



DEF Adopts Decatur Alumni Association

During its 107-year history, City Schools of Decatur has operated five different high schools: Decatur High School, Herring Street High School, Trinity High School, Decatur Girls High School and Decatur Boys High School.

It is estimated that more than 40,000 students have graduated from Decatur schools over the last 75 years, many of whom are still living. Though our graduates attended different schools and now live all around the world, they share a common bond with each other: They are part of the proud history of this unique little community we all call home – Decatur.

The idea to form an alumni association is not new. Trinity High School has had a loose association of alumni for years and several attempts have been made to form a Decatur Alumni Association – as early as 1922 and as recently as 10 years ago by volunteers Jamie and Lisa Owen and David and Melinda Mobley. Sustaining these efforts over time has been difficult, however, due to lack of funds and the tremendous amount of volunteer time required to maintain websites, collect and organize records, and communicate with constituents.

When the Decatur Education Foundation approached the Owens and the Mobleys with an offer to adopt the Decatur Alumni Association and broaden it to include graduates from all Decatur schools, they welcomed the idea with open arms. Cynthia Houston and Louise Thrower, leaders of the Trinity alumni group, agreed to join us, too, and a steer-



Above: Recently selected co-chairs of the Decatur Alumni Association, Louise Thrower (Trinity Class of 1961) and Ellen Phelps King (Decatur High School Class of 1956) represented members of the association during graduation exercises for the Decatur High Class of 2007. On behalf of alumni from all of Decatur's high schools, they congratulated the seniors on their accomplishment and welcomed them to "the club." Below right: Sherri Breunig and Bill Funk with consultants from the Goizueta Business School



ing committee was born.

As a first order of business, DEF approached the Goizueta Business School at Emory University to request assistance with a business plan. Students in the business consulting class adopted our organization and worked diligently over a four-month period to conduct research, analyze findings, and produce a business strategy for launching the organization.

Great progress has been made since
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this effort began in the fall of 2006. More than 3,000 alumni have signed up to be included in our database. A full steering committee was recruited and now meets on a monthly basis, and thanks to a financial gift from the Decatur High School Class of 1959, a website is being developed.

Members of the Decatur Schools Alumni Association Steering Committee are:

- Susan Davis Bennett, DHS Class of 1963
- David Bennett, DHS Class of 1963
- Eddie Fowlkes, DHS Class of 1971
- Cynthia Houston, Trinity High Class of 1962
- Doug Joyner, DHS Class of 1956
- Ellen Phelps King, DHS Class of 1956
- David Mobley, DHS Class of 1962
- Melinda James Mobley, DHS Class of 1972
- Lisa Funk Nied, DHS Class of 1982
- Jamie Owen, DHS Class of 1983
- Lisa Reynolds Owen, DHS Class of 1986
- Leisa Brown Powers, DHS Class of 1983
- Louise Thrower, Trinity High Class of 1961
- Fred Turner, DHS Class of 1965
- Carter Wilson, DHS Class of 1972
- Sherri Brown Breunig, former DHS teacher 1980-2000
- William Funk, former DHS principal 1983-1998

The Decatur Alumni Association steering committee (from left, back row): Jamie Owen, Daniel Mobley, Carter Wilson, Lisa Owen, Bill Funk. Front row: Melinda Mobley, Lisa Nied, Ellen King, Louise Thrower and Cynthia Houston.



The Decatur Education Foundation is proud to serve as the parent organization of the Decatur Alumni Association, and we look forward to helping the graduates of all of Decatur's schools stay connected to each other and to their hometown.

If you are interested in joining the Decatur Alumni Association, please visit our web page at www.dhsaa.org. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us at alumni@csdecatur.net.



Clairemont Faculty Wins Prize for Giving

In December 2006, Dr. Phyllis Edwards challenged all Decatur employees to increase their giving to DEF through the payroll deduction program called "One for the Kids." A cash prize was offered to the school staff with the highest participation level. Across the district, the campaign doubled the income DEF receives from employees through payroll deduction. Many thanks to Dr. Edwards for issuing the challenge and congratulations to the faculty and staff of Clairemont Elementary School for winning the award!

