

STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT 2015

TEACH FOR AMERICA - JACKSONVILLE



TEACHFORAMERICA

DEMOGRAPHICS SHOULD NOT DETERMINE

DESTINY

EDUCATION

IS THE GREAT EQUALIZER

WE ARE EDUCATORS,

EDUCATION LEADERS AND EDUCATION ADVOCATES

JOINED TOGETHER IN A GROWING

MOVEMENT

WORKING TO ENSURE ALL CHILDREN REACH

FULL POTENTIAL





Our work is driven by this belief:
One day, all children in this nation
will have the opportunity to attain
an excellent education.

DEAR TEACH FOR AMERICA FRIENDS AND FAMILY,

Teach For America - Jacksonville is proud to be a partner in the work to provide every student in Jacksonville the opportunity to achieve their full potential. We first partnered with Duval County Public Schools in 2008, responding to community members across Jacksonville who came together to demand equal access to excellent education for every student. Today, nearly **200** corps members are teaching in more than 40 of Jacksonville's highest need schools, reaching more than **16,000 students**. More than **150** local alumni are working across a range of fields in our city to address the root causes of educational inequity. Our work is driven by this belief: **One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.**

Jacksonville is a community where everyone comes together – from parents and students to school district leaders, elected officials, and the philanthropic community – and commits themselves to educational equity. This community rallied together and raised more than **\$4 million dollars in 30 days** to bring in Teach For America as a partner. We understand this is a community that cares deeply about its students and their futures. This is a place where, despite some historical scars, people will unite toward a common goal and make investments in solutions to address the challenges. This is a city that realizes in order to reach its fullest potential, it must prioritize educating every single child at a high level.

Over the past seven years, we've worked with our partners and seen strong results: **thousands of students have experienced measurable academic growth; hundreds of new, committed educators have made Jacksonville their home; and principals are highly satisfied with corps members and are eager to hire more.** While we are proud of these accomplishments, we know we still have work to do as we partner with our district to improve outcomes for our students. With a new Executive Director set to start in the summer of 2015, a strong foundation has been set along with a powerful and driven team to ensure we continue to work toward **One Day**. We have the power and a collective responsibility to set the standard for what is possible, what people believe about our students, and what our students believe about themselves.

In this community impact report we hope you'll learn more about this critical work and some of the folks who are committed to it; and how you can be a partner to ensure that every child in Jacksonville has the opportunity for an excellent education.

Crystal Rountree
Executive Director (2008-2015)
Teach for America - Jacksonville

Steve Halverson
Chair, Jacksonville
Regional Advisory Board

HOW TFA WORKS

2 YEARS

TFA corps members commit at least two years to teaching in high-needs, hard-to-staff schools.

11,000+ CORPS MEMBERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN 2014 - 2015 SCHOOL YEAR

After two years, corps members join the strong force of TFA alumni continuing to teach and bringing their experience to other sectors.

50 TFA REGIONS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

PROJECT TO HAVE A FORCE OF OVER 35,000 ALUMNI IN 2015 AND IT WILL ONLY KEEP GROWING

CREATING STRONG COMMUNITIES



BECOMING PART OF THE SOLUTION

One fact exemplifies why Jacksonville has taken action for educational equity: Duval County Public Schools' (DCPS) 8th graders from low-income communities are half as likely to be proficient in reading and math as their affluent peers. Jacksonville wants every child to have the opportunity of an excellent education. Gary Chartrand, Florida Department of Education State Board of Education Chair, says, "In Jacksonville, there's



There's momentum to have one of the best large urban school districts."

an energetic, reform-minded movement. That's not only the district, but also the community.

Since 2008, Teach For America – Jacksonville (TFA-Jax) has been a leading teacher recruitment and development partner for hard-to-



staff, high-poverty schools across DCPS. "One of Jacksonville's greatest strengths has been an infusion of people coming in who love Jacksonville, bringing new ideas, and contributing in a positive way," says Nathaniel Glover, Edward Waters College President.

