside facts."



KENNETH CHONG Kenneth Chong is the director of photography at 'Ōiwi TV, an on-demand television station dedicated to

amplifying native Hawaiian language, culture, and perspective. He will join the documentation team for the upcoming around-the-world voyage of the Hōkūle'a, a traditional Polynesian sailing vessel photographed for the photo on p. 12. One of the voyage's primary objectives is to connect and engage school children worldwide with the idea of "mālama honua," or caring for our earth. Students from Kamaile Academy, a charter school on O'ahu, are one of many groups who will be following Hōkūle'a on her ambitious journey.

One Day

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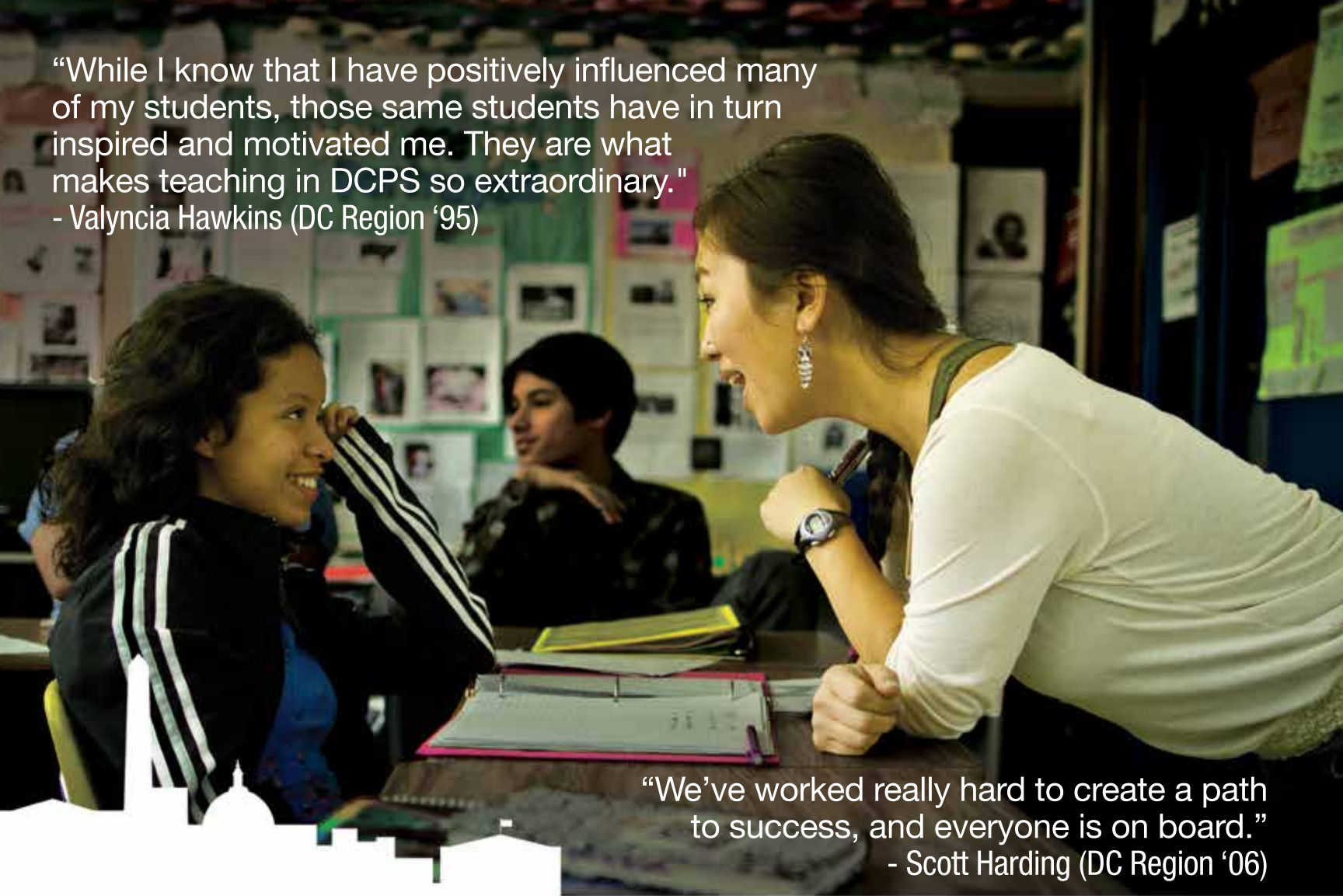
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- Scott Harding (DC Region '06)

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INBOX

SUPPORTING CASTLEMONT

I want to appreciate the article about Castlemont High School in the last issue of *One Day* (“Fight Unseen,” Summer 2013). I was a 2005 corps member, and many of my sixth graders attend or attended Castlemont High, just blocks away from the middle school where I taught. It has always been a comfort to know that heroic educators like Aryn Bowman (Bay Area '05) and her team were working their hardest to support my students (including India, the brave young woman featured, whom I had the privilege to teach many years ago when she was just 11). The staff and students are incredible—resilient, strong, and dedicated in the face of sometimes unspeakable tragedy.

Each of the last several years I have attended Castlemont’s graduation ceremony, and every year without fail my emotions swing between the highs of pride in beloved former students heading to college and the lows of watching them mourn their fallen classmates. Putting students on a different life path requires so much more than setting them up to meet academic standards. Our solutions have to acknowledge that there is much more required for us to create neighborhoods that support the realization of our vision of “One day, all children...”

Here’s to the adults in our city and other cities getting our acts together to make those neighborhoods possible.

JESSICA EASTMAN STEWART
(Bay Area '05)
Oakland, Calif.

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

I was thrilled to read Ting Yu’s interview with Steve Zimmer (L.A. '92) of the LAUSD Board of Education. It’s refreshing to see a different viewpoint printed in the pages of *One Day*, particularly



one that recognizes that there is diversity of perspectives among TFA alums. Not only do I agree with Mr. Zimmer’s assessment of the unexamined consequences of charter-school expansion and saturation in certain school districts, but I also applaud his questioning of the high-stakes use of standardized test scores for teacher evaluation.

As an alum who has spent 13 years teaching in the Bronx, my original TFA placement, there is much that I have come to understand about what matters for students and families; it is often different than what I read in the pages of *One Day*. The self-selected group of alums that I remain in contact with, including the seven TFA alums who work at the small progressive charter school I helped to found, continue to work every day to ensure educational equity for all children. However, we consider ourselves TFA outsiders at this point. It would be nice to think that there is still a place for our voices and our opinions in the organization. The interview with Mr. Zimmer gave me hope that there is a realization that not all TFA alums think the same way—or think like TFA.

KENDRA SIBLEY (N.Y. '00)
New York City

CHOICE FOR FAMILIES

I am deeply concerned as both a parent and alumna by Steve Zimmer’s comments in a recent *One Day* interview.

Zimmer says the question of “how do we make sure there are not winners or losers...” keeps him up at night. What keeps me up at night are the thousands of kids in L.A. who are performing below grade level and the 15,000 students on waitlists for charter schools. Zimmer has repeatedly tried to block those students from enrolling in high-performing schools. From attempting to exclude charters as a district partner in school-turnaround efforts to an effort to implement a charter moratorium, Zimmer’s message is clear: protect LAUSD. “Just give us more money and...time.” Zimmer focuses on how charter schools impact “the district,” when what matters to our city’s families is the impact these public schools are having for families.

Zimmer complained of the education reform movement: “I don’t see a comprehensive strategy of recruitment, training, support.” He disregards TFA’s development of one of the most effective and progressive approaches to teacher preparation and leadership development. As a board member, Zimmer has the power to inspire LAUSD to hire hundreds of committed corps members. This comment demonstrates why he hasn’t and why only 10 percent of the corps is at district schools.

During a pivotal time in L.A., Zimmer can become a leader committed to making decisions that are grounded in what’s good for kids and families, not the district as an institution. I hope he does.

ALLISON GREENWOOD BAJRACHARYA
(G.N.O. '00)
Los Angeles

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INBOX

ZIMMER'S MOTIVATIONS

When Mr. Zimmer's interview appeared in the most recent issue of *One Day*, I knew many would read it for some insight into his position on charter schools and teacher evaluations. However, I also read it with curiosity about his motivations for pursuing his line of work within the community. Interactions I've had with Mr. Zimmer have demonstrated to me that he is a school board member invested in not just LAUSD, but in the communities that surround schools.

Two instances in particular stand out. Four years ago my students collaborated with 826LA, an organization that helped them publish a book of original writing and artwork. The book-release party was an amazing event for students and their families—a public culmination of their hard work. Mr. Zimmer showed up for the event, even though our school isn't in his district, to show support and celebrate a remarkable learning outcome. Another instance, Los Angeles Audubon's Conservation Art Show, was an art/science event held at Politi Elementary School, with support from my students at Dorsey High. Again, Mr. Zimmer not only attended the event, which saw hundreds of students and community members come together, but also stayed to help put away chairs at the end. There's a big difference between gestures that suggest good will and actions that reveal it. Whether or not my politics always coincide with his, my impression is that Mr. Zimmer is there for the students.

ROBERT JEFFERS (L.A. '02)
Los Angeles

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Steve Zimmer is spot-on with pinpointing inclusivity as the core strategy for sustainable change across the nation. For the teachers union and TFA-backed reformers to champion polarizing ideologies is as morally reckless as defending the status quo. Our education crisis presents an opportunity to create meaningful modifications for the greater good, made real only when we break our beliefs down to their lowest common denominators (that every child has the right to an excellent teacher) and align on the fundamental matter: How do *we* get there?

Like Zimmer, I hope LAUSD is willing to "listen to all the voices" and that TFA can challenge itself to the same charge within its corps. Let's question the whole process, from the pace of charter-school growth and its "collateral damage" in surrounding neighborhoods to the validity of value-added metrics. Not to assign winners and losers, but to shine the spotlight on differences and springboard into discussions that lead to designing better roadmaps to serve our kids and communities. Likewise, as TFA's movement grows, let's take bolder measures to embrace our corps' diverse perspectives and experiences, or else risk a fracture in our force that will ultimately fail the families we serve.

VANESSA ZIFF LASDON (L.A. '02)
Los Angeles

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To submit letters to the editor, email onedayletters@teachforamerica.org. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Congratulations, Julie, on being awarded Teach For America's Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership. During your 15 years at Uncommon, you have worked tirelessly on behalf of our students. Today, as Managing Director of Uncommon's ten elementary schools in Newark and New York City, you are leading a revolution to stop the achievement gap before it ever starts. Thank you for all you do!

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— Julie Jackson

Uncommon NYC & Newark

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Smooth Sailing / Pacific Ocean between Nānākuli and Pōka'i Bay (off the Wai'anae coast of O'ahu, Hawai'i) September 21, 2013, about 9:30 a.m.

"For navigation, you've got to know each constellation and each star," says Dyaun Freitas (middle), a junior at Kamaile Academy charter school in Wai'anae—a remote town 30 miles outside of Honolulu. Freitas and his fellow sailors, sophomore Natty Bailey (left) and senior Isaiah Pule (right), are members of Kamaile's Future Navigators Club, led by Kenny Ferenchak (Hawai'i '08), who directs the school's efforts to provide health and academic supports through a network of community partnerships. In traditional Hawaiian culture, navigators "are known as the wisest of the wise," Ferenchak says. Students study the Polynesian navigation techniques that first brought settlers to Hawai'i more than 1,000 years ago, and they work with a local nonprofit to build and sail traditional voyaging canoes—like this one, the Hōkūle'a—no GPS allowed.



DO NOW

The homeless teacher • Charters reviewed • 'Kritikal' issues • Inequity in the Alps • Facing hunger



Darius Charney (G.N.O. '95) has spent more than five years prosecuting *Floyd et al. v. City of New York*, arguing for an overhaul of the city's stop-and-frisk policing.

TAKE FIVE

Over the past decade, police in New York City have made millions of stops under stop-and-frisk, a practice allowing officers to detain suspected criminals before a crime takes place. But in New York City, only about 5 percent of those stops resulted in an arrest, and about 90 percent of the detained were African American and Latino—though those groups make up barely half of the city's population. In 2008, Darius Charney (G.N.O. '95), a senior attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights, took the issue to court, accusing one of the most powerful police departments in the world of racial discrimination. In August, he and his colleagues won a monumental victory when a district court judge ruled that the NYPD's practices were unconstitutional, and ordered the department to implement major reforms. BY LEAH FABEL (CHICAGO '01)

1 The city appealed the August ruling, and Mayor Bloomberg and his police commissioner have argued that stop-and-frisk has led to dramatic decreases in crime. Is their claim valid? Crime has been going down in New York City for about 20 years. In the late 1990s, crime was going down drastically, and the police weren't doing 600,000 stops [per year], like they've done in recent years. They were doing 90,000. This constant argument from the police department, the mayor, and others that you need to make all these stops to keep crime down, as an empirical matter, is completely false.

2 Cities like Detroit are considering expanding stop-and-frisk practices. Do they have a place in successful policing?

The first thing police departments should focus on is how to work with the community as a partner in crime fighting. Even in the most violent communities in this country, the vast majority of people are law-abiding, and the police need their support to help identify who the criminals are, and which streets, blocks, and buildings are the most crime-ridden. Doing what amounts to mass detentions in a community only makes the police's job harder.

3 So why do they keep doing it? It's in part because in New York and cities around the country, police departments measure success without any inquiry into the effectiveness of what officers are doing. All that seems to matter is the sheer quantity of enforcement actions, not, "Was that stop legal? Did you find a gun or contraband? Did it lead to an arrest or further police action?" An officer who does 15 bad stops will be rated higher than an officer who does four or five good stops. That, I think, is a big problem, and opens the way for widespread constitutional violations.

4 This case has brought up the balance between safety and personal freedoms. What's the necessary trade-off there? That's been debated in American society for hundreds of years, but I really think it's a false dichotomy. I think that what would really benefit the discourse on this, and what would in the end benefit society, is if we took a look empirically and did the research to see if these heavy-handed policing tactics really do reduce crime. A lot of people say automatically, "Of course they work." But I'm not so sure.

5 In October, a federal appeals court put a hold on the reforms ordered by the district court judge. What are your next steps? It needs to be emphasized that they didn't overturn the August decision—they just put it on hold. We're still very hopeful. Come January, if the newly elected mayor drops the appeal, we can move forward with the reforms. If not, we'll be ready to argue the merits, and we still like our chances. ★

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Beyond Ordinary





Homeless But Not Hopeless

In his attempt to save money by living out of his truck, Mike Wooten (Hawai'i '08) became a champion for the resources teachers deserve.

ON AN AUGUST EVENING IN 2012, Mike Wooten (Hawai'i '08) pulled his truck onto a Hawaiian beach and climbed into the back, covered by a trailer, to fall asleep. Though still employed as a high school English teacher, he had hit a streak of bad luck. Student loans had come due. His car broke down. He was \$20,000 in debt and had no safety net.

Wooten figured that to regain his financial footing, he could either spend five years living on cold hot dogs in a crummy apartment, or he could spend one year living beach to beach out of the back of his buddy's old Toyota Tacoma. He chose the latter. "When all of this happened, I thought, 'Here is an opportunity.' It wasn't a sentence. I was able to step off the straight line of my life for a moment."

For the entire school year, Wooten was one of the first teachers to arrive at James Campbell High School, about 20 miles west of Honolulu. Students routinely stayed in his classroom till 6 or 7 in the evening, finishing up projects. After work, he'd stop by the YMCA to

work out and take a shower, and then drive to another beach, grill some dinner, and fall asleep. One evening, it rained so hard even the camper atop his truck bed couldn't keep the last of his earthly possessions from getting soaked. The next morning, he woke to a road race, with runners zipping past him as he hung his sleeping bag out to dry.

Using a pseudonym to protect his reputation among students, he started a blog called The Homeless Teacher. He found his posts returning frequently to the problem that precipitated his predicament: teacher salaries that haven't kept up with Hawai'i's staggering cost of living.

A first-year Hawaiian teacher's base salary is \$31,000, amid some of the highest average rents in the nation and eye-popping prices for gasoline and groceries imported from the mainland—a gallon of milk goes for \$7 at most island supermarkets. More than 50 percent of teachers leave Hawai'i within five years of being hired, according to

state statistics—many citing pay as a key factor. "The teachers who do stay are suffering financially," Wooten says. "What we do is a labor of love."

By the summer of 2013, Wooten had regained his financial footing and could afford a stable roof over his head. He's still teaching English at James Campbell High, and working on a book about his experience. But his homeless year helped inspire another project, too: In April, he co-founded Learning First with Meg McCormick (Hawai'i '09), a network of classroom teachers who build practical policy solutions based on their knowledge of needs at the school level, and then work with lawmakers to turn those solutions into law.

The first meeting, held in August, attracted about a dozen teachers, both mainlanders and native Hawaiians. They split into groups to identify key issues in need of reform. The results, Wooten says, were unsurprising: "Teacher pay, retention, attracting talent—those were the big ones."



Detroit's Parent Capital

Sydney Tanner (Detroit '12) holds afternoon parent celebrations once a month, where parents visit the classroom and participate in activities with their first and second graders.

"I had so little parent involvement during the first half of my year, and I thought it was because the parents weren't motivated. But it was only because I wasn't providing the opportunity."

EVERY WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON last spring, parents streamed into Sydney Tanner's (Detroit '12) first grade classroom at Phoenix Multicultural Academy, a district school in Southwest Detroit. For them, the school day had just begun.

As Tanner's students played quietly, their parents participated in 30-minute lessons about how to teach literacy at home, how to encourage kids' writing, what TV shows and websites are the most kid-friendly, and what on earth to make of students' achievement data.

"I had so little parent involvement during the first half of my year, and I thought it was because the parents weren't motivated. But it was only because I wasn't providing the opportunity," Tanner says.

Since its start in 2010, Teach For America Detroit has focused on parent involvement. They've partnered with the established Detroit Parents Network, a nonprofit that teaches parents to advocate for the best education for their children. At Tanner's school, DPN has a resource room that serves as a sort of parent community center.

DPN staff help train corps members at induction, and lead service days throughout the year that include going door-to-door to introduce teachers to parents and family members.

The partnership ensures that corps members "are seeing [their students'] parents as leaders in the community and people who have roles, responsibilities, and experiences that can help them grow as educators," says Tiffany Williams, Teach For America Detroit's vice president for regional management.

Yolanda Ebbins is DPN's director of parent development and training, and a wellspring of optimism in a city for which so many people have lost hope. Her vision for Detroit—where she's raised six children in the public school system—relies heavily on supporting and retaining great educators.

I don't see a 22-, or 23-, or 24-year-old in front of me—I see them at 40," Ebbins says. "And what can I put in their foundation so their building won't crumble? So they're not just still here 20 years from now, but they're good at what they're doing?" ★ **BY LEAH FABEL (CHICAGO '01)**



Kansas City's historic Drexel Hall ballroom played host to about 300 corps members at the region's 2013 induction, at the start of a fraught year for district schools.

SPOTLIGHT ON KANSAS CITY

In January 2012, Missouri's board of education withdrew state accreditation from Kansas City Public Schools, citing decades of mismanagement and underwhelming performance. The loss opened a legal pathway for students to transfer out of the district—with potentially crippling financial consequences. Community advocates, including Teach For America, joined forces to create a five-year plan seeking to improve city schools dramatically by 2017 through strategies like developing a cadre of talented leaders and supporting and replicating schools that prove what's possible for Kansas City kids. Results are far from where they need to be, but some measures are moving in the right direction: Buoyed by district efforts, overall academic performance and attendance rates have improved since 2012. The goal is to rally people around what could be and what should be, says Shannon Blankenship (N.Y. '01), the region's interim executive director. "How do we prove what's possible? How do we close the achievement gap in a time of uncertainty? We don't know what's going to happen, but we know our kids need a great education."

DID YOU KNOW?

➔ The start of the 2013-14 school year saw a bounce in Kansas City Public Schools' steady enrollment declines. Nearly 17,000 students were enrolled by late August, up from a low point of less than 16,000 at the start of the 2011-12 school year. In 2000, more than 35,000 students were enrolled.

➔ In 2011, Tom Krebs (N.Y. '05) opened the Kansas City office of Leading Educators, a nonprofit founded by Jonas Chartock (L.A. '97) that partners with schools and districts to develop the leadership skills of great teachers and to boost teacher retention. In 2012-13, the organization trained 93 teacher-fellows, 11 of whom were Teach For America corps members or alumni.

➔ In August, the Marion Ewing Kauffman Foundation hosted Teach For America's first Entrepreneurs United event, attracting more than 70 alumni entrepreneurs to Kansas City and more than 160 people overall, to share ideas for tackling social and educational inequities.

➔ Barbecue is more than a tradition in Kansas City, it's a lifestyle. Teach For America Kansas City kicks off each school year with a barbecue contest. This year, corps members chose Oklahoma Joe's as the all-around best.

FAST FACTS

464,310

Population of Kansas City, Mo.



16,787

Students enrolled in Kansas City Public Schools on the first day of school, 2013

91%

Students of color in Kansas City Public Schools, including 61% who are African American and 26% who are Hispanic

88%

Low-income students in Kansas City Public Schools

ABOUT TEACH FOR AMERICA KANSAS CITY

2008

Year placements started

160

First- and second-year corps members at the start of the 2013-14 school year

43%

Alumni in Kansas City from the 2011 corps year who continued teaching in a Kansas City district school

CORPS CONNECTION

One Day asked first- and second-generation immigrant corps members: **"What unique cultural value or practice from your childhood have you brought with you into your classroom?"**



HARRY LOPEZ
Greater Nashville '12,
3rd grade self-contained/
ELL

"My parents are from Managua, Nicaragua. When I was growing up, as I faced different challenges, my mom would always say, 'Ponle ganas, Harry, ponle ganas.' Like, give it your all, no matter how difficult it is. *Ganas* almost translates into the English word grit, but to me it means so much more because of its connection to my culture and family. I use it all the time in my classroom—we talk about the importance of just giving it your all. *Ponle ganas.*"



ANGELA RIVAS
E.N.C. '12,
11th and 12th
grade Spanish

"My parents both emigrated from Guatemala. My dad was one of the only adults in our family who could speak English, but he didn't go to English classes. He learned English from people on the street. If he didn't know something, he would ask somebody and then practice it. That's something I try to focus on in my classroom. I guide my students and then I throw them into the big pond, knowing they can survive because they have the tools, they just have to use them."



KATHY ZHOU
Delta '12,
8th, 9th, and 12th
grade math

"I was born in China; we emigrated when I was 1. My parents came to the States with \$100 and that's it. They juggled multiple jobs, but they never complained and never gave up, and now they're both in high-level positions. In my classroom, I have a quote by Einstein on my wall: 'It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer.' I reference it a lot with my kids: You don't have to know the answer right away, but giving up is not an option."

Good teachers can be great.

That's why we've designed a new online master's degree program specifically for Teach For America corps members and alumni that is aligned with Teach For America's Teaching as Leadership model and provides the knowledge and skills necessary to make a lasting impact in the classroom.

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JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY

School of Education



Photo by Markus Seppeler

The physics lab at Elisabeth Barišić-Jäger's Vienna middle school went mostly unused before she insisted on teaching her students proper scientific inquiry.

Greetings from **AUSTRIA**

by Leah Fabel (Chicago '01)

ELISABETH BARIŠIĆ-JÄGER, 30, is a Teach For Austria fellow—part of the Teach For All network operating in 30 countries around the world. Barišić-Jäger, who holds a Ph.D. in microbiology, teaches middle school science and German in Vienna, Austria's capital.



Q You teach in a middle school, but that's not quite the same as middle school in the United States. Can you explain the difference? **A** Nine years of schooling is compulsory for Austrian children. Everyone goes to primary school, and then, at about 10 years old, they choose between middle school and grammar school. Grammar-school students prepare for college-entrance exams. Middle-school students typically prepare for a trade, like hairdressing or plumbing. A small percentage of middle-school students, if they do very well, can move into the grammar schools—but by the time they get there, they're quite far behind, and many drop out. All of the Teach For Austria fellows teach in middle schools.

Q Most of your students—90 percent—do not speak German at home, but Turkish, Croatian, Serbian, Albanian, and other languages. How does that impact their schooling? **A** In Austria, the education of kids is extremely dependent on the education and background of their parents. You see that kids

who don't have German as a mother tongue and who don't speak German in their free time have real difficulties in school. Last year, when I worked with [14- and 15-year-olds], I heard their frustrations. I'd show them videos of university lectures, and I'd say, "Look, now we're students at this university!" And they'd say, "Oh, come on, Ms. Jäger, we know we'll all just end up working at a construction site." It was kind of a joke, but by that age, they were disillusioned. This year, with my [10- and 11-year-olds], they haven't yet experienced this kind of frustration. Last year, I had to push my students to set their aims high. This year, I see their curiosity and motivation, and my work is to keep it alive and carry it through four years.

Q What are some of the issues holding back the middle schools? **A** The work of teachers has to be seen as a respected profession. I see a lot of frustrated teachers who know how difficult it is to teach kids who come in at a lower academic level. So when they don't feel respected by society, and the work is very difficult, it's hard. There's also a difference in teacher education. Middle-school teachers have three years of what we call "higher school"—they don't earn a university degree, but they get a teaching certificate. Grammar-school teachers have five years of university.

Q Tell me about a student who has really made an impact on you. **A** Last year, I had a student whose family fled from Afghanistan. She started learning German at 9 or 10 years old; she lost her father; she had a brother suffering from a brain tumor. When I met her, she had a lack of self-confidence, and she knew she was in a school that wasn't the best. She was ambitious, but very closed off. I started working with her, and she did really well. She gained the respect of other students for her achievements. In some ways, she motivated the others so we

“
IN AUSTRIA, THE
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EDUCATION
AND BACKGROUND OF
THEIR PARENTS.
”

could do more challenging experiments in class. She ended up getting into a grammar school focused on chemistry—I'm so proud of her.

Most of my kids have suffered a lot, but they have such strength to keep on pushing themselves. At 14 years old, I hadn't been confronted with the problems they've faced—and even now, I don't know if I'd be able to stay confident and motivated if I went through similar things. Many of these kids have histories that are so overwhelming and tragic at times. I'm so impressed they're able to be where they are.

Q Do you foresee Austria's educational inequality being solved in your lifetime? **A** It can be solved. Teach For Austria has gone from an idea to being well-accepted in the school system—and that was a huge step. And now that we're here, and making alliances, we can bring change. One mosquito can stun an elephant and make him move. Teach For Austria is a mosquito right now, but we can make a difference. ★

BY THE NUMBERS

MORE THAN 50 MILLION AMERICANS, and nearly 9 million children, live in households deemed food-insecure, meaning they have irregular access to nutritious meals. According to studies, food-insecure children experience higher rates of illness, leading them to higher rates of absence and tardiness from school. They show higher levels of aggression, hyperactivity, and anxiety—as well as higher levels of passivity. And their numbers are rising: In 2011, nearly 21 percent of American households with children faced food insecurity, up from 16 percent in 2005.

21%

Percentage of U.S. households with children facing food insecurity

37%

Percentage of households headed by a single mother facing food insecurity

25%

Percentage of African American households facing food insecurity

26%

Percentage of Hispanic households facing food insecurity

374,000

Number of households in which at least one child experienced the most severe level of food insecurity, defined as periods of reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture

ERIC HAMP

Editor and Publisher by Tim Kennedy (Delta '11)



Eric Hamp (N. Louisiana '96) teaches Cub Scouts in Houghton Lake, Mich., the art of newspaper publishing—a family business he intends to see continue and thrive.

Officially, Eric Hamp (N. Louisiana '96) is the editor and publisher of the *Houghton Lake Resorter*, a newspaper in the vacation region of Roscommon County, Mich. (pop. 24,100). But he also serves, when necessary, as a writer, reporter, photographer, printer, delivery man, and recently, an amateur zoologist.

"I got to work a couple weeks ago and there was a gentleman who was a bus driver—I think he's probably 75 to 85—and he had a snake in a bucket that he had never seen before. And he wanted us to help him figure out what kind of snake it was," Hamp says. "I'm not real fond of snakes but, you know, this is what we do."

Not even reporters in the halls of Congress go face-to-face with actual snakes—in this case, a young Eastern milk snake. But for Hamp, it's another day on the job he has held

since 2003, when he returned to Houghton Lake—his hometown—to take over the paper that has been owned and operated by his family since 1961.

He owns the paper with his father, wife, and brother (who also works the printing press). He brings his sons—Jake, 10, and Collin, 4—and his dogs, Clara and Ty, to the office as he pleases. A column Hamp co-wrote as a third grader still hangs on the *Resorter's* office bulletin board, breaking news that the town fifth graders "really enjoyed the Shrine Circus."

Published weekly, the *Resorter* has a circulation of about 7,500 and serves the half-dozen communities that surround Michigan's largest inland lake. As a community-oriented paper, it devotes significant space to local education, and Hamp says his experience as a corps member helped to shape the paper's approach.

"We need to tell the story of the good things that happen in the schools, because a lot of journalism is reactive," says Hamp, who spent three years as a special education teacher at Westwood Elementary School in Shreveport, La.

To that end, he has created "pride pages" where local schools can post announcements and display examples of exceptional student work. One recent page featured first-grade essays about freeing the class butterflies (Consensus: It was sad). Hamp hopes the exposure will lead to increased public support for education, whether through "tax dollars or just faces and people in the seats."

"We want to educate and inform our readers so they can be educated and informed citizens and voters," Hamp says.

"It is not 'our' paper but the community's newspaper." ★

→ A sweeping study of income mobility in the U.S. found significant correlations between low mobility and high racial and economic segregation, and between high mobility and high-quality K-12 school systems. Researchers found that Salt Lake City and San Jose, Calif., have the highest levels of upward mobility, while Atlanta and Charlotte, N.C., have the lowest. (The Equality of Opportunity Project, July 2013) → School systems that track Asian American students based on subgroups like Taiwanese, Pakistani, and Hmong, instead of "Asian" as a whole, know more about students' unique needs. For example, the acceptance rate at the University of California for Hmong Americans is more than 13 percent lower than the average for all Asian Americans. (The Educational Testing Service and the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, June 2013)

→ A U.S. Department of Education study of middle and high school math teachers found that students of Teach For America corps members gained, on average, 2.6 additional months of learning, compared to their peers taught by veteran and traditionally prepared teachers. Notably, in grades using low-stakes tests where teachers knew nothing of the test that would be used, the positive impact of a Teach For America corps member was twice as high as in grades using high-stakes state tests, suggesting that corps members' strong student achievement results can't be explained by "teaching to the test." (Mathematica Policy Research, September 2013)

Public school students in the United States are more likely to attend a high-poverty school than they were a decade ago—a trend that bodes poorly for their long-term educational outcomes. In one analysis of data from Montgomery County, Md.—one of the largest suburban districts in the country—low-income students in wealthier schools improved their reading and math scores faster than their peers in high-poverty schools, even as the district provided the high-poverty schools with additional resources. In another study, data from 11 state pre-K programs showed a positive association between students' skills and their class's average socioeconomic status—low-income students in wealthier pre-K classrooms outperformed low-income students in classrooms designed specifically to meet the needs of kids in poverty.