“Clairemont Elementary is so appreciative of all the ways the DEF supports us and our students. Our staff was pleased to receive the award for the highest level of participation in the payroll deduction campaign. We cannot imagine life in City Schools of Decatur without the support of DEF.”

— Jan Goodloe, Principal, Clairemont Elementary

Decatur Spirit Earns DEF \$10,000 Prize from ING Marathon

The Atlanta ING Marathon came rolling through Decatur at the end of March 2007. ING challenged communities along the race route to show their spirit by wearing orange and cheering the runners. The organization offered to make a \$10,000 donation to a charity of choice in the community that exhibited the greatest spirit – and Decatur won!

The Decatur Education Foundation was selected to receive the prize money, which will be used to support athletic programs at Renfroe Middle School and Decatur High School.



“ We participate because we recognize that education is not the singular task of our wonderful teachers, but that it also includes the active involvement of the whole community. One of the many reasons to love Decatur is how the city serves as an extension of the classroom. We support DEF because it fosters those connections. ”

— Chris and Anne Sciarone

FOUNDATION FRIENDS

Jamie and Lisa Owen; David and Melinda Mobley

The idea for a Decatur Alumni Association started with Jamie and Lisa Owen and David and Melinda Mobley. Over the last 10 years, they have put a tremendous volunteer effort toward trying to get an alumni association off the ground. They spent many volunteer hours collecting names and addresses and establishing and maintaining a website.

When we approached them with our desire to adopt the alumni association as one of the foundation's projects, they welcomed the idea and agreed to partner with us in the transition. They passed along their records, their Web domain name, and even agreed to serve on the steering committee for the association. We'd like to publicly thank the Owens and Mobleys for their efforts on behalf of all Decatur alums.



Generous Gift Creates Scholarship for Teachers

Long-time Decatur residents Ed and Jane Carriere made a generous donation to the Decatur Education Foundation to endow the Carriere Family Scholarship for Teachers. Having spent 20 years with the Decatur school system, first as a middle school math teacher and later as the district coordinator of math and science, Jane is very familiar with the professional learning needs of teachers. She and Ed designed the annual award to assist teachers who teach in high-need areas (math, science and special education) with expenses associated with graduate study. This is the first scholarship award designed exclusively for the benefit of Decatur teachers.



Mini-Grants for Innovative Instruction Recipients

In 2006-2007, the Decatur Education Foundation gave approximately \$30,000 in grants to Decatur teachers and administrators to support innovative projects designed to assist the school district in meeting its strategic goals of improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap.

Project: Parent Link – Communication for Homeless Families

Amount awarded: \$1,500

Teachers: Faye Wilson, Joan Fisher, Rena Glass-Dixon and Lois Word

School/dept.: District-wide
To purchase pre-paid disposable cell phones for use by homeless families with children in Decatur schools.

Project: Keep Books for Reading

Amount awarded: \$1,123

Teacher: Dianna Watson

School/dept.: Clairemont Elementary
To purchase age-appropriate books at various reading levels for use by students at Clairemont Elementary.

Project: From a Kid's Eye View

Amount awarded: \$1,495

Teachers: Celeste Tibbets and Julie Martin

School/dept.: Clairemont Elementary
To purchase digital cameras for use in documenting field studies and expeditions.

Project: Activotes for Active Assessment

Amount awarded: \$1,500

Teacher: Heather Borowski

School/dept.: Clairemont Elementary
To purchase accessory equipment to make ActivBoards more user friendly for small children.

Project: Outdoor Classroom

Amount awarded: \$856

Teachers: Erin Eliassen and Ashli McMahon

School/dept.: Oakhurst Elementary
To cover expenses related to the creation of an extensive outdoor classroom at Oakhurst Elementary.

Project: Mentoring for Success

Amount awarded: \$550

Teachers: Terry LeCount, Beverly Beyer, Anita Robinson, Mike Dennard, and Erin Eliassen

School/dept.: Oakhurst Elementary
To cover expenses associated with starting a mentoring program for 2nd and 3rd grade boys at Oakhurst Elementary.