Growing its enrollment more than 50 percent, TFA-Jax has endeavored to attract and retain passionate teachers (corps members) to serve and lead in DCPS schools and call Jacksonville home.

1990

2008

2009

2011

2012



Teach For America (TFA) founded



TFA-Jax launches in Jacksonville as the 27th Teach For America region



Second cohort of 50 corps members arrives in Jax, bringing corps member total to 100



The Schultz Center for Teaching & Leadership report highlights TFA-Jax corps members' consistent, positive impact in every subject and every grade level tested



TFA-Jax increases its incoming corps members from 50 to 100, bringing corps member total to 150

Jacksonville's alumni footprint grows to 100 partnering with 150 corps members for a force of 250 in Jax



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS



Dr. Nikolai Vitti, superintendent of DCPS schools, strives to generate change at scale, creating opportunities for students that may not have otherwise existed. By incorporating multiple education non-profits and organizations, such as TFA, into the

DCPS strategic plan, Dr. Vitti envisions DCPS becoming a national model for large school urban reform. TFA plays a major role in helping DCPS fill vacancies in its schools while simultaneously developing leaders who



DUVAL COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

can continue their impact after their two-year commitment. Dr. Vitti says, “The DCPS – TFA partnership has to evolve to keep TFA alumni in Jacksonville, even if they are not in the classroom; their experience as educators and their focus on narrowing the achievement gap can transcend their teaching positions...they would still contribute to the transformation of DCPS by being equity warriors in the city.”

TFA-JAX IS JUST GETTING WARMED UP

2013

TFA-Jax adds 100 corps members growing to a total of 200 members

2014

DCPS renews three-year contract partnering with TFA-Jax

2015

TFA-Jax chosen as a key investment by the Quality Education for All Fund (QEA)

TFA-Jax chosen as site to host the TFA annual Alumni Educators Conference bringing 1,000 national TFA alum

Jacksonville’s alumni footprint grows to 150 combined with 200 corps members for a force of 350 in Jax

Five TFA-Jax alumni become school leaders in DCPS schools

HOW IT WORKS

TEACHERS

We recruit remarkable, diverse individuals to become teachers filling vacant positions in low-income communities in Jacksonville.

Corps members (CMs) are prepared with rigorous summer training and student teaching to support their immediate impact, followed by structured coaching and development throughout their two-year commitment.

LEADERS

Formal and informal experiences develop relevant leadership skills, whether or not CMs stay in education.

LEARNERS

All efforts focus on increasing educational equity so that all children reach full potential.

PARTNERS

As part of the solution, we value the opportunity to share practices and enrich community efforts.

Community advocates help spread the message about the root causes of educational inequity and champion policy changes and programmatic efforts, such as TFA, in creating systemic change.

ADVOCATES

Creating and partnering with informed community members to create lasting change in education.

By integrating alumni into communities, we help spread and scale the movement toward educational equity for children everywhere.

Continuous learning helps foster lifelong leadership in our alumni as they work at every level of education and across other professional sectors ensuring the sustainability of the long-term movement.

STRONG COMMUNITIES

TOGETHER THESE PATHS FORM A NETWORK — CONNECTING, EXPANDING AND STRENGTHENING THE MOVEMENT TO PROVIDE ALL CHILDREN WITH ACCESS TO A GREAT EDUCATION, WHICH, IN TURN, STRENGTHENS THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITIES.

“ Teaching is not easy.
Understand that it is not about
you, it is about your students.”

– LAUREN APOLITO

“ Teaching is the only place
that every day you impact
someone’s life.”

– AMANDA WHARTON

CREATING STRONG LEARNERS

CHANGING STUDENTS’ LIVES

Brothers **Steven and Carnell** are students at Martin Luther King Elementary, where they met teachers Amanda Wharton and Lauren Apolito. Lauren and Amanda were part of the 2008 and 2009 TFA-Jax corps, respectively, at MLK Elementary, and chose to stay there.

