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Walton Family Foundation Invests \$49 million in Teach For America

Grant to expand educational leadership nationally and to support teaching corps in seven key regions

BENTONVILLE, ARK., July 27, 2011 – The Walton Family Foundation announced today that it is investing \$49.5 million over three years in the national nonprofit Teach For America. Roughly half of the investment will support Teach For America’s national effort to double the size of its teaching corps, as well as support its network of alumni leaders in education. The other half will support ongoing training and professional development for more than 5,000 first- and second-year teachers in seven communities that are priority investment regions for the foundation. The Walton Family Foundation invests in programs and organizations that expand parental choice and equal opportunity in education.

“With this critical investment, Teach For America will be able to develop more of our talented recent college graduates and professionals to become long-term champions of educational equity and excellence,” said Wendy Kopp, chief executive officer and founder of Teach For America. “This support and partnership is a vital part of Teach For America’s effort to expand our national network of corps members and alumni, who are dedicated to improving educational outcomes for children in our urban and rural communities.”

The investment makes the Walton Family Foundation the largest private donor of Teach For America to date and seeks to double the number of corps members placed annually, to 15,000 by 2015. Based on Teach For America’s strong track record of leadership development, the foundation made this investment with the goal of preparing the next generation of education reform leaders. A [2011 study](#) by Harvard education professor Monica Higgins and American Enterprise Institute’s Rick Hess found that Teach For America is producing more founders and leaders of education organizations than any other organization or program.

“The Walton family’s support for Teach For America is driven not only by their ability to place the best and brightest college graduates into classrooms that need them most, but also by their proven track record of producing leaders for the parental choice and education reform movement,” said Jim Blew, who leads the foundation’s K-12 Education Reform efforts. “Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin, founders of the KIPP charter school network; and Michelle Rhee, former Chancellor, D.C. Public Schools and founder of StudentsFirst; trace their education reform roots to Teach For America, as do hundreds of [other reform leaders](#). Because Teach For America alumni and corps members are involved in efforts to empower all parents to choose quality schools for their children, they are inspiring all schools to improve, helping transform public education in our nation.”

On a regional level, the Walton Family Foundation will provide \$24.47 million to help support the training and professional development of more than 5,000 first- and second-year corps members in [seven communities](#), six

of which are in the foundation's priority areas: Denver, CO; Los Angeles, CA; Milwaukee, WI; Newark, NJ; New Orleans, LA; and Washington, D.C.

The grant also has a strong emphasis on the impoverished Delta Region of Arkansas and Mississippi, an area in which the foundation has long invested in economic and community development initiatives. This includes a relationship with Teach For America's Delta site that began in 1991. Teach For America alumni are having a large impact on the communities of the Delta, with 250 alumni still working in the region. Teach For America alumni in community leadership roles include Birdette Hughey, (Mississippi Delta Corps '09), 2011 Mississippi Delta Teacher of the Year; Doug Friedlander (Mississippi Delta Corps '04), president of the Helena-West Helena Chamber of Commerce; and Scott Shirey (South Louisiana Corps '98) founder and executive director of KIPP Delta Public Schools.

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. Teach For America is building a strong pipeline of leaders in education, with two-thirds of its 24,000 alumni working full-time in the field, including more than 550 alumni serving as school principals or school system leaders. In addition, many alumni are launching innovative efforts to expand educational opportunity.

Since 1993 and prior to today's announcement, the Walton Family Foundation has contributed more than \$22 million to Teach For America. This investment more than doubles the foundation's previous commitments to Teach For America.

About the Walton Family Foundation

Driven by the urgent need to dramatically raise student achievement, particularly in low-income neighborhoods, the Walton Family Foundation has invested more than \$1 billion to date in initiatives that expand parental choice and equal opportunity in education. Empowering parents to choose quality schools, regardless of type - traditional public, private or public charter school - will help spur the bold transformation of our national K-12 system of public education. Our nation's children will only reach their potential in today's global economy by having access to a high-quality, publicly funded education. Visit the foundation at www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org.

About Teach For America

Teach For America is the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates who commit to teach for two years in urban and rural public schools and become lifelong leaders in expanding educational opportunity. This fall, 9,300 corps members will be teaching in 43 regions across the country while nearly 24,000 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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