Project: Making ActivBoards More User Friendly

Amount awarded: \$790

Teachers: Debbie Lester, Ashli McMahon, Lynn Simpson, Robin Fountain, Wanda Nesbitt, Kira Wilsterman, and Hamilton Edwards

School/dept.: Oakhurst Elementary
To purchase accessory equipment to make ActivBoards more user friendly for small children.

Project: Learning Disguised as a Game Show

Amount awarded: \$770

Teacher: Hamilton Edwards

School/dept.: Oakhurst Elementary
To purchase a buzzer system for use with a competitive quiz bowl game.

Project: Butterfly Garden

Amount awarded: \$800

Teachers: Laura Pitts, Kristen Tavel, Robin Sanders, and Debby Miller

School/dept.: Winnona Park Elementary
To purchase plants, fertilizer, compost, and signage for a butterfly garden at Winnona Park.

Project: Read to the Dog

Amount awarded: \$270

Teacher: Amy Fraser

School/dept.: Winnona Park Elementary
To pay fees associated with bringing a trained therapeutic dog to the classroom to which struggling readers can read aloud.



Life-size Scrabble at Renfroe



Shakespeare Without Tears at Glennwood



Read to the Dog at Winnona Park

“This organization is a large part of why you will never hear any Decatur teacher complain that ‘we don’t have the financial support to truly reach our students.’”

Lynn Holden
Glennwood Academy

Project: Kids Times Newspaper
Amount awarded: \$400
Teacher: Carla von Hoffman
School/dept.: Winnona Park Elementary
To purchase supplies for a student-written and produced newspaper.

Project: Mind and Body Connection
Amount awarded: \$333
Teacher: Amy Fraser
School/dept.: Winnona Park Elementary
To pay for fees associated with infusing yoga instruction into the classroom environment to enhance physical education.

Project: Kids News Program
Amount awarded: \$650
Teacher: Cutia Blunt
School/dept.: Winnona Park Elementary
To purchase equipment for use with a student-produced television news program.

Project: A Creek Runs Through It
Amount awarded: \$1,500
Teachers: Jody Davidson, Lynn Sisler, and Carla von Hoffman
School/dept.: Winnona Park Elementary
To support a learning expedition about indigenous plants in Georgia.

Project: Shakespeare Without Tears
Amount awarded: \$1,500
Teachers: Marcia Pauly and Gloria Lee
School/dept.: Glennwood Academy
To assist with fees for an artist-in-residence program with Atlanta Shakespeare Company.

Project: Alcohol Impairment Simulation
Amount awarded: \$550
Teacher: Rick Snider
School/dept.: Renfroe Middle School
To purchase simulation goggles for use with health students at Renfroe.



Project: Math in the Real World
Amount awarded: \$702
Teacher: Chris Kanne
School/dept.: Renfroe Middle School
To assist with practical applied mathematics lessons for struggling students at Renfroe Middle School.

Project: Life-Size Scrabble Game
Amount awarded: \$411
Teacher: Dick Fuller
School/dept.: Renfroe Middle School
To purchase lumber and materials to be used in creating a large Scrabble board for use with language arts and social studies students at Renfroe Middle School.

Project: Accessorizing the ActivBoard
Amount awarded: \$480
Teacher: Wesley Hatfield
School/dept.: Decatur High School
To purchase an ActivSlate for use with the ActivBoard in one of the high school science classrooms.

Project: History through Primary Sources
Amount awarded: \$1,400
Teacher: Kristen Embry
School/dept.: Decatur High School
To purchase a series of Jackdaw primary resource kits for use in World History classes at Decatur High School.

Project: Reading in Words and Pictures
Amount awarded: \$650
Teacher: Cynde Snider
School/dept.: Decatur High School
To purchase graphic novels for use with English students at Decatur High School.

Project: Shhh...It's a Secret (Staffer)
Amount awarded: \$200
Teachers: Cara Cassell and Amanda Lockhart
School/dept.: Decatur High School
To support a program that pairs new teachers with veteran teachers who serve as their mentors.

