



together

we make a difference

In Decatur, “together” is more than a word; it’s a powerful and positive force. Through the Decatur Education Foundation, people come together in so many ways to help children and youth reach their full potential. Spend a few minutes with this report to see what happens when a community connects – and works to build a brighter future for its youngest citizens.

**IMPACT
REPORT
2013-2014**



DIGITAL STORYTELLING

The ever-changing capabilities of technology provide new opportunities for how we communicate big ideas to big audiences. Students in Cara Cassell's English Language Arts class at Decatur High broadened their knowledge through a digital storytelling unit. Funds from DEF allowed nationally renowned teaching artist Jeff Mather to help the students tell their story using modern media techniques.

Left: 2014 DHS senior Alison Thompson

together we learn

GIVING TABLETS A TRY

Students from the Decatur Housing Authority are eager to see the new educational games on tablets purchased by a grant from DEF for the DHA after-school program. Having access to technology after school allows all students to better prepare for their work at school.



ZOOMING IN

Second-grade teachers at Oakhurst wanted to equip their students with authentic scientific tools to help them explore the world of nature the way a scientist does. They applied for funds to purchase Zoomy handheld digital microscopes, and students zoomed in on a fascinating new world.



Right: Students Brennan O'Keefe and Jamieson Treadwell and teacher Courtney Hartnett explore the finer details of a leaf plucked from a tree on the school grounds

F.AVE ROCKS

DEF partners with other organizations to fund larger requests. Nick Brooks, music teacher at the 4/5 Academy at Fifth Avenue (FAVE), knew that a great way to teach students the rudiments of music theory was through guitar. He also knew he needed enough guitars for each student in the class. With a significant discount from Firehouse Guitars and support from DEF and the FAVE PTO, enough guitars were acquired for all students to begin their new study.





COMEDY TAKES THE STAGE

The Decatur YoUth Comedy Krewe (DUCK) was awarded a DEF microloan to take their improvisational comedy show into the professional realm. The students submitted a business plan along with their application and have one year to pay back their interest-free loan.

Left: Matt Thornton, Eric Broner, Connor Trotter, Lexi Ritter, Noemi Griffin, Monica Lefton and Claire Smith



Photo: Beate Sass

FOUR OAKHURST OWLS AND A GOAT

DEF's Teacher Innovation Grants allow teachers to act on their inspired ideas. Thanks to one such grant, students at Oakhurst Elementary learned about the positive ripple effect that happens with the gift of one goat to a small village in Africa. Their studies began with the book *Beatrice's Goat*, purchased with funds from DEF, and included a trip to a local goat farm where students learned that a goat's milk can be made into cheese and other ways that a goat has a positive economic impact on a community. The students put on a talent show and raised enough money to buy one of each animal in the Heifer International catalog for a village in Africa.

Above: Samantha Manasso, Maggie Kennedy, Sofia Maffey and Christian Wharton

Photo: Inga Finch



STRINGS PLAY IT UP

The Decatur String Ensemble was formed in 2011 with seed money from the Renfroe PTA. The initial response from students showed that this musical group merited further support. This past year, two grants from DEF provided support for the instructor and allowed Renfroe to purchase instruments and offer low-cost rentals to students.

Above: Alec Ogihara plays the violin

GOT ART?

Pre-K students love making art! With a grant from DEF, College Heights students hit the road, visiting local galleries like Wild Oats and Billy Goats to explore the bold colors and creative expression of professional artists.



together we learn



Photo: Arthur Ratliff

STORYCORPS COMES TO TOWN

Renfroe Middle Schoolers got a first-hand history lesson from Decatur residents who had attended Beacon Hill Elementary and Trinity High School before Decatur was integrated. By the time the students entered the StoryCorps booth for the final interview, they were able to see history through the eyes of those who lived it. The city also provided significant funding for this very important project.

Left: Seventh-grader Medinah Rashid and former Beacon Hill student Cynthia Houston already had a nice rapport before they began the interview

WATER IMMERSION

Last September, all 8th and 9th graders from City Schools of Decatur participated in Water Wise, a daylong symposium on important local and global water issues. The program was funded by the DEF Funk Global Awareness Fund in recognition of the importance of equipping our young people with knowledge and creative solutions to the problems of water management now and in the future. The symposium allowed students to attend small, focused sessions on specific issues such as the importance of wetlands in water management and how to collect and use rainwater for drinking and irrigation.

