

FUNDAMENTALS

The Big Pivot: Going Virtual

When the “lights went out” on March 16, 2021, our last day in the office, we were fortunate to be able to take home a few file folders but most of our work in our heads. We could connect remotely, and most importantly, we still had access to our biggest assets: the experience, creativity, and perseverance of our staff. Nonetheless, this began one of the most intense work periods of our organization’s history and continues into today. Not everything has worked out as planned, but we – as well as our students, teachers, and even events attendees – leveled up fast.

We’ve highlighted below some of the ways our staff quickly ensured that all who rely on us continued to get our guidance and expertise during this uncertain time.

Chromebooks Donated to College Students Working from Home

Imagine trying to keep up with your college studies without the necessary technology. That was a harsh reality for many low income, first-generation college students last spring, including recipients of our Last Dollar Scholarship.

Thanks to a generous member of PEF’s Scholars Advisory Committee, eight Philadelphia Scholars who did not have computers at home were provided refurbished Chromebooks. Scholars Program staff ascertained student needs through a COVID Needs and Concerns Questionnaire sent to all scholarship recipients in late March. Students reported trying to participate in classes with their phones or, in contravention of COVID guidelines, going to the homes of friends or family to watch lectures and complete assignments. Having the laptop made the difference between their passing or failing that semester. For those without home internet or likely to lose internet service due to precarious household finances, staff connected them to free and greatly discounted internet provider programs.



For the spring rush to choose and pay for a college, each day of the week had a theme with links to resources, guests for live Q & A, and a back channel to PEF’s counselors to answer more personal questions. “Money Mondays” focused on financial aid; “Scholarship Tuesdays” talked about sources of support outside the government and universities, including PEF’s own Last Dollar Scholarship; “CCP Wednesdays” guided students through the application and Community College of Philadelphia’s special admittance programs; and “Decision Day Thursdays” helped students understand their acceptance paperwork, make the big decision, and take next steps. Over the summer, content focused on helping freshmen prep for

continued on page 4

PURSUING EQUITY THROUGH STEM PEF Partners with GSK to Launch \$10M STEM Equity Collective



Last August, PEF President and CEO Farah Jimenez and Maya Martinez-Davis, GSK President of US Pharmaceuticals, announced the creation of the Philadelphia STEM Equity Collective with GSK’s \$10 million investment. Building on PEF’s long collaboration with GSK, **the goal of this initiative is to help Black, Latinx, and female Philadelphia students overcome obstacles to their pursuit of careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.** The Collective is working with schools, out-of-school time providers,



universities and colleges, employers, local government, and the philanthropic community using a collective impact approach to identify and close gaps confronting youth from backgrounds underrepresented in STEM.

GSK is supporting PEF’s role as the backbone organization for the Collective and contributing the executive talent of its Pulse volunteer program. In addition, GSK will support in-school programming and community efforts through annual grants of \$1 million a year for 10 years to local nonprofits. Outcomes will be tracked by a system in development by Equal Measure.



continued on page 6

A New Website and Instagram Account to Reach High School Seniors

The biggest challenge our college access team faces is connecting with students who’d normally just drop into their offices at school. Email can work, it’s a little passe among the 25-and-under. Recognizing that students spend much more time on social media and the web, last spring, the team created **College_Access_Philly on Instagram and www.collegeaccessonline.com**

President and CEO Message



Dear Friends of PEF,

It's been that kind of a year. With the advent of COVID and its accompanying shutdown, we've all learned to employ a new word and new a practice – the pivot. For us, at the Education Fund, we've embraced the challenge of COVID and introduced, as captured in our headline story, "The Big Pivot." It wasn't easy. Technology helped. A commitment to serving students aided. But what mattered most was the support of our trusted partners, the depth of our relationships with students, and the stalwart support of our donors, like you. And, for that we couldn't be more grateful.

While 2021 continues to stretch our resiliency muscles, I hope you'll find inspiration in the stories we share of Philadelphia Scholar, Brandon; our \$10 million STEM equity partnership with GSK; the students and professionals engaged with our summer career coaching experience; and in the leadership additions to our staff and Board of Directors.

We found inspiration in the many individuals, corporations, and foundations who supported us and our students, over this most uncertain period. Thank you for being there, so that when our students needed us most, we were equipped to respond.