Gardening at Oakhurst

Project: Brothers of Leadership and Distinction Spring Break College Tour 2008
Amount awarded: \$1,500
Teacher: Calvin Leaks
School/dept.: Decatur High School
To assist with travel expenses associated with a spring break college tour.

Project: Artistic Inspiration in the Freshman Academy
Amount awarded: \$1,500
Teacher: Cara Cassell
School/dept.: Decatur High School
To pay stipends for artists to conduct a series of workshops linking movement to creative concepts for Decatur High freshmen.

Project: Young Writers for Even Younger Readers
Amount awarded: \$500
Teacher: Cara Cassell
School/dept.: Decatur High School
To cover costs associated with writing and publishing children's literature.

Project: Accessing Literature through Drama
Amount awarded: \$1,500
Teachers: DHS English Department
School/dept.: Decatur High School
To pay stipends for artists to conduct workshops for America, World, and British literature students at Decatur High.

“From an early age my parents taught me that public education was not only about a quality education for the children in my family, but it was also about the quality of life for everyone. The mission of DEF affirms that lesson. Contributing to DEF is one of the most important investments that I can make.”

Julie Freeman
Associate Superintendent

DEF and Ferst Foundation Partner to Promote Childhood Literacy in Decatur

The Decatur Education Foundation has teamed up with the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy to ensure that each child at the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center (CHECLC) has their own personal library of quality children's books to read and enjoy every day!

Thanks to a generous grant from an anonymous donor, each child at the center receives an age-appropriate book mailed to their home every month throughout the year. Included with the book is a newsletter for the family that features a book guide for parents, a child activity page, and other helpful information from the director and teachers of the CHECLC. Teachers at the center also plan classroom activities and learning experiences around the book of the month.

Research shows that children who learn to appreciate books at an early age become lifelong readers and better learners. They are more prepared when they enter school and are more likely to be successful in school and in life. That's why DEF is pleased to be working with the Ferst Foundation on this exciting literacy program for our youngest students. For more information on the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy, visit www.ferstfoundation.org.



Gellerstedt Honored for Service as Board Chair

Members of the Decatur Board of Education together with the DEF Board of Directors showed appreciation to Gayle Gellerstedt for her years of service as the chair of the foundation board by naming the Family Resource Center at College Heights in her honor.

Gellerstedt, who taught at College Heights from 1992 to 1999, is a founding member of the Decatur Education Foundation and served as vice chair of the board for two years and chair of the board for three years. Under her leadership, DEF completed a five-year strategic plan, established numerous governance policies, implemented a communications plan, significantly increased our donor base and annual income, expanded our programs and scholarships, and successfully accomplished special projects like the College Heights Family Resource Center and the Decatur Alumni Association.

"To have been recognized for my life-long commitment to quality education for all children, most especially the youngest of our little ones, was an amazingly personal and meaningful gift to me. I could not have been more surprised or humbly honored," said Gellerstedt.

Adding to their gift of gratitude, the DEF board enhanced the Gayle Gellerstedt Family Resource Center by installing a new story-time corner called "Ms. Gayle's Reading Garden." Artwork, flooring, furniture and decorations form an imaginary garden where storybooks come to life.



FOUNDATION FRIENDS

Robin Doyon

In addition to being a parent to an Oakhurst Elementary student, Robin is a local graphic artist (R.E.D. Designs) who has donated her time and talent on several occasions to help DEF with special art projects. Just to name a few, she designed our 2006 TOUR deCATUR T-shirt, the 2006-2007 wall calendar, and two pieces of artwork that now hang in the Family Resource Center at College Heights ECLC. Robin was instrumental in helping to bring the idea of "Ms. Gayle's Reading Garden" to life.

Robin Doyon with her daughter Ruby Doyon.



DEF's Newest Program: School Improvement Grants

The School Improvement Plan serves as a blueprint of the actions and processes needed to produce school improvement. Once developed, the School Improvement Plan guides resource allocation, professional learning, instructional content and practice, and assessment.

At the suggestion of Superintendent Dr. Phyllis Edwards, the DEF allocated \$10,000 in grants for Glennwood Academy, Renfroe Middle School, and Decatur High School during the 2006-2007 school year to assist with the implementation of each school's School Improvement Plan. Glennwood Academy and Renfroe Middle School used the funds to focus on mathematics instruction and Decatur High School used the funds to assist with piloting a Freshman Academy.

