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TEACH FOR AMERICA ALUMNA IN SPOTLIGHT AS ONE OF AMERICA'S TOP TEACHERS

*D.C. State Teacher of the Year and Teach For America Alumna Kelly Harper (Houston Corps '12)
Among Four Finalist in National Teacher of the Year Announcement on "CBS This Morning"*

NEW YORK, April 24, 2019—D.C. State Teacher of the Year and Teach For America alumna Kelly Harper was one of four finalists for National Teacher of the Year, which was announced on "CBS This Morning" today. She is a third-grade teacher at Amidon-Bowen Elementary School in Washington, D.C., public schools and the D.C. State Teacher of the Year.

"Kelly Harper is an incredible educator and so deserving of this recognition as one of America's top teachers," said Elisa Villanueva Beard, CEO of Teach For America.

"Kelly has an unwavering belief in what's possible for her students, with high expectations for what they can achieve and providing support for their social and emotional needs so they can learn and grow and realize their immense potential. She helps them make connections between what they are learning and how they can help their community. And every day she is all-in for her students, showing them how much they are loved, supported, and valued."

"Kelly is a great advocate for excellence and equity in education - not only for her own students, but so that all students across the country may have the educational opportunities they deserve."

Teach For America also offered its congratulations to the 2019 National Teacher of the Year recipient, Rodney Robinson of Richmond, VA. Robinson has served in the classroom for 19 years and currently teaches at Virgie Binford Education Center, a school inside the Richmond Juvenile Detention Center. He shared on "CBS This Morning" that he plans to highlight educational equity during the coming year.

Harper began her education career in 2012 as a Teach For America corps member in Houston, where she taught elementary school. After her time in the corps, she came back to her hometown Washington D.C. to continue her career. This year is Harper's seventh in the classroom.

"As a D.C. area native," Harper wrote in her application statement, "I teach to empower my students to become the next leaders and change agents of their generation. Ultimately, I envision my students becoming voices for marginalized communities, voices that reverberate throughout the city and the world."

Harper was awarded D.C. Teacher of the Year on November 5, 2018, after a surprise visit by Mayor Muriel Bowser to Amidon-Bowen Elementary. She was [recognized for excellence in teaching](#) in a recent profile by *The Washington Post*.

In a [press release](#), Amidon-Bowen principal TaMikka Sykes said, "In a political climate where adults too often believe socioeconomic status and race are insurmountable barriers that mean students in marginalized groups cannot achieve, Ms. Harper is an example of a practitioner who proves them wrong. Students in her class consistently exceed expected growth academically, socially, and emotionally. I have never encountered an educator who has done more to motivate and empower students in a way that will likely change the trajectory of their lives."

About Teach For America

Teach For America works in partnership with urban and rural communities in more than 50 regions across the country to expand educational opportunity for children. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding leaders to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today Teach For America is a force of nearly 60,000 alumni and corps members committed to profound systemic change. From classrooms to districts to state houses across America, they're reimagining education to realize the day when every child has an equal opportunity to learn, to grow, to influence, and to lead. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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