1999–2000

2010–2011

STUDENTS IN HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS

(More than 75 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)



STUDENTS IN MID-TO-HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS

(51-75 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)



STUDENTS IN MID-TO-LOW POVERTY SCHOOLS

(26-50 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)



STUDENTS IN LOW POVERTY SCHOOLS

(Less than 25 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)



SOURCE: The U.S. Department of Education, *The Condition of Education 2013*

GREAT DEBATERS

by Leah Fabel (Chicago '01)

Imagine a high school debate tournament: Brainy kids in too-big suits arguing the finer points of domestic and foreign policy, right? Well, occasionally. But for students at urban public schools like Baltimore City College and the Bronx School for Law, Government, and Justice, debate has become more than a chance to play-act lawmakers. “This is not a game for my kids,” says Patrick Daniels (Baltimore '99), now in his 10th year directing City College’s speech and debate teams, currently along with Baltimore '10 alumna Amber Phelps. “This is a chance to think about the world in which we’re going to live, and think about how we orient ourselves in this world.”

Daniels’ debate teams engage in “kritik”—philosophical arguments challenging the very assumptions that underlie the policy up for debate. So while the topic might be United States trade policy in Venezuela, his debaters might use their time to reject the very structure of the debate setting as racist or patriarchal, or they may argue that the fundamental notion of U.S. intervention is unethical. It’s heady stuff, but it has taken City College debaters to the top ranks of high-school debaters nationwide: In 2013 alone, Daniels’ students won two of five major national tournaments, as well as the Maryland state tournament. They also met with President Obama, Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan, and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

In New York City, Erik Fogel (N.Y. '02) has been the force behind the city’s debate renaissance, after years of decline as public schools lost funds and coaches. He is in his 11th year as debate coach at the Bronx School for Law, Government, and Justice—where debate trophies line the display case at the building’s entrance—and serves as executive director of the New York City Urban Debate League. In 2009, with the help of community partnerships, Fogel founded what would become the New York City Great Debaters, which provides free debate education programs for students and coaches. In 2012—the same year his debaters won the New York state championships—Fogel and the New York City Urban Debate League were honored at the White House with the 2012 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award. “It’s about finding the passion of every student—once you do that, their drive is unlimited,” Fogel says. “Since Socrates, forensics have been the most powerful program for students, because they find what they’re interested in, and it opens up an unlimited world.”

MAKAYLA GILLIAM-PRICE
Sophomore, Baltimore City College



How do you approach a debate? We make it very personal to us. We’re a pretty leftist, radical group, so we talk about the black social position within society and within institutions, and how black scholarship is excluded from the debate, and how my voice, as a black woman, is delegitimized when I’m debating a white man.

Wow. So what’s the end goal of responding to your opponents with an argument about racism and sexism?

That’s an emotional question. My goal when I stand in front of judges and fellow debaters is for them to understand that my social position is very different than theirs. Normally, white debaters run policy arguments, and when we run a race argument, they respond with an argument saying we’re not doing the right thing, because we’re not talking about the [debate topic]. But as a black person, I can’t [argue within their framework] because then I lose my agency. When I give my agency away, I lose my legitimacy in the space. The end goal is to change the way debate is framed so it’s not exclusive, so voices can be heard.

Like your coach said, I gather that debate isn’t a game to you. It’s extremely real. My partner is a senior, and because of debate, he’s going to college. He comes from a

very painful background, but because of debate, he knows how to operate in society. For me, I come from a relatively privileged background, but debate has allowed me to identify myself as a black woman in society. How could someone take away the significance of an activity like that?

STARR ARROYO

Junior, Bronx School for Law, Government, and Justice

What’s more nerve-wracking, a debate championship, or speaking at the White House? Oh gosh. I think I’d have to say speaking at the White House for the simple fact that I was speaking before Michelle Obama. That was breathtaking! I’ve been in so many debates that nationals was almost a reflex—I’ve gotten so used to speaking in front of so many people. But Michelle Obama—even though she’s just one person—that was so nerve-wracking. But I was looking at Mr. Fogel, and you could just see the happiness in his face, and I realized I just had to shut out everything and get my point across. And when it was over, I got a standing ovation and the famous Michelle Obama hug.

But really, White House aside, shouldn’t we focus on getting along with each other, instead of arguing? For me, it’s not so much about fighting but getting your point across, and persuading the judge and the people in the audience to see that you’re more right. There are even times you might agree with your opponent, but it’s more about persuading than it is about fighting.

GEORDANO LIRIANO

Senior, Bronx School for Law, Government, and Justice

What separates a debater from his or her peers? Critical thinking—that’s what debate is all about. My partner and I are based around critical race theory—we’re interested in the ways that identity and culture play a role in any given situation. In terms of our preparation, we prepare so thoroughly for an argument, and we prepare to respond to the best argument against us. We may never even hear that argument, but the ability to understand the best argument against us means that we’ll also understand how to answer the weaker arguments.

You meet students from all over the country at your tournaments.

What has that taught you? I like to think that debate is an allegory for the way society functions: Some kids come from privileged backgrounds, some come in loving to defend the federal government, some are kids of color saying there are certain aspects of all of this that we need to discuss but we’re not discussing. Walk around a tournament, and you’ll see little Malcolm X’s, and Martin Luther Kings, and little Ted Cruzes and Marco Rubios. I love it—it’s a microcosm, and it prepares you for the way people communicate and interact in the world. ★



TOP: Starr Arroyo, a junior at the Bronx School for Law, Government, and Justice, represented her debate team at the White House in 2012. **BOTTOM:** Charles Athanasopoulos (left) and Geordano Liriano (right), pictured here with Ryan Wash, are the top-ranked high school policy debate team in the nation.

CHOICES AND CHALLENGES:

Charter School Performance in Perspective (Harvard Education Press) by Priscilla Wohlstetter, Joanna Smith, and Caitlin Farrell (N.Y. '05)

BY LEAH FABEL (CHICAGO '01)



During Caitlin Farrell's (N.Y. '05) first year as a corps member at Brooklyn's P.S. 157, a new charter school, Benjamin Franklin Elementary, co-located in her building. "It was fascinating—to have our school culture, things that worked, things that didn't—and then to have a really different set of things happening on the fourth floor," she says. Yet the two schools operated in complete independence of one another. "That was a missed opportunity," says Farrell, now a post-doctoral fellow at University of California-Berkeley, who recently co-authored *Choices and Challenges: Charter School Performance in Perspective*. The book reviews more than a decade of research on charters, assessing breakthroughs and failures with an academic's impartial eye and laying out opportunities for collaboration. "If we want to meet the promise of charters as labs of innovation, then district [schools] and charters need to open up some doors and take advantage of best practices from both," she says.

You looked at more than 10 years of data, and you started your research with nearly 8,000 articles. Where are we still in need of more and better research? A lot of the quantitative stuff is pretty limited in scope and focuses heavily on academic performance. But when you look back to the original charter laws, academic performance wasn't even the number one reason why legislators were putting these reforms in place—the laws had more to do with teacher empowerment, raising the district's performance as a whole, and providing new opportunities for parents and school leaders. So, while obviously student achievement is extremely important, if this is a reform meant to attend to different stakeholder groups, then what do we know about how they've fared? What do we know about parent involvement and satisfaction? What do we know about turnover at charter schools? What does teacher empowerment look like—and is that happening?

Critics often accuse charters of skimming off the top students, leaving district schools at a disadvantage. Does the research bear that out? The research is so mixed. You can find evidence for or against most criticisms, depending on the sample, depending on the state, depending on which schools were included. There is evidence on schools that advertise in certain ways to narrow the range of the students they get, or that create complicated application processes, or that don't offer, to the extent needed, services for English language learners, or special education students. But other studies say, "No, we don't see that." So it's important for further research to push past the question of if these things are happening, and to ask under what conditions are these things happening?

Any hunches on what those conditions are? I think charter authorizer practices are part of it. Is authorizer oversight strong enough to deter and then eliminate schools that have discriminatory practices? The

idea behind charter schools is you have the charter, and if you meet the goals of the charter, it can be renewed by the authorizer. If you don't, or if there are shenanigans, it's closed down. And we haven't seen the promise of that—of extra accountability in exchange for more autonomy—to the extent originally envisioned.

Charter schools were conceived as a way to revolutionize schools and learning. But by most accounts, that hasn't happened. Why do you think that is? I think part of the answer is that teaching and learning is really hard, especially if you're serving high-needs areas. It's a really difficult, tangled problem when we consider the connections between teachers, students, the curriculum, the environment in which they're living, the finances, the resources. At the start of the charter movement, a lot of people thought that the answer was a structural one—deregulate, give leaders more autonomy and extra accountability. But I think we've learned there's more to that equation.

You say throughout the book that charters aren't a passing fad, and leaders need to think more about how to work together across district-charter lines. Where do you see the most potential for collaboration? There are so many places where learning could happen. We know, for example, that many charters have dealt with a lot of teacher turnover and burnout, especially at schools where they've brought in young teachers, and that takes its toll on an organization. So what could a charter learn from a district about keeping teachers beyond one or two years? And vice versa you have some charters—I'm thinking of Alliance, Aspire, Partnerships to Uplift Communities, and Green Dot schools in Los Angeles—doing some innovative work on teacher evaluation, and creating a multi-indicator look at performance. There are so many possibilities, in both directions. ★



Educating All God's Children: What Christians Can—and Should—Do to Improve Public Education for Low-Income Kids

Brazos Press

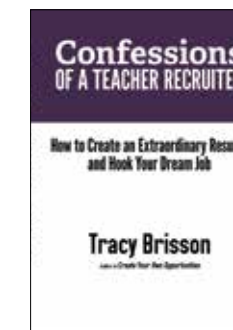
Christians in the United States have long engaged in struggles for social change, from the abolition of slavery to the fight for civil rights and racial equality. But in today's struggle for educational equity, **Nicole Baker Fulgham (L.A. '91)** has found them frustratingly absent. In *Educating All God's Children*, Fulgham calls on Christians to make education reform a religious imperative. "As Christians, we are called to fix broken systems and restore what has been lost or allowed to decay. Sadly, we have little or no voice in the public school reform conversation or debates," she writes. Fulgham, founder of The Expectations Project, a nonprofit aimed at mobilizing people of all faiths to support public education reform, introduces her readers to the statistical reality of educational inequity, and leads them through the Christian church's sometimes shameful history with public schooling—including the expansion of all-white private schools following racial integration. She then calls on churches and their congregants to take action. She writes: "If God believes that all children have potential and promise, then we have the responsibility to envision another educational system that delivers equality for all."



The Boy and the Airplane

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

"A little boy. A lost airplane. An idea takes root..." So reads the inside jacket cover of cartoonist **Mark Pett's (Delta '94)** latest children's book, an otherwise wordless journey through the young boy's pursuit. Each one of Pett's spare and often whimsical drawings inspire imagination and evoke emotion: joy at discovering a new toy, sadness upon losing it, hope for its return, nostalgia upon discovering it again. Pett, creator of the syndicated comic strips Mr. Lowe and Lucky Cow, co-wrote his first book, *The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes*, with fellow alum Gary Rubenstein (Houston '91). Pett writes on his blog that he didn't set out for *The Boy and the Airplane* to be purely illustration, but found after drawing the pictures that words simply got in the way. Beyond that, the absence of words makes for simple translations into foreign languages, he writes. "*Le Garçon et l'Avion*. There. I just translated the book into French."



Confessions of a Teacher Recruiter: How to Create an Extraordinary Resume and Hook Your Dream Job

The Opportunities Project

Tracy Brisson (N.Y. '97) starts *Confessions of a Teacher Recruiter* with some tough love for aspiring educators: "It is highly possible that some of your resumes... well, stink," she writes. She spends the rest of the book on a step-by-step, straight-talking quest to transform terrible resumes into terrific ones, with advice on topics from what experiences to include (Don't be boring!) to how to utilize social media (Activate those accounts now!). Overall, she leads readers through the creation of a resume that tells a compelling story of one's accomplishments. Brisson herself has impressive creds: She estimates that she has reviewed more than 20,000 resumes in the past 13 years, starting as a founding team member of the New York City Teaching Fellows, and later as the director of recruitment for all of New York City's more than 1,600 public schools. In 2010, she founded The Opportunities Project, a national talent development, coaching, and recruitment agency. Like any good teacher, she includes ample checklists, samples, mini-assignments, and a healthy dose of encouragement for what's often a long and difficult job search. She writes, "Focus only on what you control: the excellence of your materials." ★

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

As told to Ting Yu (N.Y. '03)

In the lives of most high school seniors, commencement marks a beginning—the first step toward a future of one's own building. Yet for the 65,000 undocumented students who graduate each year from U.S. high schools, it can signal an abrupt ending. While federal law protects the right of undocumented students to receive a K-12 education, access to higher education is dictated by the states. Without a Social Security number, students cannot qualify for federal and, in all but 16 states, state financial aid—effectively closing the door to college for most.

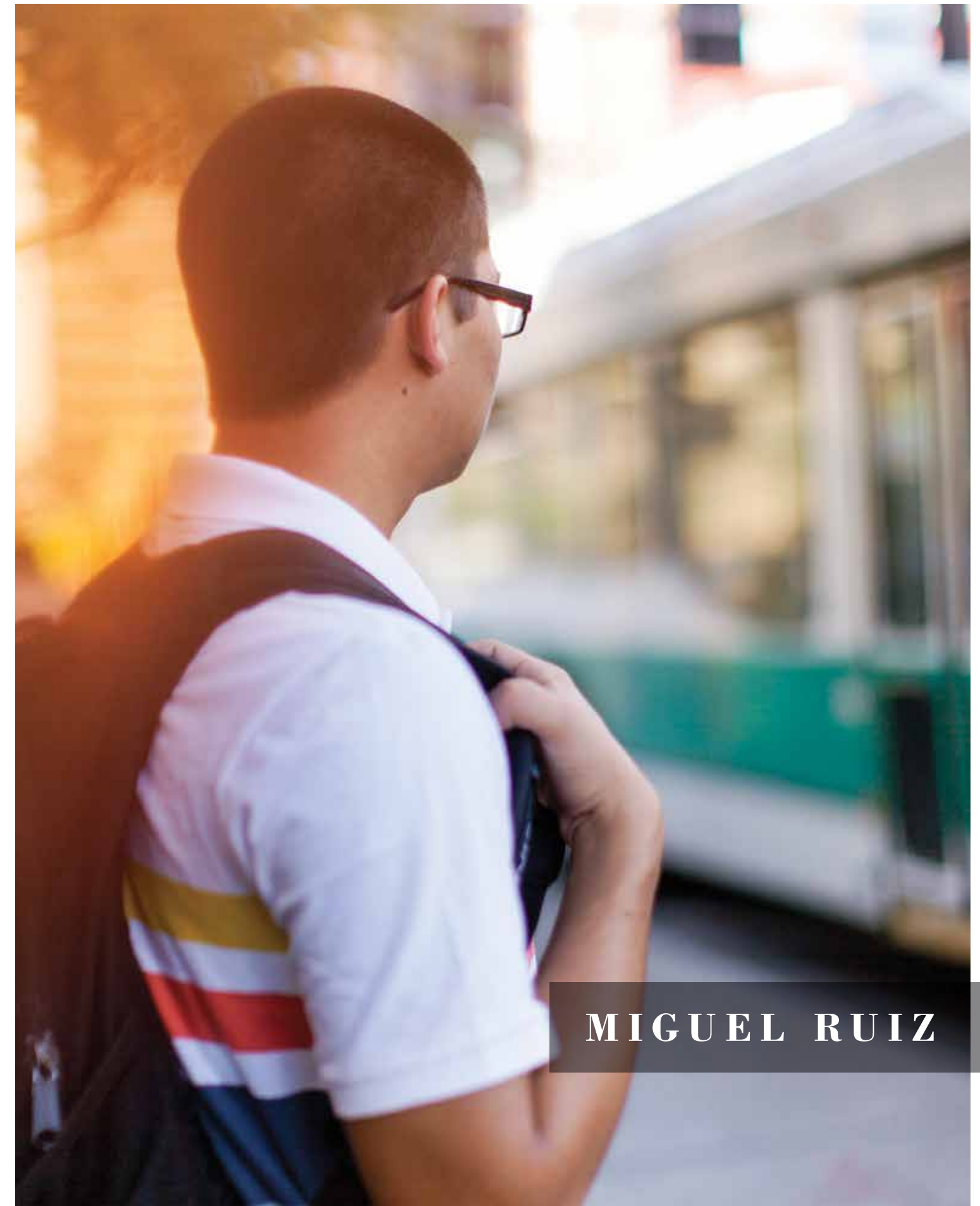
The DREAM Act, which would give qualifying undocumented individuals ages 12 to 35 a path to citizenship, has seen halting progress since the original bill was introduced in 2001. Opponents argue that its passage would amount to “amnesty” that would result in economic and social burdens

for the United States and encourage more illegal crossings. The Senate passed the bill in June, but it has since been stalled in the House.

Last year, the Obama administration introduced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a stopgap measure that grants temporary protection from deportation to a narrow slice of the estimated 11 million undocumented individuals in the United States. While it has been life-changing for many, DACA is not a path to citizenship and can be revoked at any time.

One Day sat down with four individuals who have deep personal ties to the undocumented experience. Each of them shared their story and what “life in the shadows” means to them. Some names have been changed or withheld at the subject's request.

PHOTO: “I’ve waited at the same bus stop to go to school every day since I was 6,” Miguel says. “It’s some of the only time I have to myself, so I do a lot of thinking here.”
PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Jill Richards*



MIGUEL RUIZ

I

MIGUEL RUIZ is a high school senior in Arizona. His mixed-status family offers a stark reminder of all that America has to offer—and to deny. Miguel is protected from deportation by DACA, but his parents and younger brother are undocumented. His two youngest siblings, born here, are American citizens. Miguel dreams of going to Harvard or M.I.T and becoming an engineer. A talented coder, he teaches a programming course twice a week to middle-schoolers. Despite the stalled progress of the DREAM Act, Miguel tries to stay upbeat about his future, though he concedes it's hard to feel unwanted by the country he calls home. "How I feel depends on the day," he says. "I do worry. I have dreams and goals that I can only do here in the United States. If I got deported, it would be a lot tougher—there aren't many opportunities in Mexico. But I've learned to go where life takes me. I'd still try to follow my passion."

I grew up in Sonora, Mexico. My dad had a high school degree, and he sold refrigerators and washing machines. My mom opened a small store in our house that sold groceries—water, diapers, chips. Things were good, but there was corruption, and my dad had to come to the U.S. to find a job.

I didn't know why he went, but I missed him. My mom says I used to sing his favorite songs, or if I heard them [on the radio] I used to cry. I remember the night he left. He looked at me and said, "You're the man of the house now." That hit me hard. I knew I had to grow up and look after my little brother and my mom. I was 5.

He spent three years here working at a restaurant. He would send money to us in Mexico.

I was 8 when we went to join him. I remember the last day in Mexico. When we got on the bus to go to the border, my aunt—my mom's sister—was running after the bus crying and yelling not to

leave her. My mom started crying. It stayed with me. My aunt had taken care of me, and I didn't always behave very well. When I saw her, I felt so bad that I hadn't been better.

I didn't know where we were going. I thought this bus was going to take me to my dad. I didn't know about Mexico or the U.S. I didn't know I would have to cross a desert. I didn't know we were going to a different culture or that I would have to learn a new language.

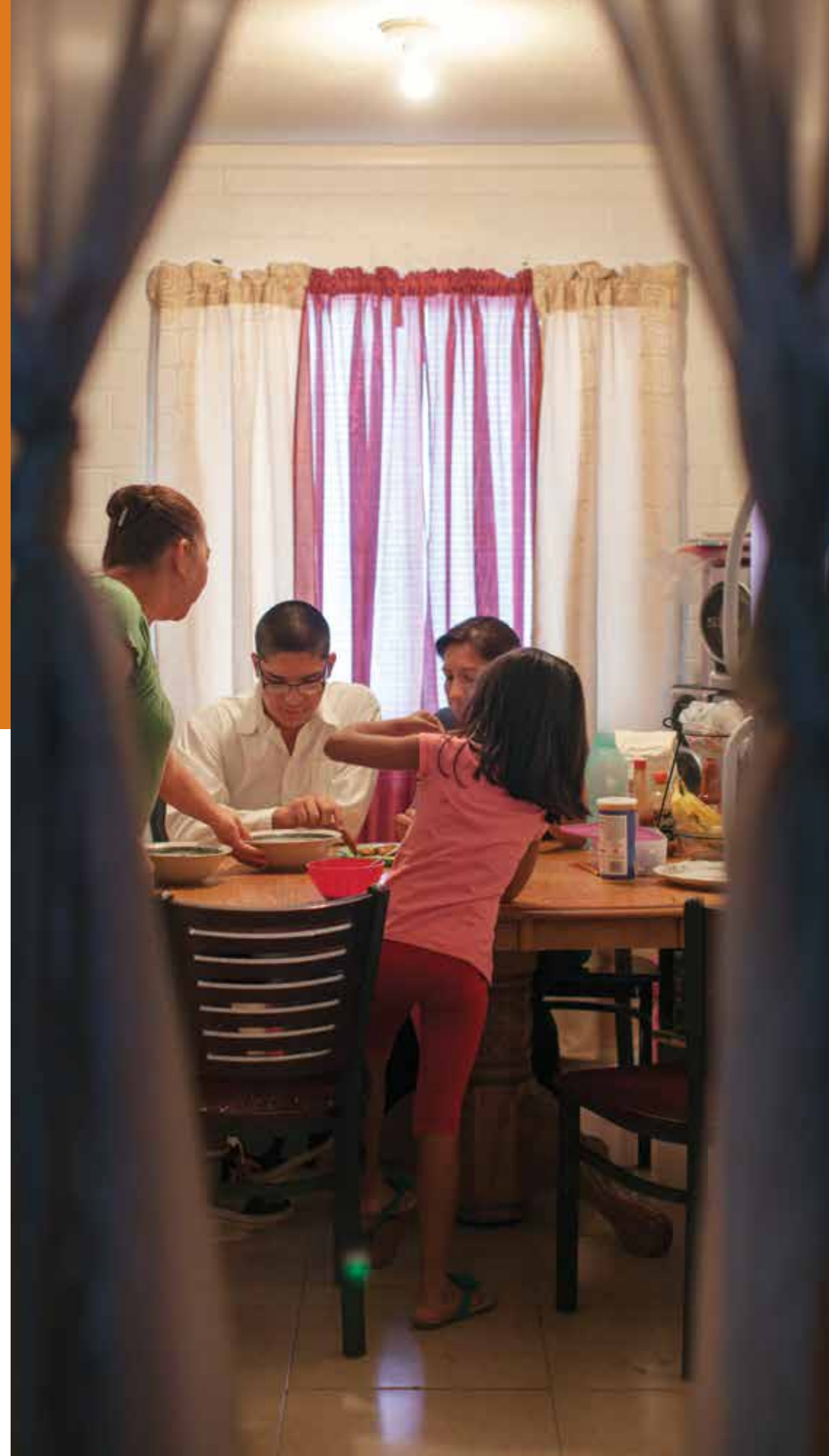
We got to a town called Agua Prieta. The first night was scary. We rented a small room and stayed the night. Then we got on another bus. I thought this was the one that would take me to my dad. But it left us in the desert. It dropped us off close to sundown and we walked all night, probably until 3 a.m.

When it got to nighttime, we had to crawl sometimes, because if we saw a car pass by we didn't want the lights to reveal where we were. At some point, I was really tired and kind of sleepwalking. I was wearing dress shoes—I don't

know why—and they kept falling off, and I'd have to go back and look for them in the dark. My mom said she started praying to La Virgen de Guadalupe that I wouldn't get hurt. That she wanted to take all my pain away. After that, she said it was like I was walking on clouds and she was the one tripping and falling. Eventually she stepped on a cactus, and we had to stop to pick the thorns out because she couldn't walk. My little brother was 2 or 3, and the coyote, the guide, carried him on his shoulders the whole time.

We got picked up and drove for a while until we got stopped. We went to a detention center. It was pretty bad. They locked us up for 10 hours without any food or water. There were a lot of kids and women in a small room. They took our fingerprints and deported us back to the border.

We tried four more times. Every time, we got locked up and deported back. The last time we walked four or five hours through the desert. My mom said if we



Miguel (sitting down to dinner with his family) takes care of his three younger siblings after school—two of whom were born here and have full rights as American citizens.

didn't make it this time, that was it, we were going back. But we made it.

AMERICA

We had a little condo, and it was me and my dad, my mom, my little brother, and my grandma and her husband. Six of us in a one-room apartment. We had a small screen TV that was white and black. My mom started working as a cashier at a Mexican food restaurant.

I didn't trust my dad at first. I thought he might try to drop us off and leave us somewhere. When he took us out on the freeway, I would count the number of exits we passed, so I could find my way back. It took me a while to get used to him being around and trusting him again. I wasn't angry. I just didn't know him—he was like a stranger almost.

That was a really tough year at school. I was in third grade. I couldn't speak English. I used to get bullied. Kids would throw my crayons on the ground or make fun of me knowing I couldn't say anything back. I was kind of the pariah. I used to get angry and get in fights with other kids. But since I couldn't communicate with my teacher, I would end up being the one who got in trouble.

When we first got here, we had the idea that we'd save up and go back. I always asked, "When are we going to go back?" They'd always say, next year we'll be ready to go back. But next year would come, and we didn't. After a while I lost hope that we would ever go back. We were here to stay.

Back then my parents were still able to work legally and use their own names and even pay taxes. It wasn't until I was in sixth grade when they passed a law where you have to have legal status to work. That was when I started to realize that we were undocumented, and that I was going to have barriers because of it. It made me angry. I was like, why do we have to stay in a country that doesn't want us here? I wanted to go back, but we didn't have anything in Mexico anymore.



A talented coder who hopes to study engineering at Harvard or M.I.T., Miguel teaches a programming class to middle school students twice a week.

I started playing basketball. That's when I met kids who weren't a positive influence, but I guess I liked not being rejected. I started messing around. I remember there was a kid who had just come from southern Mexico. At first I tried to help him, but when I had these new friends, I made fun of him. The worst thing I did was I backed him up into a desk and punched him in the stomach. I still remember his face with the tears. My friends laughed, but I knew what I had done. I felt so terrible because I realized that I had picked on someone who was just like me.

In seventh grade I got into two fights and was suspended both times. My dad didn't say anything, but I sat down with my mom to talk. My mom isn't the person to spank me or give me a tough lesson. She just sat there in the dark, and she was crying. She said she was disappointed in me and that they had come here to give me a better future, and I was wasting that. It was worse than getting hit with *el cinto* [the belt]. I remember how that felt. As we sat in the dark, I realized I had to stop, I had to change.

I had a Mexican teacher named Mr. Rodriguez. Before, I used to slack in his class and tried to be disrespectful to him. He saw how I was acting and said, "I thought you were a good student. I know you can be better than this." After that, I grew really close to him and started focusing more. And with his help, I started to pick school back up.

My dad had a construction job and he was doing well, but during the recession he lost that job, and things began to get tough. My parents started arguing a lot over bills. We had to move. I had spent my whole life in the U.S. in South Phoenix, and when we moved to West Phoenix, I lost contact with all my friends. That was hard because I felt a lot more alone.

My mom had to look for different jobs, and the jobs she had were really tough on her. Sometimes she would come home really depressed, and I'd have to deal

with it. My mom worked in a restaurant for seven years, but sometimes her boss just wouldn't pay her. If he decided to do that, there was nothing we could do. Even through all that, my mom has tried to push herself. She learned English and got a GED. She's ambitious, but she's just stuck because of how it is.

I had things going on in my life, too. I was struggling with school, but I had to put it behind me because I couldn't add my own problems to my parents' problems. Sometimes I would feel like a zombie, either ignoring what was going on at home to focus on school or focusing on home and not worrying what was going at school.

“We came here for a better future. Everybody knows that America was founded by immigrants, so it's hard for me to understand why so many barriers have to be put up.”

One night I went to work with my mom cleaning buildings. It was in a suburban area. The houses were really pretty, and the kids had access to so many things. I realized there was no way we could have this, and these people who do have it don't even appreciate it. I broke down and started crying, and my mom started crying, too. But that was the day I decided to let go of all that negativity.

HOPE

Things are better now. I've changed a lot. Before, I didn't know what I wanted or know who to become. Now I'm really close with my English and religion teachers

because I needed literature and strength in my faith because of what I had going on at home. I started to look more into who am I, and I really wanted to become an intellectual person. I stayed up at night thinking, "I want to be smarter, I want to know what I'm doing." That was a turning point.

I feel like I'm still struggling, but it's different because I'm in all Advanced Placement classes [laughs] so it makes sense that I'm struggling! Before I was struggling with English, now I'm struggling with Shakespearean literature.

I started watching old movies to learn about American culture. My favorite movie is *Scarface*. The main character is an immigrant from Cuba. My favorite scene is when he goes home to his mother and he's showing how rich he's become. He's throwing around money, and his mother gets really mad at him. She tells him that he didn't come to this country to do that sort of thing. They're honest people, and people like *Scarface* make good, hard-working Cubans look bad. That has always spoken volumes to me because sometimes I think people see us as criminals bringing drugs in—we're not.

We came here for a better future. Everybody knows that America was founded by immigrants, so it's hard for me to understand why so many barriers have to be put up. I'm not hurting anybody—I just want to go to college and follow my own dreams. And that's better for the United States because they're in need of engineers.

Do I feel American or Mexican? I don't know, to be honest. It's hard because sometimes when I go to a birthday party with my family and there's Mexican music and food and culture, it's strange to me. I feel left out. It's the same on the opposite side. I feel in-between. Sometimes I don't feel Mexican, and at the same time I don't feel American. It bothers me because I don't really know who I am.



**OSBALDO HERNANDEZ
SAHAGUN**

“This is the fence that separated me from my family for over 10 years,” Hernandez Sahagun says. “It reminds me that my mother, who is still undocumented, cannot go back and visit her father.” PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Jesse Knish*

2

OSBALDO HERNANDEZ SAHAGUN (R.G.V. '12) crossed the Mexican border into the United States when he was 12. His family settled in Washington, a state with a tolerant stance on immigration, and he excelled in school. As a high school senior, Osbaldo founded a mentorship program for struggling Latino classmates that was so effective, it was written up in the *Seattle Times*. He received his legal residency as a senior in college and now teaches social studies in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. He estimates that more than 80 percent of his students have a relative who is undocumented. Last year, he helped several undocumented students apply for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). “I want people to understand the human side. We’re not dependents. We’re not coming to take people’s jobs or to be criminals,” he says. “We’re human beings seeking better lives.”