With the support of their teachers, Steven and Carnell are achieving higher reading levels. Carnell, previously in Ms. Wharton’s 3rd grade class and now in Ms. Apolito’s 5th grade class, says, “They help with work — they always help. They have helped me with my reading by helping me sound out words and break them down.” Carnell added 32 points on a district test in just six months due to his perseverance and the support of the teachers. As Carnell excels, Steven’s excitement and high



achievement in math is spilling over to reading. Supporting the boys’ academic success is the teachers’ strong partnership with the boys’ mother, ensuring consistency at home.

Both Lauren and Amanda have been **Teacher of the Year** at MLK; they attribute much of their students’ triumphs to their TFA training, which instilled a belief in the great possibilities of all children.

84%

OF TFA-JAX TEACHERS
STAY FOR A 2ND YEAR
(VS. 77% OF NON-TFA TEACHERS)

60%

TFA TEACHERS RETURNING
FOR A 3RD YEAR AT DCPS

43% MORE

MATH LEARNED IN A YEAR
BY TFA-TAUGHT STUDENTS

CREATING STRONG TEACHERS

“There are two parts of being developed as a teacher and a leader: the willingness to be developed and the drive in the work you do.”

– CHRIS FRILLS



BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

Teach For America recruits a diverse pool of individuals from more than 850 colleges and universities to lead the efforts for educational excellence and equity. Jacksonville’s recent corps has been the most diverse yet, with **74 percent** identifying themselves as people of color or from a low-income background. These individuals begin with a two-year commitment to teach. They then join our alumni network and, whether in education or other fields, continue to advocate for students.

Alumnus **Chris Frills** joined TFA-Jax in 2013. Growing up in Chicago, Chris felt firsthand the importance of teachers. “Whether it was staying afterschool, spending time on the weekends, or hosting a peace march in the neighborhood, those teachers resonated with me,” Chris says.

Determined to become a “great teacher” and serve as a critical leader and role model, Chris teaches 5th grade math and is the grade-level chair at KIPP Impact Middle School. His impact? On the Measure of Academic Progress test, students in Chris’ 5th grade class had an **83 percent growth rate** among those who are now entering the top quartile of all 5th grade students. His secret? Chris identifies with his students, implements individualized strategies for current needs and instills motivation for the long-term.

Chris is a **national Sue Lehmann nominee**, an award given to only one corps member out of TFA’s thousands of talented teachers. His goals include becoming a principal and working with other educators and families to set students on a positive path.

“TFA is very strategic about who it recruits: They’re motivated and highly gifted academically. When you couple intelligence and passion, you create a change agent.”

– DR. NIKOLAI VITTI,
DCPS Superintendent

SINCE 2008...

1
TOP-FIVE
TOY FINALIST
FOR THE DISTRICT

3 NAMED
SEMI-FINALISTS FOR
DUVAL COUNTY’S
TEACHER
OF THE YEAR

22
TFA-JAX
TEACHERS WON
THEIR SCHOOL’S
TEACHER
OF THE YEAR

29
TFA TEACHERS AND
ALUMNI HAVE WON
TEACHER
OF THE YEAR

“TFA’s impact in my home drew me in. I saw how my relatives struggled with reading. I thought about how important this work was for my family - and Jacksonville - to succeed.”

– CHELSEA MATTHEWS

CREATING LIFELONG LEADERS



INSPIRING A LIFELONG COMMITMENT

TFA - Jax alumni work tirelessly with students and families as teachers, district leaders and advocates. Since 2008, **29** TFA-Jax teachers and alumni have earned **Teacher of the Year** at their schools. **Chelsea Matthews**, a 2010 Jacksonville corps alumna, is now assistant principal at Andrew Jackson High School, part of Duval County Public Schools’ (DCPS) Transformation Region.

A Jacksonville native, the movement to achieve educational equity is personal for her. After two years in the corps, she knew she would continue. “My third year was even better — that’s when I got hooked,” Chelsea says about Northwestern Middle School, where she inspired students and simultaneously served as the 8th Grade Level Chair, content chair, and Lead Team-Up teacher. Chelsea also participated in the **Summer Principals Academy**,

a partnership with DCPS and Columbia University.

