

TEACH FOR AMERICA ANNOUNCES RECORD TEACHING CORPS IN HOUSTON

Number of Incoming Corps Members in Houston-Area Schools Will Grow by 15 Percent

HOUSTON, May 14, 2008—Teach For America today announced that it will place more than 230 new teachers in Houston-area schools this fall, an increase of 15 percent over last year. These new teachers are among the record 3,700 outstanding college graduates in Teach For America's incoming corps, selected from an applicant pool of nearly 25,000 to teach in 29 regions around the country. Teach For America corps members commit two years to teach in high-need public schools and become lifelong leaders in the pursuit of educational equity.

"We are thrilled that so many top recent college graduates want to teach in Houston's highest-need schools," said Ann Best, executive director of Teach For America in Houston. "These corps members will make an impact on our children in the next two years, and over the long term as leaders in the region."

Teach For America has expanded the Houston corps each year since its inception in 1991, and the incoming corps represents a 15 percent increase over the 2007 corps. Together, these teachers will form an active Houston corps of more than 400 first- and second-year teachers who will reach 32,000 students during the 2008-09 year. This significant growth is made possible in part by a \$1 million commitment from Laura and John Arnold in support of Teach For America's presence in the Houston area.

"Teach For America is having a tremendous impact on the community," said Laura Arnold, president of the Arnold Family Foundation. "We are engaged with helping grow the number of corps members in Houston because these motivated young teachers will provide benefits in the classroom and beyond."

The record growth in the Houston corps is also fueled by a high number of applicants from the state's top universities, including more than 8 percent of graduating seniors at Rice University. In addition, the University of Texas and Texas A&M University saw significant growth in the number of applicants. Nationally, Teach For America attracted a significant percentage of graduates from top universities. At more than 90 colleges and universities, more than 5 percent of the senior class applied, including 16 percent at Spelman College, 11 percent at Morehouse College and Yale University, 10 percent at Georgetown University, 9 percent at Harvard University, and even 7 percent at a large university like the University of Michigan.

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A growing body of research on Teach For America demonstrates the effectiveness of corps members in the classroom. In March, the Urban Institute's Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER) released a study showing that Teach For America teachers have a positive effect on high school students' achievement when compared with non-Teach For America teachers, including those who are fully certified in their subject areas. "The results were clear," study coauthor Jane Hannaway said. "Students performed better when they had an inexperienced Teach For America teacher than when they had a veteran educator at the blackboard."

Officials from the Houston Independent School District welcomed Teach For America's growth in the region, pointing to the organization's successful track record. "Teach For America corps members have proved to be effective at helping Houston's children achieve academic success," said HISD Superintendent Abelardo Saavedra, Ph.D. "We are pleased that there will be more Teach For America teachers in our schools in fall 2008."

Teach For America's impact extends beyond the important work of corps members in the classroom to the long-term engagement of alumni in education and public service. According to a recent survey, two-thirds of Teach For America alumni are still working or studying full-time in education, including 4,000 classroom teachers. More than 300 Teach For America alumni serve as school principals or superintendents, including two-thirds of the leaders from the nationally recognized KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) and Achievement First schools. Teach For America alumni are also working from other fields to help expand educational opportunity. More than 200 alumni work in government or policy, and 14 serve as elected school board members.

Houston is home to 500 Teach For America alumni, many of whom are working to expand opportunities for children and families in low-income communities. More than 15 Houston school principals are Teach For America alumni, including Jarrett Reid Whitaker (Houston Corps '02) of Port Houston Elementary in the East End, who is one of the youngest principals in the district. Other alumni are starting and running successful charter schools in the city, including Mike Feinberg (Houston Corps '92), co-founder of KIPP and superintendent of KIPP Houston, and Chris Barbic (Houston Corps '92), founder and head of schools at YES College Prep. Natasha Kamrani (Houston Corps '91), founding executive director of the Arnold Family Foundation and former executive director of Teach For America-Houston, was elected in 2005 to the HISD Board of Education, where colleagues chose her to serve as assistant secretary in 2007 and second vice president this year.

Teach For America focuses on recruiting top college graduates who share the racial and/or socioeconomic backgrounds of the communities its teachers serve. Some 28 percent of the incoming

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corps are people of color, including nearly 10 percent who are African-American—double the African-American enrollment at America’s 400 top colleges, where Teach For America primarily recruits. Some 26 percent of the 2008 corps are Pell Grant recipients.

Teach For America is in the midst of an ambitious growth plan, aiming to place 8,000 corps members across at least 33 regions by 2010. In the 2008-09 school year, some 6,200 Teach For America corps members will teach in 29 regions, serving more than 100 school districts in 23 states and the District of Columbia, placing the organization ahead of its growth targets.

About Teach For America

Teach For America is the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates who commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools and become lifelong leaders in expanding educational opportunity. Currently, 5,000 corps members are teaching in over 1,000 schools in 26 regions across the country; more than 12,000 Teach For America alumni continue working from inside and outside the field of education for the fundamental changes necessary to ensure educational excellence and equity. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org.

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