"The school improvement grant allowed us to purchase engaging materials as we launched the new Freshman Success program at DHS," said Lauri McKain-Fernandez, principal of Decatur High School. "We purchased class sets of high-interest books for struggling teens in order to encourage pleasure reading among our students, something that research shows is essential for continued academic growth. Thanks to the support of DEF we've been able to successfully incorporate sustained silent reading as a part of each school day."

The School Improvement Grants have been extended to include Decatur's K-3 schools during the 2007-2008 school year.



“DEF has been instrumental in designing, funding, and implementing our Family Resource Center and front receptionist area for the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center. They’ve also supported our work to promote childhood literacy through book donations, their partnership with the Ferst Foundation, and much more. We appreciate their support!”

— Suzanne Kennedy, director,
College Heights Early Childhood
Learning Center

“We give to DEF to show our appreciation for everything the City Schools of Decatur did for our three graduates and love to pay it forward for future generations!”

— Kathy and David Dorough
faithful sponsors of the TOUR deCATUR

FOUNDATION FRIENDS



Kyle Williams and Larry Kosten

Every year, Kyle and Larry throw a fantastic New Year's party with a cause. Last year, they chose to support the Decatur Education Foundation's Family Resource Center Project at the College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center (CHECLC). They asked each of their guests to bring a gift of books (or cash for books) for the ECLC.

School officials compiled a large list of desired books for families with children ages 0-4. Kyle and Larry registered those titles with the Little Shop of Stories and Amazon.com to make it easy for their guests to select appropriate books. When all was said and done, they donated more than \$2,000 in books to the ECLC and plan to continue working with DEF on the ECLC project in the future.

2007 DEF Scholarship Winners



Carl and Mae Renfroe Memorial Scholarship Awards
 2007 winners: Female: Auyrel Walton, Bennett College; Male: Juan Montier, Purdue University. Pictured with Frank and Sue Tetterton



The Thomas Hawk Memorial Scholarship Award
 2007 winner: Joseph Gillespie, University of Georgia, pictured with Dr. Gary Hawk, Rev. Kate Hawk, and Alexis Hawk



Westchester Life Skills Scholarship
 2007 winner: Karman Duchon, Earlham College, pictured with Gary Simms



The Harry Edwards Class of 1960 Memorial Scholarship Award
 2007 winner: Nathan Tavel, Maryland Institute College of Art, pictured with Jim Moore



The Patrick Family Foundation Scholarship Award
 2007 winner: Thomas James Brown, Case Western Reserve University, pictured with Pat and Hilda Patrick



The Sarah Lynn Woolf Memorial Scholarship Award
 2007 winner: Olivia Sedlack, Cleveland Institute of Music, pictured with Bill and Donna Woolf



Bill Mealor, Jr., Memorial Scholarship
 2007 winner: Joshua Schindler, Methodist College, pictured with Marie Mealor and Bill Mealor, Sr.



Mary Elizabeth Brown Wilson Scholarship
 2007 winner: Kirstin Williams, Guilford College, pictured with Elizabeth Wilson

“As a teacher, I feel so empowered to explore new ideas for curriculum as I know that DEF is willing to support innovative classroom instruction. I carefully consider the causes I support financially and I know, first hand, that my gift to DEF directly impacts the lives of the children of Decatur!”

– Laura Pitts
 Winnona Park Elementary

Agnes Scott College

Agnes Scott College (ASC) has been a strong supporter of the Decatur Education Foundation since the beginning. Former ASC President Mary Brown Bullock was a founding board member and now Gué Hudson, dean of students, is serving as a board member. The college has always been generous in allowing us to use rooms on the campus for events.



This is a huge gift to DEF because meeting spaces that are large and lovely and offer good food and parking come at a premium anywhere in Atlanta, and especially Decatur. ASC has also been a faithful sponsor of our 5K road race, TOUR deCATUR, for five straight years. We are deeply grateful for Agnes Scott's support and partnership in education in our community.