I was born in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, the famous tourist area, in 1990. My mom was 17 when she had me. I was born in the inner city, but I grew up in a small town of about 1,000 people, with dirt roads, just one school, one church, one store.

My family lived in one room in my grandma’s house until I was 8 or 9. The only thing that fit in the room was a queen-sized bed, where my mom and I slept, and a small stove. There were bags full of clothes and the Mexican candies and snacks my mom sold. There was no tile, just dirt on the floor. The toilet was outside.

Eventually my dad saved money and we were able to build our own home next door, but I have a lot of memories in that room. When I went back to my grandma’s house in 2011, I asked to walk in alone. The room was just the same. When I saw the stove, my heart filled with so many memories—from the smell of milk burning to my mom’s eggs in the morning. I stayed there for an hour just thinking about all those years from my childhood.

My dad was a migrant worker, and he would often be away for several years at a time. I was raised by my mother, a very strong woman. She started her own home business by selling food and then having a little store with everything from shoes to pants.

My dad and my mom didn’t go to school. They dropped out after third grade, but they didn’t need to have an education to know the importance of one. I remember my mom would always make me sit down at the table and do my homework. She didn’t know any math, so she just made sure that I was writing something on the paper. She was at every school meeting, and she would make sure that I had good shoes and good clothing. We were a low-income family, but she worked, and my dad was working on the U.S. side to make sure that I had everything I needed.

My dad tried getting a visa. He applied to the American embassy three times,



"My students know that I believe in them and that barriers can be broken down," Hernandez Sahagun says.

but every time he got denied. We didn't have any property, so we didn't have strong evidence to prove that we would come back. They kept denying us until my dad gave up and said, we're just going to go.

LEAVING

It was July fourth, and I remember my mom and my dad told me that we were just going away for a few months. We packed our things. I remember riding on the back of the truck that would take us to the main city and waving goodbye to my friends. Those few months turned into 10 years.

My dad arranged the details with the guy who would be crossing us, the smuggler. In Spanish, we call him *el coyote*, or the coyote. I was 12, and my brother was almost 5. We took two buses, one to Guadalajara and then from Guadalajara to Tijuana. We met with the coyote. They separated me and my little brother from my mom and dad and told us that we would see our parents again in a few days. We said goodbye, and my dad said, "You'll be okay." That's all he could say. They had to trust their children to these random strangers who would cross us over. My brother was crying. I wanted to cry, but I needed to be the strong one.

I remember it was a summer day and very hot. When we got to the house, we met a lady there and her husband and their daughter. They said, "In two days we're going to cross you. We'll give you food." They laid some blankets on the floor. They said, "Don't leave the house. You cannot leave or you'll get in trouble." My brother was scared. The house was cold, and it was dark inside. We had no access to phones. At night, the couple would fight. We would hear the breaking of glass. My little brother would cry, and I cried too.

The third day we met our "sister." They said, "She's going to pass you across the border. You're going to get in her car. These are your new names." I remember my name being Arturo. They would quiz us every five minutes until we got our names and birthdays without a moment of pause. The story was that we were going to go across the border to the mall to shop for school supplies.

When we got to the border, there was a long line of cars near the checkpoint. I was nervous. She told me to take out a magazine to pretend I was reading it. Right before getting to the checkpoint, I noticed I was reading it upside down.

There was a man at border patrol asking questions. We did what we were told

and he just signaled with his hand—go ahead, keep going—and so we did, and we passed.

Then we got picked up by another man. It was July 9. By now, we had not seen my parents in three days. We're told that now we're going to cross the second checkpoint. They took us to an isolated parking lot, somewhere behind a warehouse. They pulled up a huge semi-truck that was carrying bananas.

They told us: "You're going to get in there. It's going to be cold. It's a refrigerator, but there is an area where we're going to put you inside. You get three gallons of water. Your trip will be about three or four hours long. You cannot talk and you cannot make any noise. You cannot do anything that could get us in trouble."

There was a pregnant young woman and another young father with a young kid. It was me and 15 others, all Mexican people. We got into this very tight place. Three hours became four, and four hours became five, then seven.

It was very dark. I just kept with my brother in the corner. My brother's birthday is July 10. At midnight, I grabbed him to make sure that he knew I was there. I told him, "Happy birthday, happy birthday. You're 5." I couldn't see his face, but I wanted to make sure that at least he heard it from someone.

Thirty minutes later, the driver said, "About to approach the checkpoint, do not move." Then we felt the truck stop. We heard dogs barking outside. We heard people talking in English. Then the truck started to move again. After a while, we stopped and they let us out of the semi-truck.

I was really cold, my brother was really cold. After we got off the truck, I grabbed my brother and hugged him. Then we see a van pull over, and it's my dad. We ran to the van, and my mom is inside. She kissed us and we were just happy, tears coming down our cheeks.

COLLEGE

The college question never came into my mind until junior year. That's when it struck me. As an undocumented student, could I apply to college?

My teacher, Miss Gonzales, had a similar story to mine. She crossed the border illegally with her baby in her arms. She swam across the Rio Grande. She finally got her papers. Then she got her master's in teaching. She was a role model for me. At the time I was in her class, she was working on her Ph.D. She taught me about the requirements for college—that in Washington I could go to college without a Social Security number, that there were scholarships for people who were undocumented.

She recruited other people to be my supporters, my mentors. She had someone help me with my essays. I knew that I couldn't get a loan. I knew that my dad couldn't get a loan. She helped me find scholarships that were just for undocumented students. She became this person who made the difference in me going to college. Because of Miss Gonzales, I started to believe that it was possible. Eventually, I got into Seattle University and, after I wrote to the president of the school, they covered 95 percent of my tuition. My parents only had to pay \$3,000 a year.

During my senior year, I started thinking, what the hell am I going to do when I graduate? My cousin, who is also undocumented, had graduated from college in Arizona the year before, and was working in construction. He couldn't apply for any jobs he was qualified to do. I didn't want to become him.

I researched the process to become a legal resident and learned that my dad had been here for so long he could apply for citizenship. And if he got it, then he could apply for me and my family.

Right then, I printed his citizenship application, and I was like, "Dad, you're going to become a U.S. citizen." For four months, I studied on the weekends with him, teaching him English, how to write "George Washington." I put all this

pressure on him, poor guy. I said, "Dad, you need to pass this test, because the only way I'll be able to get my papers is through you."

His appointment was on a Friday in April. We went to the Homeland Security office in Seattle. I was praying and just so nervous. And my dad comes out with his face saying "no," and I was like, "Oh my God, he didn't pass." But he was joking! He had passed it. We had a really good hug, and he actually got sworn in that day and left with his citizenship certificate. Then immediately the following day I filed my paperwork and my mom's and brother's.

"It's such an emotional, heavy story to not share. To not be able to share it is very damaging to our souls, but they were able to share it with me."

THE CLASSROOM

I knew I wanted to serve communities that had similar experiences to mine. I teach ninth grade social studies in the Rio Grande Valley. Many of my students are facing a barrier that can be a deal-breaker for them going to college—whether it's their immigration status, their economic status, a broken family, or domestic violence in the home—whatever it is. I need to know my students on a personal level and understand where they are coming from. I go into the class knowing that my students have a lot going on at home, but they're still coming to class because they want to change their situation.

I always think back to me going to a classroom with Miss Gonzales and al-

ways feeling safe. Always feeling like what I was doing in that classroom was valued and respected, and she saw a future in me. I want to make sure that my students know that I see that future in them as well. That the immigration issue, whatever issue they have in their life, is not the end for them.

I want them to know my story, because Mr. Hernandez struggled to do this. He crossed the border in a semi-truck. He didn't know English. He made it to college, and they can do it too, but it's not going to be easy.

I told them my story, and I was like, "I'm here after school, and before school, and you can always come talk to me about what it means to be undocumented, what it might mean to have an undocumented parent, because I still have an undocumented mom. I want to hear your stories."

So a random kid came in the morning and said, "Sir, your mom is undocumented? My dad is, too." Finally they just started opening up their stories, and it made me so happy because oftentimes we don't know who to share our story with. It's such an emotional, heavy story to not share. It's such a traumatizing thing that can affect us psychologically. To not be able to share it is very damaging to our souls, but they were able to share it with me.

The biggest issue for me is that we're wasting so much potential—so much. I call it the lost generation: Not allowing people like me, like DREAMers around the country, to get to college, graduate college, and start working and give back to the community. That's why I share my story. That's why I want my students to share their story too, so that the people around this community know their faces. And whenever they hear an immigration story on TV, they know Osbaldo or they know Ricardo or they know Aidee. Because it affects not just communities far away, down in the border, but it's also affecting people that you know, that you care about, that you would love.



MINERVA

“We never asked for help from anyone,” says Minerva, who was undocumented until she was 25. “We were afraid to because of our status.”
PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Noah Rabinowitz*

I was born in the Philippines, and I grew up there for about 10 years. I actually came from a privileged background. We had a nice, big home. My father had his own business. Then—I don’t know the circumstances—my dad lost it all.

My father and my two older sisters came here first. My mother, me, and my other brother and sister were left in the Philippines for about a year. If my father forgot to send money, we wouldn’t have any money. My mother would scrimp and save, borrow and beg money from relatives just so we could have rice. But my mom was the glue that held it together. She made sure that we survived.

When we moved to Staten Island in 1987, I was in the fourth grade. My mother, as soon as she could, got a job. She worked at a coffee shop off the books because she didn’t have any papers. It was really hard for her because she didn’t speak English well. She wasn’t educated. People could be very cruel. A couple kids would come in and talk down to her all the time and behave in ways

that people shouldn’t behave towards other people.

I would get teased a lot for my accent. They would tell me to pronounce certain words over and over again because they found it amusing. But it wasn’t something that would send me home crying. In junior high, the kids got meaner.

Middle school was rough. It wasn’t a diverse school at all. In sixth grade, the kids started calling me a Chinese bitch. They would pull my hair on the school bus or spit on me. I didn’t fight back, and it surprised me. Back home in the Philippines, I wouldn’t hesitate to fight back. But there’s something about a bus full of children chanting mean things over and over again. It’s like a wolf pack, and you’re alone. The school bus driver didn’t do anything. He would just sit there, stare straight ahead, and not say anything. I’m sure teachers would see it when they went past the bus, but no one ever did anything.

I remember there was one Chinese girl. I had a feeling she’d been through this many times before because she would sit there and just zone out and pretend

nothing was happening. She was very, very quiet the entire time. After a while I stopped seeing her on the bus.

Even in school, teachers would make really stupid remarks about Asians. I would pretend to ignore it, and other kids would just laugh. I had one teacher who insisted on calling Asians yellow-skinned. I was like, I’m not yellow. But he insisted on saying it.

I felt helpless all the time I was in junior high. I asked [the school] for a city bus pass because I just couldn’t take the school bus anymore. They wanted to know why I needed it, but I didn’t want to say. I was ashamed. It took a while for me to get one, so I would walk home. It was a long walk, about an hour. Even then, the kids would spit at me off the bus and scream out the windows at me.

I started withdrawing a lot, hiding things from my mother. If a kid pushed me in front of the bus, I didn’t tell my mother. I would cry the entire way to school or from school. I developed a fear of going out. As soon as I would come home, I would lie down in bed and not get out. My mom was worried, but she

3

MINERVA works on staff at Teach For America. (She has asked to withhold her last name to protect her family.) After coming to the United States from the Philippines when she was 10, Minerva went through middle and high school undocumented. She didn’t receive a permanent visa until she was 25. When her friends began applying for college and making plans for the future, she looked at her own path and saw only a dead end. Although she has overcome enormous challenges to be where she is, Minerva doesn’t identify with the inspiring stories of DREAMers who “were always so insistent on doing something with their lives,” she says. “I let it beat me down. I drifted. I didn’t graduate from high school, and I’ve always been ashamed of that.” This is the first time she has ever shared her full story.

didn't know how to deal with it. Then at night, when everyone went to sleep, that's when I would be up. I would go back to bed at 6 a.m. and then sleep for an hour and go to school.

THE FIRE

I started working when I was 12—at the same coffee shop that my mother worked in. Sometimes I'd work 18 hours straight because I needed the money. If my sisters and I needed anything beyond the little food we had on the table, we had to work. Every one of us worked at a young age.

In my freshman year, we had a house fire. My mother suffered third-degree burns all over her face and body. It was devastating. My dad lived with us, but we didn't really have a lot of interaction with him. We were pretty much on our own. My sister picked up my mother's cleaning jobs so we could buy food for the house. My second-eldest sister took care of the kids. My mother was in the hospital for a few months. It was just basically the children taking care of everything.

A social worker came to our home and asked if we were okay. We'd never asked for help from anyone. We were afraid to because of our status.

I remember being really angry because the ceiling was black from the fire and the landlord never did anything about it. The entire time we lived there, it was just black—a constant reminder of what happened. We never complained. We never said, "Hey, how about fixing the ceiling," or "Why didn't you have a fire alarm?" We never even questioned it. Because there was nothing we could have done except move.

NOWHERE TO GO

High school was actually pretty good. It was a very diverse school, predominantly African American and Latino. It also had a large population of first-generation immigrants from the Caribbean, Israel, and Italy. I made a lot of friends. My friends weren't undocumented, but they

came from low-income backgrounds and some had problems with their families. I wasn't different. I was accepted.

I was in the honors program in my freshman year, but after the fire, I started cutting school. Later, when my friends started talking about college, I went even less. I thought, I'm undocumented, so what was the point? I knew I wasn't going to go to college. My parents couldn't afford to send me to school. We couldn't get financial aid.

My friends were coming back from school visits, and I felt very alienated, so I stopped going to school. My friends got frustrated with me. They would say, "What is wrong with you? You're so

"I had no hopes for myself. I drifted for many, many years. After high school, I had jobs. I got my GED because I didn't have enough credits to graduate. I was just existing."

smart. Why are you screwing up?"

It would hurt my feelings, but I couldn't share why, because I was ashamed. If they knew about me, how would they treat me? Would they still be my friends? So I just kept quiet and wouldn't say anything.

Christmas of my senior year was the only time that my mother acknowledged the whole college thing. I think she's had such a hard life that she's used to putting up a wall, even with her own kids. I've never said I love you to my mother. We don't hug. We don't do any of those things. We don't acknowledge when we

make mistakes. We don't talk.

But in my Christmas card, she wrote, "I'm sorry I can't send you to school." I remember going to the bathroom and crying. I couldn't stop crying. I was there for a while. I don't know why it hurt me so much. Looking back, I know that was a huge thing for her to say, and it hit me how much it hurt my mother as well. She always had high hopes for me. I was the one that they all thought was going to do something.

I never spoke to my mother about it. I just pretended nothing ever happened.

FORWARD

I had no hopes for myself. I drifted for many, many years. After high school, I had jobs. I got my GED because I didn't have enough credits to graduate. I was just existing. My two closest friends went off to schools outside of New York.

I worked in a temp agency at first, and did clerical work. Then I was an assistant. Every time something opened up, I said, "I can do that." I ended up learning more and more things. One of my best friends decided she was going to go to law school. She's like, "Why don't you become a paralegal? You love to read." So I started looking at certification courses. I worked full time while I went to school to become a certified paralegal.

When I started working in a law office, that's when things turned around for me because I saw a different way. I saw how my friends were moving on with their lives, and I wanted to do that. I didn't want to be depressed anymore.

At 24, I decided I wanted to go back to school, and I paid for city college fully. I looked at my mother, who has been through so many horrible experiences. She doesn't give up. She just pushes her way past things. I started doing that.

After I got my green card, things were so different. More opportunities opened up. I had a different confidence. I wasn't afraid anymore. Before then, I had a fear of the future—that I couldn't do certain things, or of people finding out.



"This was my secret spot growing up," says Minerva at a secluded garden chapel near her home. "It's where I always went whenever I felt lost and overwhelmed."

There was a shame that I felt about it. It seeped into everything.

Trust is still hard for me. When you're undocumented, you can't even trust the police. You can't expect to be protected. You can't expect to be safe. Even now, I tend to withdraw. I don't feel like I'm a part of things. Like I can be in a roomful of people and be friends with all of them, but they're a group, and I'm the guest.

I don't open up because I don't feel like I belong in their world. I'm kind of a clown at work; I joke when I get uncomfortable, because for the longest time I had to keep a part of myself from others—even my closest friends in the world. That's isolating because how

can someone really know you if you don't give them a chance to see past the surface?

I only started talking about that aspect of my life recently. It was just something that I blurted out: "Yeah, I'm undocumented." Once I said it, it was easier to say. It feels strange to me to be able to talk about it. I get very emotional. But I feel this obligation to really put myself out there.

It's a huge problem for Asians. When you look at the statistics, there are extremely high rates of undocumented people in the Filipino community and in the Chinese community, and they're growing every day. I know there were

people within my circle, the Filipino community, who were undocumented, but we never talked about it. It was a taboo subject.

It's like a double-edged sword: As a kid, I was grateful that I don't represent undocumented people. When they think about the undocumented, they see a Latino face—they don't see an Asian face. It felt safer for me as a kid, but at the same time, I had to sit there listening to people talk in a very insensitive way and could never say anything about it.

But if we're not part of the conversation, then we're not part of the solution. Then what does that do for us as a community? So here I am.



ELIZABETH FRANKEL

4

As a bilingual teacher at a middle school in the South Bronx, Elizabeth Frankel (N.Y. '99) saw firsthand the struggles faced by immigrant families in low-income communities. Affected by her experiences, Frankel went to law school to become a stronger champion for their cause. As associate director of The Young Center for Immigrant Rights based at the University of Chicago Law School, Frankel serves and trains others—law students, social workers, and teachers (including a large cohort of Teach For America alumni in the Rio Grande Valley)—to serve as advocates for immigrant children who are detained without their parents. She has represented children as young as a few months old who—as “unaccompanied alien children” in deportation proceedings—have no right to a court-appointed attorney. Frankel’s job as a child advocate is to persuade judges to make decisions that are in the best interest of the child, which, under U.S. law, they are under no obligation to do.

PHOTO: In the federal statute governing immigration proceedings, “there is no statutory best-interest-of-the-child standard,” says Frankel (with a client). “Our system treats children in the immigration system like adults.” PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Sally Ryan*

My first year teaching, I had a student I'll call Pedro. He was born in the United States. His father passed away when he was very young, and he had been raised by his mom, who was undocumented. Before I was his teacher, when Pedro was just 11, his mother, who worked in a local factory, was picked up in an immigration raid and placed in detention.

When no one showed to pick Pedro up from school, he was placed in a group home until the authorities could figure out what to do with him. Eventually, he was sent to live with an aunt and uncle in New York.

While this was all going on, his mother was placed in immigration detention in South Texas, right on the U.S./Mexico border. She spent six months in immigration detention, and because she was so far away, Pedro wasn't able to visit her at all, which was really difficult for him.

Eventually she was deported back to the Dominican Republic. At the point when I met Pedro, he had been separated from his mom for well over a year. He was really struggling. He was lethargic in class and fell asleep a lot. He never wanted to hang out with other kids. He was a loner. It became clear to me that Pedro was really depressed, so I reached out to his mother to talk to her and let her know how he was doing.

Pedro's mother expressed to me that she didn't want Pedro to come back to the Dominican Republic because life was so difficult there. She told me over and over again how much she wanted her son to have all the opportunities that she had never had, how she wanted him to be able to study and go to college. She didn't want him to have to worry about where his next meal was going to come from. She was crying and talking about how much she missed him, but she just wanted a better life for him.

It showed me how broken the immi-

“The children are detained in locked facilities, but they're not jails. You can walk right by and have no idea that there are a hundred kids inside.”

gration system is—the way it tears apart families and forces them to make these awful choices—that a mother would have to make this choice between being with her child or giving him an opportunity.

The population of children I work with now is unaccompanied immigrant children. We see kids who come from all over the world: The majority come from Mexico and Central America, but we also see children from China, India, Romania, Bangladesh, Somalia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Eritrea, among others.

They come for many different reasons: to reunify with parents and other family members who came here first; to escape physical or sexual abuse or gang recruitment. We see a lot of kids fleeing extreme poverty. In the cases of kids from China and India, they're often trafficked for labor. Sometimes they're sent with smugglers or sometimes they make the journeys on their own. At the point where they're apprehended, which is usually right after crossing the border, they're alone, so they're designated by the federal government as “unaccompanied alien children”—a legal term which means a child under the age of 18 without lawful status and without a parent or legal guardian.

These children are placed in the custody

of the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, which has facilities all around the country. Here in Chicago, we have about 425 children detained at any given time.

It was eye-opening to discover this population of children that is invisible. The children are detained in locked facilities, but they're not jails—they look like any other building in the city. You can walk right by and have no idea that there are a hundred kids inside.

One of the important things to understand about our immigration system is that there is no statutory best-interest-of-the-child standard in the Immigration and Nationality Act, which is the federal statute governing immigration proceedings. Our system treats children in the immigration system like adults—there aren't any special protections for kids. For example, children don't have a right to an attorney at government expense. Many kids must appear in court alone without a lawyer.

So, in our work, we argue that U.S. courts should always consider what is in the best interests of a child, and we look to state law as well as international law to guide our work. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty requiring decision-makers around the world to consider the best interest of the child in any action concerning children. Unfortunately, the CRC has been ratified by every country in the world except the United States, Somalia, and South Sudan. Still, these are the principles on which we base our legal arguments.

In terms of the factors we consider [in advocating for kids], the child's wishes are always paramount. The one exception would be in cases where there's a clear safety risk to the child. We also weigh the right of a child to be with [his or her] parents; the right of the child to have basic developmental needs met; the right to go to school; the right to be free from detention.

Our model at the Young Center is to

train bilingual and bicultural volunteers to work with children one-on-one under our supervision. In the Rio Grande Valley, we have a lot of Teach For America volunteers who have been excited to get involved. These volunteers are often shocked to hear that the government detains and deports unaccompanied children—most had no idea that there are more than 1,000 kids in centers around the Valley.

By the time we meet with kids, they've already met with a lot of different adults. They're often very confused. They don't know who to trust. Sometimes they've been coached heavily by their smugglers or traffickers not to say anything if they're apprehended, or to tell a different story and not to trust anyone.

They're also obviously scared. They don't know what's going to happen to them. They're in custody, and they think they're going to be deported. It's a really scary time.

Many of the kids are often struggling with some trauma that they've experienced. The journeys are really hard for children. They see people fall from trains; they see people drown in the river; they may be subject to physical or sexual abuse on the journey.

There's a lot going on that makes building trust much more challenging. We don't expect kids to open up right away. We recognize that it's going to take some time. What we tell our advocates is: “Don't go in with a pad and paper and ask a lot of questions in the beginning. Just spend some time with the child and try to get to know them.” Our volunteers in the beginning will just play games, do art projects, things that kids like but that are completely unrelated to their legal case.

What we have found is that if you are consistent, and you spend an hour each week and really put in the time, the kids do end up trusting their advocates. Their advocates are, in some ways, the one person who is there for them who doesn't have an obligation to anyone else.

Having that one person who's there for you really helps, and they do eventually open up and share their stories.

We also do a lot of different kinds of advocacy after children get released. While kids are in custody, they may be frustrated, sad, and anxious to be with their families. But they're also well cared for. They have three meals a day; they have school. What I've seen is that a lot of times after they get released is when the serious problems start.

We've seen cases where children have ended up homeless, and we had to find them housing. We do a lot of the work after children get released to family to find them a lawyer who will take their case pro bono, because again, they don't have an automatic right to a lawyer.

It is common for children to get push-back from schools, even though they have a legal right to enroll. We have to call schools and explain why, under the law, these kids have a right to be there and what needs to happen.

It can be harder with repatriation. We

give the children an international calling card so that they can call us if necessary. But it's harder for them to reach out to us, so we try to reach out to them and make sure that they're okay and have a place to go to where they're safe.

Our long-term goal is to get a best-interests standard into the law. So judges must consider a child's best interests and can't just deport a kid without weighing that. Lots of children don't qualify for legal relief in the U.S., but that doesn't mean they'll be safe if they're deported. Going back to their country could mean they'll be homeless or separated from their parents in the U.S., but that doesn't necessarily qualify them for the right to stay here.

People often ask, “How do you do this work? It must be so sad. It must be so hard.” Obviously it is, but I feel so lucky to be around these kids, and I learn so much from them. I always wonder, “What would I do if I was in their shoes? Would I be able to make this journey on my own?” Everything they've gone through and have been able to overcome and persevere through is just incredible. ★



Frankel's hopes to get Teach For America alumni involved in child advocacy programs in Chicago and South Texas.

OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS,

the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States has soared, from under 1 million in 1980 to around 11.2 million today.

SOURCE: Harvard Educational Review



About **1.09 million**

undocumented immigrants qualify for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Over 500,000 of them have applied. Seventy-two percent of those applications have been approved, 1 percent have been denied, and the majority of the remaining applications are still under review.

SOURCE: Brookings Institution and Migration Policy Institute

There are **APPROXIMATELY 5.5 MILLION** children in the U.S. with undocumented parents. Of them, **1 MILLION** are undocumented themselves; the other **4.5 MILLION** were born here and are American citizens. Of these citizen-children with undocumented parents:

80% were born after their parents had been settled in the U.S. for at least two years.

50% were born after their parents had been here five years or more.

SOURCE: Harvard Educational Review

65,000 undocumented students graduate from U.S. high schools every year.

SOURCE: American Civil Liberties Union and Immigration Policy Center



An estimated 16.6 million people in the U.S. are living in some kind of mixed-status home, where at least one person is undocumented. This figure includes 1 in 10 children currently growing up in the U.S.

SOURCE: The Center for American Progress and Harvard Educational Review

U.S. IMMIGRANT POPULATION

UNDOCUMENTED

11-12 MILLION TOTAL

DOCUMENTED

ABOUT 28 MILLION TOTAL

TOGETHER

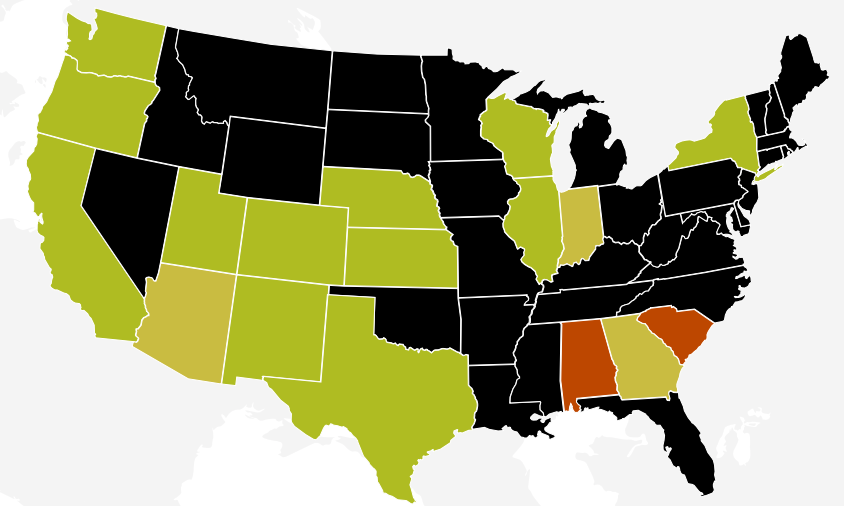
ABOUT 39 MILLION TOTAL



Mexico **29.8%**
 The Philippines **4.5%**
 India **4.3%**
 China **3.7%**
 Vietnam **3%**
 El Salvador **3%**
 Korea **2.6%**
 Cuba **2.6%**
 Canada **2.1%**
 Dominican Republic **2.1%**

44% of foreign-born residents are naturalized citizens.
24% are legal permanent residents.
29% are undocumented.
3% are temporary legal residents (students, etc.).

COLLEGE ACCESS

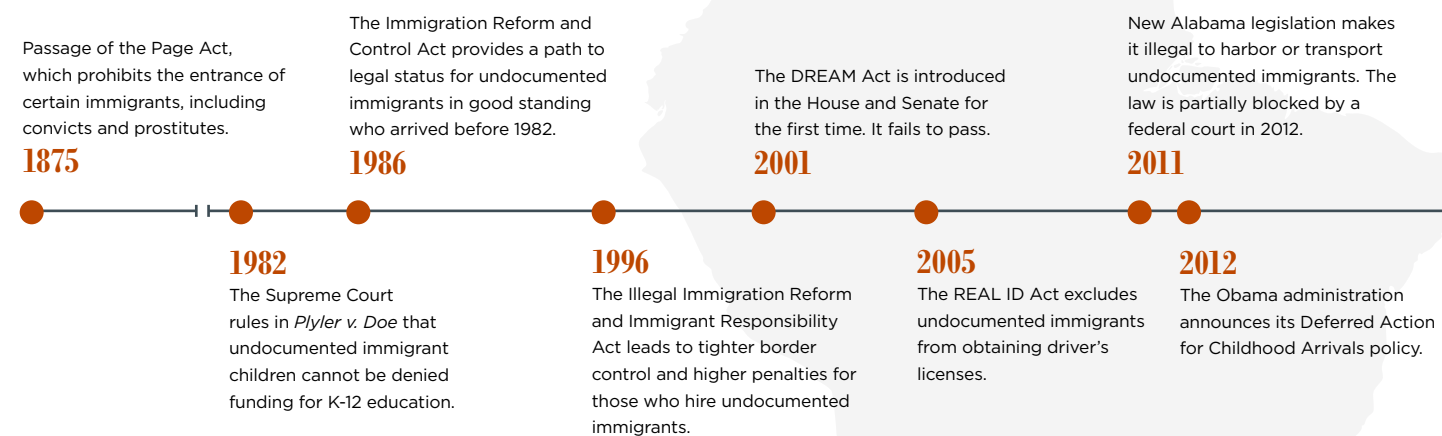


14 states have their own individual DREAM Acts providing in-state tuition to undocumented students.

3 states specifically bar undocumented students from receiving in-state tuition: Georgia, Arizona, and Indiana.

2 states bar undocumented students from enrolling in state universities: Alabama and South Carolina. (Alabama also prohibits community college enrollment.)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW



2013

FEBRUARY U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement releases over 2,000 undocumented detainees in the face of looming mandatory budget cuts.

APRIL Thousands of immigration reform advocates attend a rally in Washington calling for passage of the DREAM Act.

JUNE The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, which provides a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who meet certain requirements, passes the Senate.

JULY Iowa Republican Steve King is heavily criticized by members of his own party after claiming that the majority of DREAMers have spent time "hauling... marijuana across the desert."

OCTOBER Over 50,000 people nationwide turn out for a National Day of Immigrant Dignity and Respect.

PRESENT The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act is still waiting for consideration by the House.

SOURCES: 2001 Northeastern University Political Review; Undocumented and Unafraid: 11 Million Dreams 2005 DMV.org, The University of Washington-Bothell Library, 2010 the Huffington Post, 2011 the New York Times, 2012 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2013 Poynter

THE DREAM ACT'S STALLED PROGRESS

2003, 2005, and 2006 Versions of the DREAM Act are introduced in both the House and Senate but never brought to a vote.