Warmly,

Farah Jimenez

Philadelphia Education Fund Board of Directors

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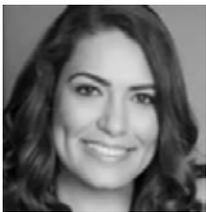
Juliana Mosley
Salus University

Lesley Tewnton

Markus Weidner
Pennon

Melinda Welsh
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PEF Welcomes New Directors



Aleksandra Davis is Managing Director, Deloitte Digital.



Patricia Day is Manager of Leadership Councils at the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia.



Phillip Gabler is a Distinguished Engineer at Comcast.



Asim Haque is Vice President, State and Member Services, at PJM.



Susan Lorenz-Fisher is the Vice President of Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability for AmerisourceBergen.



Juliana Mosley, PhD, is Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Salus University.



Melinda Welsh is Chief Commercial Officer, Dollar Financial/ Money Mart Financial Group.



Philadelphia Scholars



Photo courtesy Brandon Peña

PHILADELPHIA SCHOLARS SPOTLIGHT: Brandon Elvira Peña

College freshman Brandon Elvira Peña’s family home is three blocks from his former high school, Olney Charter. “Still, I was late sometimes!” he confessed. Since late last August, his home base has been Cabrini University, a small private college in Radnor, PA. He had the usual tearful goodbyes with his mother, Maria, and he’s in a double with a roommate he likes pretty well. Looking at the blank walls, he said his friends teased him that his dorm “looks like a jail cell. We have to get some stuff on the walls.”

But in other ways, it’s a very different start to college than any of us might remember. At Cabrini this semester, all classes are both in-person and virtual, alternating according to a student’s last name. Not surprisingly, Brandon prefers to be in the classroom with his professors where it’s easier to ask questions and be completely engaged. Plus, he learned from Olney’s College Access Program (CAP) that he should try to meet his instructors. “I stayed around after one of my classes to introduce myself to the professor and talk about what kind of learner I am,” Brandon said. “She said that not many students do that. I’m trying to make a good impression.”

He credits PEF and his CAP counselor, Natalie Almiron, with his being the first in his family to go to college. “I probably never would have made it without her encouragement and helping us with all the forms.” Also, Brandon successfully applied to PEF’s Philadelphia Scholars program for a Last Dollar Scholarship to bridge the gap between his financial aid package and the actual cost of attendance.

He’s aware that as a Latino, he’s in the minority among Cabrini students. “No one here believes that my high school was 1% white,” Brandon laughed. “It’s a big cultural change, but I wanted to see what it was like and meet people different from the ones I’ve been in school with since kindergarten.” Cabrini’s freshman seminars create a shared experience for their new students, and along with those, he’s taking marketing and Spanish for Heritage Speakers to improve his reading and writing. (He speaks the language fluently.)

All in all, Brandon feels hopeful about “the friend situation,” and to branch out further, he tried out for the cross-country running team. There’s good news also on the academic front: he got an A minus on his first college midterm and ended the fall semester with a 3.0.

Brandon’s younger sister, Kalian, is a sophomore at Olney and also in CAP. Cabrini, save a space for another Peña in the Class of 2027!

The Big Pivot: Going Virtual

from page 1

the college experience through PEF's annual Know Before You Go and First Year Experience. These days, there are sessions on Zoom etiquette and staying well during Covid.

Partnered on Comprehensive COVID Resource Guide on PhillyGoes2College.org

Our PhillyGoes2College.org was a long-standing service designed to assist students with limited or no access to college and career advising services at their schools. With COVID-19, this became every high school student in Philadelphia. To reach as many students as possible and to pool resources, we joined Philadelphia Futures and Summer Search Philadelphia to produce a COVID-19 Resource Guide with answers to frequently asked questions and resources for current and future college students.

EdFundamentals Print Newsletter Goes to Weekly E-Newsletter

As the longest established public education organization in Philadelphia, many looked to us to provide information and guidance about how to do the work in this new environment. And, we were leading the way with putting resources online for students, their counselors, and teachers. Thus, a weekly email EdFundamentals was born. Now settled into a monthly cycle, visit www.PhilaEdFund.org to sign up to receive it in your inbox.

