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TEACHFORAMERICA

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TEACH FOR AMERICA ALUMNI SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS RECOGNIZED FOR INNOVATIONS THAT SUPPORT STUDENTS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES, ADDRESS EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY

Teach For America Announces Alumni Winners for Leadership in Social Entrepreneurship with the Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock Social Innovation Award

NEW YORK, June 10, 2019—Three innovative alumni leaders are the recipients of Teach For America’s award for leadership in social entrepreneurship.

The Arthur & Toni Rembe Rock Social Innovation Award recognizes Teach For America alumni social entrepreneurs who have founded a social venture to expand opportunities for students in low-income communities, address the root causes of educational inequity, and help students reach their potential.

The award-winning proposals included an immigrant-led program to provide supports for undocumented students and families, a multi-generational education, workforce and community development initiative, and work to disrupt the status quo for students with developmental disabilities.

The three winners—Vanessa Luna (Los Angeles ’14), Taylor Toyne (Dallas-Fort Worth ’14), and Bryan Boyce (South Dakota ’09)—were driven by their experience in the classroom as Teach For America corps members and proximity to the issues they are working to solve. The award will provide each with the opportunity to bring their innovation to scale, build their network by working alongside a community of social innovation leaders, and engage with entrepreneurial coaches and mentors.

“Each year, when I meet the amazing winners for this award, I’m reminded once again how important social entrepreneurship has been to making our world more fair and just, and our education system more equitable for our students and communities,” said Teach For America CEO Elisa Villanueva Beard. “Teach For America’s work is built on the knowledge that achieving excellence and equity in education takes the work of leaders inside and outside the classroom, and that we need individuals innovating from the many sectors that shape our students’ lives, working together in partnership with their communities. Vanessa, Taylor, and Bryce and all our social innovation finalists are powerful examples of our mission in action.”

The Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock Social Innovation Award, which is open to both Teach For America corps members and alumni, recognizes its namesakes advocacy for educational excellence whose spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship helped create Silicon Valley and who inspire young leaders today to pursue the ideals of innovation, compassion, and excellence. Teach For America also recognizes excellence in other sectors, including the Sue Lehmann Excellence in Teacher Leadership Award and the Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership, named for the late journalist and anchor of ABC World News Tonight, which honors an alumnus whose work has led to transformational change in the past year.

Learn more about the winners below and [on our website](#).

Vanessa Luna (Los Angeles ’14), Co-Founder & Chief Program Officer, ImmSchools

Vanessa was recently [named](#) to the 2019 Forbes “30 Under 30” list in recognition of her work at [ImmSchools](#) and her leadership in supporting undocumented students and families. As a former DACA-protected teacher and undocumented student, she understood the barriers that prevented many undocumented students from reaching their full potential. Her experience led her to co-found ImmSchools, an immigrant-led non-profit that envisions a world where all students, no matter their immigration status, have access to resources and safe, welcoming, and inclusive schools. ImmSchools partners with K-12 schools and districts to provide ongoing professional development for educators and workshops for undocumented and immigrant students and families. The organization also advises and advocates for the passage of immigrant-friendly policies in school districts. The Social Innovation Award will accelerate ImmSchools’ impact by increasing the number of schools the program serves, reaching more educators who work with undocumented students and families.

“The immigrant experience is deeply rooted in the pursuit of educational opportunity,” said Luna. “The intersection of immigration and education must be urgently addressed as we seek educational equity for all.”

Taylor Toynes (Dallas-Fort Worth ’14), Co-founder & Executive Director, For Oak Cliff

Taylor Toynes grew up and taught as a corps member in Dallas’s South Oak Cliff neighborhood, a community impacted by intergenerational poverty. Together with a fellow alumnus, Xavier Henderson (DFW ’15), Toynes co-founded [For Oak Cliff](#) in 2017, which serves as a hub for the 15,000 residents living in the neighborhood and provides education and wraparound services that promote social mobility. The founders employ a holistic, dual-generation approach to their services: parents can take GED classes and participate in workforce training while their children engage in early learning enrichment opportunities. As For Oak Cliff continues to grow, the organization remains focused on expanding services and transforming lives in the immediate community.

“Our ultimate goal is liberation for the community,” said Toynes. “In order to do that, we believe that we have to heal our neighbors together and inspire them to believe in themselves.”

Bryan Boyce (South Dakota ’09), Founder & Executive Director, Cow Tipping Press

Disrupting the status quo around developmental disability is personal to Bryan Boyce, whose younger brother has disabilities. Boyce is the founder of [Cow Tipping Press](#), a Minnesota-based nonprofit that partners with local disability service organizations to offer creative writing classes to adults with developmental disabilities. After each class, participants publish their work and read their stories and poems in coffee shops, bookstores, and breweries. Boyce recruits diverse, equity-minded college students to teach the classes, many of whom go on to dedicate their career to supporting individuals with disabilities. Teachers can also download a curriculum that incorporates Cow Tipping students’ stories, elevating a diverse set of authors in the classroom. The program has served over 400 students to date, including some who now co-lead classes. As a Social Innovation Award winner, Boyce plans to test new ideas and scale the venture, as well as hire a second full-time staffer and pursue national content partnerships to more widely share authors’ voices.

“If we’re successful, that means our participants are able to develop a voice and speak for themselves and be more engaged,” said Boyce. “We’ve only just scratched the surface of what kind of dent that can make in our profoundly inequitable status quo.”

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. Teach For America is a proud member of the AmeriCorps national service network. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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