2007 Senator Dick Durbin reintroduces the DREAM Act in the Senate as a stand-alone bill. It fails to pass.

2009 Senator Durbin again introduces the DREAM Act in the Senate. The Obama administration publicly commits to making immigration reform a priority, but not until after the midterm elections. The bill fails to pass.

2010 Senator Durbin again reintroduces the DREAM Act in the Senate. It fails to pass.

2011 Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid reintroduces the DREAM Act in the Senate. It fails to pass.

T&A

with ELISA VILLANUEVA BEARD (PHOENIX '98)

In the last two decades of Teach For America's history, the organization has largely shied away from taking positions on divisive questions of public policy. But in recent years, Teach For America has tweeted in support of marriage equality, filed an amicus brief to the Supreme Court backing affirmative action, and strongly voiced its support for the DREAM Act. *One Day* asked co-CEO Elisa Villanueva Beard why Teach For America is diving into the fray.



In the last couple of years, we've seen more and more instances of Teach For America weighing in publicly on some hot-button issues. Does this mark a turning point in the organization's willingness to get involved in public policy debates? The way we've always approached these questions is by asking whether an issue gets in the way of us being able to operate as an organization. So, for example, we've been involved in teacher certification and advocated for policies so our corps members could teach in certain states. We're not a think tank; we're not a policy group; and we've felt it's important to stay out of the fray and not get distracted with all the things that come with these very complex issues.

But over time TFA has gained more momentum and strength, and we've begun realizing that it's important for us to consider the question more broadly and the role we should play. With the DREAM Act, it's not political—it's an issue of educational inequity. When we signed up to teach Latino children, we signed up to stop at nothing until each one of them had the opportunity and access to attain an excellent education. This is simply part of that commitment.

TFA has taken hits for not being vocal enough in the past. Why has

the organization been reticent to speak out? So much of this is complex, and we don't always feel like we're well positioned to have a voice on some topics. That said, I'm proud that TFA is constantly reflecting: Does this feel right given our changing landscape? We rearticulated our core values and have done a lot of thinking about who we are as an organization. Once you reach a certain scale and have a certain voice, you've got to reconsider what your leadership means in that space. As we think about who we are at our best, it has become obvious that it's our right—and our responsibility—to speak up.

So is there a litmus test or some kind of criteria for when TFA will or will not take a stand on an issue? We know it has to be directly linked to educational equity and it has to be fully mission-aligned. We believe we have to stay in our lane, but we're also considering expanding our framework. We're excited to fully consider what might be right as we work for educational equity and justice in our communities, not just the ability to operate in a community.

Why some issues and not others? Why not, for example, gun control? That's a huge issue that affects our students and their communities. There's no question this is a topic of great

importance for our students and communities. However, we're still working to figure out our own voice and where we fit into this discussion. We're exploring the question, "Is gun control relevant to the question of access to an excellent education?" and what might be Teach For America's role in that conversation.

Are you worried at all that taking stands on certain issues might alienate or exclude members of the TFA family? On marriage equality, for example, we've taken a position that has received pushback from various communities. The reason I don't feel conflicted about that is because it is so critical to our cause. We cannot build the strongest movement without embracing the talents and contributions of everyone who will join us and for the many [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] kids in our classrooms. Children cannot get an excellent education in an environment that devalues their identities. Of course, we care a lot about the diversity of our community and want to hear from people when they disagree. We have to make sure we are constantly reflecting on being the organization we aspire to be.

What's your vision for the role TFA can play as a voice in the broader community? We are teaching mostly African American, Latino, Native, Asian American, and Pacific Islander kids—some of the most disenfranchised groups in our country. In everything we do, we have to have real skin in the game. That means we take risks, have courage, and stand up even when it's not always easy to because everyone is watching you. We need to ground ourselves in what we are and what we are not. And we have to determine what role we want to play—one that is deeply grounded in an aspiration to be a place working toward equity and justice. For me, this means taking into consideration every topic that is preventing any child from having full access to an excellent education. ★



A guest speaker educates Monica Trejo's class on immigration issues.

TEACH FOR AMERICA

Steps Up Support of DREAMers

by Ting Yu (N.Y. '03)

Teach For America publicly announced its support for the DREAM Act in April. But the organization has made increasing, if tentative, moves over the last four years to begin supporting corps members who teach undocumented students. Starting in 2009, the Phoenix region began partnering with the Arizona Dream Act Coalition (ADAC) to offer a four-part series of optional workshops intended to build awareness and help corps members navigate the complex barriers DREAMers face on the path to college. This year, four of eleven summer institute sites—Houston, L.A., Phoenix, New York—offered some form of immigration-related programming. Vice President of Teacher Preparation Tim Hughes says they are considering offering a more robust and comprehensive set of offerings for next summer.

VICTOR DIAZ (BAY AREA '02), who leads Teach For America's work on culturally responsive teaching, designed the sessions with ADAC, as well as a 15-page primer on federal immigration laws and policies. "There's so much a teacher can do. We try to show the continuum and hope teachers will take the steps that feel most comfortable to them," Diaz says. While he'd love to see teachers organizing within their communities on behalf of DREAMers, Diaz says even smaller actions, such as providing information to families and carving out safe spaces for students to talk about their immigration status, could be life-changing for kids.

ADAC's Carmen Cornejo welcomes Teach For America's outreach given the state's hostile posture toward immigrants. Until Diaz contacted her, Cornejo says no Arizona institutions or schools would host ADAC trainings because "everyone was so afraid. Any institutions that received public money felt it was a political issue, and didn't want to touch it. So there was no discussion of real problems or any help for students." Teach For America's interest in supporting DREAMers "is a big deal to our students," Cornejo says. "This is their life, their futures."

While Diaz is glad to see the organization's growing focus on undocumented students, he is impatient to see bolder and more urgent actions. "We have a mission statement that says 'all children,'" Diaz says. "I hope we get to the point where we mean all children, not just ones who have a certain piece of paper. We just can't live with that contradiction anymore."

"These are individuals who have overcome tremendous barriers, who have had to be incredibly persistent, incredibly resourceful."

San Antonio staff member Viri Carrizales, who grew up undocumented for 12 years before receiving a visa two years ago, believes her presence on staff has helped make the plight of undocumented students more of a priority in her region. "It's not this random person—it's me who lived through this, and they understand how important it is," she says.

This summer, she shared her story with 120 new teachers at the Houston institute and invited local DREAMers to meet with San Antonio corps members. Carrizales is also planning monthly meetings for teachers who want to integrate more culturally responsive content into their classes.

Nationally, Teach For America has begun partnering with community organizations to actively recruit undocumented applicants to the corps. This fall, for the first time in Teach For America's history, two undocumented corps members were placed in Colorado. (Both were recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a new federal law that gives qualifying individuals a two-year permit to work in the United States) So far this fall, 40 DACA recipients have applied.

However, admitting undocumented corps members is a lot simpler than placing them. Sean Waldheim, who heads Teach For America's admissions team, says finding jobs for undocumented corps members requires navigating complicated state laws and policies with school districts, credentialing partners, and state certification boards. Still, he says the organization is commit-

ted to expanding pathways to bring more DACA recipients into the corps. "We exist to put ourselves out of business, and that can't happen unless the students we teach are ultimately leading this work," says Waldheim. "These are individuals who have overcome tremendous barriers, who have had to be incredibly persistent, incredibly resourceful. Many of them have been leading in their communities, high schools, and colleges for years. The potential of undocumented students as leaders in the corps is huge."

Tucson native Monica Trejo (Phoenix '12) teaches special education and geometry at Sierra Linda High School. At Phoenix institute last summer, she attended a session designed to educate corps members on Arizona's immigration policy. "I thought it was awesome that TFA did this," says Trejo, who used the opportunity to link up with other teachers interested in supporting undocumented students. While she can't say how many of her students are undocumented—schools are not permitted to ask about the status of their students—Trejo says that several of her students' siblings and parents have been deported. One child wasn't able to receive special needs services because her mother was in detention and could not sign the papers.

Last year Trejo's students held mock elections, and the candidates debated their platforms, including their stances on immigration. "I want kids to see for themselves what is unjust and understand that there are basic human rights, whether you're born in this country or another," she says. At the start of school, she invited a friend from an immigrant rights organization to come and speak to her class to educate kids on the issues.

"If you want to make a true, lasting impact, you have to make connections to the community, and not enough of us are doing that," Trejo says. "How can we make our kids into leaders of their communities if we're passive ourselves?" ★

Driven by Diversity

Ten miles outside of Boston, the post-industrial city of Lynn, Mass., has become one of the most ethnically diverse pockets in the entire metro area. At KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate, teachers are learning that to capitalize on students' diversity takes more than simply recognizing it.

By LEAH FABEL (Chicago '01) Photos by JONATHAN KANNAIR



Before coming to KALC in ninth grade, Roanne Elsadig felt her cultural and religious identity was “shut down” at school. “I’m a Muslim. [Being at KALC] helps me express who I am, and pass on knowledge about my culture.”

Roanne Elsadig doesn't remember the specific day or the subject matter, but she remembers sitting in Derek Davidson's (Baltimore '07) 10th grade world history class, her pink hijab adjusted just so, and hearing him say something about Muslims—something simple, she recalls: “It was like, ‘Muslims are awesome. The people out there doing bad things in the name of Islam, they're not speaking for the faith.’” It was so basic. But for Elsadig, it meant the world: In this place where she came every day to undertake the task of becoming herself, she felt completely safe. “Mr. Davidson totally said the right things,” she says.

For Davidson, it was one comment amid a class discussion. But it was also one small part of something much bigger going on at his school, KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate, or KALC, about 30 minutes north of Boston in Lynn, Mass. (pop. 90,000). This year, its third as a high school, KALC is embracing a philosophy of culturally responsive teaching—the idea that centering instruction on the needs of students and families not only accelerates academic achievement, but also develops students as critically minded citizens empowered to create change in their communities.

KALC's unique challenge in doing so is the breadth of its diversity: in part because of the local presence of immigrant resettlement agencies, the school's families claim more than 45 country backgrounds, from the majority Dominican to many more from Haiti, West Africa, Cambodia, Vietnam, Central America, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere. So for Elsadig, a Muslim woman of Sudanese heritage, having a respectful classroom discussion about the distinctions between Islam and Islamic terrorism allowed her to share her identity in a way that felt ennobling—certainly one of the goals of culturally responsive teaching. But that goal becomes more daunting when a school community must take into account dozens of other cultures as well.



Founding principal Drea DeAngelo (Phoenix '03) is pushing herself and her staff to be more aware of their own cultural identities, as well as those of students and families. “We want to build our repertoire so that when we're teaching, we're more aware of the kids in front of us and the dynamics at play.”

Drea DeAngelo (Phoenix '03) is KALC's founding principal and a former math teacher who won the KIPP network's Excellence in Teaching Award in 2009. “We need to know the cultures around us so that we can meet students' needs now, but at the same time we need to create a culture where kids can come to terms with what they believe about themselves,” she says. “Because we could be awesome at academics—we could have test scores up the wazoo. But if we haven't equipped our kids with how to move forward if on their first day at college, someone makes some offensive side comment, then there's a good chance we haven't given students the space to develop their character enough to fight through difficult obstacles.”

DeAngelo is working with several teachers, led by Lindsey Ryan (Massachusetts '12), to develop a yearlong professional development around culturally responsive instruction—their topics based in part on feedback from parent and student focus groups, and in part on notable texts like *Affirming Diversity*, by Sonia Nieto. They started the series by sharing results of an informal student survey. Nearly 80 percent of students reported being born in the United States compared with only 25 percent of their parents. Twenty-two percent reported that at some point in their education, their peers have treated them differently based on race; 20 percent reported that teachers have done the same. In a small sample of students' open comments, one student wrote about being called “burnt” by a classmate, in reference to skin color. Others wrote they had been called terrorists outside of school.

Within the school, DeAngelo's teachers pride themselves on making students feel safe, she says. And their success shows: KALC students have a 96 percent retention rate—one of the highest in the KIPP network. On a parent survey, 95 percent reported that their child feels safe at school. But even so, DeAngelo remains vigilant, recognizing that her teachers must build their cultural knowledge not only for lesson and curriculum planning, but also to ensure students feel safe in expressing their cultural identities.

Her teachers would be surprised, she says, by how many students used the survey to share times they felt disrespected by another student based on race or culture, without feeling that teachers understood, or knew how to respond. “To know what comments mean, and to know how to address them—I don't know if everyone on my campus knows that right now,” she says. “And that's the thing that's scariest to me—kids not feeling safe in this building.”

Roanne Elsadig's father, Khalid Ahmed, fled the Sudan in the mid-1980s amid threats against outspoken people like himself. At KALC, Roanne and her twin sister are allowed a safe space to grow into themselves, he says—in a way that he and his wife are proud of. “They contribute to the school—they're able to stand firm, and prove themselves as Muslims,” he says. At the same time, he's astonished by the depth of their friendships with students across cultural backgrounds. “They're surrounded by differences, and they want to show their differences, in marvelous ways.”

Hugo Carvajal is KALC's director of community programs—a position created to ensure that the entire community feels valued and able to support students' success. Under Carvajal's leadership, KALC surveyed parents and found a strong desire for English classes, followed by citizenship classes, GED and computer literacy courses, and even gym time. Now, on Tuesday through Thursday evenings, KALC's classrooms and gym are packed with Lynn residents—some parents, some not—taking the free courses, from basic English to citizenship to family literacy to Zumba.

"If you're trying to get a child to go to college, to complete college, to have a good life, the more parent support, the better—we recognize that no one will replace the role of the family," Carvajal says. "So, as an example, if a parent can get a promotion because of better language fluency, then he or she will have a better income, and will be better able to support the student to and through college."

But Carvajal says being culturally responsive is also about allowing parents and the community to contribute to the school. To that end, he's conducting an assessment to draw out families' skills and the community's resources. "Parents always tell me they want to help," he says. "We talk about the sustainability of the school, and not wanting teachers to be here 12 or 14 hours a day—we want them to have a life, and a family. And if we could work with parents to serve as resources, it would make our jobs easier, wouldn't it?"

"If you're trying to get a child to go to college, to complete college, to have a good life, the more parent support, the better—we recognize that no one will replace the role of the family."

• HUGO CARVAJAL •

Derek Davidson, Roanne Elsadig's social studies teacher, lives in Lynn with his fiancée—Baltimore '08 alumna Vanessa Palmer—and their 3-year-old daughter. He calls his adopted home a "little oasis of true diversity," and he loves it for that. But neither is he oblivious to the cultural dynamics beyond its borders. Early each fall, he asks his juniors how important race is to their lives. "It seems weird, but they say it's not really a big deal." The next day, he brings in a map of Lynn and surrounding areas, comparing racial makeup with various indicators of success.

While surrounding towns like Marblehead and Peabody are overwhelmingly white and middle-to-upper-middle class, Lynn has languished economically and educationally. More than 50 percent of Lynn residents are people of color; only 25 percent have earned higher than a high school degree; more than a third of families live on \$35,000 per year or less—double the rate for Massachusetts as a whole. "I have to teach them that this is a real problem, which I feel a little conflicted about," Davidson says. "Sometimes I think, 'If it's not a problem for them, maybe I should leave it alone and they'll be okay.' But I think that's naive."

Principal DeAngelo, who has worked with Davidson for three years, trusts that with the right instructional pieces in place, Davidson's students ultimately will feel empowered by tough truths about race and equity—not hamstrung. If, as a whole, the school does culturally responsive instruction right, she'll see classrooms like Davidson's where kids not only are engaging with diverse texts and resources, but where "kids are comfortable and confident in pushing back and forth, even if the content deals with race, class, gender, and so on. Kids [will be] able to have dialogue, with evidence, and not shy away from issues," she says.

Anaidys Uribe is the president of KALC's junior class. She has spent her entire life in Lynn, but like many classmates, identifies first as an outsider. "First, I am a Dominican and a Puerto Rican," she says. Then, in no particular order, she's an American, a feminist, a sister and daughter, a member of the school's step team, basketball team, and a handful of clubs.

"The beauty of our diversity is it makes you comfortable," she says. "The setback is we're sheltered. When we go to college, it's not going to be like this at all. I go to college campuses now and I'm surrounded by white kids, and I say, 'How will I fit in a place like this?' But I think it's about being really strong in your self. If you have firm beliefs in who you are, if you're able to be true to yourself, you'll be able to get along with anyone—race and class won't matter. But you have to know who you are, and where you came from." ★



TOP: Social studies teacher Derek Davidson talks to his students about race, but also about gender, culture, and the interplay between them all. "Giving kids the vocabulary to be literate in those conversations is my whole goal," he says. **BOTTOM:** Junior Anaidys Uribe says KALC has raised her awareness of society's expectations: "The stereotypes made about me are different than those about white women. That could hold me back, or it could motivate me to move forward."



What is DACA?

ONE DAY spoke with Tina Fernandez (N.Y. '94), the Director of The University of Texas School of Law's Pro Bono Program. In 2012, in response to the Obama administration's launch of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, Fernandez and her students, in partnership with the UT Law Immigration Clinic, organized clinics offering free DACA assistance to undocumented youth in Austin and the Rio Grande Valley.

Interview by **TIM KENNEDY (DELTA '11)**

BROADLY SPEAKING, WHAT IS DACA? WHOM DOES IT AFFECT, AND HOW? Last year, in response to Congress' failure to pass the DREAM Act, the Obama administration launched a program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. This was meant to provide interim relief for the millions of undocumented young people [those under the age of 31 who arrived in the United States before they were 16] who are in the U.S. Qualifying individuals are protected from deportation for two years, with an option to renew at the end of the two years. They also are issued a valid Social Security number, and may be eligible for work authorization. DACA allows these youth to come out of the shadows, and it sheds light on how many undocumented students there are in this country.

WHAT ARE SOME LIMITATIONS OF DACA? We think that DREAMers should be able to be on a path to citizenship, and DACA does not provide that. It's temporary protection; there's no guarantee that this program will be around for the long term. In addition, the age restrictions are arbitrary and exclude so many people. And states apply DACA benefits inconsistently. For example, having a Social Security number in Texas means you can apply to get a driver's license. But in some states, people may have their work authorization and Social Security [numbers] but not be allowed to sit for licensing exams in different professions or get driver's licenses. And DACA recipients cannot apply for federal financial aid and are not eligible for most state financial aid programs either. For low-income students and families, the costs of private aid may be prohibitive.

IN THE YEAR SINCE DACA WAS ENACTED, ONLY ABOUT HALF OF THOSE ELIGIBLE HAVE APPLIED. WHY HAVEN'T MORE PEOPLE APPLIED? Some are afraid of telling the government they're undocumented, or they may not know

about the program. It's also a complicated administrative process, and most young people would have a hard time completing applications on their own. Private immigration attorneys are charging over \$1,000 to prepare a client's DACA application—and this doesn't include the \$450 filing fee that the U.S. government has imposed. You also need to have a lot of documentary evidence to be able to get your application approved—you have to show, among other things, that you arrived before you were 16, that you have been continuously in the United States from June 15, 2007, to the present, that you are either currently in school or have graduated from high school or gotten your GED, and that you do not have any significant criminal convictions. Large urban areas tend to have better access to legal services for low-income individuals. But people who

live in rural regions have a really hard time accessing legal services.

TELL ME ABOUT THE DACA CLINICS YOU'VE LED IN THE R.G.V. AND AUSTIN. Starting in the fall of 2012, we've held 11 free legal clinics [with 30 to 40 law students at each] to assist 600 applicants in filling out their applications. Once approved, students have been able to get their driver's licenses and get a part-time job to help their families and save up for college. We heard of a UT undergraduate who was undocumented but is now sitting for her teacher certification exam. DACA has really allowed students to plan their futures, pursue their dreams, and access a lot of benefits that we take for granted.

WHAT HAPPENS TO IMMIGRANTS WHO HAVE "COME OUT OF THE SHADOWS"

IF THE DACA PROGRAM IS REVOKED? The [Obama] administration and the Department of Homeland Security have said that they're not going to use DACA information to turn around and deport individuals. I personally think there would be an uprising if that were to happen. But it would be speculative to say what happens when a new administration comes in. We don't know.

DO YOU EXPECT DACA TO HAVE ANY LONG-TERM IMPACTS? If anything, I think DACA has shown us the possibilities. Students who can now apply for college and jobs—I don't think they are going to be willing to go back into the shadows, now understanding what can be different if they have access to some of the things that the rest of us do. I think there's no going back after this. ★

Tina Fernandez's (center) University of Texas law students have run free DACA clinics for 600 students in Austin and the Rio Grande Valley.



Photograph by Stephanie Swope



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A February 2013 rally in Annapolis, Md., drew 3,000 people in support of a bill that will provide \$1 billion for Baltimore school renovations. (INSET: Yasmene Mumby (left) and Shannen Coleman Siciliano in Detroit, where they were finalists for the Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership.)

BALTIMORE RECONSTRUCTED

Yasmene Mumby and Shannen Coleman Siciliano empowered Baltimore families to overcome years of false starts and broken promises in the pursuit of safer and more inviting schools **BY LEAH FABEL (CHICAGO '01)**



Yasmene Mumby (Baltimore '08) recalls a conversation in 2011 that brought her mission for the next year into focus. She was speaking with the mother of a Baltimore high school student. “I asked her, ‘What is the one thing you’d like to see changed at your daughter’s school?’ She looked at me and said, ‘Ms. Mumby, I would like for there to be a door on the bathroom stall.’”

“Parents saying they want a place for their children to go to the bathroom in private—it gets you at the core,” Mumby says. “I had to balance my emotional reaction with some semblance of a visionary’s mind to say, ‘We’ll get that—and we’ll get more.’”

Mumby is the co-chair of the Baltimore Education Coalition, a network of 26 community and religious organizations that advocate on behalf of Baltimore’s children and families. The BEC grew into a force in the world of Maryland politics under the leadership of Mumby’s colleague and predecessor as co-chair, Shannen Coleman Siciliano (Baltimore '03). The coalition is volunteer-led—Mumby is a second-year law school student and KIPP Baltimore’s director of community engagement; Siciliano is the director of development and academics for Baltimore’s Child First Authority, a nonprofit focused on after-school programming.

Since 2009, the BEC has rallied Baltimoreans to avert \$125 million in

state budget cuts to the city’s schools. Beginning in 2011, Siciliano and Mumby led a deft effort to convince Baltimore’s mayor and city council to support a bottle tax to raise \$10 million to patch up the schools’ crumbling infrastructure.

But Baltimore schools needed more than patchwork—a report on their conditions had found not only bathrooms without stall doors, but pipes leaking sewage into classrooms, broken heaters, and contaminated water in the drinking fountains. So Siciliano and Mumby set their sights on a seemingly impossible goal: convincing Maryland’s legislature to put more than \$1 billion toward Baltimore school construction over the next 10 years.

Skeptical politicians weren't the only tough sell—they also encountered Baltimore parents and residents who, through the years, had endured countless broken promises and failed efforts to improve their schools. “There was a strong belief that this couldn't happen,” Siciliano says, “from teachers and especially people who have lived in the city for so long.”

Mumby, a third-generation Baltimorean, knew that trust could only be gained in her city one living-room conversation at a time. The BEC listened, and then they mobilized by training hundreds of teachers, parents, and students to share their stories with legislators from Baltimore and around the state.

They also invited city council members to visit local schools “to see where we're asking students to go to class every day,” Siciliano says. One Teach For America corps member—a science teacher—was making do in a regular classroom with no lab equipment. “So she would pull up things online and project what the lab

would have looked like.” Siciliano says. “One of the city council members said, ‘If I was taught in a classroom like this, I would have never loved science, and I never would have majored in science. So how do we expect our students to be competitive in the 21st century?’”

State senator Bill Ferguson (Baltimore '05), who represents parts of Baltimore, became a champion for the BEC's work. He credits Mumby and Siciliano with organizing residents and presenting their concerns in a way that forced powerful politicians to pay attention. The BEC “has transformed the way that elected leaders in the state view Baltimore City,” he says.

By February 2013, the BEC had gained the support of a powerful coalition of legislative leaders in support of the Baltimore City Public Schools Construction and Revitalization Act. In March, the bill passed both chambers of the Maryland assembly with bipartisan support. It provides up to \$1 billion for

the reconstruction of Baltimore City public schools—an investment that allows for the renovation or rebuilding of dozens of schools over the next decade.

The task now, Mumby says, is keeping momentum going, ensuring the construction begins, and strategizing to secure another \$1 billion over the next 20 years. She has attended dozens of community meetings since April, where children have asked for state-of-the-art media centers, and teachers have asked for green space, so they can take their classes outside.

Mumby says she thinks often about her conversation with the mom who asked for a door on the bathroom stall at her daughter's school. “Now, we're able to move beyond adequacy,” she says. “We don't just want beautiful new boxes to send our children to, but we want to transform the school as a learning center. We want to build people, not robots. We want to build a society.” ★



Kelly Amis, winner of the 2013 Teach For America Social Innovation Award, facilitates screenings of her films nationwide—like this one at a public library in Orinda, Calif.

MINI-LESSONS

Filmmaker Kelly Amis (L.A. '90) keeps her documentaries short, allowing for interactive screenings from coast to coast that spur discussion about public education **BY CALVIN HENNICK (N.Y. '04)**

The camera is trained on a young man named Jerone, who stands outside a school-yard fence and tells how he learned more during his time in prison than he did in public schools. Instead of teaching him to read, he says, one of his teachers used to clock in hung over and show videos. Another routinely called students “stupid.”

“We would question him on it,” Jerone recalls on film. “But as a kid, at 11, why do I have to speak up that hard for my education?” The footage ends with the news that Jerone has been re-arrested and is serving decades in prison.

The entire film is only seven minutes long, but director Kelly Amis (L.A. '90) hopes Jerone's story sticks with viewers and sparks discussion in a way that

data about the achievement gap doesn't. “With film, you can reach people at a more visceral level,” she says. “I think it puts a face to the issues and connects people in ways that stats, research, and analysis never will.”

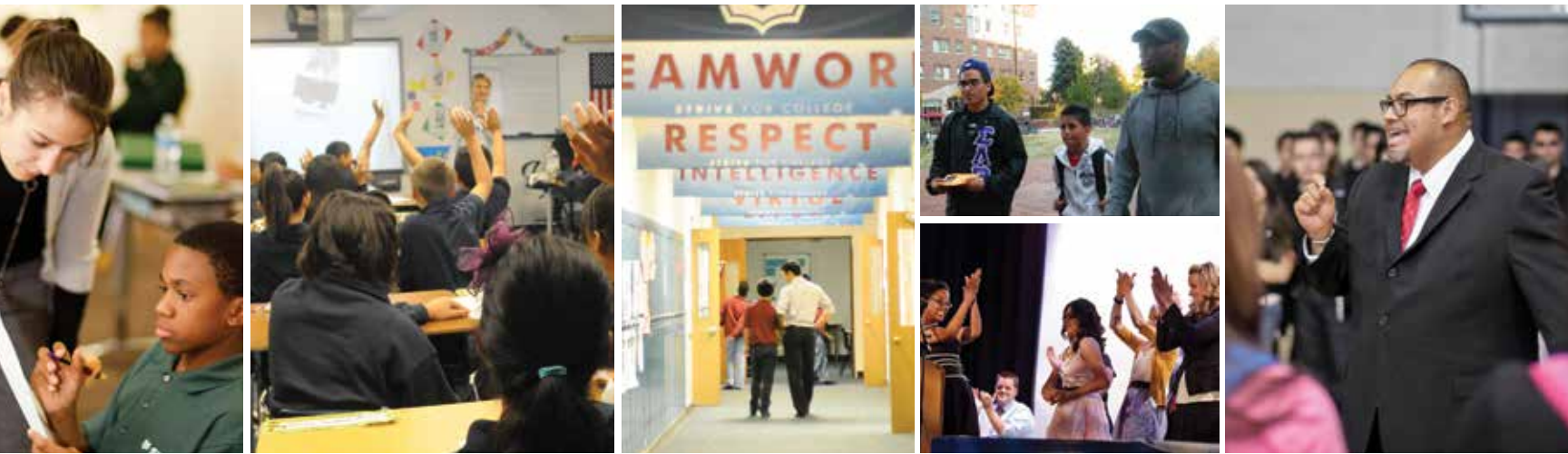
Amis knows firsthand the limitations of numbers and reports. She spent years in education policy—working for think tanks, foundations, and as a legislative aide on Capitol Hill—but grew frustrated with the slow pace of change. She became convinced that most people simply don't understand the reality facing students in low-income school districts. So she quit policy work and set out to spread the word through film.

“It kind of was a crazy decision, because I had so much to learn,” she says. “I had no background in film other than

being a very avid amateur photographer.”

Amis taught herself how to edit film, turned her living room into a production studio, and set to work on her first three short documentaries, collectively called *TEACHED Vol. I*. The first, *The Path to Prison*, shows Jerone trying—and ultimately failing—to turn his life around. The second, *The Blame Game: Teachers Speak Out*, examines the impact of teacher quality on student achievement. In the third film, *Unchartered Territory*, charter school advocates make the case for their education model.

The films debuted at the 2011 Napa Valley Film Festival and have continued to be shown dozens of times at other festivals—winning awards at the Williamsburg Film Festival and the Amsterdam Film Festival—and at



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screenings for school districts, community groups, and colleges. In October, *TEACHED* was shown at Northwestern University, the Guild Theater in Sacramento, and Brooklyn Law School in New York City.

Because the films are so short—none is longer than 17 minutes—they can be paired with discussion panels, speakers, and Q&A sessions that allow audiences to participate in the conversation about education reform. “With feature lengths, by the time people are done watching the film, they’re ready to go,” Amis says. “It’s hard to have a long discussion at that point.”

Amis says organizations can mix and match her films and tie them into what’s happening locally in education. At a Washington, D.C., screening, for example, most of the conversation centered on charter schools, while the hot topic at a Los Angeles screening was teacher evaluation.



“I think [the screenings] have been productive in the sense that you’ve got people discussing these issues,” says Howard Fuller, a professor and the former superintendent of Milwaukee

Public Schools, who stars in *The Blame Game*. “To me, it isn’t just the film itself. It’s the format that you use when you show the film.”

The novel screening model helped Amis to win the 2013 Teach For America Social Innovation Award. She plans to use the \$50,000 prize to hire staff to help get the films in front of more audiences. She’s also fundraising to produce six more short documentaries—along with two feature-length films.

Unlike most documentary filmmakers, who tend to hop from topic to topic, Amis plans to stick with education. She wants to follow the reform movement over time and continue to add to a library of films that educators and advocates can use to raise awareness about issues in their community. “I like the idea of documenting the change that is going to happen,” she says. ★

The greatest journeys rarely follow a straight line.