TFA served as Chelsea’s door into the education field for which she is so passionate. As an administrator, Chelsea will promote significant change within Jacksonville and across the nation as she aspires to open a school devoted to innovation and sustainable high results.



The Summer Principals Academy sends teachers with leadership potential to Columbia University for two consecutive summers to earn their master’s degree in education while apprenticing under principals with proven leadership during the school year.

By 2018, TFA-Jax is projected to have 12 alumni school leaders working within DCPS schools.

THE TFA-JACKSONVILLE ALUMNI REACH STRETCHES ON:



SUMMER PRINCIPALS ACADEMY

	2	TOTAL GRADS
2015 CLASS	3	PROJECTED ALUM SCHOOL LEADERS BY 2018:
2014 CLASS	4	
		12



CREATING STRONG PARTNERS

“In every stage of my career I have asked, ‘How I can expand my impact?’”

– TREY CSAR

INCREASING OUR IMPACT

Jacksonville is experiencing a positive change toward education equity. We value our incredible partners and their work to improve educational opportunities for all children.

One partner is **Trey Csar, Jacksonville Public Education Fund (JPEF) President**. Before coming to Jacksonville, Trey was as a 2002 TFA – Houston corps teacher at a high-needs elementary school. He then served as an assistant principal at KIPP New Orleans West, a Houston school set up after Hurricane Katrina for low-income evacuees. During this time, Trey witnessed a 5th grader serving as the caretaker for his bedridden mother. This experience instilled in Trey a civic responsibility toward education.

educators, and the experience TFA alumni bring into a variety of sectors.

Trey extends this challenge: “It’s going to take a chorus of voices to keep our focus on educational equity. Can we keep education on the front burner? There are a million other things competing for attention. Yes, we are on the right track. Do we have the stamina to stay there?”

JPEF | QEA

Jacksonville Public Education Fund (JPEF) partners with organizations and individuals to advocate for high-quality public schools for all children. Through their Quality Education For All Fund (QEA), JPEF administers grants for programs that attract and retain high-quality educators for our area.

Trey views TFA’s mission to affect social change as the epicenter of our work. He values our ability to attract and retain high-quality



“Teach For America is an organization we truly believe in. TFA is crucial to the work of

AmeriCorps in Jacksonville and across the nation.”

– CHESTER SPELLMAN,
CEO, Volunteer Florida

TFA IS ONE OF
642
**EDUCATION
NON-PROFITS**
WORKING TOGETHER FOR
EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN
JACKSONVILLE

WORKING
ALONGSIDE

30



**AMERICORPS
PROGRAMS**

IN FLORIDA MANAGED BY STATE COMMISSION,
VOLUNTEER FLORIDA

“I have a commitment and responsibility as a member of the community to give back and support the others who need it here.”

– HOLLY FINCHEM

“My role is to keep telling the story and being the ambassador that I am. I have seen it (TFA’s work); I know it’s right.”

– ELLEN WISS

CREATING LIFELONG ADVOCATES

CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE

Jacksonville’s philanthropic community was instrumental in bringing Teach For America’s teachers to our classrooms. Here are two outstanding examples:

As a leader in the education community, **TFA – Jax board member Holly Finchem** was familiar with TFA’s impact elsewhere and immediately became involved when TFA launched here. As a regional board member and Sponsor-A-Teacher participant, Holly sponsored Jennifer Feigert, the Andrew Robinson Elementary 2012 Teacher of the Year. Holly was influential in making a dream come true for 11 of Ms. Feigert’s students. Creating “**Destination College,**” Holly and Jennifer led student visits to the University of Virginia and the College of William & Mary, underscoring the point that every student deserves the opportunity for a college education. In addition to supporting TFA, Holly participates in weekly tutoring at Long Branch

Elementary School, building relationships and supporting individual educational needs.