Financial Aid Application Help Turns to Instagram

Philadelphia Education Fund

FAFSA FRENZY

Complete your FAFSA and PHEAA
BY MAY 15TH AT 11:59 PM
for a chance to WIN A \$50 AMAZON GIFT CARD!!

How To Be Entered to Win:

STEP 1: Complete your FAFSA and PHEAA (PA State Grant) Application by May 15th at 11:59 PM

[CLICK HERE IF YOU NEED HELP WITH FAFSA!](#)

STEP 2: Email proof of FAFSA/PHEAA completion to your GEAR UP Program Manager (see below)

The annual “FAFSA Frenzy,” the campaign to get every high school senior to complete their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) by the May 15 deadline, was re-created on PEF's new Instagram account. Much like a tax form, the FAFSA demands time, family financial documents, and a certain familiarity with the language of government – all customarily provided in the school by PEF College Access and Gear Up counselors. The closing of schools, prospective colleges, and government agencies made the task especially daunting. The solution was to go to where their students are – on social media – and with the chance to win a \$50 gift card.

PEF's College Transition Programs Prepped Students for Opportunity

PEF* **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!**
A virtual experience to prep for life post high school
Follow us on Instagram (@college_access_philly) for all of our content
Monday, August 3rd - Friday, August 7th

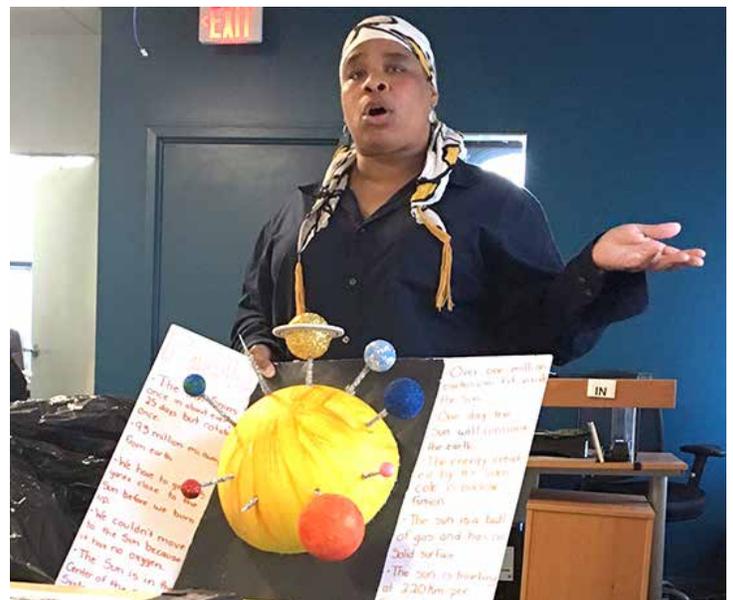
Monday 8/3	Tuesday 8/4	Wednesday 8/5	Thursday 8/6	Friday 8/7
"Financial Balance"	"Academic Balance"	"Social Balance"	Student Panel 12:00 - 12:45 PM **Link in our Instagram Bio! **	Signing Day Celebration!
Topics covered: - Navigating the financial aid office, how to meet your financial aid officer, and financial strategies for college.	Topics covered: - Choosing the right courses - Classroom etiquette - Collaborating rubrics - Obtaining course materials - Understanding requirements and basic formatting of college papers.	Topics covered: - Setting a mood, using resources, volunteer and internship opportunities, the Multicultural affairs office, and creating your COVID safety plan.	Two CAP and Scholars alumna will answer your questions about transitioning to college. If you can't make the live event, send your questions to pef@phillygoes2college.org and we'll forward them to the panelists.	Tune into our IG Live at 12:00 to promote your plans for this fall!

college_access_philly | www.collegeaccessonline.com

Whether starting in-person or online, moving from high school to college is an exciting time. New fields to study, people to meet, literal and virtual landscapes to navigate – it's a big transition. PEF's annual Know Before You Go and First Year Experience programs provide the “orientation before the Orientation” by helping graduates of our College Access Program and recipients of our Philadelphia Scholars Last Dollar Scholarship prepare for those initial weeks “on campus.”

In 2020, the two customarily in-person programs were combined to make five themed days of virtual and recorded events. Students also accessed blogs on such subjects as how to save money on course materials and how to manage unstructured time. Two, hour-long live events, an Ask Me Anything panel with College Access and Philadelphia Scholars alumni via Zoom and a Signing Day celebration on Instagram, concluded the week.