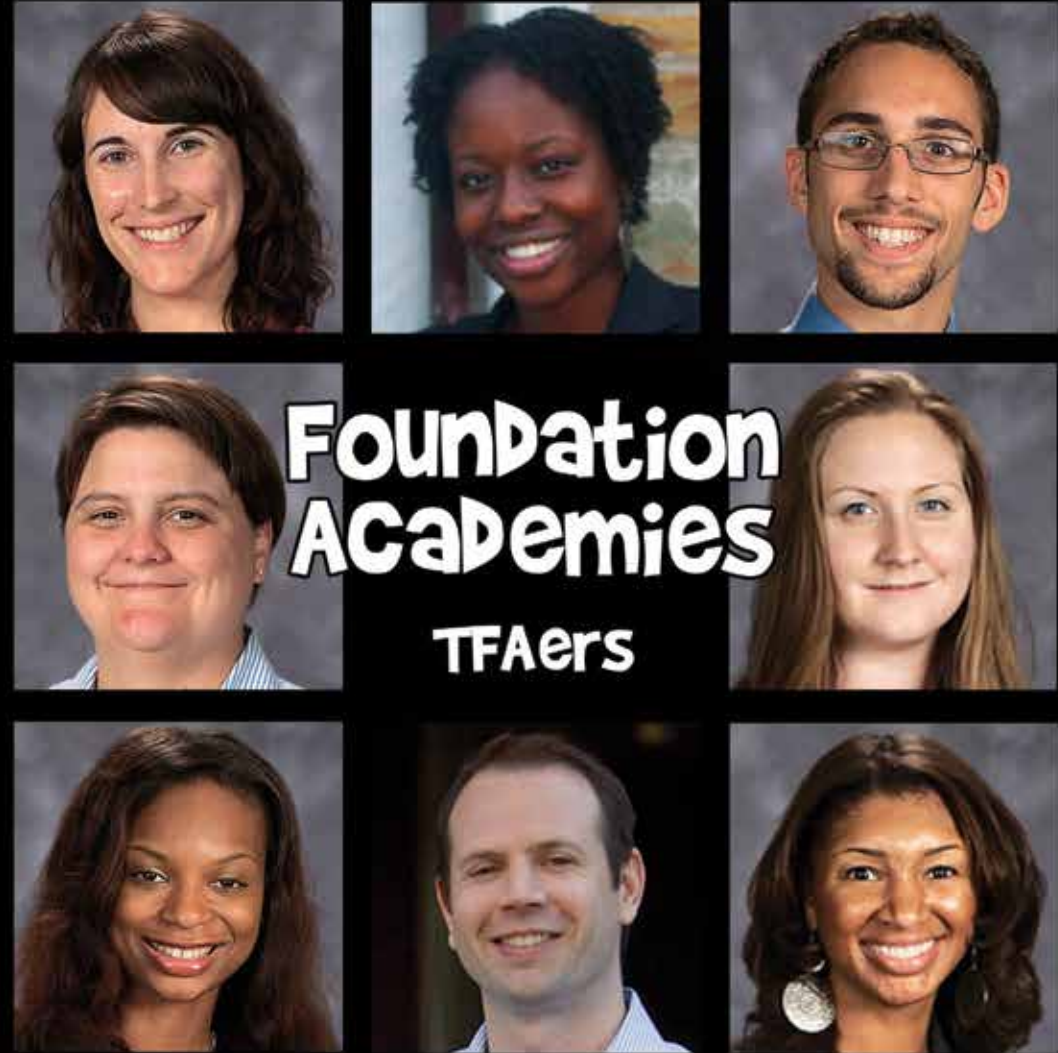
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All in the Family

Teach For America launched its Annual Alumni Awards and Educators Conference this summer, drawing 900 attendees from around the country for a day of inspiration and celebration

By LEAH FABEL (CHICAGO '01), TIM KENNEDY (DELTA '11) and TING YU (N.Y. '03)

On July 18, Detroit played host to Teach For America's first Annual Alumni Awards and Educators Conference. The daylong event attracted nearly 900 people from across the country—corps members, alumni, staff members, community partners, students and more. The morning kicked off with a breakfast for The Collective, Teach For America's national alumni of color association, that brought together more than 100 educators of color to connect and strengthen their community. After a day of workshops, speakers, and networking, attendees spent the evening at the Detroit Opera House celebrating the

recipients of the Excellence in Teaching Award, the Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership, and the Social Innovation Award. "We launched this event to bring alumni educators together to learn from each other, to celebrate progress along the way, and to highlight communities we're privileged to partner with across the country—starting with Detroit," says Andrea Stouder Pursley (Phoenix '02), who heads the alumni affairs team. "I hope this annual event serves as an opportunity for alumni educators to get energy from one another and recharge for the school year ahead."

2013 PETER JENNINGS AWARD FOR CIVIC LEADERSHIP



The Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership is presented annually to a Teach For America alumnus/a whose work in the last year has led to far-reaching impact in addressing an issue of critical importance to achieving educational equity



Jackson gives her acceptance speech at the Detroit Opera House.

Winner JULIE JACKSON

Greater Newark '94

Uncommon Schools

In 2007, the year Julie Jackson founded North Star Academy Vailsburg Elementary in Newark, N.J., only three percent of incoming students could read at grade level. Within one year—and every year since—that figure rose to 100 percent. The school's third and fourth graders are ranked first in reading in the state of New Jersey out of 1,300 schools, and in the top 25 for math.

Earlier this year, at nearby NSA College Prep, a high school also founded by Jackson, students were ranked among the top 10 in the world on the gold-standard PISA assessment administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. For several years running, every student in the school's graduating class has been accepted to at least one four-year college, and 80 percent have earned their degrees.

In 2012, she became managing director of nine schools in the Uncommon School network, serving more than 3,000 students in Newark and Brooklyn. Yet the broad scope of her work hasn't deterred her highly personal, hands-on approach to leadership development. She brings her principals together regularly to learn from one another—and for a healthy dose of tough love. "I put the data on a chart—all nine schools. Because we need to be rooted in reality," Jackson says. "I said, 'If you're the ninth school, wouldn't you want to know you're the ninth school?' Of course you do. If you act like these numbers don't exist, then you don't become better, and then ultimately the kids don't become better."

Jackson also finds time to travel and hold workshops for her fellow school leaders, training 3,500 educators in the 2012-13 school year alone. Meanwhile, her schools have become models for educators around the world, drawing more than 7,000 visitors over the years. "If we've been able to figure out something that works, then it's my responsibility to share it, to make the impact greater," said Jackson.

"If we've been able to figure out something that works, then it's my responsibility to share it, to make the impact greater."

JULIE JACKSON



The Jennings Award winner and finalists met with Kayce Freed Jennings and Teach For America co-CEOs Elisa Villanueva Beard and Matt Kramer to share their insights and perspectives. (From left: Kramer, Shannen Coleman Siciliano, Yasmene Mumby, Beard, Jennings, Julie Jackson, and Jonathan Klein)

Finalist JONATHAN KLEIN

Los Angeles '97
Great Oakland Public Schools

Jonathan Klein knew something had to change in Oakland, Calif. Over the past decade, the Oakland Unified School District had spent six years under state control and suffered a 30 percent decline in enrollment. Students were struggling: In 2011, 70 percent of OUSD schools performed lower than average compared with demographically similar schools statewide, and only 59 percent of students were completing high school in four years.

However, Klein also knew that community-driven changes were the only ones with a chance of succeeding. In 2008, he co-founded Great Oakland Public Schools, or GO Public Schools, to organize parents, educators, and activists to find real solutions for Oakland's students. "What drives us is the basic value that those impacted by decisions need to be included in making decisions," says Klein.

Five years later, GO's impact is unmistakable. The organization helped rally support around a \$475 million measure to upgrade school facilities and improve access to healthy meals. It also mobilized dozens of parents and community members to testify before the school board and collected 3,000 signatures in support of a policy that would allow schools more autonomy over hiring, scheduling, and budget allocation.

In 2012, after realizing that 8 of the past 12 Oakland school board elections had gone uncontested, Klein spearheaded an unprecedented effort to raise the profile of the local races. After seeking community input, GO endorsed three challengers to run against incumbents and rallied volunteers to knock on more than 11,500 doors and make more than 64,000 phone calls. The three candidates endorsed by GO won in a landslide.

"In our offices every night for weeks, phone banks were filled with teachers and parents and principals, charter people, district people," Klein says. "This is not about charter schools or district schools; this is about quality schools and [being] ready to move forward as a city, for kids."

"What drives us is the basic value that those impacted by decisions need to be included in making decisions."

JONATHAN KLEIN

Finalists

SHANNEN COLEMAN SICILIANO

Baltimore '03

YASMENE MUMBY

Baltimore '08

Baltimore Education Coalition

Since 2009, the Baltimore Education Coalition—a network of 26 community and religious organizations that advocate on behalf of the city's children and families—has become a powerful voice for the wishes of parents, educators, and community members. First co-chaired by Shannen Coleman Siciliano and now Yasmene Mumby, the BEC has organized thousands of Baltimore residents around successful actions, including averting \$125 million in cuts to city schools and persuading Baltimore's mayor and city council to back a bottle tax that raised \$10 million to repair crumbling schools. By spring of 2013, Siciliano and Mumby's tireless efforts with the BEC paved the way for the bipartisan passage of the Baltimore City Public Schools Construction and Revitalization Act, which provides up to a staggering \$1 billion for the reconstruction of Baltimore City public schools.

Read more about Siciliano and Mumby's work with the BEC in their profile on p. 59.

2013 SOCIAL INNOVATION AWARD WINNERS



The annual Teach For America Social Innovation Award sparks bold innovations that expand opportunities and eliminate educational inequity for students in low-income communities. The award recognizes alumni whose work exemplifies innovation, leadership skills, and transformative impact and sustainability

ELLIOT SANCHEZ

Kansas City '08
Founder and CEO, mSchool



Elliot Sanchez, founder and CEO of mSchool, is something of a magician: Every day, he tricks New Orleans students into learning math without them even realizing it. Partnering with after-school community programs, mSchool (the “m” is for “micro”) provides electronic tablets and computers pre-loaded with some of the highest-quality math software on the market. Kids taking part—often at places like community centers and churches—flip them on, and presto! They are playing learning games that change daily in response to their needs and strengths.

“So much student frustration comes from having material that isn’t appropriate, that’s too easy or too hard,” says Sanchez. “Being able to give kids their own lesson every single day is a radical transformation.” And it’s effective: In a previous job, Sanchez

“So much student frustration comes from having material that isn’t appropriate, that’s too easy or too hard. Being able to give kids their own lesson every single day is a radical transformation.”

ELLIOT SANCHEZ

helped compile a list of STEM initiatives in New Orleans, ranked by efficacy. Software that responds well to students’ individual needs came in first—10 times more effective than its closest competitor.

The mission behind mSchool is to make it easier for students to receive targeted math help at an alternative location, instead of families facing the difficult decision to change schools when needs aren’t quite met. The company was awarded \$50,000 through the Social Innovation Award.

KELLY AMIS

Los Angeles '90
Founder of Loudspeaker Films



Kelly Amis, founder of Loudspeaker Films and the director and producer of *TEACHED, Vol. 1*, creates short documentaries—each only about seven minutes long—sharing the stories of people and communities impacted most severely by educational inequality. But Amis doesn’t stop once her films are released. She brings them into communities nationwide, organizing and often leading screenings followed by discussions about how to address inequity locally. Her films have won awards at the Williamsburg and Amsterdam film festivals, and have been screened in cities from L.A. to Chicago to Washington, D.C. Her second collection, *TEACHED Vol. 2*, is in production. She was awarded \$50,000 through the Social Innovation Award.

Read more about Amis’ work in her profile on p. 61.

ZEKE COHEN

Baltimore '08
Co-Founder and Executive Director,
The Intersection



In recent years, The Intersection has helped transform a dangerous vacant lot into a community garden; they’ve been part of an effort to pass a Baltimore bottle-tax increase to raise funds for school reconstruction; they’ve gone door to door to rally support for Maryland’s DREAM Act; and they’ve organized a campaign to address gun violence. Even more impressive: Students led all of the efforts.

The Intersection focuses on student-led grassroots community organizing, and developing the leadership skills of students considered at-risk. “If educational inequity is truly to become the civil rights struggle of our generation, which I think it is, then it’s got to be led by the kids who need their education reformed,” says Zeke Cohen the group’s co-founder and executive director.

Intersection students take part in a leadership training that focuses on recognizing personal barriers and developing strategies to overcome them. They then design and lead civic engagement projects to improve their city and schools. The Intersection was awarded \$20,000 through the Social Innovation Award.

ELIZABETH DAVIDSON

Mid-Atlantic '06
Co-Founder, ScriptEd



Spanish, French, JavaScript? Students in ScriptEd, co-founded by Elizabeth Davidson and Maurya Couvares, become fluent in the most modern of modern languages: computer programming. ScriptEd hires technology professionals as volunteers to teach low-income students computer programming and web development skills through on-campus, after-school courses. The students also take field trips to major technology firms, and take on full-time summer internships at places like Connetly, About.com, and Thrillist.

“We felt it was really important not just to teach our kids computer programming skills, but that they would be able to converse about technology,” Davidson says. “That was the big takeaway we saw from the internships, just how enmeshed in the industry they were becoming.”

ScriptEd volunteers currently work in five New York City high schools, with plans to expand. The organization was awarded \$10,000 through the Social Innovation Award.

YAMILÉE TOUSSAINT

New York '08
Founder and CEO, STEM From Dance



As an African American undergraduate at MIT, Yamilée Toussaint couldn’t help but notice how few minority women pursued careers in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). She also had a pretty decent hunch why that was. “I’ve learned through my own experience as an engineering student, and later as a corps member, that confidence is one of the main barriers,” Toussaint says. “I’ve also learned that exposure to the arts can dramatically increase confidence.”

An avid dancer from an early age, Toussaint drew on her talents to design STEM From Dance, combining math and science instruction, and exposure to STEM careers, with a full dance curriculum designed to give minority girls the skills and confidence necessary to excel. Participants’ time is split equally between math and science labs and dance studios. “I’m using dance as a way to attract students,” Toussaint says. “What they gain in dance can be applied to any area of life.” STEM From Dance was awarded \$10,000 through the Social Innovation Award.

2013 ALUMNI AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING WINNERS



The Teach For America Alumni Awards for Excellence in Teaching are presented annually to alumni teachers who are transforming students' lives through extraordinary leadership and an unwavering belief in the potential for all children to succeed



Photograph by Jim Barcus

KELLEE RANSOM

Kansas City '08

When Kellee Ransom talks about her “babies” from last year—her third graders at University Academy in Kansas City, Mo.—her Alabama accent warms up like a ray of sunshine. A career-changer with a degree in business, Ransom decided to pursue teaching in part because of her own academic struggles growing up. “I remember how my mom and dad held me to high expectations and were uncompromising with that,” she says. “I bring that unapologetically into my classroom every day.”

Ransom’s students have risen to the challenge. Last year, 92 percent of her third graders scored proficient/advanced in math on state assessments (up from 50 percent the previous year). They also grew an average of 145 Lexile points, well over the expected range of 70-100. In addition, Ransom, who now teaches first grade, is determined that her students leave her classroom with strong values and an unshakable sense of self. She routinely brings in pastors, professionals, and other community members to speak to her students. Ransom recounts the story of one little girl who had been retained the previous year but flourished in her class. She was dependent about leaving Ransom’s class. “But I said to her, ‘The seeds are planted, baby girl. It’s time to grow. It’s time to take over the world!’”

KENNETH ROBINSON

D.C. Region '93



Photograph by Andrew Harnik

In the two decades since Kenneth Robinson was placed as a corps member at Hendley Elementary, he has changed the lives of entire families—siblings, cousins, and even parents. Robinson has supported his students at dance recitals, football games, and even in court. He helped the mother of one student earn her high school diploma and secure a job as a school bus driver, enabling her to buy the family’s first home. “I pride myself on caring for each student as if they were my own child,” he says. “My bond doesn’t end when they leave my class.”

Robinson is routinely assigned the lowest-performing students each year—including those who have been retained—and by year’s end, his fourth graders far outperform their strongest peers. Last year he received the prestigious A Standing Ovation Award, given to 25 of the District’s most effective teachers. But Robinson doesn’t measure his own success through accolades. “Truthfully, standardized tests have very little to do with whether I reached this child or if this child grew,” he says. “That shows in the level of conversation. It shows in their maturity level. It shows in them—especially my boys—saying, ‘When I go to college,’ not ‘If I go...’ If I did my job right, they can articulate the steps they need to take to accomplish what they want to in life.” And how does Robinson articulate his own goals? “I plan on teaching,” he says. “I want to retire as a teacher.”

ERIKA SASS

Los Angeles '01



Photograph by Brian Peterson

“Kids who can read, write, and use computers fluently are going to have more choices and more control over their lives,” says literacy and technology teacher Erika Sass. Her students at Hiawatha Leadership Academy in Minneapolis use computers to research countries around the globe, create dynamic presentations, and edit video—even as many are still learning to tie their own shoelaces. Last year, nearly 100 percent of Sass’ students met national technology standards, and just shy of 90 percent exceeded them.

Sass attributes much of her success to the close relationship she maintains with her students’ parents. “It’s pompous to think you could teach kids without the advice of the parents who raise them—to ask them, ‘What helps your kid learn?’” she says. In addition to teaching, Sass co-founded a nonprofit, Catalyst Learning Center, that provides free math tutoring. She led her school’s chapter of Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity, or S.E.E.D., a professional development program designed to reduce bias in classrooms and promote social justice. And she organized the school’s Festival of Nations, a cultural celebration for Hiawatha’s families. Teaching empathy, respect, and curiosity about others is a gradual process, Sass says. “And it can sometimes feel like time is wasted. But in the long run, we want to make sure our kids can work with a diverse group of people. That starts when you’re 5.”

JENNIFER CORROY

Rio Grande Valley '04



Photograph by Johnny Quiroz

In 2010, at the start of Jennifer Corroy’s first year teaching at IDEA College Prep in Donna, Texas, her 11th graders stared at the requirements for IB English Literature and sank in their seats: two years of oral exams, written exams, essays, and thousands of pages of reading. It seemed impossible. So she hung up a strip of butcher paper with a drawing of a road. Along the road, she drew in IB milestones and tracked the class’s progress with footprints. “One step at a time,” she told them, as they dug into works like *Death of a Salesman* and *The Great Gatsby*.

By the time they finished the final exam of their senior year—80 percent passed—that poster had become a powerful symbol. “It was such a clear memory of how far they’d come,” says Corroy, recent winner of TNTP’s prestigious Fishman Prize for Superlative Classroom Practice. In 2013, 62 percent of students passed the IB exam, and 100 percent went on to college. Corroy’s student achievement results are the highest of any teacher in the history of the IDEA network, according to her principal. And they’ll continue. “I’ve become sure that I want to teach for a while, probably a very long time,” Corroy says.

As a parting gift to her graduates each year, Corroy cuts up the road maps that chronicle their year together and frames each piece. “I [tell] them, ‘Put it in your college dorm room and remember the lesson: When it seems impossible, take it one step at a time.’”

ROBERT LEICHTNER

Charlotte '04



Photograph by Travis Dove

Robert Leichter struggled as a corps member at West Mecklenburg High School. But the teacher next door took Leichter under her wing. Now in his 10th year teaching at “West Meck,” Leichter is a National Board Certified teacher and a model for his school and the district. At one point he toyed with becoming a principal, he says, but he finds much greater satisfaction from his work as a teacher: “I love learning how you can spread good ideas, and invest people, and work with new teachers to help them get better. That’s teacher leadership.”

And Leichter loves teaching math. For the last two years teaching Algebra 2, thanks to his inspired instruction and Paideia seminars—for which his kids produce rigorous written and oral discourse on mathematical concepts—his students have made tremendous growth on rigorous, team-designed assessments. Three years ago, while teaching geometry, his students made more than two years of growth as measured by a state assessment, scoring in the district’s 96th percentile. His methods are now being implemented across the district.

He also coaches West Meck’s rugby team, which won the state playoffs three years ago and has placed in the top four ever since—earning him the state’s top coaching honor in 2007 and 2010. Rugby is a club sport, so Leichter actively recruits students who aren’t academically eligible to play varsity sports. “We go after a lot of the kids who are struggling, and we try to turn them around,” he says. “Some kids definitely wouldn’t have graduated without it. It’s about giving them a second chance.”

ASHLEY RIGGIO

Kansas City '08



Photograph by Taylor Glascock

As an English teacher at Chicago’s Noble Street College Prep, Ashley Riggio takes in freshmen furthest behind on reading and writing. By the end of the school year, many have advanced their reading levels by four to five grades, while having grown, too, in their love of reading and scholarship. “Every year I try to get better at not only creating a challenging curriculum, but creating a trajectory of materials and experiences that allow students to look at themselves and the world—to better understand who they are, who they want to be, what they love about the world, and what they want to make better,” she says.

Riggio also leads an all-girls advisory at Noble Street whose success has helped shape the entire school’s vision. Beginning in 2008, she created a motto: “Riggios don’t get C’s, or D’s, or F’s.” When those young women graduated in 2012, 17 out of 18 had at least a B-average and had been accepted to at least four four-year universities. In 2012, when Noble Street set a similar no-C’s policy schoolwide, her class of 2016 advisory upped the bar, aiming instead for a 3.2 class grade-point average. Riggio’s advisory becomes like a family. “We do community service together—when my son was at Noble Street’s day care, my girls would volunteer there. I have my door open, they know my husband, I share my family life with them, I know their families,” she says. “I’m there for bad choices, but equally for good choices.”

ROB GARZA

Rio Grande Valley '02



Photograph by Johnny Quiroz

Rob Garza isn’t your typical audio/video teacher. His students at McAllen High School in Texas have interned at South by Southwest and on shows like *Grey’s Anatomy*. They create movie trailers, music videos, silent short films, commercials, newscasts, and public service announcements of professional quality. They have placed first for four consecutive years in national competitions in Dallas, Los Angeles, and Orlando, Fla., and this fall attended a film festival in New York City. “In my class,” Garza says, “they find something they love—some excitement that motivates them to come to school and work harder.”

Garza grew up the son of Mexican immigrants, and says his background gives him credibility with his students. “I lived what they’re living,” he says. He has chosen to lead by example, returning to the Valley to teach at McAllen, his alma mater, and strengthen the community he loves. “We have some very smart kids, but they tend to go away to college and stay away. We don’t get a lot of that greatness back here,” he says. A former student, Alexander Stockton, now a junior at Dartmouth College, rattles off a list of achievements that were made possible by Garza’s dedication. “Most importantly,” Stockton says, “I went from saying that I want to be a filmmaker to having the courage to say, ‘I am a filmmaker.’ He is the greatest teacher I have ever had, in high school or in college, and I think every single one of his students would say the same thing.”



Photograph by Andrew Harnik

FLORA LERENMAN

D.C. Region '07

Teachers often lament that teaching is a lonely pursuit, but not Flora Lerenman. Lerenman, who teaches special education, says that on her toughest days, she finds her greatest support from other educators—like her former vice principal, a literacy expert, whose novel tip on blending phonemes unlocked the world of reading for a developmentally delayed student.

“When I first started, I thought I needed to do everything on my own,” Lerenman says. “Now I see I can learn from everyone—from the most veteran to the newest teacher. Your successes are not only yours, but part of a dynamic team effort. It really takes a village.”

Last year, 100 percent of Lerenman’s pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and second grade students at John Tyler Elementary School made significant reading growth—at least three to five grade levels. And she’s determined to expose her students to a diverse array of experiences, from visiting the White House to learning from raptor handlers. “Flora is defying expectations that students have for themselves, and that other adults in the school have for students with IEPs [individualized education programs],” says Ryan Mick (G.N.O. ’09), who oversees special-education instruction for Teach For America’s corps members. Lerenman often works as a co-teacher

with general education teachers—a role that Tyler principal Jennifer Frentress says is a gift for the school. “When Flora partners with teachers, they get better,” Frentress says.

This fall, Lerenman took a position at H.D. Cooke Elementary as an English language learners inclusion teacher, even as she continues to work closely with the Tyler community through an after-school reading intervention class that she founded. “Disability is not destiny—it’s something you learn to adapt to,” Lerenman says. “All students can learn. It may take longer, or they may have to take detours on the route, but they can overcome anything.” ★

POST-ITS

Apply for a Teach For America alumni fellowship

Teach For America has launched three new fellowships to further alumni's impact in school system leadership, rural schools, and on Capitol Hill. **The School Systems Leaders Fellowship** is currently accepting nominations at www.bit.ly/sslfnominate for the 2014-15 school year. The current 12 fellows are working in 10 urban districts, including the New York City Department of Education, D.C. Public Schools, and Tulsa Public Schools. Fellows develop their skills through on-the-job-experience, a robust academic curriculum, and leadership development.

→ CONTACT
beau.gallegos@teachforamerica.org for more details.

The Capitol Hill Fellows Program includes seven alumni working in year long positions in both House and Senate congressional offices representing both Democrats and Republicans. Applications for the 2014 fellowship will be accepted beginning in February.

→ CONTACT
stephanie.parra@teachforamerica.org for more details.

The Rural School Leadership Academy brings together alumni in rural areas for one week during the summer and three weekends during the school year to learn about how to contribute to local efforts and navigate the promise and the challenge of living and teaching in a rural setting. Applications will open in February.

→ CONTACT
RSLA@teachforamerica.org for more information.

The TFANet Job Board is getting a makeover!

We just beta-launched a mobile-friendly online platform for the Teach For America community that enables you to more readily locate jobs and opportunities that fit your needs. Visit the new Job Board to find opportunities in a variety of sectors, and professional contacts to reach out to as you explore your next career move. In addition, post on our board to recruit your fellow alums.

Check out the beta version at www.tfanet.org/job.
Have questions or comments? Email jobboard@teachforamerica.org.

Alumni Honors

T. MORGAN DIXON (Metro Atlanta '00), co-founder of GirlTrek, a national health movement for black women and girls grounded in civil rights history, was selected as a 2013 Echoing Green Fellow. GirlTrek is one of 25 social entrepreneur teams selected from over 2,800 applicants.

CLAIRE BLUMENSON (N.Y. '06), co-founder of The School Justice Project, is the first-ever alumni entrepreneur to be selected for Echoing Green's 2013 Black Male Achievement Fellowship. Her venture protects and enforces the special education rights of older black male students involved in the D.C. juvenile justice system by providing free special-education representation, legal advocacy, and rights-based trainings.

TONI MARAVIGLIA (N.Y. '05), founder of Eneza Education, a Kenya-based company that delivers educational content through mobile phones, was selected as a 2013 Unreasonable Institute Fellow. The fellowship offers an "unreasonable advantage" to entrepreneurs working on the world's toughest social and environmental problems.

GEORGE DONG (Chicago '09), founder of Education In Sight, which provides vision testing and eyeglasses to underserved schools, won the 2013 Yale School of Management Education Business Plan Competition.

MIRIAM ALTMAN (N.Y. '08), co-founder of Kinolved, an app that aims to prevent student absenteeism, won \$50,000 at the 2013 NYU Entrepreneur Challenge.

Apply now for Teach For America's 2014 Social Innovation Award

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ALUMNI NOTES



Jinan O'Connor (S. Louisiana '97) first met Julian O'Connor at Houston institute in 1997. Thirteen years later, they reconnected in Italy. They wed in August 2011.

1990

Jill Gaulding (N.Y.) I'm excited to be heading into my third year leading Gender Justice, a nonprofit I co-founded in 2010. I can't believe I am still pulling all-nighters at my age, but at least it is for a good cause. Our work focuses, in part, on the gender-related issues facing black boys in the classroom.

Susan Hendricks Richman (L.A.) I have started my own in-home preschool called Blythe's Garden. Through this, I have initiated a public benefit proposal around day-care reform because I believe that in-home family child care is also deserving

of the best practices found in education.

Beverly Neufeld (L.A.) I am a development executive at Juntobox Films, where we are committed to making low-budget films and helping new filmmakers get their voices heard.

Margaret Power (L.A.) I am enjoying my role on the Hillsborough City School Board and my service on the San Mateo County School Boards Association.

Tom Rinaldi (N.Y.) I'm a correspondent at ESPN and a proud alumnus of Teach For America's charter corps.

Jeffrey Simes (N.Y.)

My wife, Kendra [Lee] Simes, was also a charter corps member. We met commuting to our schools together from 1990-92.

Victoria Smith (L.A.) I have found that my teaching experience was one of the best preparations for being a physician, as physicians educate our patients, support staff, and the community. I teach at least 20 times a day.

1991

Beth Anderson-Mello (L.A.) I started Phoenix Charter Academy in Massachusetts in 2006, and it has since turned into a network of

high-performing alternative schools. We have schools in Chelsea, Lawrence, and one on the way in Springfield.

Gina Downin (G.N.O.) I am still teaching at a public school in Mount Rainier, Md.—the urban community where I live. My home is across the street from my school. It has long been a dream to teach the children of my neighbors for a long enough time that I get to know what kind of adults my students become.

Charles Gutman (L.A.) I founded Envision Scholars to help translate the college dreams of my students into reality.

Jill Joplin (Houston) I am proud to be heading into my 13th year working with KIPP, ensuring more students are equipped with the academic skills, scholarly habits, and character traits necessary to be successful in top-quality colleges and the competitive world beyond.

Danique Loving (L.A.) According to New York City's progress reports, Success Academy Harlem 4, where I am the principal, tied for number one in the category of student performance in Manhattan in 2012.

Angela Lundy Jackson (Houston) I serve as principal of North Houston Early College High School,

MATCH.CORPS

SIGNIFICANT GAINS

by Leah Fabel (Chicago '01)



Lisa Nuyens (left in both photos) and Chrissy Heyne tied the knot in 2012 in Decorah, Iowa. They now live in Grand Rapids, Mich., with Jonas, 5, and Ruby, 18 months.

Baby sitters at the Heyne-Nuyens household have a lot of questions about the detailed printouts hanging on the refrigerator door, says Lisa Nuyens (St. Louis '05). "You'd see our relationship goals, family goals. There are boxes where we track things. A family vision statement," she says. "We feel like anything can be done if it can be tracked."

Old habits die hard: Lisa and her wife, Chrissy Heyne (Phoenix '02), met in 2006 while working at Atlanta's institute. Both work for Teach For America today—Heyne as the director of Chicago's institute, and Lisa, a former principal, on the team that supports alumni school leaders.

Yet what drew them together was harder to quantify. "Lisa seemed really cool to me—she had tattoos," Chrissy says of their meeting in the summer of 2006. "I was trying to be funny and charming, and she was kind of like, 'Whatever.' Which of course only made me like her more."

By the end of summer, however, the two had become close friends with a spark of something more. But when institute wrapped, Lisa returned to teaching middle-school special education in St. Louis; Chrissy returned to a Teach For America staff position in Phoenix.