Far Right: Bill Ainslie and students Zoe Geiger and Grace Haley Wilkins

Right: Alex Thorsrud, Benjamin Taylor and Caleb Arias



Photos: Joseph Aczel



MUSICAL ASPIRATIONS

The spring musical at Decatur High typically involves a large cast and multiple ensemble numbers. Suspended, high-quality microphones were needed to project the performers' voices throughout the performing arts center. The mics were purchased with funds from a DEF grant and helped turn up the volume for the smash hit "Hairspray."

From left: Katie Adams, Dylan Byars, Nathan Holmes, Jenna Hanes, Sam Fiore, Louisa Boswell, Windsor Jones, Ethan Magnes, Hannah Boykin, Miriam Moore-Keish and Eric Broner

together we create

BUILDING SKILLS

DHS teacher Chris Davis wanted to offer students the opportunity to learn carpentry and basic construction techniques. A grant from DEF allowed the woodworking club to start off with tools, building supplies and safety equipment.

Right: Addie Andrew works on a project



MAKING SPACE IN DECATUR

DEF partners with organizations across the city to provide great opportunities for children in our community. Decatur Makers, a grassroots group, is creating a family-friendly "maker space" that will give youth a place to build, create, dream and learn from members of our community. DEF is serving as the fiscal sponsor of the group during its early years and has also invested as a founding member. Decatur Makers will be a game-changer on the educational landscape by providing a place for the hands-on application of learning.



ROBOTICS REV UP

Several years ago, a DEF grant helped fund the start-up of the STEM Club at Renfroe Middle School. The club launched the robotics program at City Schools of Decatur and in just a few short years the Decatur High Robotics Team has become a competitive force in regional, national and global competitions. DEF continues to provide support and serves as the fiscal sponsor for the team's fundraising efforts.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DR. SEUSS!

What better way to honor the birthday of Dr. Seuss than by reading? Third graders from Oakhurst did just that in the Read Across Decatur project, which paired them with Pre-K students at College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center on Dr. Seuss' birthday. Funds from DEF allowed students to build their home libraries with Seuss selections.

Right: Third grader Eli Hair reads *Green Eggs and Ham* to Sebastian Buso and Corbin Whitt



together we read

ON THE SAME PAGE

DEF is one of the primary sponsors of "On the Same Page," a citywide reading initiative designed to foster a community of readers by bringing families together around the same book. Clairemont students Nadiyah Mohamed and Hamza Maollim (inset) are all smiles as they show off the book chosen for 2013, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, by Grace Lin. Funds in support of this program are used to ensure that every child can be on the same page.



MR. MUSTACHE

Labor Day is known in many communities as the end of summer, but in Decatur it has become synonymous with the Decatur Book Festival, the largest independent book festival in the country. Decatur Education Foundation's sponsorship of the DBF allows students at every grade level to interact with nationally renowned authors on the Friday before the festival starts, feeding their love of reading and often inspiring them in their own writing. This year Mac Barnett, author of *Mustache!*, *President Taft Is Stuck in the Bath*, *Telephone* and many more children's books, visited Winnona Park Elementary students.





Cindy Weiss Earns DEF 'Extra Mile' Award

Jack Vaden has mitochondrial disease, and as a result, he is blind, non-verbal, and wheelchair-bound. His mom, Suzanne Vaden, nominated teacher Cindy Weiss for a DEF Extra Mile Award. Suzanne's nomination letter is excerpted here:

In addition to the daily aspects of life, Cindy makes sure that Jack does not miss anything Winnona Park has to offer. Jack is rarely in his wheelchair, modifications have been made so he can sit with the other students in art class or circle time, play instruments during music, and take part in all activities during P.E....she makes sure he is up and ready with the others kids, holding him up to perform the same exercise the best he can.

together we experience

SUPPORTING SPECIAL STUDENTS

Thanks to generous donors, DEF provides support to students with special needs across our community. Throughout the year, students with multiple disabilities participate in outdoor education and swim therapy. And this year, DEF provided a number of grants to families of special needs children for creative fun and enrichment during the summer.

