

Highlighting the 2018-19 NASDTEC Forward Fund Recipients

If you had the pleasure of attending the 92nd NASDTEC Annual Meeting, held in June 2019, in Denver, Co, you met four outstanding NASDTEC Forward Fund recipients, representing each of the NASDTEC regions, who absolutely captivated the audience with their vision, experiences, and commitment to our profession.

The initial priority of the Forward Fund is to support classroom teachers, especially those in under-represented groups and those who serve in high-need schools. Learn more about these extraordinary individuals below and how they are using the \$1000 grant that your generosity made possible.

First Four Recipients: Their Vision and Use of Funds



WESTERN REGION

Kareem Neal
Self-contained Special Education Teacher
Maryvale High School
Phoenix Union High School District
Phoenix, Arizona

How the Forward Funds will be used: “The funds will be used to purchase journals for discussion groups and affirmations at our social justice camp called Panthertown. The camp is an annual social justice trip to Prescott, AZ where students learn leadership skills and do activities that help them open their minds to combat differences that keep people from connecting with their peers. If there are funds left over, we will put it towards empowerment boards, that students break after writing their goals and obstacles for creating change back on campus.”

Expected Outcomes: “Students typically come back to campus determined to make the school a more inclusive place. Past outcomes from Panthertown include: The development of a Best Buddies Club (a club where “typical” students and students with special needs work together on projects, sporting events, etc.), A Day Of Unplugging (where students all kept their phones off for the school day in order to connect with peers), Mix-It-Up Day (where students all pledged to sit with new people all day), Say No to the R Word Day (where students signed pledges and decorated the schools in an effort to raise awareness about the word retarded), and mental health boxes to combat drug use on campus. Every year, the club decides on a new project for the year. They also have started a website called Humansofmaryvale that brings awareness to issues of body image, race, sex, gender, etc.”

About the Forward Fund: “I hope that all of you realize how much your efforts affect real change in schools that need it most. I can’t wait to send pictures from our project.”



CENTRAL REGION

Leah Juelke
EL (English Learner) English Teacher
Fargo South High
Fargo Public Schools,
Fargo, North Dakota

How the Forward Funds will be used: “The Forward Funds will be used to support refugee and immigrant English Learners at Fargo South High School.

1. In the Partnership for New Americans class, students in the EL program who are new to the country are partnered with native born students. This class helps students understand their new school and community. Funds will be used to purchase supplies for the class, such as notebooks, pumpkins (for carving), and supplies for cultural food days. In addition, students create a lesson plan about their native country to teach to the local elementary school students. Funds will also be used for transportation and lesson supplies.
2. Create a care station in the classroom. This station will have snacks, headphones, school supplies and a phone charging station.
3. Diversity Night - Students will work with the neighboring high school to create a diversity night, which would be open to the public. Funds will be used to bring in local ethnic restaurants that will set up food sample booths. Also, funds will go to advertising, supplies (henna, crafts, etc.) and a stipend for local performers.”

Expected Outcomes: “I hope that the outcome of these initiatives will give EL students educational and socio-emotional support to succeed in school and assimilate into society. Being able to provide hands-on activities and field trips for the Partnership for New Americans class will help our new students become actively engaged in school and the community. Creating a care station in the classroom helps meet the basic needs of students. Students often come hungry to class due to not being able to afford lunch or because they did not have adequate transportation to arrive early enough for breakfast. Being that students some students are socio-economically disadvantaged, have difficult home lives, or are unaccompanied refugee minors, there are some basic needs that students need met before they are ready to learn. Providing snacks, toiletries, and getting cellphones out of their hands and left in a corner of the room at a charging station will help meet needs and increase attention. A diversity night would help bring the community together by celebrating the many cultures that make up our student population. Working with the neighboring high school will also help to create a collaborative approach to educating the community about our New American population.”

About the Forward Fund: “I am so very thankful to be able to support my English Language students through the Forward Fund Award. The work that NASDTEC is doing to value students and teachers is remarkable. Investing in quality programs for our most disadvantaged students is the key to future success.”