TFA – Jax board member Ellen Wiss first experienced TFA through her daughter, a Chicago corps member who worked with previously expelled students. Her daughter’s passion affirmed Ellen’s belief that one teacher can transform a child’s life. As the Junior League Education Committee Chair, Ellen first interacted with Jacksonville corps members when she volunteered in a TFA classroom. “I realized the power of one and the importance of the teacher in the classroom; she did not allow anything to stop her from teaching,” says Ellen. Through **Sponsor-A-Teacher**, Ellen partnered with that teacher for the school’s very first Scholastic Book Fair, which is now an annual event. Ellen remains in the Sponsor-A-Teacher program and is active on the TFA – Jax regional board.



PRINCIPAL’S CORNER

“I always want TFA teachers at my school. They’re always working to do what’s best for students.”

– MS. KIMBERLY BROWN,
Principal, MLK Elementary

FROM 2008 TO 2015, **600 TEACHERS** HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO **JACKSONVILLE** THROUGH GENEROUS DONATIONS FROM **100 INDIVIDUALS** **25 CORPORATIONS** AND **10 FOUNDATIONS**

93% OF PRINCIPALS BELIEVE TFA **TEACHERS** ARE MAKING A **POSITIVE** DIFFERENCE AT **THEIR SCHOOLS**

INCREASING OUR TFA-JAX IMPACT



EXPANDING OUR FOOTPRINT

Many efforts address injustices facing America's children who grow up in poverty, and we strive to be a key partner. To help end educational inequity, Teach For America develops teacher-leaders who offer their students educational opportunities, and supports our alumni's work in education and related fields. We drive change through leadership inside and outside the classroom. We believe that this is a unique role, and our important efforts, alongside many others, will mean reaching our vision of **"One Day"** in our lifetime.

REGIONAL VISION

We are committed to seeing the day when every child in Jacksonville will attain an education that:

- 1. GIVES THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE CHOICES ABOUT THEIR FUTURE;**
- 2. ENABLES THEM TO BE WELL-PREPARED FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE, CAREER AND LIFE; AND**
- 3. PROPELS THEM AS THE LEADERS THAT CREATE A JUST SOCIETY FOR ALL CHILDREN IN OUR CITY, STATE AND COUNTRY.**

"When I think about TFA, I think about all of it. I was taught by TFA in school and now I am working for the organization. I'm helping continue that inspiration and I'm part of the movement."

– ASANTE DEAN, 2013
Jacksonville corps member

"The TFA alumni movement has tremendous potential. We are on the cusp of having a huge alumni base in Jacksonville. As alumni, we want to push outside of our four walls and partner with others to affect the Jacksonville community."

– LAUREN MARTIN, 2010
Jacksonville corps member
and Manager of Recruitment
& Talent, KIPP Jacksonville
Schools

“TFA gave me a chance and trained me. It takes people outside of education and invests in them, to show them the greatness within. TFA trained me and gave me the support to bring out the best I had inside me to teach my students.”

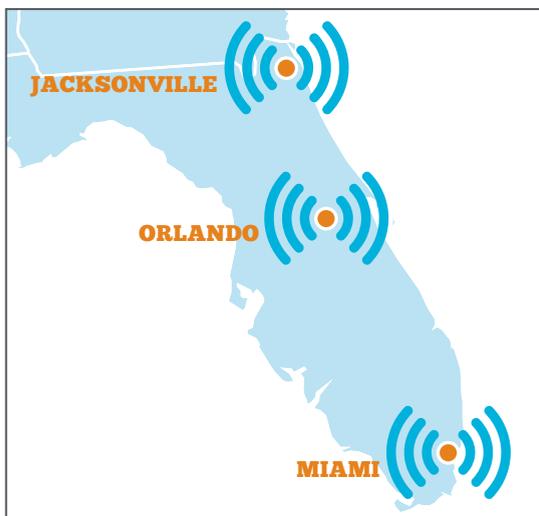
– LATOYA RAINES, 2013
Jacksonville corps member

BY 2018

Currently, Teach For America trains and supports around **200** corps members working in Duval County Public Schools every year, reaching approximately **16,000**, or **25** percent, of all low-income and minority students in more than **40** high-needs schools across Duval County.

