

**EMBARGOED UNTIL APRIL 5, 2017 AT 12:00 P.M.**



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## **17 EAST HARTFORD TEACHERS WILL ENGAGE THE WORLD FOR THEIR STUDENTS** *Fund for Teachers Announces Professional Learning Grants*

**APRIL 5, 2017, EAST HARTFORD, CT** – Today, the partnership of the Dalio Foundation, East Hartford Public Schools, and Fund for Teachers (FFT) celebrates 17 East Hartford teachers receiving professional learning grants. “We are thrilled to continue to partner with Fund for Teachers and the Dalio Foundation, and to benefit from the powerful learning experiences we know our East Hartford FFT Fellows will have from being a part of this fellowship program,” said Nathan D. Quesnel, Superintendent of East Hartford Public Schools. “This is a dream come true for impassioned East Hartford educators who are generously provided with the resources to pursue their passions. I am especially pleased for our students next year who will be blessed to have East Hartford FFT Fellows as classroom teachers.”

East Hartford’s teachers are part of a larger cohort of 210 Connecticut teachers taking part in this year’s fellowship program. As FFT Fellows, these passionate and dedicated teachers will spend part of their summer vacations traveling around the world to pursue personally-designed learning experiences in various fields and disciplines. Teachers will document their remarkable journeys, and when they return, they will apply what they learned to enhance student experiences in their classrooms. In total, 145 teacher-created professional learning projects are being awarded grant funding, enabling teachers working in 123 schools in 60 public school districts to embark on summer learning odysseys in 48 countries for the benefit of thousands of students.

“The Dalio Foundation and Fund for Teachers supports teachers who identify needs and opportunities in their school communities, seek out solutions, and strive for excellent teaching and learning by demonstrating awareness, inquiry, empathy, and resilience. We are proud to add these newly-selected Connecticut FFT Fellows to our cohort of teacher experts and leaders,” said Karen Webb, FFT Executive Director.

This year’s FFT application process showcased an inspiring theme of teachers helping other teachers to pursue their professional goals and passions. Dozens of 2016 FFT Fellows were instrumental in recruiting and increasing the number of Connecticut teachers who applied for FFT fellowships in 2017, and many of the planned learning projects rely on teacher-to-teacher sharing across cultures. FFT Fellows will explore topics including: education leadership, history, kinesiology, language through

cultural immersion, literature, math, science, social justice, special education, technology, and the visual and performing arts.

Here are the teacher-created professional learning projects that will enrich teacher and student experiences throughout East Hartford:

- **Audrey Aresco and Carol Fellenstein of O'Connell Elementary School** will learn to enhance classroom differentiation techniques at an International Baccalaureate (IB) conference in Berlin, Germany, and then visit two IB schools in Switzerland to deepen their proficiencies with the IB curriculum.
- **Janet Berzinkas of Silver Lane Elementary School** will attend the International Literacy Conference in Orlando, Florida to learn from literacy experts and network with colleagues from around the world to raise grade-level proficiencies and better support a professional learning community in East Hartford.
- **Rebecca Cutkomp of East Hartford High School** will explore Washington's Spokane Indian Reservation and Alaska's Denali National Park to enrich student learning in thematic units on identity and aid in students' deeper insight into rhetorical analysis.
- **Kim DeMarco and Amanda Miser of Franklin H. Mayberry Elementary School** will research their personal histories and genetic blueprints while experiencing the culture, history, and schools of Vietnam, bridging the gap between students of diverse cultures and encouraging a celebration of differences while enhancing discourse.
- **Jeffrey Erami of East Hartford High School** will research historical and cultural sites relevant to the dynamics between the United States and Great Britain to develop students' understanding and historical perspectives.
- **Patricia Hackett of East Hartford High School** will dive into theatre at three of its sources – Dublin, London/Stratford-upon-Avon, and Paris – in order to engage reluctant readers in poetry, drama, and art.
- **Amy Holt of Franklin H. Mayberry Elementary School** will attend Spanish Immersion School in Central America while volunteering on community service projects to acquire language skills and deepen her understanding of Hispanic culture in order to facilitate more effective engagement with Hispanic students and families.
- **Paul Horvath of Woodland School** will participate in a Yoga4Classrooms workshop and "Calming Kids," a certified teacher training program in Boulder, CO, to incorporate yoga and mindfulness techniques in the classroom and help students deal with negative behaviors and overall well-being.
- **Thomas Lonsdale and Jessica Peltier of Sunset Ridge School** will participate in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program conference in Berlin, Germany, and then visit local IB schools to study the integration of deliberately-taught communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills into the academic school curriculum.

- **Candace Morgester of East Hartford Middle School** will research in San Francisco, Monterey Bay and Hawaii concepts presented in the JASON Project's "Resilient Planet" curriculum to promote student behaviors of conservation and ecological restoration.
- **Jennifer Pires and Linda Simmons of Gov. William Pitkin Elementary School** will participate in the Creativity Workshop in Barcelona, Spain, learning tools of creative writing, art, photography, storytelling, and mapmaking to inspire student work.
- **Reed Sasso of Stevens High School** will document global warming and environmental conditions in Alaska, Minneapolis, and Seattle to help students gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between humans and the environment.
- **Conan Schreyer of East Hartford Middle School** will complete a Spanish language immersion program at the Rassias Center at Dartmouth College to develop linguistic skills and cultural knowledge to facilitate better communication with English Learners and their parents.

For the second year in a row, the Dalio Foundation has supported FFT and East Hartford Public Schools to provide professional learning grants for teachers. "I am inspired by the teachers' commitment to instill in their students the thrill of learning. To partner with East Hartford Public Schools and Fund for Teachers to help bring this about brings me great joy," said Barbara Dalio of the Dalio Foundation.

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### **About Fund for Teachers**

FFT annually awards grants to Pre-K through 12 teachers to pursue self-designed summer fellowships for professional learning. Connecticut's FFT Fellows were chosen by local selection committees comprised of teachers, administrators, union leaders, and community stakeholders. Through the rigorous selection process, every fellowship application was read three times and carefully reviewed against FFT's objective rubric.

Since 2001, FFT has awarded more than \$27 million in grants, empowering nearly 7,500 teachers to explore their passions, deepen their scholarship, and enhance their craft. FFT Fellows have studied in 145 countries on all 7 continents.

FFT Fellows become powerful change agents in their schools and communities. They inspire and challenge their students to apply their learning to real-world issues, embrace perseverance, take ownership of their learning, and build empathy of others. For more information, visit: [www.fundforteachers.org](http://www.fundforteachers.org).