STEM Teaching Fellows Grateful to Finish Program



Pre-pandemic, the PECO-sponsored McKinney Center Teaching Fellows Program, administered by PEF, met Monday nights for hands-on workshops and to work on their capstone projects. During the pandemic, PEF staff created an online community to allow the Fellows to meet, share and critique presentations via the web. Projects ranged from “Designing Energy-Efficient Houses” to “Maker-Spaces.” The teachers were grateful to be able to continue the program, and virtual attendance was better than in-person! The PECO STEM Teaching Fellows Program is being continued for 2021.

Educate Philly Gala Raised More Than \$100,000



FISCAL YEAR-END EVENT WAS A VIRTUAL -- AND LITERAL -- SUCCESS!



We raised the curtain at noon on June 18th, 2020 for our annual fundraiser with excitement... and a certain amount of trepidation. The usual attendee benefits were erased by the pandemic – no luncheon, no networking, no catching up with colleagues and friends. On the plus side, the topic of Media and Education was ultra-current, we attracted a top-notch panel, and it was come-as-you-are attire, no parking required! Still, would people come?

They did. You did. We had a live conversation among our panelists, meaty Q and A, and raised \$100,115 at the end of the day.

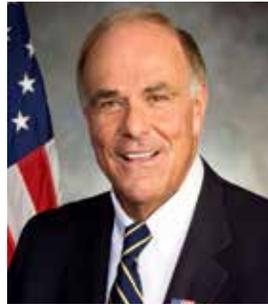
We are tremendously grateful for everyone who attended, sponsored, and donated during this especially challenging time. That we could raise such a sum speaks to the generosity of this community and to the universal belief that students of ability and ambition deserve support.

Many friends and partners contributed their time. Otis Hackney, Philadelphia's Chief Education Officer and a Philadelphia Scholars Program alumnus, and wife La-Toya Hackney, SVP, General Counsel, and Secretary for St-Gobain and first-gen college graduate opened the event. William Hite, Superintendent of the

Philadelphia School District, talked about the SDP's long partnership with us.

Another Philadelphia Scholars alumnus, State Representative Jordan Harris, shared how PEF's scholarship helped to shape the trajectory of his life. Harris introduced Inya Wyche and Jayson Burgos, graduates of our College Access Program. Temple junior Wenting Dong expressed the sentiments of a current scholarship recipient.

Our Media and Education panel was headlined by Ed Rendell, 6ABC morning anchor Tamala Edwards, and Garrett Graff, formerly with Politico. Our President and CEO Farah Jimenez moderated a rich discussion of the media's impact on students' understanding of the world around them, from pandemic to presidential election.



Former Governor Ed Rendell



Tamala Edwards, 6ABC



Garrett Graff, Author and Director of Cyber Initiatives for The Aspen Institute

EDUCATE PHILLY 2020 SPONSORS



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Don and Lynn Haskin
Farah Jimenez and David Hyman
James Jolinger
Joanne Markman

Joann Mitchell
The Mordy Family
Lesley Tewnton



LATE SPRING!

Educate Philly 2021



Public Health 101: COVID Recovery and the Future of STEM Education

NEW STAFF FILL EXPERTISE NEEDS



Dana Hawkins, Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer

Prior to PEF, she was the Head of Finance at Penn Asian Senior Services, a social services nonprofit

with a \$20 million budget. Dana's a graduate of Temple University's Fox School of Business with degrees in Finance and Management Information Systems, and she's a first-gen college graduate and Philadelphia public school alum.

Dana is an active member of the Association of Accountants and Financial Professionals in Business and an IRS Certified Tax Preparer.

Susan (Betsy) Payne, Manager, Philadelphia STEM Ecosystem



Working for equity and diversity in education has been Betsy's lifelong pursuit. Betsy coordinates PEF's backbone

organization responsibilities and relationships as well as works with the Philadelphia STEM Equity

Collective, a 10-year initiative in partnership with GSK. (See story p. 1.)

Before joining PEF, she managed the Women In Natural Sciences (WINS) program at the Academy of Natural Sciences for more than 11 years.