Saucony Grant to Promote Running for Youth

DEF recently received a grant from the Saucony Run for Good Foundation to assist with creating and promoting running clubs at each of Decatur's K-3 schools and Glennwood 4-5 Academy. The goal of the program is to help children ages 5-11 develop healthy and active lifestyles and teach them how to enjoy the sport of running.



The program includes stipends for teacher track coaches at each school, T-shirts for track club members, and the opportunity for each child to participate in DEF's annual TOUR deCATUR 5K Road Race held in March.

Every Burden Shall Be Rolled Away

CD sales benefit Thomas Hawk Scholarship Fund

On Nov. 28, 2004, The Divas, women who sing together for joy and friendship, gathered at Oakhurst Baptist Church to present a concert to raise money for the Thomas Hawk Memorial Scholarship Fund. The concert, titled *Every Burden Shall Be Rolled Away*, is available on CD.

The Thomas Hawk Memorial Scholarship was established to honor the life of Thomas John Anthony Hawk, who died in 2002 at the age of 16 from complications related to Addison's disease. The award is given each year to a graduating male from Decatur High School who embodies Thomas' personal qualities of courage, friendship, and peace making.

Thomas was the son of Kate Hawk, a Diva who showed courage through his passing that amazed and humbled us all. The other Divas on this recording are

Harriette Bugel, Cis Hinkle, Maureen Kilroy, Merideth Northcutt, Barbara Panter, Janet Shepherd, Chloe Smith, Jan Smith, Leah Smith, Ann Whitley, Kitty Wimbish, Elise Witt, and Inge Witt. Thomas' father, Gary Hawk, joined Kathy Reed, Kate, and Dale Blasingame on the song Nantahala, which Kathy wrote in honor of Thomas.

The Divas continue to sing together on most Thursday evenings, usually around Jan's dining room table or in Barbara's living room. Although they have pledged not to be a performing group, they may break into song at any time and any place where a quorum can be found. The Divas have no leader and no set arrangements. Their music grows from their love for each other and their keen

Every Burden
Shall Be Rolled
Away



The Divas in Concert
at Oakhurst Baptist
Church

For the Thomas Hawk
Scholarship Fund
November 28, 2004

listening ears as they sing.

All proceeds from the sale of this CD will be given to the Decatur Education Foundation, which established and manages the Thomas Hawk Memorial Scholarship Fund. If you are interested in purchasing a CD, contact Ann Whitley, awhitley@csdecatur.net.

Fundraising by the Numbers



STATS on the 2007 TOUR deCATUR

Date: March 17, St. Patrick's Day

Temperature: 35 degrees

Registrations: 708

Volunteers: 60 from the Decatur High School Key Club and Volunteer! Decatur

T-Shirt designer: The one-and-only Michele DeHaven, Function Gallery

Water stops: 2 provided by Oakhurst and Winnona Park PTAs



to benefit the decatur education foundation
 city schools of decatur fifth annual
tourdecatatur
 saturday march 17th 2007 5k road race / walk one mile fun run / walk



Refreshments: 2 tables full provided by Glennwood and Clairemont PTAs

Money raised: \$13,000

Race Steering Committee: 15

Laura Deming
 Sally Dobbins
 Brent Eickhoff
 Amanda Lockhart
 Emilie Markert
 Anne Moore
 Jennifer Osborne
 Katie Pedersen

Tom Seetoo
 Claire Shepherd
 Pat Solomon
 Nancy Turnipseed
 Eric Willis
 Kira Wilsterman
 Lara Zelski

Sponsors: 28

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 One Step at a Time
 Phidippides
 Coca-Cola

Save the date: March 15, 2008
2008 TOUR deCATUR

STATS on the 2006 Low Country Boil

Date: November 2, 2006

Temperature: 35 degrees

Attendees: 167

Volunteers: 15

Celebrity chefs: 4

Money raised: \$10,000

Sponsors: 15

Many thanks to our sponsors:

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Students Explore the World through Student EdVentures

The North Carolina School of the Arts Summer Session for Film was an amazing experience. I learned a lot about filmmaking and met a lot of new people. The five weeks started with two weeks of classes, where we learned about everything from cinematography to screenwriting. After that came two weeks of hectic filmmaking. Every person made their own film, and that meant four hours of shooting every day. The films were about everything from time travel to ninjas. It was hard, but it was fun. I learned a lot about film, and I got a little taste of college life. I even won an award for best sound design. All in all, it was a great experience.

