

A *Foundation* For Springing F o r w a r d

Why the TC Fund matters so much

*A Letter From Suzanne M. Murphy
Vice President, Development & External Affairs*

S WINTER ENDED AND PEOPLE SET THEIR clocks, there was the usual talk of springing forward.

Here at Teachers College, we're talking about the TC Annual Fund — our springboard to the future following the conclusion of our extraordinarily successful Campaign.

Why have an Annual Fund?

First, because the Fund supports all aspects of teaching and learning at the College, from our world-class faculty to student financial aid, with unrestricted dollars. Suppose an unexpected new research opportunity arises, or an unanticipated need to upgrade our physical infrastructure. Normally we would cover the costs either by raising the price of tuition, which we obviously don't want to do to our students, or borrowing against our future by taking money from our endowment, which is the nest egg that ensures that our institution will continue to thrive, grow and be a force in perpetuity.

Instead, such efforts can be paid for from the Annual Fund. And in so doing, we narrow the gap between the tuition we charge and the

larger full cost of educating a TC student.

But what the TC Fund represents may be even more important.

The Fund stands at the center of our ecosystem of giving. It is the point of entry to our staunch community of TC supporters, a space for donors at every level. It is also a barometer for external funders of that community's vitality and enthusiasm — and what it shows is impressive indeed. Over the past decade, monies raised for the Annual Fund have increased by 78 percent and now total over \$2.1 million. Our Maxine Greene Society — TC Fund supporters who have given for three or more years consecutively — boasts 2,000 members, at all levels of giving. Over the past decade, membership in our John Dewey Circle (those who make a yearly contribution of \$1,000 or more to the TC Fund) has increased by 51 percent, with well over 300 Dewey donors each fiscal year, and growing.

We're particularly proud that during the past two fiscal years, more than 1,500 people have



Ellen R. Flanagan (Ed.D. '06)

participated in the Annual Fund for the very first time. Many of these donors are young — a sign to us that, during these particularly challenging times, Teachers College and its work stand as exemplars of innovation and beacons of hope. These younger donors see the College as their go-to place for making a difference — *the* one-stop institution for addressing the causes and concerns they care about most. And we're confident that what we've accomplished this year — supporting and educating displaced people worldwide; documenting the links between poverty and brain development in young children; filing a lawsuit to guarantee all young people a quality education that prepares them for citizenship; blueprinting a comprehensive national system for early childhood education and care — will prompt them to contribute again during the coming year and beyond.

Last year, with the support and endorsement of the Student Senate leadership, the College initiated its first-ever Class Gift from graduating students, focused on supporting the Annual Fund in honor or memory of a faculty member, adviser, or anyone who changed students' lives. In fiscal year 2018, that gift brought in more than \$5,000 from 60 first-time donors who were graduating. This year, we are on track to exceed both numbers as we continue to develop a culture of philanthropy and impress upon students the

value and importance of giving back.

Here's what the Fund's supporters, at all levels, say about why they give:

BILL RUECKERT, *Chair of the Teachers College Board of Trustees*: “The Annual Fund provides important, unrestricted support for a wide variety of programs. Its proceeds can be directed by the College to the areas where they are most needed and provide the greatest support for faculty and students. Many smaller gifts add up, and no one should think any gift is too small!”

LESLIE NELSON, *TC Board Vice Chair*: “TC's Annual Fund is my first thought when I think of a contribution to TC, for its success is crucial to the well-being of the institution. The Fund is vital not only in helping TC to meet yearly budgetary needs but also in providing the flexibility to direct funds to critical immediate needs. The Annual Fund allows TC to continue to be the very best with its faculty, research and student support.”

ELLEN R. FLANAGAN (ED.D. '06), *Principal, South Bronx Preparatory* recalls: “Arriving at TC in Fall 1992, I knew I was investing in my future as an educator, but I was unaware of the investment I would receive in return. TC plays out continually through my lifelong friendships and professors who became friends, especially

GOOD INVESTMENT

For Ellen R. Flanagan (Ed.D. '06), “TC plays out continually” through her friendships, mentors, and ongoing learning in “a profession that can change lives.”

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— SUZANNE M. MURPHY, VICE PRESIDENT,
DEVELOPMENT & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



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— NORI NEGRÓN (M.A. '19)

SHE'S A COLLEAGUE

Nori Negrón (M.A. '19) participated in a class gift because of her adviser, Jin Kuwata, who treated her as an intellectual equal.

the amazing Ruth Vinz. TC created opportunities for me to extend my learning, thinking, and to be challenged. Most importantly, it lives in my active participation both in theory and practice in a profession that can change lives and allow you to be changed by them. That's why I give.”

Ellen offers these words from the late TC philosopher Maxine Greene:

For me, the child is a veritable image of becoming, of possibility, poised to reach towards what is not yet, towards a growing that cannot be predetermined or prescribed. I see her and I fill the space with others like her, risking, straining, wanting to find out, to ask their own questions, to experience a world that is shared.

And she adds: “Maxine’s words speak to my experience at Teachers College of not considering what you can become but simply enjoying the act of becoming within the community of learners.”

JANELL DRONE (ED.D. '87), education researcher and former superintendent and professor, credits TC faculty members such as Greene, George Bereday and A. Harry Passow with “shaping me to become the person I aspired to be” and “enabling me to pursue my dream, which was to extend myself in higher education.”

As she recalls on page 65, Janell, for her TC dissertation, designed the first international secondary school curriculum to integrate the culture of an African nation (Kenya) into the

International Baccalaureate. Janell gives because “TC is a gift that’s given to me since the day I arrived.”

NORI NEGRÓN, who just graduated with her master’s degree in Instructional Technology & Media, with a particular focus on Computing in Education, says she contributed to the 2019 Class Gift to honor her TC advisor, Jin Kuwata.

“He was really interested in knowing what we thought and how we’d apply the information — he made me feel like a colleague, not a student,” says Nori, who is also grateful to faculty members Mark Dzula and Susan Lowes. “And he had this way of laughing with you when you made mistakes, which helps you learn from them and move forward. I always wanted to rise up to his expectations.”

Nori has been applying what she learned to her job as an English teacher at North Rockland High School. There, as part of her TC-integrated project, she has empowered high school students to lead assemblies on bullying with younger children.

“The work that is done at TC, and a community like TC, is so rare,” Nori says. “I wanted to contribute to ensure that this great work continues for other people.”

For me, those words capture what the TC Annual Fund is all about. Campaigns, of course, bring about quantum leaps forward in the growth and development of any institution. But the Annual Fund is like the family who is always there, in good times and bad, when the party ends and when the next one is still being planned.

We are so grateful to our Annual Fund donors. Their dollars make a difference right now, but their commitment and loyalty are gifts that keep on giving — every single year.



Suzanne M. Murphy

SUZANNE M. MURPHY
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