The years passed. In February 2008, Lisa and her then-partner welcomed a baby boy, Jonas. She and Chrissy kept in touch, sending letters and care packages. In hers, Lisa always included a handwritten Post-It—a reminder of the uplifting notes she'd leave on Chrissy's door during their institute days. In spring 2009, Chrissy moved to Chicago.

By that point, Lisa was a first-year principal and a newly single mom, and she was struggling. Chrissy and a few friends decided to pay her a visit in St. Louis, a four-and-a-half hour drive from Chicago. "We needed to cheer her up," Chrissy says.

It worked. Chrissy kept making the drive from Chicago until one weekend in August when she packed as much as she could into her navy blue Jetta, no air conditioning, and showed up at Lisa's door. "I think I'm going to stay," she said.

In December 2011, Chrissy proposed. "We had to argue about who was going to do it," Lisa says, sharing a common dilemma for same-sex couples. Chrissy sealed the ask with a made-to-order T-shirt for Jonas: "Say yes!" it read across his almost-3-year-old belly, when he peeled off his sweatshirt.

And Lisa did. The two were married three months later on March 24, 2012, in Decorah, Iowa, before friends, family, and a beaming Jonas (the self-proclaimed star of the day). Later that spring, baby Ruby joined the family, too.

Today, the foursome live in Grand Rapids, Mich., near parents and extended family. The transition to family life and minivans in a smaller, more conservative city has been tough, but worth it, Chrissy says. "We've had a sort of cycle of courage—one of us has stepped up with confidence when the other has wondered if we're doing the right thing," she says. "But we're at a point now where I don't think there's anything we need that we don't already have." ★

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Karin Norington-Reaves (L.A.) I was appointed by Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle to create and lead the Chicago Cook Work force Partnership. We administer all federal work force development dollars for the City of Chicago and Cook County, and oversee employment training for the under- and unemployed.

Oscar Ortiz (Houston) I became a director in educational services for the Oak Grove School District in San Jose, Calif. I can't

believe that this journey all started when I saw a flyer for TFA at my alma mater and decided to apply.

Anissa Patton (L.A.) In 2009, I co-founded the Children and Women's Advocacy Clinic, Inc.—a nonprofit legal services clinic that provides free legal assistance to victims of intimate partner violence. In 2010, I became one of Georgia's first board-certified child welfare law specialists.

Alfred Silverstein (Houston) I married Edward Yaeger in May 2009, shortly after same-sex marriage became legal in the state of Connecticut.

Timothy Sippel (L.A.) I was appointed principal of John Muir High School in Pasadena, Calif., in July 2012. My wife and I purchased a new home in Pasadena to have more space for our growing boys—both elementary

students in the district's Spanish dual-immersion program.

1992

Kelly Concannon Cicchino (Baltimore) Hillendale Elementary School, where I teach third grade, was just rated the number-one elementary school in Pennsylvania, according to schooldigger.com.

Elaine Doyle-Gillespie (Baltimore) My husband, Edward Gillespie, and I recently celebrated our daughter's one-year "gotcha day." We adopted Piper in November 2011.

Patricia Halagao (Bay Area) I recently completed my 10th year of teaching at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa. I received the University of Hawai'i's Board of Regents' Teaching Excellence Award, and I have received two federal grants to support the educational mission of Hōkūle'a's Worldwide Voyage.

Matthew Kingsbury (Houston) In June 2012, my wife, Joanna, and I adopted the third of our four children, Alaya Joy, at the age of 3. She was baptized on July 8, 2012.

VaJezatha Payne-Hines (Houston) I completed Leaders for Educational Equity training in D.C.! Powerful!

Michelle Proctor (S. Louisiana) We had our second child, Casey Grace, on Sept. 15, 2012, who—although born seven weeks early—is doing well.

Jean Raabe (E.N.C.) Since 1995, my more-than-20 trips to Trinidad and Tobago have included playing steel drums with the award-winning steel orchestra Phase II Pan Groove; guest lecturing about music therapy as a profession; and working as a part-time lecturer at the University of the West Indies, teaching a course about music therapy.

Felicia Reid-Metoyer (L.A.) I live in Corvallis, Ore., where my husband of 18 years and I are raising our three children. I am currently working as part-time faculty at Oregon State University in the College of Education, where I teach classes and supervise student teachers.

John Rubio (L.A.) I have a new wife, a new baby, and a new job as an assistant superintendent for the Live Oak School District in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Michael Stitts (Houston) I recently started teaching business courses at Ohio Business College.

David Wu (L.A.) I'm working for the education bureau in Hong Kong as part of a program to introduce best practices on English-language teaching into local schools.

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1993

Heather Alden Pope (Houston) I received the 2012 National Social Worker of the Year award from the School Social Workers Association of America in Boston, in March 2012.

Sekou Biddle (N.Y.) I joined UNCF in July 2012 to start and lead an expansion of the organization's advocacy efforts.

Robert Bryan (L.A.) I was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives.

Wendy Dougherty (L.A.) I am the board chair of a nonprofit called School-to-School International that promotes educational equity and school health in Africa. I recruited another alumna, **Laura Stahl (G.N.O. '98)**, to join the STS board.

Jennifer Goldstein (L.A.) I started at Cal State Fullerton as professor and

chair of the Department of Educational Leadership in August 2012.

Samina Hadi-Tabassum (N.Y.) Last summer, I took six TFA Chicago students to work and teach in Bombay for two weeks.

Ann Herlin (R.G.V.) My husband, Terry Staley, and I are proud parents of our daughter, Leah, born last February.

Robert Horne (R.G.V.) I run a successful Mindstorms Robotics program in my school for all third graders.

E. Strother Murray (E.N.C.) After 15 years with the U.S. State Department, I will go to Brazzaville, the Republic of the Congo, in July 2013 as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy.

Tracy Rodriguez (Houston) I gave birth to my fourth daughter in March 2012.

Arati Singh (R.G.V.) and **Allyson Randall (R.G.V.)** and I recently joined forces to complete the final evaluation report for GEAR UP Waco, an \$11 million college-readiness program funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

1994

Victor Dubin (N.Y.) Nourish, the wellness center that Jocelyn (Vaughnes) Dubin and I own, has been voted the best of Santa Cruz three years in a row by both local newspapers.

Philippe Ernewein (G.N.O.) I am honored to be part of *How Are You Smart: Lessons From Those Who Learn Differently*, a beautiful narrative film about four amazing high school students.

Chad Heeter (Metro Atlanta) I joined a team of international filmmakers helping to rebrand and relaunch Qatar Television,

the country's national network.

Mark Pett (Delta) My new picture book, *The Boy and the Airplane*, came out in spring 2012. I (a non-runner) also ran in the Mississippi River Marathon in February to support TFA Delta.

Joshua Reid (Seattle-Tacoma) I was elected to a three-year council position for the American Historical Association. My appointment is one of several seats that focus on teaching.

Becca Stein-Gutwirth (Greater Newark) I am the director of education and outreach at the nonprofit Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge in Medford, N.J. Along with planning and teaching environmental science programs, I train and handle raptors and reptiles on a daily basis.

Anthony Warn (L.A.) I have been invited to lead a charter school in our

new hometown of Moscow, Idaho—the Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning. We are a small school with big dreams, and would love to partner with anyone who can help us overcome the financial and organizational challenges we face as a start-up school not associated with a larger district.

1995

Marguerite Gaines (Delta) I married Mark Gaines in September 2012.

Andrew Legant (Delta) My wife, Kim, and I welcomed our second son, Ethan Paul Legant, into the world last August.

Andre Ramos (L.A.) My wife, Kirstin Hernandez, and I are the ecstatic parents of twins, Ezekiel and Zoe.

Cicely Warren (Greater Newark) I have had the unique opportunity to serve as vice principal and

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Sophia Lalani (N.Y. '05) spent summer 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya, working with the U.S. Agency for International Development to support community-driven programs in areas of neighboring, war-torn Somalia. Lalani (front row, second from the left) is pictured here with her co-workers.

principal at the same school where I was placed as a corps member 18 years ago.

1996

Richard Barrett (Houston)

I married the wonderful and beautiful Ann (Omar) Barrett from Midland, Texas. We had an amazing wedding in the Riviera Maya, Mexico, with close friends, TFA alumni, and family.

Philip Kent (N.Y.) In summer 2012 I developed and taught a six-week law and culture class in conjunction with a restorative justice class at the University of New Haven. The course ended with a two-week study abroad to Australia, where we studied the legal and governmental

systems and the treatment of Aboriginal peoples.

Moseka Medlock (Houston)

I founded a nonprofit named A Full Cup, Inc., to help develop and maintain healthy lifestyles among at-risk populations through initiatives like college scholarships and providing toiletries, groceries, transportation, and school-uniform assistance to high-school students.

Viet Nguyen (Bay Area)

After 15 years in Oakland Unified Public Schools as a teacher and then school leader, I am now at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education, serving as coordinator of our Leadership Support Program, which provides induction for our novice school administrators.

Cynthia Skinner (D.C. Region)

I was nominated to the city of Alexandria, Va.'s new Commission on Children, Youth, and Families, where I am currently serving as the chair of the commission's research and data committee.

Kalin Tobler (D.C. Region)

I had a baby girl, Ruby Moon, on Cinco de Mayo, 2012. She is amazing!

1997

David Griffith (R.G.V.) Last spring, I was hired to lead and develop a reading department at my school, Ridgefield High School.

Jennifer LoPiccolo (E.N.C.)

My children, Melea and TJ, started attending Blackstone

Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, where I am in year three as director of external affairs.

Rob (S. Louisiana '99)

and I learned the first week of school that Melea had two corps members as her homeroom teachers, and we couldn't be more thrilled!

Jill McLaughlin (L.A.)

I completed an Ironman Triathlon.

Shamim Nooruddin (Baltimore)

I am an adjunct faculty member at Lone Star Community College in Cypress, Texas. I am teaching college success courses and recently received the Adjunct Faculty Excellence Award.

1998

Michael Higgins (Delta)

On Oct. 1, 2012, my wife and I welcomed our second daughter, Eugenie "GiGi" Margaret. Her middle name is in honor of my mother, who passed away on June 16, 2012.

Michael Leahy (Bay Area)

I am still loving teaching first grade. I'm a husband! I'm a dad! Ian Charles Leahy Bonilla was born Oct. 8, 2012. What a year!

Tamara Mason (G.N.O.)

My husband, **Kenneth Mason (Bay Area)**, and I welcomed our first child into the world, a boy, DuBois Alexander Mason, on Aug. 14, 2012.

Unai Montes-Irueste (L.A.)

I was part of the team that helped lead Nevada to a 4.5 percent increase in voter turnout between the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections—the highest increase in the nation.

Cara Rodriguez (R.G.V.)

My husband and I welcomed our second son, Benjamin Reeder, into the world on March 9, 2012. His older brother, Christian, declared him to be "the most beautiful baby" he'd ever seen.

De'Shawn Wright (N.Y.)

I was appointed to serve as deputy secretary for education to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

1999

Sharon Collins (N.Y.)

My husband, David, and I welcomed our second child into our family in February 2013. Our son, Alexi, was excited to become a big brother.

Aisha Crumbine (Houston)

My husband, **David Crumbine (Houston '97)**, was featured in the book *American Teacher: Heroes in the Classroom* after being nominated by Rafe Esquith. He has been an anchor at KIPP's original Houston campus for the past 14 years.

Robert DeWitt (Houston)

I married **Jasan-Marie Ortiz (Houston '00)**. Jasan's OB/GYN was an unexpectedly familiar face: **Carrie Sopota (Houston)**. We became friends and she delivered Diana, our daughter. Small world!

Julie Feinberg (D.C. Region)

My husband, Aaron, and I welcomed our son, Ari Jacob, to our family on March 9, 2009. Overjoyed big sister Noa, 3, welcomed him with open arms.

Liana Geffer (Bay Area)

Through Stanford University's Department of Family and Community Medicine, my research team and I have developed a youth diabetes coaches program which brings physicians into the classrooms of high school students to train them to become coaches for their diabetic family members and friends.

Allison Leslie (Houston)

I have moved to Memphis, Tenn., to be the executive director for the Memphis region of *Aspire*, and I absolutely love it!

Maureen Milligan (D.C. Region)

Vasu Raja (Baltimore) and I welcomed into the world our second child, Rohan Thomas Raja, on Aug. 14, 2012. We also celebrated 10 years of marriage on July 5, 2012. (Many thanks to TFA for making the initial introduction at the 1999 induction in Houston.)

John Nolte (N.Y.)

I won election to the Pomona, Calif., City Council, District 1, last November, with a lot of much-appreciated support from LEE.

Alexander Quigley (E.N.C.)

My wife, **Ashley (Delta '99)**, and I welcomed our fourth child in late December.

Laura Sears (Delta)

My husband, **Shawn Sears (Delta '99)**, and I were featured in the *Christian Science Monitor* for the work we have been doing for the past 11 years at Vida Verde Nature Education.

2000

Rana Boone (Houston)

I was one of four administrators featured in PBS *Frontline*'s "Dropout Nation" in September 2012.

Anya Schoenegge Burgess (S. Louisiana)

Still living in south Louisiana and loving it. My husband and I had our second baby boy, Silas Alan, in January 2012.

Dana Enriquez-Vontoure (Houston)

I am the curriculum manager for the Houston Independent School District—the same district that led me, as a student, into remedial college algebra.

Ariela Freedman (Chicago)

I have been working with a fantastic group of corps members and alumni, as well as public health, nursing, and medical students at Emory University, to start ConnectEd 4 Health. We want to be the go-to resource for bringing health into TFA schools, and for corps members and alumni interested in health careers!

Michael Herring (Bay Area)

I joined Chicago Public Schools as an instructional effectiveness specialist. I support administrators in 34 schools, building their capacity to accurately analyze teacher practice using CPS' new evaluation system.

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New Leaders is a national education non-profit focused on recruiting, training, and supporting principals and other school leaders to turn around low-performing schools in 10 urban communities across the nation.



Over the course of 18 months, husband and wife David Rhoades and Rachel Cole (both Delta '04) backpacked more than 5,000 miles around the country—and they were still hiking their way through New Mexico at press time. They are pictured here in Texas' Big Bend National Park.

Rebecca Kaye (Metro Atlanta) Our second little future corps member, Oscar Harvey, joined the Kaye clan on Sept. 1, 2012.

Heather Kirn Lanier (Baltimore) I recently published two books: a poetry chapbook, entitled *The Story You Tell Yourself*, and a memoir, *Teaching in the Terrordome: Two Years in West Baltimore with Teach For America*. I also continue to publish in literary journals and magazines.

Justin Minkel (N.Y.) Karen Minkel (N.Y. '99) and I now have a young son

named Aidan as well as our daughter, Ariana. I also had my children's book on conflict resolution, called *Clubhouse Clash*, published in December 2012.

Leila Morsy (Houston) I received my Ed.D. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2011. I am now a lecturer at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

Jesse Noonan (L.A.) My son, Milo Gordon Sage Hurwitz, was born in August 2012!

Kristen Paul (Delta) I got married on Sept. 8, 2012!

Lindsay Rosenfeld (L.A.) Andres Lessing and I welcomed twins on May 16, 2012. Eliana Rebeca and Mateo David are at home and enjoying their family, friends, and many books!

Drew Sprague (S. Louisiana) I started the law firm Sprague Law, PLLC, in Raleigh, N.C., and I work in criminal defense and civil litigation representing individual and small-business clients.

Thalia Theodore Washington (N.Y.) My husband, Jason Washington (Houston), and I had our

first child in August 2012! Her name is Rowan.

2001

Richard Adzei (Houston) Life is great in Ghana. Anyone headed this way, or interested in education in Ghana issues, do get in touch!

Laurelin Andrade (G.N.O.) I welcomed my first child, our daughter Maren, into the world in January 2012!

Laura Butler (S. Louisiana) My husband and I welcomed a baby girl, Melanie Grace Butler, on June 7, 2012.

Ariel Dolowich (Baltimore) I received the Educator of the Year award from Hayward, Calif.'s, Chamber of Commerce and am now in my fourth year leading Ochoa Middle School. Just as importantly, I am a proud father of three, recently welcoming newborn twin girls, Maya and Brooklyn, into the world with my beautiful wife, Diana.

Sarah Garb (S. Louisiana) My husband, Nate Olson (S. Louisiana '02), and I welcomed our first child, Maia, in November 2012.

Tony Hua (L.A.) As a first-year principal in California's Lynwood Unified School District, our school's scores rose 29 points, compared to the state average of eight points. We met our targets on the state test in every category for the first time in four years.

Kelly Jackson (Houston) In May 2012, my husband, Denis, and I welcomed our second son, Benjamin Atticus Ticak. He joins older brother Alexander Jackson Ticak.

David Kloker (New Mexico) I am the literacy coach at Greenleaf in the Oakland Unified School District. I am also teaching credentialing courses to corps members in San Jose and San Francisco through Loyola Marymount University.

Avra Maxwell (Houston) and I welcomed our first child, baby Sarah Aileen Maxwell, on Sept. 6, 2012. I am a stay-at-home mom while Jeff is the principal of Southeastern High School in Detroit.

Gregory Reilly (E.N.C.) I left private practice after five years with the San Diego office of an international law firm and entered academia as a Bigelow Fellow and lecturer in law at the University of Chicago Law School. I made the move from San Diego to Chicago with my wife, Erin, our son, Desmond, and our dog, Smiley.

Jennifer Stewart (Houston) I got married on June 30, 2012.

Carey Swanson (N.Y.) After eight years in teaching and leadership at Explore Charter School, I have become a founding leader at Exceed Charter. Exceed is a K-3 school serving students previously attending failing district schools.

Paige Vaccaro (Baltimore) My husband and I welcomed our third child, Peter, in 2011. After a year of home schooling, I decided to return to the classroom and advocate for changes within the school system where I live and teach.

2002

Erick Casallas (L.A.) I am an instructional specialist with the Bakersfield City School District, and I have been appointed by California Governor Jerry Brown to serve on the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The perspectives I gained while in TFA continue to shape the decisions I make for the students in California. I was also named Kern County Teacher of the Year in 2011.

Julie DeFrain (Bay Area) In 2009, my sister and I opened Scion Restaurant in the Dupont Circle neighborhood

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of Washington, D.C. In August 2012, we opened Crios Modern Mexican in the same neighborhood. Come by, and be sure to mention Teach For America.

Brianne Dotson (L.A.) I moved to Chicago with my husband and became the principal of Bronzeville Lighthouse Charter School. I was also accepted into the Urban Education Leadership doctoral program at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Errica Dotson-Hooper (Houston) I married Kenna Hooper on July 20, 2013, in Houston.

Shannon Funt (Houston) My husband, Josh, and I had our first child in October 2012—a son named David Theodore.

Mira Goodman (Bay Area) I married the most wonderful man, Judd Goodman, on July 3, 2011, in my hometown of Bloomfield Hills, Mich. **Katie Brown and Joan Ferng (both Bay Area '02)** were in attendance. My husband and I live in San Francisco, and I am finishing my master's in occupational therapy.

Robert Gunn (St. Louis) At Foster Traditional Academy, a Title I school, our students were able to raise \$1,150 for relief aid to people impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

Caroline Isaacs Latterman (S. Louisiana) I have been working with a high school in Harlem on linguistic issues that affect student achievement. In addition, my husband and I welcomed a son on Aug. 8, 2012, named Parker Irving Latterman.

Lucy Jewett Wheatley (Baltimore) My husband, Kevin, and I welcomed our second child in November 2012. He joined big sister Lemmathea.

Katherine Kittredge (Bay Area) I got married in San Francisco on Oct. 27, 2012,

to Brad Kittredge! Bay Area '02 corps members in attendance included **Gretchen Stewart, Trinity Broderick, Michele Caputo, and Sara Schonwald.**

Christian Ledesma (N.Y.) Principal **Bob Groff (N.Y.)**, Assistant Principal **Tu Harris (N.Y.)**, third grade teacher **Stephanie Tybinka (N.Y. '05)**, and I (the science and wellness director) work at the Active Learning Elementary School, P.S. 244Q, which won the Silver Award from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for leading a healthy school.

Matthew Levine (S. Louisiana) I served as a lead instructor for Google's Computer Science Summer Institute, which provides an opportunity for rising college freshmen from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in technology to spend three weeks on Google's campus, learn how to program, and build working mobile and web apps.

Carla McCullough (L.A.) I earned my doctorate in educational leadership from Loyola Marymount University, and I'm a principal's resident at the Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools.

Campbell McLean (Baltimore) My wife, **Sarah Kenders McLean (Baltimore)**, and I had our second child.

Heather Menzel (N.Y.) I was on *Jeopardy* and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. I have also been collaborating with teachers at my school to present best practices at our state's social studies conference.

Bethany Mills Jennings (Greater Newark) My partner and I had our second baby!

Sarat Munjuluri (Houston) I finally married **Andrea Randisi (Houston)** in June 2012!

Laura Nikstad (R.G.V.) My daughter, Ana Gloria Tyx, was born on March 12, 2012. She and her brother Ben are doing great! We still live in the R.G.V. with my husband, Daniel Tyx.

Meghan Pluimer (L.A.) I married Michael Pluimer at a winery in California in April 2012. We had our first child in June 2013.

Cassandra Reilly (D.C. Region) My husband, Paul Reilly, and I welcomed a son, Nathan James, on April 23, 2012. Nathan joins big brother Sam as well as the Elm City College Prep team and family.

Jing Shiao (R.G.V.) I got married on Oct. 20, 2012, and several friends from my corps year traveled to Oklahoma from Maine, Minnesota, and Texas to attend my wedding!

Alison Smith (L.A.) My son, Matalino, was born on Jan. 3, 2012!

Eric Snider (E.N.C.) I was selected to join the Leadership Raleigh class of 2013-2014, a program of the Greater Raleigh Chamber.

Gavin Sosa (New Mexico) I coach the cross-country team at Diné College, a Navajo tribal college. In 2012, our men placed second at the USCAA National Meet, and our women placed fourth. A local runner, Dustin Abeita, captured the men's individual national championship. This is an entirely Native American team, and they represented their school, their families, their communities, and their culture with pride.

Emily Weiss (Bay Area) I married Ray Hainer on Aug 4, 2012, in Cambridge, Mass. In attendance were TFA alumni, including **Kevika Amar (Bay Area), Danielle Pilon (Houston '01), Meghan Cliffl Weaver (N.Y.), Emma Snyder (S. Louisiana), and Rebecca Rich (N.Y. '03).** I

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Manjula Dissanayake is the founder of Educate Lanka Foundation, Inc., a global, crowd-funded philanthropic initiative which has impacted 500 students in his home country of Sri Lanka. He is one of nine Fletcher alumni named to the Diplomatic Courier's 2013 list of "Top 99 Under 33 Foreign Policy Leaders."

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have been working for the New York City Department of Education since 2006.

Jarrett Whitaker (Houston) I created an online digital curriculum program called STEMscopes that now serves over 1 million students in over 450 Texas school districts. It is the number-one program in Texas for teaching science and STEM to students from kindergarten through eighth grade.

Joe Wilkins (Delta) I published my third book, *Notes from the Journey Westward*, which won the 17th Annual White Pine Press Poetry Prize.

2003

Joni Angel (N.Y.) I had a baby, Ezra, on Aug. 16, 2012 (coincidentally, my third wedding anniversary). I was promoted to lead facilities advocacy at CCSA, where I work with some great alumni.

Kathryn Bauman (E.N.C.) I married Shannon Bauman on April 7, 2012. Fellow corps member **Jessica McNamara (E.N.C.)** attended our wedding. We had our first child in April 2013.

Joseph Bielecki (Bay Area) On July 21, 2012, I married Sarah Farber, an amazing life partner.

Kasey Boike Cogan (Phoenix) My husband, **Matthew Cogan (Phoenix '06)**, and I welcomed our son, Samuel, on June 5, 2012.

Michael Chin (G.N.O.) Inspired by my TFA experience, I started participating in a pioneer mentoring program with the Cook County juvenile justice system, in which local lawyers serve as mentors for kids in the system. There have been struggles along the way, but the mentoring experience has been incredibly rewarding.

Karen Dhillon (N.Y.) My husband, Arjuna Sunderam, and I welcomed our second child, Adrian, in March. Our other son, Devin, is excited to be a big brother.

Zahire Estrella (G.N.O.) I am on the board of Las Americas International, an organization formed to assist the orphanage Hogar Niño Divino Jesús. The orphanage is located in Palmarito, Salcedo, in the Dominican Republic.

Giovanina Gardiner (G.N.O.) I have two children: Milo Wayne Rogers, born May 5, 2011, and Scout Valentine Rogers, born July 16, 2012.

Shelby Hamilton (N.Y.) Ryan Hamilton (Houston '02) and I were married on Oct. 6, 2012, in San Antonio. I graduated from law school and have been admitted to the Texas State Bar.

Colleen Hinds-Rodgers (Mid-Atlantic) In 2011, I started a career with KIPP Newark and got married in beautiful Jamaica. At the start of 2012, I welcomed a beautiful baby girl named Madison Lena Rodgers.

Leena Im (Bay Area) My husband, **Nick Lewis (Bay Area)**, and I welcomed our first child in winter 2012.

Adrienne Johnson (Chicago) I had my second daughter, Sydney, who joins her big sister, Mackenzie.

Daniel Kelly (N.Y.) I proposed to my girlfriend, and for some reason she said yes! We got married in August 2013.

Benjamin Kornell (Bay Area) My wife, Juliana, and I welcomed our son, Nicolas, on Nov. 16, 2011.

Nicholas Lewis (Bay Area) My wife, **Leena Im (Bay Area)**, and I welcomed our first child in November 2012.

Abigail Lovett (N.Y.) I run the only high school program in New York

that offers architecture and the basic construction trades. Thirty-two percent of our students have special needs, and we have mainstreamed 100 percent of our students for at least part of their schedule. We were highlighted by InsideSchools as one of their top high-school picks and were also featured on NY1 and News 12.

Margaret Maraschino (L.A.) I married Cliff Maraschino in June 2012. My best friends from the corps traveled from all four corners of the United States to Central California's wine country for the wedding, including **Corey Triplett, Candace (Rodgers) Chatman, Amanda Ronan, Jeremy Hilinski (all L.A.), and Angella Martinez (L.A. '01)**.

Anna Newell Brothers (Metro Atlanta) My husband, **Matthew Brothers (Metro Atlanta '02)**, and I welcomed a baby girl, Mia Marie Brothers, on Jan. 14, 2012.

Margaret (Mollie) Page (L.A.) My husband, **Kirk McGettigan (L.A.)**, and I welcomed a second son, Reed Alexander McGettigan, on July 23, 2012.

Grace Park-Bradbury (N.Y.) My husband, Shawn, and I welcomed a baby girl, Elin Hyunae Bradbury, in May 2012.

Meagan Pollack (Houston) I married Dr. Todd Pollack on Sept. 29, 2012, in Lincoln, N.H.

Natalie Rockwell (Mid-Atlantic) In 2012, I married Vince Camiolo, the man who strongly encouraged me to choose TFA over another opportunity back in 2003. We began dating as soon as the school year started, and he fully supported me during my four years as an eighth grade math and science teacher in North Philadelphia.

Megan Schultz (Baltimore) I graduated medical school

in May 2012 and am now a resident at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Alisha Scruggs (Metro Atlanta) I received my Ph.D. in Education from the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University in May 2012, after successfully defending my dissertation on March 28, 2012. I currently serve as a program evaluation specialist in the Fairfax County Public Schools, and I got married on Oct. 26 in Northern Virginia.

Sarah Staley (G.N.O.) I gave birth to twins, Elizabeth and William Staley, on May 25, 2012, in Cambridge, Mass.

Bernard Weber (Delta) I married my wife, Kelly, in November 2008. We have two sons, Teddy Patrick and Luke.

Jennifer Willson (E.N.C.) My husband, **Eddie Wilson (E.N.C. '02)**, our daughter,

Eleanor, and I welcomed new baby Nathaniel Edward to our family on Sept. 14, 2012.

Ally Wray-Kirk (Bay Area) In 2010, I was working as a successful public school leader in Oakland, Calif., when I was diagnosed with stage three breast cancer. I was unable to continue as a school leader during the following two years of surgeries and treatment, but I took a position with Partners in School Innovation in order to continue supporting public schools. I am now cancer-free and ready to resume my career in school leadership.

2004

Christopher Arnold (R.G.V.) My wife, **Reyna Tenorio (R.G.V. '05)**, and I were married on Aug. 4, 2012, in Los Angeles, with a host of R.G.V. corps members in attendance.

Elizabeth Bush (New Mexico) In April 2012, my husband, Caleb, my three-year-old son, Jonah, and I welcomed the newest addition to our family, Norah Alice.

Charl Castelyn (N.Y.) I married Craig Strulovitz on Oct. 6, 2012, on Shelter Island, N.Y.

Emily Cook Dwight (Delta) I married **Christopher Dwight (Delta '07)** in 2012.

Juliet Curci (Mid-Atlantic) I gave birth to my son, Benjamin Christopher, on Sept. 12, 2012.

Alexandra Danforth (Baltimore) My husband, Jim, and I welcomed a daughter, Mckenna Rose, in November 2011.

Natalie Davidson Kemp (Houston) My husband, Micah Kemp, and I had a baby boy, Jack, on April 30, 2012

Theresa Doggett (Mid-Atlantic) My husband, **Patrick Doggett (Greater Philadelphia '04)**, and I welcomed our new daughter on June 27, 2012. The number of TFAers in our family also increased to six, as Patrick's second brother and two cousins joined the corps.

Nicole Duong (Mid-Atlantic) I had a baby, Elsa Parchment, in June 2012, while attending law school at McGill University.

Sarah Elder (Mid-Atlantic) Molly Eigen (R.G.V. '99) and I welcomed Zoe Juniper Eigen-Elder into the world on Oct. 9, 2012.

Jodi Friedman (N.Y.) I have been working at my TFA placement school since 2004. I am now the assistant principal. Our school has gone from failing to being the top elementary school in our district.

Michelle Garcia (L.A.) My son, Grant Ernest Garcia, was born on Oct. 3, 2012.

Samuel Goessling (R.G.V.) Lenora Vlasic (R.G.V. '07) and I were married on South Padre Island in 2012. There were many TFA alumni at the wedding.

Nancy Hanks (Metro Atlanta) I was one of 82 Chicago Public Schools principals to receive a merit-based award for student achievement. My teachers also voted to extend the school day an additional 90 minutes.

Isaac Holze (Delta) I got married to Viviana Ramirez on Sept. 9, 2012.

Earthen Johnson (Mid-Atlantic) I was one of 38 attorneys in Pennsylvania. to be selected as a 2013 Lawyer on the Fast Track.



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Emily Gorenz, MPA '10
Teach For America Alum, '10
Concentration: Nonprofit Management
Current Position: Director of School Support
at the Achievement Newwork, New Orleans, LA



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Teach For America alumna, Celeste Barretto is a REEP MBA graduate student and School Leader at KIPP Dream in Houston.