— *Zachary Moore, senior, Decatur High School
North Carolina School of the Arts*



I found the college tour to be an opportunity for me to bond with students of the same interests. I learned things about other individuals that helped to form a strong brotherhood and sense of camaraderie with those wanting to attend college. It also gave me the opportunity to experience a day in the life of a college student.

During my meetings with the administrators and professors on campus I got several questions answered concerning college requirements and what I need to do to prepare myself for college. Also, I learned many new aspects of colleges to evaluate when making my final decision. For example, how would this college assist me in my ultimate goal of job placement after college? Overall it was a great experience for me as a young confused individual who now has a sense of what it means to be a college student.”

— *Brandon Fabre, senior, Decatur High School
Spring Break College Tour*



From May to July 2007, I served in a bi-national ministry called Frontera de Cristo on the militarized, sun-cracked, and simply crazy Arizona-Mexico border. Social activism was nothing new to me, but the Saguaro cacti, blaring norteño music at 2 a.m., and shanty poverty definitely were.

My adventure brought me Border Patrol agents, illegal migrants, recovering drug addicts, big-pocketed Republicans – often all in the same day. Every encounter challenged me to find beauty and hope in the ugliness and bleakness of the border.

I was constantly reflecting, questioning, and praying. The border’s sheer demand on the psyche – and the spirit – made me. The question “Who am I?” kept popping up. As I volunteered one evening at a resource center for deported migrants, one casually asked me, “And where did they (Border Patrol) get you?” It almost made me laugh. “Oh no, I’m a volunteer here.” Later that night, I opened my eyes wide thinking that it wouldn’t take much – just a poor Mexican birthplace – for me to be that migrant. “Destiny can be so cruel,” I said to myself. At the same time, my destiny was confirmed – to serve, welcome



with open arms, and delight in the big, messy knot that is humanity.

One pink-skied evening, I hung out with a 20-year-old maquila (low-wage factory) worker named Manuel. A recovering drug addict, he knew gang life on the U.S.-Mexico border. Instinctively, I asked questions. “How do you like work?” He squinted and shook his head responding, “There’s nothing here. There’s no opportunity.” The job feels like nothing to him. Describing his gang life, always on the verge of arrest, he opened up to me – sharing his moments of rancor toward God where he’d scream to escape his spiritual jail. Suddenly, the wind rushed in the tiny house, and we

heard the soft gush of rain outside. Manuel scrambled outside, where he silently gazed at the horizon. The rain reminded him of his home down south, Chiapas. The rain refreshed him.

The experiences above characterize my wild summer on the border. While I worked on specific projects – writing employee biographies for a local, fair trade coffee cooperative and heading Frontera de Cristo’s summer newsletter – the spur-of-the-moment conversations like the ones above taught me the most. In that starkly beautiful Sonoran desert, no man’s land of dehydration and “dreams deferred,” people actually live, and they carve out stories of fierce, fierce hope – and love. I’m pleased the Decatur Education Foundation values leaving the air-conditioned classroom and immersing oneself in an entirely different setting. In fact, it is most often when we’re challenged and stuck in places of strain and conflict and confusion that we learn the most about the world – and ourselves.

— *Juan Cardoza-Oquendo, senior,
Decatur High School
Frontera de Cristo
Arizona/Mexico border
more ►*

Student EdVentures *continued*

On March 7, 2007, I went to the Student Television Network National Convention in Anaheim, California. I went on this trip with the Video Productions Class from Decatur High School.

During this convention, we went to different small sessions. These sessions were led by people in the television world and they gave us new ideas for our show, "The Dec." We also got ideas for improving our show by seeing shows from other schools. I was only able to go to this convention thanks to DEF's Student EdVenture scholarship. I appreciate the opportunity!