Brandi Ashley, GEAR UP Specialist



A Greater Philadelphia native, Brandi graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and minor in Africana

Studies. Following positions with City Year Philadelphia and Spark, Brandi received her M.Ed. from Penn's Graduate School of Education. Stepping into her new role as GEAR UP Specialist, she's excited to work directly with students and their families and help them plan and reach their post-secondary goals.



Adriana Ongay, College Access Program Coordinator

Philly-born and raised, Adriana majored in Political Science and Latino Studies at Millersville

University. She earned her Masters degree at the Clinton School of Public Service at the University of Arkansas. As the College Access Program Coordinator for Bartram High School, Adriana is delighted to work with diverse communities to ensure our students have equitable access to education and college readiness.



Emma Cohen Westbrooke, Special Assistant to the President & CEO

Emma Cohen Westbrooke graduated from Ithaca College where she studied Sociology, African

Diaspora Studies, and Art History. After college, she focused her energy in education, working as a Montessori teacher, health educator, and youth and LGBTQ education program leader for Planned Parenthood. Ready to be back in a big city, Emma's thrilled to continue supporting programs that uplift young people.

Pursuing Equity Through STEM

from page 1

"PEF was founded by individuals who believed Philadelphia school children deserve equitable access to college and career success," said Jimenez. "Students who are underrepresented on college campuses and in high-growth careers deserve our support to access these opportunities, and we are grateful for the leadership, partnership, and commitment exhibited by GSK's investment in the Philadelphia STEM Equity Collective."

PEF also coordinates the city's 400-plus-member Philadelphia STEM Ecosystem. The Philadelphia STEM Equity Collective is a natural next step in this work, and we welcome the involvement of additional schools, community organizations, and the philanthropic community. For more information, contact Betsy Payne, Philadelphia STEM Ecosystem Manager, at spayne@philaedfund.org or 215 665 1400 x3333.

First STEM Equity Grants Announced on 2/4/21

The STEM Equity Collective awarded more than \$1M to support enhanced student and teacher programs in its initial funding round. Recipients sharing this honor are:

- **The Fund for the School District** will provide teachers with STEM activity mini-grants, a two-year training program for 100 middle school math and science teachers, and additional online science lab software for K-12 students.
- **The College of Physicians STEM Internship Program**, which engages high school students in a summer and academic-year program, will link STEM learning with social justice issues by exploring the impact of violence through such disciplines as public health.
- **The PA Society of Biomedical Research "SPARC" Program** will bring biomedical knowledge, concepts, and career pathways directly to students through a mobile classroom.
- **The Philadelphia Robotics Coalition** is creating "hands-on, minds-on" team engineering challenges to help students build critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.
- **The Wistar Institute Accelerated Biomedical Technician Training Program** will support 15 paid internships for Community College of Philadelphia students to engage in hands-on biomedical research training.



TOPICAL, TIMELY, AND CANDID: PEF'S EDUCATION FIRST COMPACT EVENTS

Did you know that we organize the longest-running forum addressing education issues in our city? If not, it's time you attend an Education First Compact – now, easier than ever as all sessions are virtual.

Each month, PEF curates a session on an education topic of local or regional relevance. The usual format is a context-setting presenter complemented by a panel of education leaders, practitioners, and researchers who respond by offering varying perspectives, followed by Q & A. We begin at 9:00am and conclude by 10:15am via an easy-to-use online platform.

All sessions are free, although not free to produce. If you'd like to underwrite an upcoming event or become a subscriber, please contact Emma Cohen-Westbrooke at info@philaedfund.org or 215 665 1400 x 3322.

Topics Explored 2020-21

- **Distance Learning During Covid**
- **Paying for College: Avoiding the Affordability Trap**
- **Futures Thinking for Educational Leaders: An Introduction to Scenario Planning During and After the Crisis**
- **FY2021 School District of Philadelphia Budget Talk with Uri Monson, Chief Financial Officer**
- **Opening the Academic Year in Unprecedented Times with School District of Philadelphia Superintendent William Hite**
- **Barriers to Bridges: Teacher Perspectives on Accelerating Learning, Leadership, and Innovation in the Pandemic**
- **From Pre-K to Fifth Grade: Early Literacy as Dropout Prevention**
- **Beyond Coding: Meeting the Challenges of Digital Literacy**
- **Is It Time to Say Goodbye to the SAT?**
- **An Introduction to the Philadelphia School Board's "Goals and Guardrails" Initiative**



Looking forward

March 4, 2021

From Foster Care to the Graduation Stage – Supporting College Students Leaving “the System”

April 1, 2021

How a Philadelphia Collective is Leading the Way – Advancing Those Underrepresented in STEM Careers

May 6, 2021

Can Character Education Improve the ABCs?