Top left: Special education teacher Cindy Weiss assists Jack Vaden at a weekly swimming experience

Right: Special Education teacher Vicki Case-Holden helps Maya Pomfret explore a variety of tactile experiences with toys designed especially for this purpose

Bottom left: A grant from DEF allowed CSD students to compete in the Georgia Special Olympics held in May in downtown Atlanta

Bottom right: Katie O'Keefe experienced the joy of the trapeze at Circus Camp



Connecting Community, Schools, and Youth

A generous gift made anonymously by a Decatur family in 2012 continued to make an impact during the past year and exemplifies how the community, Foundation and City Schools of Decatur work together for children and youth.

Specifically, the gift allowed DEF to invest in programs that address the educational needs of disabled and disadvantaged students. As a result, teachers and parents have received training; schools have implemented new technology to help kids learn and develop faster; students from kindergarten to high school have taken educational excursions; and two young students received scholarships that helped them make an early start on their education at College Heights.

Every gift to DEF – large and small – represents a connection between the community and its youth. It's true: together, we make a difference.





together we experience

BUILDING BRIDGES

DEF is proud to support Partnerships for Success at Decatur High and Renfroe Middle School. This national program is designed to create an inclusive environment where special education and regular education students come together for friendship, service and leadership development. A grant from DEF helped the student-run club plan outings like this trip to the Georgia Aquarium.

Above: Mae Rosen, Harper Reed, Christine Sass, Rachel Glasser, Devonte Render, Declan Tillman, Sarah Stubbs, Trent O'Dell and Wren Ballou



CAPITOL CLOSE-UP

Each year, the Decatur High School Close-up Club travels to Washington, D.C. to see firsthand how our government works. Students spend the year leading up to the trip participating in service projects and raising funds, and DEF helps close the funding gap for students who need scholarships.

TEXAS TROPHIES

Students attended the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America national conference in San Antonio with travel funds provided by DEF. Ilana and Trés Jones won Gold in the Focus On Children category. Mawal Sidi won Silver in the Nutrition and Wellness category. Sophia Goldberg and Ava Dempsey won Bronze in the Food Innovations category.

Left to right: Ilana Jones, Sophia Goldberg, Ava Dempsey, Mawal Sidi and Trés Jones





SUMMER EDVENTURES

Each summer, students from Renfroe Middle School and Decatur High School go off into the world to pursue their passions with the help of Student EdVenture grants. These awards allow for the development of new skills and the application of classroom learning to real-life situations, and many students come back with a new way of looking at the world. Each year, DHS alumni classes help to raise funds to send students on these wonderful enrichment experiences.

Nandi Salahuddin (top left) attended a 10-day leadership conference in the field of health and medicine on the campus of University of California, Berkeley. She was introduced to many practical skills that a doctor or surgeon would need for diagnosis of disease and caring for patients. She also got hands-on experience to help develop surgical skills. Based on her experience, Nandi hopes to go into the field of medical research.

DHS senior MacKenzie Rhone (top right) traveled to Matagalpa, Nicaragua, to participate in a six-week leadership training and total immersion language program. On her return, she said, "It was the hardest challenge and the most rewarding experience of my life."

Aria Posner (lower left), Renfroe 8th grader, honed her skills as a cellist while at a four-week music camp that was part of the Sewanee Summer Music Festival.

Irene Ruby (bottom right) knows she wants to study art. Her Student EdVenture experience at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y. helped her build and broaden her portfolio.

Summer 2013 EdVenture Grant Recipients:

It feels really good to receive recognition from the community that your passions are something the community wants to support.

—Juliana Eidle

Through their EdVenture grant, the Decatur Education Foundation told me that they believed I could make a difference...and after those three weeks [in a Haitian refugee camp], I believe that I can make a difference, too!

—Sarah Stubbs



Photo: Inga Finch

Left: Four members of the winning team – Renfroe teachers Holly Juras, Carol Duzan, Chelsea O'Connell-Barlow and Kristan Jacobs
Below: Liam Connolly and his sister, Paige



Photo: Inga Finch

together we run



Keegan Greene, Alex Brown, Cole Dixon and Danny Hinton
Photo: Inga Finch

2014 TOUR DECATUR

It is hard to think of a single event in Decatur that affects students throughout the city more than the annual Tour deCatur 5K Road Race. This well-loved community event brings out thousands of runners of all ages. Several Decatur schools host track clubs to help students train for the event. The Tour deCatur is also the biggest fundraiser of the year for DEF, and the \$80,000 in revenue provides funds for multiple programs throughout the school system.

