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## TEACH FOR AMERICA WELCOMES MORE THAN 80 NEW TEACHERS TO LOS ANGELES, MARKING ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

*For the First Time, More Than Half of New Los Angeles Corps Identifies as Latino*

**LOS ANGELES, August 12, 2015**—Teach For America—Los Angeles announced today that it will welcome more than 80 new teachers to local schools this fall as the organization celebrates its 25th anniversary. The new teachers, known as corps members, will commit to teach for two years in under-resourced schools and become lifelong leaders in the pursuit of educational equity.

This is the 26th cohort to lead classrooms in Los Angeles, and it is as accomplished as ever while being among the most diverse and connected to the state. Almost 85 percent of the incoming corps members identify as people of color, more than 70 percent are the first in their family to graduate from college, almost 70 percent come from a low-income background, and more than half of the corps members were raised or educated in the Los Angeles area. Known for its high admissions standards, Teach For America admitted 15 percent of applicants this year, and the incoming national corps has an average GPA of 3.4.

By maximizing the diversity of its teaching corps, Teach For America ensures that it is enlisting the country's top talent, whether they share the backgrounds of students affected by educational inequity or come from backgrounds of privilege. This diverse talent pipeline comes at a time when California is facing a serious teacher shortage, with enrollments in teacher-preparation programs down 53 percent from 2008. Teach For America—Los Angeles is a critical partner in the recruitment of emerging leaders to high-need schools and hard-to-staff subjects like science, math, and special education. In addition to teaching, corps members go on to be long-term leaders in education more broadly, and they work across sectors to end educational inequity.

Teach For America—Los Angeles is also keeping pace with changing demographics across the state. In July, census data confirmed that the Latino population has edged out the white population in California for the first time. And, for the first time this fall, more than half of the incoming Teach For America—Los Angeles corps identifies as Latino. Among other new corps members, 13 percent identify as white, 13 percent as African-American, and 12 percent as Asian American or Pacific Islander.

"We know that teachers from all backgrounds can be incredible role models for their students, in particular those who come from communities similar to those in which they serve," said Lida Jennings, executive director of Teach For America—Los Angeles. "That is why we're fully committed to recruiting highly talented and diverse college graduates and professionals to lead classrooms in our highest-need schools and to advocate for transformational change."

Daisy Policarpo-Hernandez is a corps member with a special distinction: She is returning to teach at her former school district, where she herself was taught by Teach For America corps members. After becoming the first in her family to graduate college—with a history degree from the University of Southern California—she found that Teach For America was an accessible way to give back to her community. She will teach seventh grade special education English and reading at Animo Western Charter School, one of

Green Dot Public Schools' newest transformation schools, this fall.

"I want my students to learn to advocate for themselves and to vocalize what they need to be excellent students," Policarpo-Hernandez said. "I also want them to know that you can be a Latina and from a low-income community and still excel. Where you're from does not prevent you from learning, and it does not prevent you from being a teacher. It is essential that people like me, who look like my students, come back and teach and create bonds with students and families who may feel like outsiders."

Jesus Quiroz, a graduate of the University of California–Berkeley, joined the corps because he shares Teach For America's commitment to social justice and educational equity. He will teach seventh grade history at a Los Angeles Unified School District authorized charter, Synergy Kinetic Academy.

"The growing population of Latino students is going to redefine education in Los Angeles and California," Quiroz said. "As a Latino professional, I want to be a resource for low-income communities and people who speak Spanish. I know the language that is spoken at home and many of the struggles faced by students growing up here, and I think that is an asset that can be used in the classroom, with parents, and with communities."

The new corps members, like Policarpo-Hernandez and Quiroz, will join 100 returning corps members to serve an estimated 19,500 students in early childhood and K-12 schools in some of the highest-need communities in Los Angeles. They will teach in traditional districts like LAUSD, nonprofit partner schools like L.A.'s Promise and Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, and charter schools, including Alliance College-Ready Public Schools.

"Teach For America–Los Angeles has been a terrific partner for Alliance, helping us attract great talent for Alliance schools. We continue to look to Teach For America and its alumni network for quality teachers and principals who can deliver the best education for their students," said Dan Katzir, CEO and president of Alliance.

To prepare for the school year, the new corps members completed a rigorous pre-service training program led by veteran teachers from Teach For America and Loyola Marymount University. The program included 150 hours of training and student-teaching, an additional 45 hours of preparation to work with English language learners, and an additional 75 hours of specialized training for special educators.

Training and professional development will continue throughout the corps members' two years of service, and includes one-on-one coaching and classroom observations. Given the robust support, most teachers will complete the CalTPA performance assessment and move from an intern teaching credential to a preliminary teaching credential after just one year. Sixty percent are also projected to attain a master's degree after year one.

"Alternative pathways to teaching are necessary to ensure we have qualified teachers in every classroom," said Shane Martin, the dean of the LMU School of Education and Teach For America–Los Angeles advisory board member. "Through the Teach For America–Loyola Marymount University partnership, we prepare teachers who are local, diverse, and have demonstrated success in their college and professional lives to make a difference in their schools and communities."

Independent external research studies show that Teach For America corps members are having a positive impact on students nationally and in the Los Angeles region. A 2012 study in LAUSD, conducted by the Harvard Strategic Data Project, found that Teach For America teachers tend to be more effective than other novice teachers at promoting student learning in math and English language arts in grades three to nine.

The impact is wide-reaching. During the past 25 years, Teach For America–Los Angeles corps members have educated nearly 750,000 students, ranging from early childhood to 12th grade levels. Today, more than 2,000 alumni call Los Angeles home, and education is their most popular profession. About 1,000 alumni serve as teachers, principals, and school system leaders in the greater Los Angeles area, including at LAUSD and Lynwood Unified School District.

### **A National Look**

Nationwide, Teach For America will mark its first quarter-century this fall with a diverse community of 50,000 leaders committed to expanding opportunities for students and addressing the systemic barriers to educational equity. A total of 8,800 Teach For America corps members will be teaching in 52 urban and rural regions while more than 42,000 alumni of the program are working from an array of sectors to ensure that all children have an equal chance in life.

Among new Teach For America corps members nationally, nearly half identify as people of color (compared with less than 20 percent of teachers nationwide); 47 percent come from low-income backgrounds; 34 percent are the first in their family to graduate from college; one-third applied as professionals or graduate students; more than 20 percent have backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, or math; and almost 20 percent will be teaching in the region where they grew up. The national corps includes graduates of nearly 830 colleges and universities across the country.

The start of this school year also marks the start of Teach For America's 25th-anniversary year, culminating in its 25th Anniversary Summit, slated for Feb. 5–7, 2016. Thousands of corps members, alumni, and other community members will come together that weekend in Washington, D.C., united in the goal that, in their lifetime, every child will have access to an excellent education.

### **About Teach For America**

Teach For America works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunity for children facing the challenges of poverty. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding college graduates and professionals to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. This fall, 8,800 corps members will be teaching in 52 urban and rural regions across the country while more than 42,000 alumni work across sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education. Teach For America is a proud member of the AmeriCorps national service network. For more information, visit [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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