TFA Baltimore staffers Chitamawe and Meredith Mulwanda (both Baltimore '05) welcomed their son, Miles Patrick Daka Mulwanda, on June 22, 2012.

THREE PROGRAM TRACKS

REEP MBA for School Leaders

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APP DEADLINE: MAY 9, 2014

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APP DEADLINE: MAY 23, 2014

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APP DEADLINE: OCTOBER 13, 2014

Rakeda Leaks (Charlotte)
In December 2012, I received my doctorate in education from the Education Leadership Administration and policy school at Fordham University in New York.

Saniya LeBlanc (D.C. Region) I completed a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering at Stanford University.

Anna Martin (Bay Area) I am now a National Board Certified teacher in history/social studies, working in the Oakland Unified School District, and got married in summer 2012 to my husband, Chuck Flanders.

Ruben Morris (Metro Atlanta) My wife, **Jon'ta Morris (Metro Atlanta '08)**,

and I had our first child, Hamilton Morris, on Sept. 11, 2012.

Dustin Odham (St. Louis)
I married the love of my life, **Ashley Sewell Odham (N.Y. '06)**, in June 2011. She is a fifth grade reading teacher. I lead part of an educational consulting practice with FranklinCovey-Education.

Ashley Perez (Houston)
My first young adult novel, *What Can't Wait*, was named to the Young Adult Library Services Association's Best Fiction for Young Adults list, and it has featured on reading lists in Texas, Georgia, Kentucky, and Indiana. My other book, *The Knife and the Butterfly*, has received wide recognition as a

go-to book for reluctant readers and those who seek authentic portrayals of the experiences of marginalized teens.

Ryan Pontier (R.G.V.)
My wife and I welcomed our first child, Anna Ruth Pontier, on Feb. 21, 2012.

Julia Rafal-Baer (N.Y.)
I got married in summer 2012, moved to the Albany area, and accepted a new role with the New York State Education Department. I am now executive director of NYSED's Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, Policy and Programs. I am responsible for the human capital initiatives impacting teachers and principals in New York state.

Tracy Sanderson (Mid-Atlantic) My second child, Madeline May Sanderson, was born on Oct. 9, 2012.

Crystal Shin (E.N.C.) I got married to Jordan McKay on Sept. 2, 2012.

Lauren Taiclet (N.Y.) I married Raymond Canada on July 7, 2012.

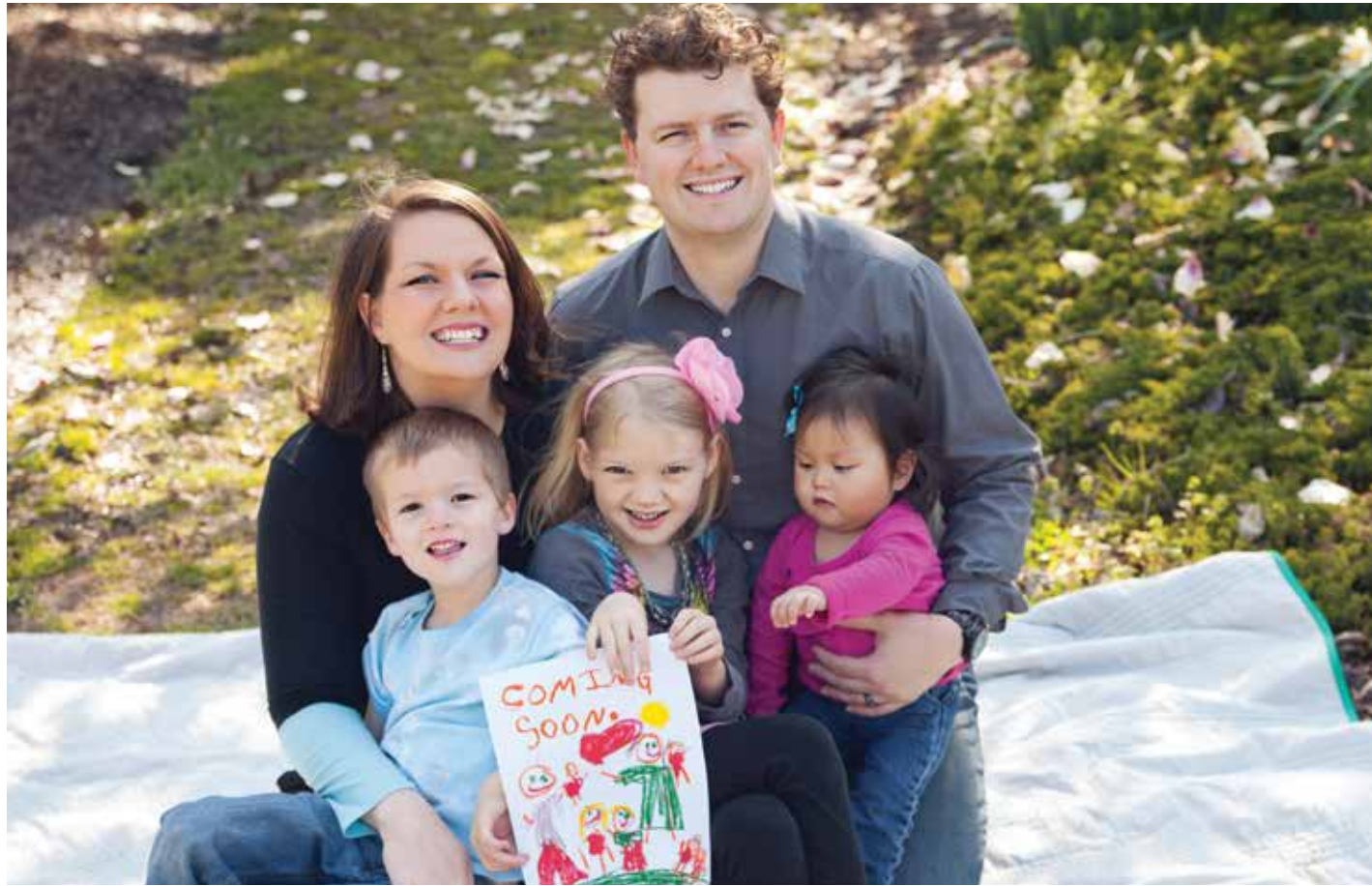
Paula Wackenheim (New Mexico) My husband, **Kyle Wackenheim (New Mexico '03)**, and I welcomed a baby girl, Harper Ann, on Aug. 16, 2012.

Christy Wessel Powell (Chicago) I had a baby, Sylvie Louisa Catherine, last year.

2005

Rachel (Wilson) Pakzadeh (Las Vegas) My husband and I welcomed our first child in 2012, and **Eric Rosecrants (N.Y. '06)** is her godfather.

Eduardo Alleyne (Charlotte) I created a nonprofit program in Delaware called Project SSOAR (Study Skills in Organization, Arithmetic, and Reading)—a partnership between St. Andrew's School and Appoquinimink School District. It provides academic and social support, remediation, and enrichment for rising eighth and ninth graders who are considered "average" in the classroom.



Shannon Dingle (R.G.V. '03) and her husband, Lee, adopted Zoe Amanda ChiehHsi from Taiwan in 2012. She joins big siblings Robbie and Jocelyn. At press time, the Dingles were in Uganda preparing to return home with three new adopted children.

Lindsay Ambriz (Las Vegas) My husband and I welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Eve, on Oct. 24, 2012.

John Avery (Charlotte) I live in Fayetteville, Ark., and work in consumer packaging. I also serve as the state chair of the Arkansas Young Republicans.

Emily Banks (D.C. Region)
Zachary Potter-Vose (Connecticut '06) and I were married in July. We were happy to have many Connecticut, D.C. Region, and Delta corps members there to celebrate. We are both academic deans at Achievement First in New Haven, Conn.

Isaac Cardona (Houston) In their first year of Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills testing, my fifth grade science students beat our district average by 40 percent, becoming one of the top-performing sets of students in our region.

Laura Dobroski (Chicago) I married Paul Dobroski on Oct. 15, 2011, in Chicago. The festivities were attended by fellow corps members **Nicholas Caputi, Karl Gunderson, Aaron Bredenkamp, Joe Halli, Kate (Kreinbring) Halli, Joshua VanderJagt, Sarah (Willey) Severson, Maria Luna, Kim Bowman (all Chicago), and Carolyn Eggert (Chicago '03).**

Bill Ferguson (Baltimore) My wife, **Lea (Baltimore)**, gave birth to our son, Caleb Claiborne Ferguson, on Aug. 27, 2012.

Jared Fox (N.Y.) My daughter, Penelope "Poppy" Ama Madeline Fox, was born on May 26, 2012.

Rachael Gabriel (D.C. Region) I had a book published: *Reading's Non-Negotiables: Elements of Effective Reading Instruction*.

Melody Garcia (South Dakota) I married Rogelio Garcia on Aug. 4, 2012.

Vanessa Garrison (D.C. Region) My husband and I welcomed a baby girl, Madelyn Grey Garrison, on Sept. 20, 2012.

Casey Hilty (L.A.) My husband, **Bo Hilty (S. Louisiana '03)**, my sons, James (5) and John Leyson (3), and I welcomed baby number three into the world. Lena Marie Hilty was born on April 23, 2012.

Ryan Holcombe (Houston) I had a baby in June 2012 with my wife, **Christine (Alfredson) Holcombe (Houston)**, a fellow corps member.

Meredith Howell-Turner (Mid-Atlantic) I married **Daniel Turner (Greater Philadelphia '06)** on April 19, 2013, in Philadelphia. We are forever indebted to **Rebecca Maltzman (Mid-Atlantic)** for her matchmaking skills!

Rachel Kopera (L.A.) I am successfully managing a high-quality theatre program at my charter school. We've produced *The Crucible, Romeo and Juliet, and Noises Off*.

Tiffany Morton (N.Y.) I met my husband while teaching through TFA. He was not a corps member, but he worked in my placement school. We got married in Asheville, N.C., in August 2011.

Ashley Mostaghimi (Delta)
Babak Mostaghimi (Delta '06) and I joyfully welcomed our first child, Kaveh, on July 20, 2012, in the Mississippi Delta. Our son was happily welcomed by several of our former students.

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Although they were married in Seattle, Sarah Jean Marshall (G.N.O. '07) and Jack Marshall (G.N.O. '08) managed to infuse their ceremony with some Louisiana style. After their vows, a New Orleans-style brass band entered the church and led guests down the street to the reception in a traditional second line parade.

Elizabeth Nelson (Chicago)
Jeff Nelson (Chicago '04)
and I welcomed our first baby, Emma Rose, on Aug. 9, 2012.

Ambler Mauger Ochstein (G.N.O.) My husband, **Ben Ochstein (G.N.O.)**, and I moved to Oakland, Calif., in 2012.

Matthew Pierson (Phoenix)
I married **Emily Green Pierson (New Mexico '07)** on Memorial Day 2012.

Brendan Rivage-Seul (Phoenix) I accepted a one-year assignment at the United States Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, working as a staff assistant to Ambassador James Cunningham. Reforming the Afghan public education

sector is a major component of U.S. development and diplomatic efforts.

Meredith Smith (Phoenix)
My husband and I welcomed our second daughter, Rebecca Lynn, on Dec. 23, 2011. She has an older sister born Feb. 14, 2010.

Katherine Sutcliffe (S. Louisiana) I serve as the director of service learning at Episcopal High School in Baton Rouge, La. working to bring meaningful service opportunities to my students by partnering with local nonprofits, some started by other TFA alumni. For example, my students now tutor sixth graders at THRIVE, the charter boarding school started by **Sarah Broome (S. Louisiana '08)**.

Vanessa Thurmond (L.A.)
My husband, Robb, and I welcomed our first child, Farren Robert Michael Thurmond, on Nov. 21, 2011.

Lessita Villa (Phoenix) I married Omar Villa on Nov. 11, 2011, in Sedona, Ariz. I gave birth to our first daughter, Aylani Amaya Villa, on Aug. 27, 2012.

Jennifer Ward (N.Y.) My husband, Daniel, and I welcomed our first son, Aiden Lee Ward, on Oct. 1, 2012, in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Sarah Webb (S. Louisiana)
My husband, **Jonathan S. Louisiana**, and I had a daughter, Lily, on April 6, 2012.

Janine Wetzel (Delta)
I completed a one-year clerkship with the Minnesota Supreme Court for Justice Alan C. Page. Then I became a member of Greene Espel, PLLP, a Minneapolis law firm that specializes in governmental and business litigation.

2006

Rachel Acosta (R.G.V.)
I finished my M.A. in leadership studies in August 2012, with an emphasis on education reform. My husband and I also welcomed our second son in 2012.

Jacqueline Busch (St. Louis)
I co-authored a children's book called *Christian's Quest*, released in September 2012.

Sarah Carucci (E.N.C.)
I married Long Chi on Aug. 31, 2013, in Hillsborough, N.C. **Carlle Ewen (E.N.C.)** and **Jennifer Preston (E.N.C. '07)** were bridesmaids, and **Kathryn Paulson and Amos Irwin (both E.N.C. '07)** were also in attendance.

Erika Childs (Las Vegas)
I finished a psychology internship in Ghana, working in a school in a refugee camp teaching coping skills related to trauma and domestic violence.

Matthew Cogan (Phoenix)
My wife, **Kasey Boike (Phoenix '03)**, and I had our first child, Samuel Robert Boike Cogan, on June 5, 2012.

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Kristina Cunningham (Connecticut) I graduated from Michigan State University's M.A. program in Serious Game Design. As part of my time at MSU, I worked in the Games for Entertainment and Learning lab, including working with a team on an iOS game to promote financial literacy and financial management skills to college freshmen. I now work as a user experience designer at the educational software company Hobsons.

Colleen Doyle (N.Y.) I finished my master's program in Speech-Language Pathology at Boston University. I now work as an early intervention speech-language pathologist, transitioning young children into public schools and making sure they receive the services they need. I also got married to Brendan Doyle, and we live happily in Quincy, Mass.

Angelina Fonseca (R.G.V.) I interned at USAID in D.C. for two months in summer 2012 in the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau. Then I lived in Ankara, Turkey, for three months, interning with the Department of State U.S. Embassy Ankara in the Public Affairs division.

Jenifer Frudden (Bay Area) I received the CALI Award for Excellence in my race law class for my paper on public school funding in California and equal protection issues.

Emily Gorenz (Houston) I married Kurt Hofer on June 1, 2013, in Princeton, Ill. Alumni in attendance were **Justin From, David Holmes, Chris Chen, Allison Farley, Sarah Jensen, Matthew Bannon, Jennifer Gover-Bannon, and Michael Koch (all Houston).**

Joshua Isaacs (N.Y.) I started a YouTube channel focused on chemistry help and lessons. I have had about 400,000 views and 2,000 subscribers so far. I also married fellow corps member **Sadra Christianson (N.Y.)** on Aug. 4, 2012.

Amy Leibach (N.Y.) My husband and I welcomed our baby girl, Kaylee Shay Leibach, into the

world on Aug. 28, 2012. We couldn't be more thrilled.

Kristin Levine (N.Y.) I was married to Louis Levine in Chicago on May 27, 2012.

Bethany Lukach (L.A.) I married Brandon Lukach on July 7, 2012, in San Mateo, Calif.

Adriana MacGregor (N.Y.) I got married to Eric MacGregor in 2010. TFA alumni in attendance were **Kate Lenzser Molina (N.Y.), Megan Hatschek (N.Y. '07), Katie Hendricks (N.Y. '07), Brenda Wylie (N.Y. '07), and Rachel Brick (N.Y. '09).** In November of this year, we welcomed a baby boy, Eric James MacGregor.

Emily Masengale (St. Louis) As an Indianapolis Principal Fellow, I spent a year designing and getting a new school, Christel House DORS, chartered. The school is a dropout recovery school that re-engages students who have left the educational system and gives them the opportunity to earn their high-school diploma. The school opened its doors and began serving students on Aug. 2, 2012.

Laura Millkamp (St. Louis) I am the program director at the Youth Learning Center in St. Louis, which focuses on exposing students from underserved communities to the STEM fields. My husband, Joel Millkamp, and I also welcomed a baby girl, Charlotte, on Sept. 16, 2011.

Tom Musgrave (L.A.) I married **Ashlee Pezzino (L.A.)** in summer 2012.

Christine Nishimura (L.A.) I am working as an Equal Justice Works Fellow to prevent the school-to-prison pipeline by advocating for culturally and academically appropriate reading programs in Austin, Texas.

Veronica Palmer (L.A.) In summer 2011, I took part in the Urban Leader Fellowship with Senator Mike Johnston in Denver. I was on his Education Policy team and learned a tremendous amount about education policy and reform.

Mor Regev (N.Y.) I got married in September 2011 to Vadi Dodge of St. Louis. He served in U.S. infantry for nine years. We met when he was stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, and I was doing public health research at Texas Tech University. We moved to St. Louis shortly before we got married and now live here with our two basset hounds.

Katrina Rios-Ashworth (Houston) I earned a master's degree in Curriculum: Reading and Writing with a certification in Reading Development. I am also a new mommy to a wonderful little boy: Zachary.

Alexandra Rouse (Delta) I got married in August 2011 to Nathan Rouse. He is studying law at Seattle University, and I am now the outreach and events director, and a mentor, at Summer Search Seattle, a nonprofit that provides opportunities and mentoring to low-income high-school students.

Tiffany Sandoval (Phoenix) My husband, Marco, and I had our second son, Jonah Anthony Sandoval, on Sept. 18, 2012.

Tessa Silvestri Higgins (Delta) **Chas Silvestri Higgins (Delta '05)** and I had our second child, Caroline Rose, on July 10, 2012.

Jessica Simon (Mid-Atlantic) I published poetry in *Magnolia: A Journal of Women's Socially Engaged Literature, Vol. II.*

DeVoia Stewart (Greater Newark) I passed the New York and New Jersey bar exams and worked as a clerk for New Jersey Supreme Court Justice Helen Hoens.

Elli Theobald (Bay Area) I married **Roddy Theobald (Bay Area).**

Matthew Topel (Metro Atlanta) As a corps member at South Atlanta High School, I helped start a program in partnership with the Emory School of Medicine called the Emory Pipeline Program. I have remained involved while attending medical school at Emory and have seen the program grow nicely. I am now

president of the program and am honored to continue working with the community to change public health knowledge and mindsets.

Mara Waldhorn (N.Y.) My background in documentary filmmaking led me to work with Academy Award-winning director Peggy Stern on a new multimedia web project called Dyslexia-ville. The site is intended to help dyslexic kids boost their self-esteem, connect with others around the world who struggle with reading, play academic reading games, and watch videos about successful dyslexics.

2007

Emily Blatter (N.Y.) I worked as campaign manager for **Elissa Kim (G.N.O. '93)** for Metro Nashville Public Schools from April-August 2012. Elissa won the election against a two-term incumbent.

Emilie Brill-Duisberg (New Mexico) Because of my experience working with Native communities in the New Mexico corps, I was hired to teach at Hiaki High School, a charter school located on the New Pascua Yaqui Reservation just south of Tucson, Ariz.

Lynn Cartwright-Punnett (N.Y.) I was the first educator to be hired to work at the Museum of Mathematics, which opened in December 2012. I am pleased to use my position to welcome students of all backgrounds, including visits from sixth and seventh graders from my placement school.

Margaret Croushore (D.C. Region) I am piloting KidFit Academy, a physical education program leveraging technology and community engagement, at a charter school in D.C. The program is already experiencing great success, and we plan to expand to more schools.

Zach Dembo (Delta) I graduated from law school at the University of Michigan, was admitted to the Kentucky Bar (apparently, they'll let anyone in), and am starting a career as a Navy JAG Officer!

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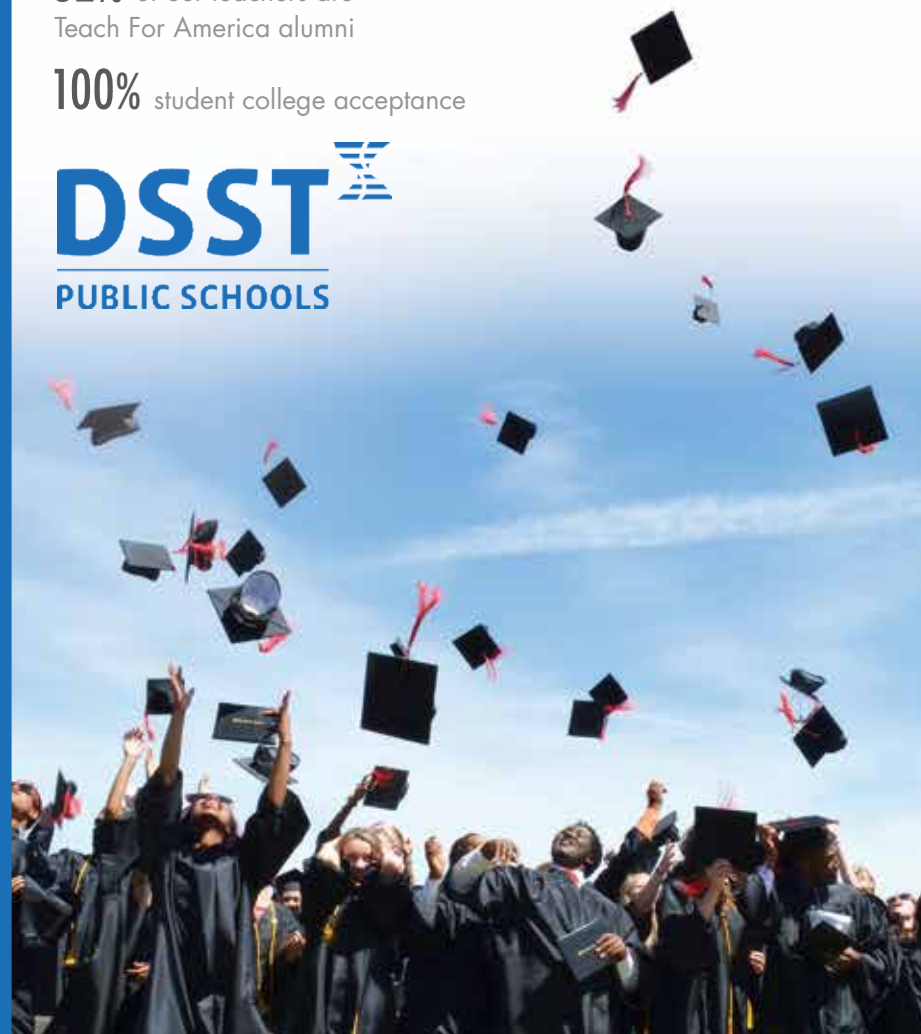


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Michael Dobbs (D.C. Region) I married a fellow corps member last year. I also received a competitive position in the School of Library and Information Science at the Catholic University of America.

Jocelyn Essler (Colorado) I graduated with an M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology and was hired by Children's Hospital Colorado. It is wonderful to continue to work with children with special needs!

Yoni Geffen (Colorado) I co-founded a nonprofit in the Denver area called First Ascenders. We utilize the unique challenges of rock climbing to help urban teens develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, self-confidence, physical fitness, and a greater awareness of the outdoors. We have already served more than 150 students and are excited to expand on our success in the coming year.

Elizabeth Greenman (Hawai'i) Chelsey (Yap) Arakawa (Hawai'i) and I co-founded our school's first-ever foreign-language program. We teach Spanish and Japanese after school for grades K-6.

Ashley Holtan (Colorado) I completed nursing school at the University of Colorado and received my RN license. My husband, **Jeremiah Holtan (Colorado)**, and I are enjoying spending time with our son, Merrick, who was born on Leap Day 2012!

Brett Jenkins (Phoenix) I married Evelina Isabel Jenkins in May 2012 and graduated from the U.S. Army's flight school in October 2012.

Katherine Kuzmeskas (R.G.V.) Matthew Kuzmeskas (R.G.V. '06) and I were married on Sept. 1, 2012.

Sally Lineback (Delta) Kristi Michaels (Delta '09) and I were married in Oxford, Miss., on May 18, 2012. **Elizabeth Wilson Harris (Delta '04)** and Brett Harris officiated the ceremony, and fellow TFA alumni **Janna Miller (Delta), Sarah Franzen (Delta),** and **Suzette Matthews (Delta '08)** were bridesmaids. Over 45 TFA corps members, alumni, or staff joined family and other friends to help us celebrate and dance the night away.

David Maddox (R.G.V.) Candice DePrang Boehm (N.Y.) and I started our own public affairs firm, Maddox & Boehm LLC. We focus primarily on Texas education policy and state-level advocacy. We also co-founded Austin Kids First PAC in July 2012 with other TFA alumni. Austin Kids First raises community awareness around Austin Independent School District issues and organizes voters to support outstanding school-board candidates.

Joseph Manluco (Bay Area) Almost every year that I have taught at my placement school, my wrestling team has made it to the county finals, despite facing students coming from other schools that represent some of the wealthiest and most privileged communities of Silicon Valley.

Elizabeth Materese (E.N.C.) I am a founding teacher at Central Queens Academy, a middle

school in Elmhurst, Queens, which was established to meet the needs of English Language Learners and recent immigrant families in one of the most overcrowded districts in New York City. Out of a staff of about 15 people, five of us are TFA alumni.

Jonathan Merritt (L.A.) I run an after-school program in the greater Detroit area. We are an Army program, and while we focus on military and Department of Defense civilian youth, we have partnerships with local school districts to serve the greater community. Our projects include designing and building wind turbines for our community garden and a food drive for the local Humane Society.

Elyse Moretti (Hawai'i) I joined the board of the African-American Children's Theatre in Milwaukee. We work to help all children express themselves through

theater while educating them about African-American culture.

Brynn Myers (R.G.V.) I married Jay Pendrak (R.G.V.).

Laura Powers (N.Y.) I am the teacher rewards coordinator for the district of Lawrence, Mass. I oversee the Acceleration Academies in Lawrence. These academies are helping to increase student achievement in English and math.

Desiree Raught (D.C. Region) I was named a GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) Educator of the Year finalist for 2012.

Catarina Rivera (N.Y.) I was a speaker at the fourth annual Latinos in Social Media conference. I spoke on a panel called "Healthy Latinos Needed: Preventative Medicine and Education."

Teresa Schiff (R.G.V.) I volunteered in a small community in El Salvador before completing my final year of medical school in Hawai'i.

Temeca Simpson (N.Y.) I manage a new program in Brooklyn, N.Y., called P-TECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High School). U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, State Commissioner John King, and New York City Chancellor Dennis Walcott visited the school and are interested in replication. I also manage a literacy program called Reading Companion.

Pamela Swanson (R.G.V.) I graduated from the University of Illinois College of Law in May 2012. I joined an education law firm in Chicago.

Holly Trifiro (Baltimore) I married **Adam Trifiro (Baltimore)** on Aug. 3, 2012.

We met during the corps but are both from Ohio and have returned to our home state. I am leading our charter corps in Northeast Ohio.

Kristin Van de Water (N.Y.) On Aug. 14, 2012, my husband John and I welcomed our newborn twins into the world.

Andrew Vega (L.A.) An op-ed I wrote about the film *Won't Back Down* and the complications of school turnaround was recently featured in *USA Today*.

Victor Wakefield (Chicago) I married **Alexis Gonzales-Black (E.N.C.)** in 2012.

Lacee Watkins (Phoenix) My husband, **Ben (Phoenix)**, and I welcomed baby girl Sundae Lou on March 7, 2012. She joins her 2-year-old sister, Vella Rae.

Jane Winfield (N.Y.) I married **Kyle Hosier (N.Y. '04)**.

Dara Yusuf (N.Y.) I got married on Oct. 7, 2012. Two of my bridesmaids were fellow '07 corps members.

2008

Aubrey Beals (New Mexico) I married my TFA sweetheart **Adam Beals (New Mexico)** on Aug. 18, 2012, in Grand Lake, Colo. **Betsy Hoback, Jess Heaton, Daniel Fishman, Allegra Fisher, Puby Bolster,** and **Julia Risk (all New Mexico)** were in attendance.

Jason Beer (Chicago) My wife, Cassie, and I welcomed our second son, Aug. Rhodes, on August 10, 2012. Our older son, Avram, is adjusting nicely.

Megan Brown (Baltimore) My elementary school sweetheart, AJ Brown, and I were married this summer in Virginia. Fellow corps members **Kevin Cournoyer (Baltimore), Patrice LaHair (Baltimore '09),** and



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Filmmaker Molly Blank (D.C. Region '98) created a series of 19 videos called *Schools That Work*, showcasing successful schools in South Africa that serve disadvantaged communities. In August, she gave a TEDx Talk in Johannesburg about her work fighting educational inequity in South Africa.

Sisi Dong (Baltimore) attended, as well as two of our former students from Doris M. Johnson/Heritage High School in Baltimore.

Lauren Buglione (Connecticut) I married **Dana Buglione (Connecticut)**.

Melissa Chapman (D.C. Region) I produce a webcast dedicated to inspiring Generation Y to take action as global citizens, be responsible, and live a joyful life. I am also the head designer and CEO of an all-natural skin-care line called Skin of God.

Maggie Dahn (Chicago) I married **Josh Dahn (Las Vegas)** on July 15, 2012, in Chicago.

Hannah Fox (Kansas City) On July 14, 2012, I married **Joe Fox (Kansas City)** in Kansas City, Mo. We taught at the same school during the corps.

Andrea Frear (Baltimore) I am teaching in Salvador, Brazil.

Tiffany Galloway (Metro Atlanta) I gave birth to an amazing baby boy, Maddox James Herrington, on March 16, 2012.

Jessica Gardner (N.Y.) I had an essay about my experiences as an LGBT educator in the Bronx published in a book.

Brian Anthony Gerardo (Baltimore) I am part of the first cohort of the Design

Leadership M.A./M.B.A. program at Johns Hopkins University and the Maryland Institute College of Art, serving as executive director of the Baltimore Dance Crews Project.

Kelly Glasenapp (Phoenix) I run an AmeriCorps program called Jumpstart Philadelphia. Our preschoolers experienced growth that was 5.2 percent above the national average for Jumpstart programs during the 2012-13 school year.

Elisabeth Glenn (Phoenix) I am working for the co-curricular program at New Global Citizens. We are expanding our existing after school program to target the classroom and provide

professional development for teachers.

Courtney Harris (Phoenix) I co-sponsored the first community service club at Del Valle High School: Students Helping Our Community (SHOC). We participated in multiple community service events on weekends, including building and maintaining a campus vegetable garden.

Matthew Helfrich (St. Louis) I am the founding drama teacher at my school, Johnson College Prep, and I love teaching it.

Emily Horrworth Feinberg (L.A.) I married **Ben Feinberg (L.A.)** on July 8, 2012. **Bryan Hunter (L.A.)** officiated the ceremony in

front of friends, family, and, of course, TFA alumni.