— *Brittney K. Hearn, senior, Decatur High School Student Television Network National Convention*

FOUNDATION FRIENDS

Jon Abercrombie, Fred Boykin, Bill Markert, Bill Floyd, and Walt Drake

When these guys signed on to be our celebrity chefs for the Low Country Boil, they probably didn't know exactly what they were getting into. They may be local "celebrities" but the job is not all glamour! They work very hard to pull off our annual Low Country Boil each fall. Under the direction of the master chef, Fred Boykin, all



of the sous chefs show up hours before the event to prepare the food. They are involved in everything from shucking corn to washing potatoes and cutting sausage.

Fred, who is truly the man in charge, does some of the shopping to make sure we have the best possible ingredients, brings all of his cooking equipment from home, and makes sure that all the various ingredients go in at just the right time. It is quite a production! Over the last several years, their hard work has raised approximately \$40,000 for the foundation.

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

We consider it our privilege to work as a partner with City Schools of Decatur to support the children, youth, and professional educators in the City of Decatur. We believe in the school district's vision that we will have one of the top 10 community school districts in the nation and consider our work to be instrumental in helping to make that dream a reality.



The Decatur Education Foundation is now six years old as an organization. Our board's commitment to think *big* and act *boldly* on behalf of Decatur's children and youth has helped to raise more than \$1 million since our inception. Thanks to the Decatur community's generous support of our annual campaign and various fundraisers, we are able to offer a wide variety of programs like mini-grants, Teacher EdVentures, Student EdVentures, The Book Club, The Youth Fund, SAT prep and college scholarships.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to sincerely thank all of you who have supported us, and I'd like to encourage you to continue. If you have not joined us in our efforts, I hope that after reading this report you will be inspired to do so. The foundation's success is dependent on you. Thank you, Decatur!

Gratefully,

Anthony Powers
Chair, Decatur Education
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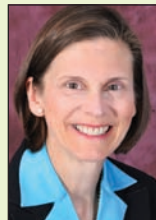


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DEF Welcomes New Board Member Carol Ellis Morgan



Carol Morgan recently retired from National Service Industries, Inc., (NSI) after a 25-year career, the last three years as president. Born in Columbia, S.C., and raised in Atlanta, Carol received her B.A. with distinction from Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., and her J.D. cum laude from the University of Georgia School of Law. She practiced for two years as an associate with Cofer, Beauchamp, Hawes, and Brown in Atlanta before joining NSI, and taught business law as an adjunct professor at Georgia State University.

Carol served for four years on the executive board of the Midtown Alliance in Atlanta and is currently on the board of the Metropolitan Atlanta YMCA. Carol is married to J. Tom Morgan, former district attorney for DeKalb County, who is currently in private practice as a trial lawyer in Decatur. They have two children who have enjoyed the benefits of the City Schools of Decatur: Caroline, a recent graduate of Davidson College, and John, a senior at Decatur High School.

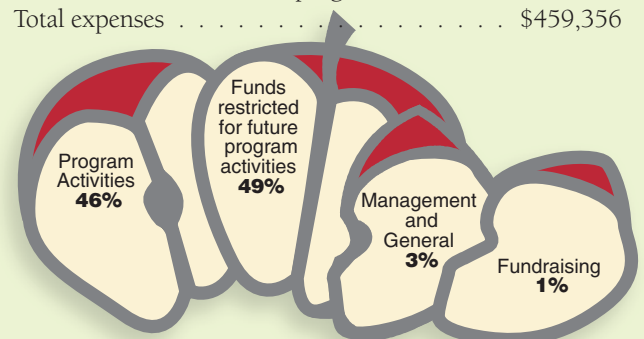
Financial Report for 2006

Revenue and support:

Unrestricted contributions	\$175,438
Restricted contributions	\$234,823
Investment income	\$49,095
Total revenue and support	\$459,356

Expenses

Management and general	\$15,849
Fundraising	\$6,675
Program activities (funded)	\$210,300
Funds restricted for future program activities	\$226,532
Total expenses	\$459,356



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Vol. 6, No. 1 • Fall 2007

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