The staff and teachers at each CSD school compete for the greatest number of runners/walkers in the race. Renfroe Middle School took the Golden Shoe honors in 2014.

Training Ambassador Poppi Florence

This year, three Decatur residents (two adults and a student) were chosen as Tour deCatur Training Ambassadors and asked to share their training experiences on our blog. Poppi Florence, then a 4th grader at the 4/5 Academy at Fifth Avenue, wrote the following post about motivation:

What motivates me to run? Well, it's definitely not being able to eat more chicken wings on Super Bowl night like my dad. It's not about chasing a baseball, like what motivates my brother. It's not about getting "quiet time," like it is for mom. What motivates ME, is the after-effect. After a good long run, I feel refreshed, happy, and proud. After a completed run I feel like I just mastered all my multiplication facts.

Inset above left: Lily DeLaRue and Sydney Holland

Left: Oakhurst Elementary mascot Oaky the Owl poses for a photo with a tour participant



Photo: Arthur Ralliff



Photo: Inga Finch



Photo: Beate Sass

together we celebrate

MARDI GRAS ON MEAD

Decatur residents Dave and Emily Berg turned their annual Mardi Gras party (above) into a community parade and fundraiser so that DEF could provide grants to support music education. The event raised \$2,000, which provided a grant to Westchester Elementary for new musical instruments. Residents of all ages joined in the festivities. Third-party events such as this are a great way to raise funds to support Decatur youth.

LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

Glennwood teachers dreamed up the fabulous idea of a lantern parade as the culminating event of their study of the cosmos. The result was so stunning, it inspired a new annual community event – the Light the Night, Summer’s in Sight Decatur Lantern Parade – so that all of Decatur could take part in the magic on May 16. DEF joined with the Decatur Arts Alliance, Color Wheel Art Studio and artist Chantelle Rytter to provide lantern-making workshops so that Decaturites could let their lights shine!



Photos: Beate Sass



PARTY WITH A PURPOSE

Each fall, DEF turns up the heat at the Low Country Boil. This party brings out an intergenerational crowd of 400 from across Decatur to enjoy great food and drink, music and an auction. The festivities raise funds for a variety of Foundation programs providing opportunities for Decatur youth to reach their full potential.

Far left: Local residents Arlene Dean and Linda Lehsten enjoy the 2013 Low Country Boil

Left: Commissioner Patti Garrett attended as well



Photos: Mike Curtice

OUR VOLUNTEERS

There is no doubt that volunteers fuel the work that DEF does all year long. DEF relies on the talents and willing spirits of a multitude of volunteers, whether helping in the office or at one of the many events during the year.

Left: DEF Agnes Scott College intern Kerry Ayres-Smith, Decatur High teacher Jon Reese, and Volunteer of the Year Julie Shimada, who earned the title by volunteering at every key DEF event in 2013



Photo: Inga Finch

together we recognize

Thank You! Honor Roll of Supporters 2013-2014

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GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Each May, City Schools of Decatur honors outstanding students from each school at the Academic Awards ceremony. During this event, DEF honors dedicated teachers nominated by their students as going the “Extra Mile,” and the students read their winning essays to the audience and their teachers. DEF also treats all honorees and their families to a special dessert reception following the ceremony.

Right: Adam Berardi with Kindergarten teacher and Extra-Mile winner Stephanie Trauner

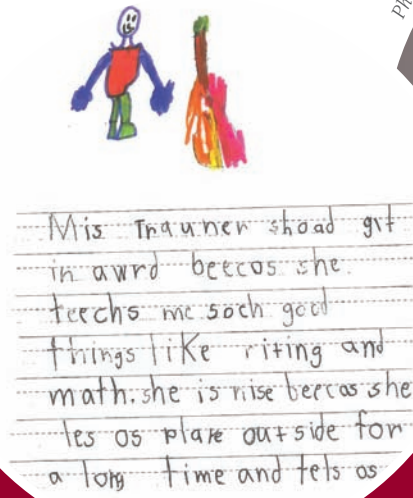


Photo: Inga Finch



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together we recognize

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

Thanks to the generosity of families and individuals who have set up scholarships for DHS graduates, DEF awarded more than \$48,000 this year to 22 college-bound students — Kori Anderson, Jessica Chatman, Kyle Drenner, Alex Foster, Adam Garlow, Ioanna Gotschall, Rachel Harber, Autumn Kirkendall, Jason Moody, Lyndsay Morrow, Isabel Newsome, Solveig Olson-Strom, Harper Reed, Darshan Shah, Mohamed Sheikh, Mawal Sidi, Sarah Stubbs, Tiffany Thomas, Max Waterhouse, Deangelo Watkins, Alexis Williams, Cydne Wright, Demi Wright, Chloe Zhao. Visit decatureducationfoundation.org/programs/scholarships for their profiles. Our newest scholarships are:

The Madison Lewis Memorial Scholarship

honors the life and legacy of Madison Lewis, a DHS graduate who was tragically killed during her sophomore year of college. A talented softball player, Madison brought her passion to every match-up and was a role model for teammates on and off the field. The first award was made to Harper Reed.



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Elizabeth and Judson Flynn
Skip and Jill Fossett
Eddie and Anne Fowlkes
April and Billy Gabor
June Gay
Rachel Gervin
Jo Giraud
Mary Goodloe-Murphy
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James Gresham
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Paula Herrema
Ann Herrera and Mary Goodwin
Penelope Hopkins

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Chris Hunter
Rodney and Ann Hunter
Susan Hylen
Mary Ellen Imlay
Jan Irvin
Clayton Johnson
Sara Joiner
Jill Jordan
Stephen and Monique Joyce
John and Marceil Joyner

The Flourish on Purpose Scholarship

presented to Lyndsay Morrow, honors Paula Collins, former DEF board chair, for the many years of energy, dedication, passion and thought power that she brought to building, growing and sustaining the Foundation. Paula taught the DEF board and staff to Flourish on Purpose (her most recent entrepreneurial effort) and left her mark on the Foundation and our community.



Nicole and Paul Kaplan
Jennifer Katz
Chris and Gail Kearney
Nadine and David Kennerly
Alan and Linda Kenton
Michael and Maria Kochel
Rebecca Kolesky
Beth and Joel Kostka
Peter Kowalski
Gil and Eleanore Kulers
Joann Lata and Timothy Turner

The Gladding Family Scholarship

founded by DHS alumnus Sam Gladding (class of 1963) in memory of his parents, Russell Burton and Gertrude Templeman Gladding, is awarded to a student who is hard-working, service-minded, unselfish and outgoing, focused on bettering humanity and plans to attend a four-year liberal arts college. Solveig Olson-Strom earned the award for 2014.



The Beatrice A. Pask Scholarship is presented to a student who exhibits a commitment to education, a history of involvement in meaningful community service that enhances the lives of others and who is a first-generation college attendee. The 2014 scholarship winner is Chloe Zhao.



Photos: Inga Finch

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Luz Marti
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“One For The Kids”: CSD Employee Giving Program Participants

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Leslie Brown	Mary Farmer	Dianna Herron-Watson	Mary Mack	Nicki Parks	Thomas Seetoo	Robyn Tibbets	Eileen Zack
Marcia Bryant-Fowler	Joan Fisher	Dionne Hicks	Nick Madden	Sabrina Manns	Nkenge Ayoka Shakir	Jill Tolsma	Starr Zalanka
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The Decatur Education Foundation works with the community to help Decatur youth realize their full potential, not only in the classroom but also through learning experiences that contribute to personal development. Here's how it works: individuals, companies and organizations contribute funds and volunteer time to the Decatur Education Foundation. With these resources and energy, the Foundation makes things happen for Decatur's youth, awarding grants, managing scholarship funds, purchasing books and supplies and engaging in a wide range of activities that meet a need, remove an obstacle, fuel personal effort or support teacher innovation.

Make a difference this year with a gift in any amount

Go to decatureducationfoundation.org and click the donate link (or scan the QR code here) or mail your check to the address at the bottom of the page.

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$ _____

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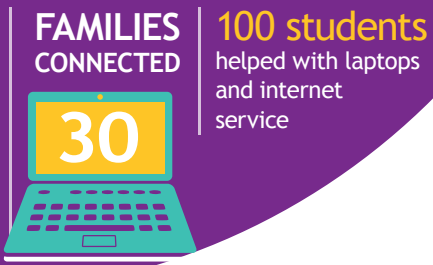
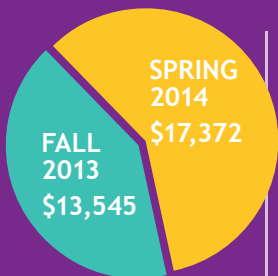
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