Amy Jackson (Chicago) I got married Sept. 8, 2012, the weekend before the Chicago teachers strike. It was quite an interesting week in my life!

Alan Johnson (Baltimore) I founded a company called Breakrs, a web service for competitive music discovery where players maintain a roster of bands they think are up-and-coming. As their bands increase in value, they will earn points, badges, and bragging rights—but most importantly, they will discover new music.

Nadina Juarez (Connecticut) My son, Christopher Matthew Juarez-Montiel,

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was born on Jan. 13, 2012. I began an M.A. in Administration and Supervision in January 2013.

Stephanie Kristovic (Chicago) I married **Michael Kristovic (Delta)**.

Francesca Leahy (R.G.V.) I married **Patrick Leahy (R.G.V.)**. Two of my bridesmaids, **Michelle Keba** and **Alli Gates Anderson**, and three of his groomsmen, **Ben Coate**, **Ross Cohen**, and **Andrew Levy**, were also **R.G.V. '08** corps members. Our guest list included many fabulous TFA alumni.

Hillary Maxson (Las Vegas) I married **Daniel Barber (Las Vegas)**.

Julia McCarthy (G.N.O.) I was awarded the Jacobson Public Service Scholarship for Women, Children, and Families—a full-tuition scholarship to New York University Law School. I plan on doing policy work to expand healthy food

access for low-income communities.

Corinne Mehan (E.N.C.) I married **Brendan Egan (E.N.C.)** on May 26, 2012, in Cordova, Tenn. We were joined by **Holly May Tilden**, **Dan Tilden**, **Stephanie Vallance**, **Megan Bauer**, **Jack Winn**, **Adrian Allen**, **Jason Simons** (all **E.N.C.**), **Matt Simon**, **Eric Raymer** (both **E.N.C. '07**), **Sarah Rosenberg**, **Maura O'Keefe** (both **E.N.C. '06**), and **Justin Tooley (Memphis)**.

Jonta Morris (Metro Atlanta) My husband and I met through TFA, and on Sept. 11, 2012, we welcomed our first child, Hamilton Morris.

Jeremy Norden-Paul (Phoenix) On June 22, 2012, I married **Annie Pennell (Phoenix)**.

Alex Orozco (N.Y.) I moved to San Francisco with my family and started a custom suiting and shirting company, Kippier Clothiers.

Gordon Owen (N.Y.) I changed schools within New York City and now teach at the Special Music School, a music magnet that serves students from all five boroughs. I also started my Ed.D. at Columbia University in curriculum and teaching.

Susan Petraitis (Chicago) I was promoted to literacy mentor teacher at my school. I work with literacy teachers by observing lessons, modeling teaching strategies, supplying resources, and improving class scores. I also had my first baby, Haley, in September 2012 with my husband, Kevin.

Evan Pulver (Houston) My wife, **Cara [Reedy] Pulver (Houston)**, and I welcomed a baby boy, Brooks Randall Pulver, on Sept. 17, 2012. I am in chiropractic school at Parker University in Dallas, and Cara is taking care of the baby full time.

Antonia Randazzo (N.Y.) I received my professional diploma in school psychology and my master's in education in therapeutic interventions from Fordham University in May 2012.

Zak Ringelstein (Phoenix) **Leah Schrader (Phoenix)**, **Christian Pina (N.Y.)**, and I have launched United Classrooms, an online platform that connects classrooms around the world.

Tadina Ross (D.C. Region) I started a teaching blog called Spanish Simply that shares the lessons I have used in my early elementary teaching.

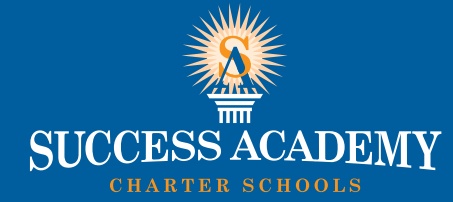
Julia Schwartz (S. Louisiana) I teach reading to some fabulous and brilliant seventh graders at KIPP NOLA. Every day we get to read books, dress up, do phonics, and have meaningful discussions about literature and our world.

Jeremy Spekman (Memphis) To help deal with the stress of the classroom, I trained for my first marathon at the end of my first year of teaching in 2009. Since then, I have run 26 marathons, 10 of them after I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

John Stefanic (Bay Area) I married **Catherine Vanier (Bay Area)**, and we moved to Phoenix. I am still teaching, and Catherine is attending medical school.

David Swank (South Dakota) My wife, **Katey [Lee] Swank (South Dakota '06)**, and I celebrated our daughter's first birthday in October 2012. We are now living in Rapid City, S.D., serving as instructional coaches.

Holly Tilden (E.N.C.) Dan Tilden (E.N.C.) and I got married on June 11, 2011. We contra-danced at our wedding in honor of our time at the Welton Mill in E.N.C.



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Katelynn Tymczyszyn (N.Y.)
I founded a grant-writing team at my school, P.S. 81 in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Our team has raised over \$900,000 for programming in the past four years.

Maria Vibandor (G.N.O.)
My son, Brayden, turned 1 on Nov. 25, 2012. We live in New Orleans, and I am a math specialist at the International High School of New Orleans.

Lauren Watler (G.N.O.)
I decided to leave KIPP Central City Academy in New Orleans to be a caregiver to my grandmother in Virginia. I learned so much under the leadership, but I had to make the move for my family. I am now attending Regent University on a partial scholarship and grants.

Kathleen Windisch (Kansas City) My dog, Daisy Mae, and I are a registered therapy

animal team with Pet Partners. Every week we visit two special-education classrooms. The general joy that Daisy gives others is incredible, and my experience as a special-education teacher with TFA helps me guide students and create new activities.

2009

Elizabeth Allen (Colorado)
I moved to Seattle to start law school at the University of Washington and work on immigration and education law and policy.

Alexandra Aronson (Kansas City) I married **Mark Aronson (Kansas City)** on June 30, 2012. In attendance were **Leah Marr, Brian Anderson, Lindsey Dolge, Julie Vermeer, Ashley Scheeter, Dan Murphy (all Kansas City), Beth McMillan, and Chelsea Rosell (both Kansas City '10).**

Kyle Bailey (Oklahoma) I am working with primary schools throughout the West Midlands region of the United Kingdom as a Teach First leadership development officer. Although there are some differences organizationally and culturally, my work has recommitted me to closing the achievement gap.

Luke Botting (Connecticut)
I married **Hannah Budde (St. Louis '08)** on July 27, 2013, in Dublin, Ohio. Fifteen staff members or alumni were there to help us celebrate.

Candace Burckhardt (Indianapolis) I got married on Jan. 14, 2012, to Cody Burckhardt in Costa Rica. Fellow alumna **Elizabeth Retana (Indianapolis)** was the maid of honor.

Daniel Carroll (Colorado)
My company, Clever, raised \$3 million in seed funding. More than 2,000 schools are using our software. **Matt**

Pasternack (N.Y. '04) is working with us.

Lauren Chesler (N.Y.)
I'm working for Wireless Generation, an incredible company that is creating new digital curricula to reinvent teaching and learning. Our products combine interactive experiences with rigorous analytics that align to the Common Core State Standards.

JaLissa Coffee-Sterrett (Oklahoma) Janell Sterrett (D.C. Region '08) and I were married, and many corps members shared in our special day.

Alexandra Elias (Bay Area)
I am working with the UC Davis School of Medicine Office of Diversity and Oakland High School to let 100 students shadow me as medical students for the day.

Franklin Engram (Metro Atlanta) In summer 2012,

I was the recipient of the Emory Summer Child Advocacy Program Grant. I worked with indigent parents and their children in public deprivation proceedings in juvenile court.

Jennifer Feigert (Jacksonville) In summer 2012, I brought a group of 11 elementary students to the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary on a four-day college trip called Destination College 2012.

Kristina Fisher (Bay Area)
I got married on July 15, 2012.

Mark Forner (Indianapolis)
I am a principal at Carpe Diem Schools in Indianapolis, where we use a new, blended-learning model.

Carolyn French (Oklahoma)
I brought my TFA training to Thailand! I introduced my

fellow Thai teachers to backwards planning and aligned and rigorous assessments.

Jay Galbraith (Greater Newark) I started a new job as a biology teacher with TEAM Schools, the KIPP region in Newark, N.J.

Kendra Gray (Baltimore) I teach 11th grade at an all-girls school in Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates.

Courtney Hampson (Bay Area) I run the Google Science Fair page. As part of this, I curate content and communicate with our community of about 70,000 people.

Kelly Heber (D.C. Region) I am on full scholarship at MIT pursuing a Ph.D. on environmental issues in impoverished communities.

Stephen Hill (Dallas-Fort Worth) I am the head varsity basketball coach for a 4A high school in Dallas.

Pragati Khara (Houston) I co-founded a nonprofit called Local Schools Local Needs, a free online tool that connects educators to the local community to enable sharing of resources and volunteers.

April Kujawa (R.G.V.) I teach at a missionary school on the edge of the jungle in Shell, Ecuador. My corps experience prepared me to teach at a school with limited resources and has made teaching in another country less of an adjustment.

Matthew McCabe (Chicago) I was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as a board member for the Corporation for National and Community Service. I was nominated by President Obama in 2011 to serve on the board, which oversees and funds service programs such as AmeriCorps, NCCC, and AmeriCorps VISTA. I am also a high school history teacher and 2012 Teach+ Policy Fellow in Chicago.

James McQuilkin (Charlotte) I married **Heather Antonides (Charlotte '08)** on Oct. 20, 2012.

Daniel Minot (D.C. Region) I took a group of eight high school seniors to Costa Rica on an educational trip in summer 2012.

Anita Mitchum (Greater Nashville) I was nominated to join the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Teacher Leadership Institute, a program for effective fourth-year teachers to increase their leadership potential.

Jennifer Mojica (Miami-Dade) I am a site director for Breakthrough Miami. I lead an enrichment college preparatory program for Miami-Dade high-school students.

Kim Morrissey (D.C. Region) I started a new job teaching special education at a school in San Diego in August 2011. The school is 10 miles



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Cassie Pergament (Los Angeles '02)
Edgewood Middle Campus Principal

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Julia King (Chicago '08), pictured
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Benning Middle Campus Founding Assistant Principal



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from the border, and 92 percent of the students are English Language Learners. In October 2011, my boyfriend of six years and I were married in Virginia.

Sarah Nager (N.Y.) I teach at Ocean Hill Collegiate, an incredible Uncommon School in Brooklyn. Over 80 percent of our teachers are TFA alumni. Most of us have been teaching for more than four years, and our hard work is paying off. In 2012, we were the fourth ranked school in the city according to the citywide grading system.

Arjun Natarajan (Greater Newark) My son was born on Nov. 12, 2012.

Emily Nicholson (E.N.C.) I had my first baby in March 2012. Her name is Emma Maye.

Mary Jean O'Malley (Oklahoma) Starting in July 2012, I worked with a team of 14 other Oklahoma corps

members and alumni to help open Tulsa Lighthouse Charter School. On Aug. 13, 2012, the school officially opened with 280 grade-school students and a waiting list of over 100 students.

Anastasia Pastan (N.Y.) In the summer of 2012, I married fellow corps member **Nicholas Pastan (N.Y.)**.

Charlotte Pullins (Phoenix) I got married on Oct. 6, 2012.

Brett Rector (Delta) I married **Ashley Bevis (Delta)** in June 2012.

F. Deanna Roark Johnson (Delta) I got married on Dec. 28, 2011. I work for the School Improvement Network, a professional development company that provides online video tools to our subscribers.

Kassandra Rodriguez (Dallas-Fort Worth) I got married on Aug. 3, 2012.

Darcel Sanders (Bay Area) I was selected as one of 18 California Senate Fellows for the 2012-2013 term—a public service fellowship that was ranked nationally as one of the top 10 internships of 2012.

Meleah Selip (Charlotte) I am a school counselor at Berryhill School (pre-K through eighth grade) in Charlotte, N.C.

Bradley Smith (Colorado) I am studying Higher Education Administration at Auburn University. I became inspired to pursue the degree after teaching a predominantly Latino population at Skinner Middle School in Denver, in order to advocate for the needs of secondary students looking to access higher education across the country.

Sarah Snell (New Mexico) My school, Central Elementary in Lordsburg, N.M., was recognized by Governor Susana Martinez

for its improvement. Our school grade increased 14 points from the 2011-12 school year to the 2012-13 school year.

Justin Taylor (Connecticut) I co-founded a chapter of the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project at the University of Connecticut School of Law, and I currently serve as an adjunct professor for the program. The program organizes law students across the country to develop curricula and teach courses on constitutional literacy and oral advocacy in traditionally underserved public schools.

Jason Thomson (Houston) I am dean of students at an Apollo 20 school. I was able to attend Harvard's Closing the Achievement Gap conferences and apply the latest research-based strategies with my students.

Karina Vanderbilt (New Mexico) I am playing a

major role in education reform at the state level as a policy analyst at the New Mexico Public Education Department. I am working on our implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Baltazar Vega (L.A.) I was elected to the Glassell Park Neighborhood Council as educational representative.

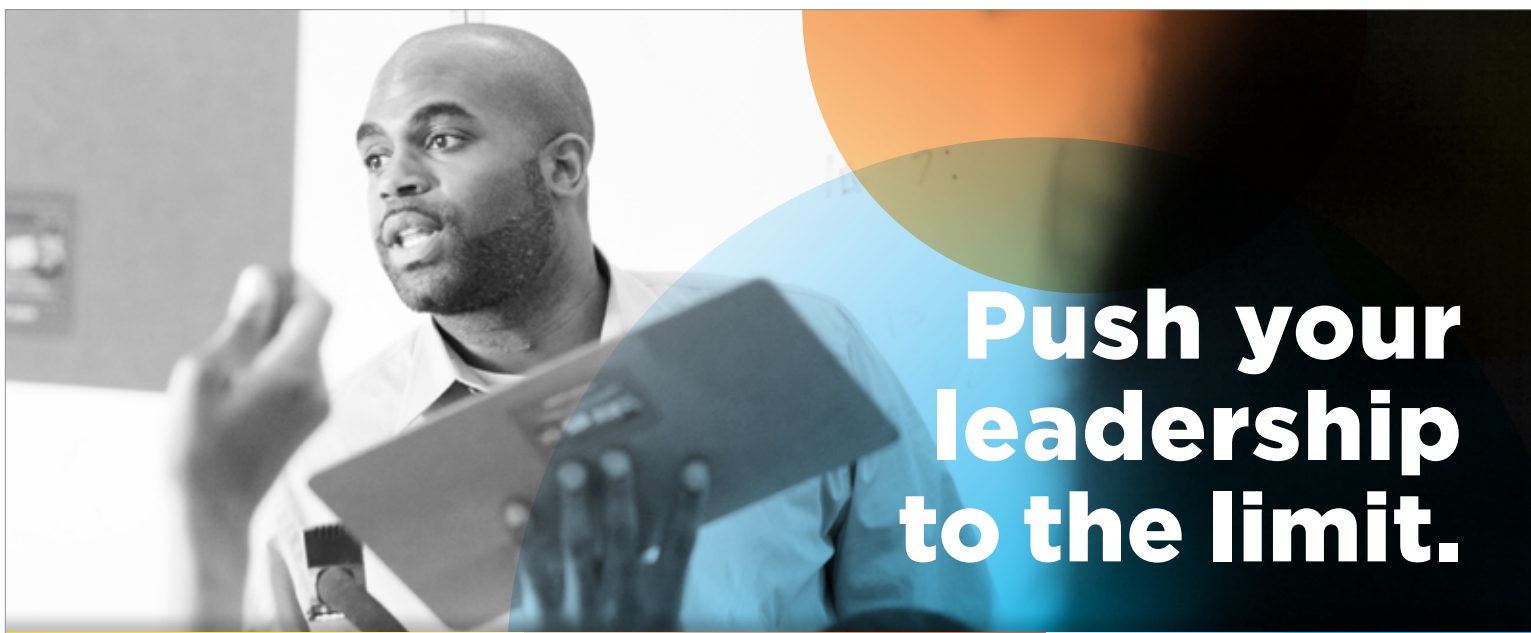
Jete White (Phoenix) I married my college sweetheart on June 8, 2012, in Flagstaff, Ariz.

Tiffany Zapico (G.N.O.) My nonprofit, Reading Partners, works in low-income schools to help close the literacy gap and strengthen students' confidence and love of reading. Many alumni work for the nationwide organization.

2010
Chloethiel Ahmann (Baltimore) I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Anthropology



Josh Nathan (Massachusetts '10), photographed here with his students in Buea, Cameroon, spent a year teaching media skills with the Youth Advocacy Network. The network aims to inspire grassroots social justice projects for historically marginalized people and communities, and to build a network of international support.



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with a focus on the culture of school reform in urban America.

Miriam Archibong (Metro Atlanta) From 2012-2013, I was a Fulbright Research Scholar and a visiting scholar at the National University of Singapore. My research focused on the effect of Singapore's education-policy shifts on students.

Omar Aziz (Miami-Dade) I work in a freshman residence hall at Rowan University in New Jersey while obtaining my master's degree in Higher Education Administration. My work helps build communities that have a huge impact on the retention of college students.

Brittany Bell (N.Y.) I married Michael Connolly, a special education math teacher in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Dec. 3, 2011. I have also taken on the role of IEP teacher/special education liaison for my school, in addition to teaching two ELA classes.

Paul Bolaji (Dallas-Fort Worth) While working as a special assistant to a sitting senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I was able to network with other senators in the National Assembly and speak directly with the Education Committee's chairman about education reform efforts in Nigeria.

Sarah Bowman (Detroit) In June 2012, I married

fellow corps member **Alex Bowman (Detroit)** in our new home, Detroit. We were blessed to have our bridal party and guest list full of corps members, staff, and alumni.

Leah Bruchis (Charlotte) During the first month of my new corporate career, I worked with several other TFA alumni on a steering committee to plan a companywide fundraiser for KIPP Nashville. We raised \$22,000 to fully fund KIPP's All of Us Will Read program.

Andres Chong-Qui (Miami-Dade) I worked for Organizing for America on the campaign trail and proudly helped President Obama get re-elected.

Karina Cremades (Houston) I work for Barrio Logan College Institute, a nonprofit in an area of San Diego that is rich in culture and pride but grossly underserved. We work together with disadvantaged families to ensure that 100 percent of our students enroll in college.

Aislinn Cunningham (G.N.O.) I work with **Alex LaPres** and **Margaux Dubuar (G.N.O. '09)** as instructional and curricular leaders in St. Bernard Parish, La. We are helping to lead the shift to common core and are partnering with the Gates Foundation to lead new literacy and math initiatives.

Megan Durling (Delta) In my second year teaching, two

co-workers and I launched a youth spoken-word series that attracted dozens of student performers and community supporters from the Indianola, Miss., area. The series continued into 2013.

Ashley Foxx (Memphis) I am launching a small, independent press called Kifani, Inc. Kifani means "unique" in Swahili. Our launch projects target K-2 readers. I fell in love with literacy after teaching kindergarten and first grade, and I want to share wonderful stories with little readers.

Jessica Goldstein (Bay Area) Through TFA, I became interested in community dynamics and

leadership development. I am now working on my master's degree at Cornell University, where I am evaluating indicators of community resilience in order to help improve community response to environmental and macroeconomic shocks.

Jennifer Grierson (Houston) I moved to San Sebastian, Spain, to teach English. My training and experience with TFA led to my success teaching abroad.

Anais Gude (Hawai'i) I was awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in the Slovak Republic.

Travis Haby (Colorado) I am participating in the Japanese Exchange Teaching program, working at a Japanese Board of Education school in Hirosaki, Aomori.

Caitlin Hannon (Indianapolis) I was elected to the Indianapolis Public Schools Board of Commissioners. As the first elected alumnus in Indianapolis, I'm looking forward to bringing positive changes to the schools we worked in.

LeAnn Holland (South Dakota) I got married to William Holland on Sept. 29, 2012.

Alton James (Detroit) I am publishing three books, including an education book called *Why Your Child Isn't Making the Grade*.

Joshua Johnson (D.C. Region) I was a recipient of the 2012 Harris Wofford Award from Youth Service America for my Sustainable Scholars program at Center City Public Charter School in Brightwood, Washington, D.C. Through this program, my students built two

raised garden beds and a greenhouse and began working on sustainable irrigation methods.

Jovan Julien (Metro Atlanta) I am working with G.O.A.L.S. Haiti to improve education in rural Leogane.

Kara Kinoshian (Houston) I married **David Floyd (Houston '09)** in July 2011.

Valeria Koss (G.N.O.) In June 2012 I was selected as an Education Pioneers Fellow in the L.A. region. I completed a 10-week project working on-site at both the L.A. and Houston TFA institutes in order to conduct a comparative analysis of teacher-training models.

Kayla Lopez (N.Y.) I married the man who encouraged me to accept my TFA offer in New York even though it would separate us. We are now relocating back to Boston to start our careers

(mine is still teaching) and family.

Federica Lyford-Pike (Indianapolis) Meeting Street Academy, my school in Charleston, S.C., was visited by Governor Nikki Haley and Michelle Rhee because it is seen as a pilot school for how education needs to change for low-income communities in South Carolina.

Mohamad Maarouf (Houston) I took a year to travel the world.

Mayra Macias (Miami-Dade) I worked on the Obama campaign in Miami. It was amazing to engage in a different capacity with the communities I served while teaching.

Lauren Martin (Jacksonville) I work for KIPP VOICE in Jacksonville, Fla. Nine of our 13 school-based staff are TFA alumni.

We have such a unique opportunity to impact the educational landscape in Jacksonville.

Sarah Mielbye (Massachusetts) I taught English to fourth grade students in Thailand for a year.

Megan Miller (Milwaukee) I have run several marathons, and my passion is spreading: In fall 2012, I recruited six coworkers at my school to run a half marathon for the first time, and I led a Girls on the Run team, which teaches positive self-esteem and self-image to young girls through running.

Aja Moore (N.Y.) My husband and I had a beautiful baby girl named Soleil on Sept. 24, 2012. She strengthens our urgency in the fight for great education.

Meagan Moore (Charlotte) I married Matt Markiewicz on July 29, 2013, at my parents' home in Salem, Wis.

Shauna Myers (D.C. Region) In summer 2012, I conducted independent research on the quality and effectiveness of instructional coaching in the most economically depressed region of Jamaica. I reported directly to Jamaica's minister of education, and the research is being used to transform instructional coaches nationwide.

Joseph Evan Nogay (S. Louisiana) I am a student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. I was elected to our Student Bar Association and have also been active with the Pitt Law Democrats and the Sports and Entertainment Law Society.

Julie O'Neil (Houston) I left my placement school in Houston and moved back to the Northeast, teaching sixth grade reading at Achievement First Hartford Academy. It was bittersweet to leave my Houston friends and students, but I am happy to be spending another year in the classroom.

Sarah Pendergast (G.N.O.) In June 2012, I was a youth representative at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio +20 Summit with the nonprofit SustainUS.

Brianna Savoca (Baltimore) I'm a recruitment manager for TFA in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Athens, Ohio, and the creator of the Urban Authors League project. We are trying to get novels published that feature urban protagonists

who overcome tremendous obstacles to succeed in life.

Ben Schurhamer (Delta) I got married to **Maggie Bates (Delta '11)**.

Rachelle Snyder (Chicago) I became a commissioner on the Commission for Women in the city of Somerville, Mass.

Sarah Sparks (Charlotte) **Jordy Sparks (Charlotte '05)** and I had a baby boy on Dec. 2, 2011.

Shelley Stash (Colorado) My school, Place Bridge Academy, is doing great stuff to help out the refugee population in Denver.

Michael Tcheyan (R.G.V.) I spent summer 2012 working with teachers in Kibera, a slum in Nairobi, Kenya. I ran a weeklong professional development

program, where I learned a lot from the Kenyans and they learned a lot from me.

Adrian Uribarri (Chicago) I am the manager for communications at CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. We are an organization advancing the teaching of academic, social, and emotional skills.

Leah Vanevenhoven (Baltimore) I was the chair for my school's annual 5K Fun Run/Walk. The race was held on Oct. 27, 2012 in Cherry Hill, Baltimore, and had the largest turnout of any community engagement event our school has hosted.

Bretton Wall (Delta) I started the Mississippi River Marathon in order to make sure I left a legacy when I left my placement

region. All proceeds were donated to TFA.

Alexandra Wiggins (Metro Atlanta) I am a law student at Louisiana State University's Paul M. Hebert Law Center. I also volunteer with a program called Street Law that was started by a Houston '08 alum. We go into local middle and high schools and teach a legal lesson about how impulsive actions may have legal implications.

Kristopher Wright (Dallas-Fort Worth) I co-founded the Texas Debate Collective, an organization that helps low-income high-school debaters achieve academic and competitive goals. In summer 2012, we awarded \$25,000 in need-based scholarships for debaters to attend our rigorous two-week summer camp in Austin, Texas. ★



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Tribute to Will and Jamie (Soukup) Reid

by Stephanie Silver

Will and Jamie (Soukup) Reid (both Greater Philadelphia '10) died in a car accident on Aug. 11, 2013. They met as corps members through Teach For America and were married on May 26, 2013. She was pregnant with their first child.

Jamie and Will continued to teach in Philadelphia after finishing their corps commitment in 2012. Will taught math at the People for People Charter School and was set to begin his first year as chair of the math department. Jamie joined Mastery Charter School: Harrity Elementary, one of Philadelphia's "turnaround" schools. She was preparing to begin her third year there as a seventh grade language arts teacher.

In addition to their contributions in the classroom, Jamie and Will made a difference for students outside school hours. Jamie worked with her school's administration to start a gay-straight alliance and would certainly have continued to work passionately for the rights and respect of marginalized students. Will was involved in leading staff training for his peers.

Jamie and Will represented the spirit of Teach For America through their sustained dedication to their students and to the city of Philadelphia. They were also important members of the local TFA community, forming a family of friends with

fellow corps members as they grew to be talented educators, marked by passion and humor. Many fellow corps members were in their wedding party. Even the theme of their wedding was "Teachers," with each table named after a different class. In keeping with the disciplinary system at Mastery, Jamie jokingly passed out "demerits" to wedding guests throughout the night for violations such as "not dancing enough."

Their future plans included Will attending business school, with the dream of developing a sustainable charter school funding model. Jamie considered going on to get an MFA in creative writing. ★

Donations can be made to the William and Jamie Reid Scholarship Fund, c/o Phillipsburg High School, 200 Hillcrest Blvd, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865, with checks payable to the school. Contributions can also be made to the Jamie Soukup Reid Memorial Scholarship Fund, Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA 99362.



Tribute to Jeremy Tucker

by Thomas Ryan (Phoenix '97)

Jeremy Tucker, a 1997 Phoenix Corps Member, died peacefully on Sept. 6 in Houston at the age of 38. Jeremy will always be remembered for his passion for life, his diverse talents, and his kindness to others. Jeremy taught fifth and sixth grade in South Phoenix for two years and over that time, built incredibly strong connections with his students and families, relationships that eventually became the foundation for his book *Before A Canyon*.

One of my favorite memories of Jeremy that captures his commitment to his students and his talent as a writer occurred during our second year in Phoenix. Waiting in line at a book signing for famed author Sandra Cisneros, Jeremy began writing a letter to her when the bookstore employee announced that the signing was ending soon. Not having an opportunity to speak with Ms. Cisneros, Jeremy handed her the letter as he exited the store. The letter detailed Jeremy's appreciation for Ms. Cisneros' work, along with a request for her to visit his classroom and teach a lesson to his students. One month after the book signing, Ms. Cisneros contacted Jeremy and expressed her interest in visiting his school. A month later, Jeremy welcomed the author to his classroom and later accompanied her to lunch along with two of his students. Needless to say, Jeremy and his students were thrilled by the experience! There were countless gifts that Jeremy shared with his students and

friends in the corps, from his love of dancing to his artistic talent to his thought-provoking conversations over dinner.

Following his time in Phoenix, Jeremy went on to earn a medical degree from Harvard University. He spent time in Costa Rica during his studies as a med student, learning Spanish in order to better serve his patients back home in the United States. In 2005, at the beginning of his second year of residency, Jeremy was struck with brain cancer. He defeated the cancer but faced significant physical challenges moving forward. Jeremy's courage and resilience in the following years was evident when he published his book, *Before A Canyon*, chronicling his experiences and lessons learned from his students during his time in Phoenix.

We will miss Jeremy's caring spirit, his profound insight, his sense of humor and his genuine friendship. He had immense talents which he chose to share with all people he met to make the world a better place. He will be dearly missed. ★

Jeremy's family established The Jeremy Tucker Memorial Fund in honor of Jeremy's deep belief in Teach For America's mission. To learn more about Jeremy's life and to make a gift to his fund, please visit www.jeremytuckermemorialfund.org.

EXIT TICKET

BY TIM KENNEDY (DELTA '11)



LA'SHAYE JOHNSON is a junior at Miami Northwestern Senior High School. In September, with the support of her American Literature teacher, Amber Walker (Miami-Dade '12), she attended "The Trayvon Martin Verdict, Its Genesis and Its Aftermath," a college-level roundtable discussion sponsored by the African & African Diaspora Studies Program at Florida International University.

What is it about the Trayvon Martin case that speaks so strongly to you? He could have been my older brother. He's my race, [from] the same background and community. So how come nothing was done about this? It angers me and it hurts me because, in all honesty, I don't think there's justice for all in the system.

Have you seen people in your community lose hope after the case? My mom was heartbroken. She said, "Where really is the justice when you need it?" People in my community have said things like, "Stay out of white people's faces because they aren't going to do anything for you." But for those who are losing hope, I just really hope they don't give up. Because once they give up, who's going to be there to try to build us back up?

Has the case affected your daily life? It makes me feel like I'm in a box, like I can't really express myself. Will somebody shoot me because I have on a hoodie? I don't think that's fair at all.

Did the Trayvon Martin roundtable you attended at FIU change your perspective? It really opened my eyes. I asked, "How can we help everyone to hear our voices?" [The speakers] told us to

go out and change the world; we cannot wait for the world to change on its own. That really stuck with me. I plan on starting a community activism group at my school and having peer leaders go out into the community to help those in need. I don't want "equality for all" to just be a phrase; I want it to really mean something.

What are your plans for the future? I plan on going to Florida State University to study biology and psychology. I want to be able to help people whose voices are not being heard, and give them certain resources: jobs, food, help with managing budgets and money. I understand people are going through trials and tribulations—my mom goes through a lot and she doesn't have anyone to talk to. But I want to be able to help them overcome. I come from the same inner-city background as them, so I believe people will listen to me.

What do you think it will take for America to heal and move on? Whatever happened in history—I won't say forget about it; I'll just say let it go. All the grudges and the heartache and the hurt and the pain—just let it go, so we can step forward and rebuild our nation. But I will say that I'll never forget what happened. I'll be able to overcome it. But I won't forget. ★

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