NORTHEAST REGION

**Richard Warren, Jr.,
Eighth grade science teacher,
Crisfield High School and Academy
Somerset County Public Schools
Crisfield, Maryland**

How the Forward Funds will be used: “With the forward fund, I will strengthen my partnership with the Teacher Academy of Maryland schools- a high school student to teacher pipeline program. I will do this in 3 specific ways.

1. Touring TAM schools to recruit more high school students to become teachers, with a special emphasis on male teachers of color.
2. Sponsoring TAM students with active memberships in the national Educators Rising program.
3. Attending the national Educators Rising conference for profession development in order to help build the instructional capacity of TAM students.”

Expected Outcomes: “The expected outcomes are to 1) tour TAM schools and recruit at least 10 students to become teachers, with a special emphasis on male teachers of color; 2) sponsor at least 10 students with active membership in the national Educators Rising Program; and 3) attend the national Educators Rising Conference for professional development (PD) and use this PD to deliver a keynote address and workshop at the #Teach MD Inaugural Conference. The goal of this conference is the recruitment of a diverse pool of high school and college students into the teaching profession. It will target students enrolled in the Teacher Academies of Maryland and colleges students that have not elected education as their major.”

About the Forward Fund:

Longer Version if we can fit it in – a great story:

“One of the most rewarding aspects as it pertains to my journey as Maryland State Teacher of the Year is being able to connect with other educators who are extremely passionate about education like myself. That passion gives me courage to stand in any arena and say that I am proud to be a teacher!

It also pushes me to reflect on why I became a teacher in the first place. Two educators changed my life. Mrs. Heidi, my high school anatomy teacher - She gave me hope when I felt hopeless, belief when I was in doubt, and personalized academic support to make sure that I graduated from high school and got into college.

Second, Mr. Taylor, who was a school principal - He was the first person to invite me back into a place that never imagine I'd return to after college, public school. He offered me an opportunity to mentor young males of color. Then he offered me a substitute teaching job. For the first time in my life, I considered becoming a teacher, and I never looked back.

What I neglected to mention was that Mrs. Heidi was white and Mr. Taylor was black. Mrs. Heidi helped

me to break down the barriers and get to the next step in my life. Mr. Taylor, helped me to see the possibility that I could be an asset to education. Both served as pivotal figures as to who I am today, and it speaks to the value of that diversity brings to education and the impact it can have on students.

It is for this reason that my work has been to improve the student to teacher pipeline with a special emphasis on diversifying the profession. I look forward to strengthening my existing partnership with aspiring educator programs at the high school level. With the help of the NASDTEC Forward Fund, I can continue investing into the next generation of educators and return the favor that was given to me years ago.”

Shorter version: “My work has been to improve the student to teacher pipeline with a special emphasis on diversifying the profession. I look forward to strengthening my existing partnership with aspiring educator programs at the high school level. With the help of the NASDTEC Forward Fund, I can continue investing into the next generation of educators and return the favor that was given to me years ago.”



SOUTHERN REGION

Jeff Maxey
Special Education Resource Teacher
Starr Elementary School
Anderson District Three
Starr, South Carolina

How the Forward Funds will be used: “Teacher Leadership and Family Engagement for Students with Disabilities: Families of students with disabilities in rural and impoverished settings are often disengaged with their child's school due to negative experiences as a parent or even from the past as a student themselves. At the same time, general education teachers often experience difficulties in knowing best practices to engage families of students with special needs. The NASDTEC Forward Fund Grant will be used to create a replicable model to increase family engagement through positive teacher/family/student interactions while providing professional development for teachers to increase knowledge and skills to facilitate this exchange.”

Expected Outcomes: “The project goals are 1) to increase teacher leadership by providing opportunities for professional growth in communication and interaction with parents of students with disabilities; 2) to increase family engagement in their child’s school and educational progress; and 3) to increase student progress through positive school/family relationships.”

About the Forward Fund: “As an inaugural Fast Forward Fellow, it is an honor to work together with the membership of NASDTEC on a project that can produce lifelong results in the lives of students with disabilities and the teachers and families who serve them each day.”

Let's make the 2019-20 NASDTEC Forward Fund a great success.

Pay It Forward By Giving Back here: <https://www.nasdtec.net/donations/fund.asp?id=5215>.

Submitted by:

Anne Marie Fenton

Chair, NASDTEC Forward Fund