June 17, 2021

The FY22 School District of Philadelphia Budget Primer with Uri Monson, CFO

CAREER PROFESSIONALS COACH STUDENTS TO SUMMER SUCCESS

At first, it seemed the pandemic might put our students' summer jobs prospects at risk. But, thanks to the overwhelming interest we received from individuals and corporate partners keen on supporting PEF's Summer Gear Up program participants, this past summer proved a virtual success for our students.

For six weeks last July into August, PEF's Summer Gear Up Program provided 50 rising high school seniors with paid career awareness and development internships. Joining in their journey were 27 volunteer Career Coaches, matched to students based on career interests who helped our seniors better understand the pathway required to achieve their career goals.

Our Career Coaches were candid – sharing successes and struggles and revealing helpful life lessons. Our students presented their college and career plans at an end-of-summer celebration.

One student discovered right away that there's value in having a plan. Following a successful job interview, she commented that, **“The [business] owners said I stood out because the other candidates were there for the money, while I actually had plans for the future. Plans that the program helped me make.”**

The Coaches, too, gained something from the experience. “I was unaware of the lack of information they have. **It has given me a broader perspective on how we can help to give students more resources to fill in the information gap, especially those they can use long-term,**” said one volunteer. And another, “This has been an incredibly fulfilling experience. I really enjoy interacting with the students, and they are always really prepared with great questions.”

We thank the volunteer Career Coaches and the following companies who afforded them the time to enrich our students' summer experience: Defender Association of Philadelphia, Comcast Corporation, Comcast NBCUniversal, Burlington Township School District, Fuel Pax Foods, Sports Radio 94WIP, Posce Studios, National Guard, Civil Barbers, You're Beautifully Made, Inc., and the University of Pennsylvania.



In June, we celebrated the graduation of the more than 300 high school seniors enrolled in PEF's College Access Program. With their tickets punched for college, it was time to recognize their achievements. And, this year, as our seniors got creative, we were fortunate to have a photojournalist from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* capture their expressions of joy.

Photo: Charles Fox, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

PEF ON ASSIGNMENT: DEVELOPING STEM TEACHERS IN EGYPT

For two weeks last February, STEM education expert, Dr. Nancy Peter, gained the experience of a lifetime and strengthened PEF's connections across the globe. Invited by a longstanding US-Egyptian STEM education collaboration, Nancy observed and coached kindergarten through 12th grade STEM teachers in Cairo, Egypt.

Secondary school principals, teachers, and academics from across Egypt joined in Dr. Peter's training session with STEM teachers. The sessions went beyond instruction in the delivery of STEM content. Instead the focus was on teaching methodologies and best practices for engaging students in STEM learning and exploration.

Nancy and her cohort of five American educators were invited to Cairo by the 21st Century Partnership for STEM Education, an effort which has its roots in Philadelphia dating to 2006. The partnership with Egypt began in 2011 when that country opened several STEM-

focused schools and looked for assistance in developing less rigid, more creative pedagogical examples. The national education system was opening up, like many institutions, after the Arab Spring, but their practitioners lacked experience in training students in critical thinking, inquiry, problem-solving, and other ways of learning that are the norm in American schools.

With a mix of activities and advice, the US team helped their Egyptian colleagues try out and receive critiques of everything from teaching styles to facilitating discussion to classroom management. All the instruction was in English. Nancy also taught creating professional development plans for teachers and lesson planning. "They were easy to get along with and very willing to learn and receive coaching from us," said Nancy.

"Watching other people teach teachers for two weeks was transformative and enhanced skills I can bring back to PEF's McKinney Center work," said Nancy. "It has led to creating additional training modules for teacher trainers everywhere."

While trips to Egypt are currently suspended, Nancy intends to continue her work with this initiative virtually and, ultimately, in person once again.



Photos courtesy Nancy Peter



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Photo: Madeline Birkner