- We expect more than **250** TFA alumni will be living and working here, making an impact toward educational equity in Jacksonville
- **12** TFA alumni are projected to be principals in DCPS schools, helping to ensure that every DCPS student, no matter what part of the city they grow up in, receives the opportunity for an excellent education
- Teach For America teachers and alumni will, collectively, impact approximately **35,000** students in Jacksonville

TFA'S STATE-WIDE IMPACT



BIG GOALS

TEACH FOR AMERICA'S FIVE COMMITMENTS

A recent **100**-day “listening tour” by our national co-CEOs led to five commitments to our organization and community:

- 1. BEING BETTER LISTENERS TO BOTH OUR FRIENDS AND CRITICS**
- 2. RE-ENVISIONING OUR ONGOING WORK AS ROOTED IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES**
- 3. TAILORING OUR GROWTH PLANS TO THE NEEDS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY**
- 4. INVESTING MORE HEAVILY IN OUR CORPS MEMBERS, FROM SELECTION TO SUPPORT**
- 5. LEADING WITH HEART AND BUILDING STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS**

JACKSONVILLE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Our vision for Jacksonville depends on advancing two key priorities:

- **UNDERSTANDING THE BROADER EFFORTS TO FOSTER EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND A BELIEF IN WHAT'S POSSIBLE**
- **UNDERSTANDING AND BELIEF IN TFA'S ROLE IN THIS WORK**

Our strategies to promote these priorities include:

- **BUILDING DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE**
- **BUILDING STRONG MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS**
- **ENGAGING OUR BASE**
- **ELEVATING OTHER VOICES**



CREATING STRONG ALUMNI

“Once you see the social injustice of educational inequity, you can’t turn around. The spreading of knowledge through experiences is even more profound than people generally give it credit.”

– JOHN FAILS

MOVING TOWARD “ONE DAY”

John Fails is many things: Jacksonville native, Army Veteran, 2013 Teach For America corps member, father and husband. All of this makes up the man who teaches philosophy, economics, history and government at First Coast High School, using critical thinking methods to challenge his students and enhance their education.



John Fails (right) with his Lieutenant in Baghdad, Iraq

While serving **on a team** as an Army Sniper Radio Telephone Operator in the 82nd Airborne from 2002 to 2004, John held

the hands of children in Iraq on their way to school, ensuring their safety. “It was a really stark reality – these children were willing to risk their lives for education,” he says. “When I got out of the military I wanted to do something for social change.”

Connecting with the mission, he joined Teach For America in Jacksonville in 2013. He was determined to bring excellent educational opportunities to his students, as well as connect their education to their real-life paths to adulthood. During his first year of teaching, John was humbled when one of his AP history students, Jessica (a Duval County Sunshine State Scholar), identified him as her most impactful teacher.

Through ongoing support from his colleagues and TFA staff, John has been able to refine his teaching skills. Looking forward, John would like to impact education policy. John says, “I have lived through a lot things. I have a responsibility to the community, I have more life to make up for than myself.”



**BE THE
CHANGE**

GET INVOLVED WITH TEACH FOR AMERICA

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO SUPPORT TEACH FOR AMERICA – JACKSONVILLE:

- BECOME A CORPS MEMBER
- BECOME A DONOR
- BECOME A BOARD MEMBER
- VISIT A CLASSROOM
- MENTOR A CORPS MEMBER
- ATTEND OUR EVENTS
- ADVOCATE OUR WORK
- WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT
- RECRUIT A CORPS MEMBER
- SHARE SUPPORT WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

REACH OUT TODAY!

VISIT

teachforamerica.org/jacksonville

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TEACHFORAMERICA

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TEACHFORAMERICA

ONE DAY

ALL CHILDREN IN THIS
NATION WILL HAVE THE
OPPORTUNITY TO ATTAIN
AN EXCELLENT EDUCATION.

Our mission is to enlist, develop and mobilize our nation's most promising future leaders to grow and strengthen the movement for educational equity.

JOIN US IN STRENGTHENING THE MOVEMENT.
VISIT [TEACHFORAMERICA.ORG / JACKSONVILLE](https://teachforamerica.org/jacksonville)

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